**Where is your faith?**

**Luke 8:22-25**

**Key Verse 8:25a**

 **“Where is your faith?” he asked his disciples.”**

Good morning. How are you today? I am very good. Thank you. It is nice to start the first day of the month with Sunday worship service. Today is the first of March. Did you notice that it is already March? (Yes) We have a wedding this Saturday, joyful wedding. Also William and Sarah had a baby about a week ago. Both of them are in hospital I think. Sarah did not feel good a little bit. Her name is “Alisa Love Larsen”. Middle name is “love”. So please pray for her so that she can grow under the love and grace of the Lord. The title for today’s message is “Where is your faith?”. The key verse comes from verse 25a. Let’s read together. **“Where is your faith?” he asked his disciples.”** Let’s pray together.

Today’s passage is very small, only 4 verses, 22-25.

**22One day Jesus said to his disciples, “Let us go over to the other side of the lake.” So they got into a boat and set out. 23As they sailed, he fell asleep.** So Jesus was very tired from work. **A squall came down on the lake, so that the boat was being swamped, and they were in great danger.** Obviously they were losing their lives. They did everything they could do, but nothing worked.

 **24The disciples went and woke him, saying, “Master, Master, we’re going to drown!”** They did not understand why Jesus could sleep like a baby even though the boat was swamped.

**He got up and rebuked the wind and the raging waters; the storm subsided, and all was calm.**Suddenly it was so quiet. In that moment, a voice went out. **25“Where is your faith?” he asked his disciples. In fear and amazement they asked one another, “Who is this? He commands even the winds and the water, and they obey him.”**

When we think about what Jesus did while he was here on earth, Jesus did his best to plant faith in the hearts of his people including his disciples. For example, when a woman came to be healed, he said, “Daughter, your faith has healed you. Go in peace.” Jesus did not day, “I healed you.” But he said, “your faith has healed you. Go in peace.” Someone came to him to be healed and Jesus asked him if he believed he could heal him and he said yes. Then he said, “According to your faith will it be done to you.” To his disciples he said, “Where is your faith?” “You of little faith. Why are you so afraid?” Why did Jesus do his best to plant faith in the hearts of his people?

It is because Jesus wanted them to live a victorious life as spiritual army and soldiers. Faith has a very unique function. Faith has a function of ‘spiritual shield.” Let us read,

**Ephesians 6:16 “In addition to all this, take up the shield of faith, with which you can extinguish all the flaming arrows of the evil one.”**

Faith is called ‘spiritual shield.’ If you are in a spiritual field your enemy, evil one, shoots. It is not just regular arrow, but it is flaming arrows. If you are hit you have major damage. So you need to protect yourselves from the flaming arrows of the evil one. How could you do that? By shield of faith. All human effort cannot extinguish the flaming arrows of the evil one but the faith, the shield of faith can do that. I heard that in a battle field, the number of soldiers who died out of fear is greater than the number of soldiers who died out of actual bullets. In the battle field, soldiers are under the hard pressure of fear. They are so afraid to die because of such fear of death. Many people die out of fear rather than bullets. This is actual life of men. Human beings, under the power of Satan, are suffering greatly from fear of death. And Jesus did his best to plant faith in the hearts of people because he wanted them to overcome the power of death and live a victorious life.

Yesterday I was very surprised to find that MIT students study the book titled ‘Art of War” written by Sun Tzu, a Chinese military strategist. And this is one line from the book. Can we read it together?

**“Therefore a victorious army first wins and then seeks battle; a defeated army first battles and then seeks victory.”**

This is what he said. The victorious army first wins and seeks battles, and they win because they secured their victory first. A defeated army goes and fights first and try to win victory. Will they be successful? No. When I read the verse, the defeat or victory of our spiritual battle is not determined at the actual battle field or at the very time of battles but in the morning when we have fellowship with God. When we secure our fellowship with the Lord in the morning by praying to him and listening to his word we become like a victorious army who first wins and secures the victory and seeks battles during the day. So the morning time is the time and place is the place where we read the word of God and have fellowship with God is the very place where we secure our spiritual victory. And then we go and pick up victories which we secured in the morning.

A defeated army, they go out and fight. There is no preparation in the morning. No assurance from the Lord. They just go out and fight and try to secure victory. Will they be successful? Probably not.

When I read the sentence I also realized why Jesus worked so hard to plant faith in the hearts of his disciples and people. It is because he wants them to be victorious army who first wins and then seeks battles.

How can a victorious army first wins and seeks battles? How can they do that? They can do it through thorough preparation. Preparation. Complete preparation. And Jesus wanted his disciples to become victorious army which first wins and seeks battles through thorough preparation, which is planting faith in them, faith in the almighty Creator God.

That’s the weapon. They can win over the power of death and fear of death. That is why Jesus did his best to plant faith in them. Today’s passage is one good example. He asked his disciples, ‘Where is your faith?” What did you believe?

There is one example Jesus did the same thing recorded in **John 11:1-6.** Let’s read responsively. I will go first. “**Now a man named Lazarus was sick. He was from Bethany, the village of Mary and her sister Martha. 2(This Mary, whose brother Lazarus now lay sick, was the same one who poured perfume on the Lord and wiped his feet with her hair.) 3So the sisters sent word to Jesus, “Lord, the one you love is sick.” 4When he heard this, Jesus said, “This sickness will not end in death. No, it is for God’s glory so that God’s Son may be glorified through it.” 5Now Jesus loved Martha and her sister and Lazarus. 6So when he heard that Lazarus was sick, he stayed where he was two more days”**

These sisters were so sure of Jesus’ love for Lazarus. So when they sent their message, they said, ‘Lord, the one you love is sick.” They even did not ask him to come. They were so sure of Jesus’ love that they believed that Jesus would run to them immediately. And verse 5 specifically said, according to the Holy Spirit, “**Jesus loved Martha and her sister and Lazarus.**” But when Lazarus was sick Jesus intentionally stayed two more days where he was. To Martha, Mary, and Lazarus, it was the evidence of no love. But the bible clearly say ‘he stayed where he was two more days intentionally because he loved them.” Why? How can we interpret this? He loved them but he allowed them to experience the pain of death.

Lazarus died, and Martha and Mary had to see how their brother Lazarus died. It was going through a spiritual pain of death. Why did he do so? Because he wanted to give them the best gift. What is the best gift? It was faith, the resurrection faith. He wanted them to know he is the resurrection and the life. It was his last time to visit them. It was his last time to visit Jerusalem to be crucified. And in his last meeting with them Jesus wanted to bless them with the best gift, and the best gift he prepared was ‘faith’, the resurrection faith.

In order to give them the best gift as the expression of his love he allowed them to die spiritually and physically. Jesus’ disciples obeyed Jesus’ command to go to the other side of the lake. But still they were hit by storm. Sometime obeying Jesus lead us to be hit by storms. And these storms and crisis in our lives come unexpectedly. We may not like these crisis. Crisis in our marriage life, crisis in our health, crisis in our job or financial security, crisis in our children, crisis in our lustful desires, and many accidents from which we cannot protect ourselves.

I still remember one man whom I met in Cal State Long Beach Library. He was in a wheel chair coming out and I talked to him because I wanted to have a bible study with him. And he said, he really enjoyed suffering. I could see that he really enjoyed surfing. But something happened and he was in a wheel chair and he had to be in the wheel chair for the rest of his whole life. And I could not forget his sad eyes. I could see how he was healthy and enjoyed surfing but he had to be in the wheel chair for the rest of his life. He was hit by a storm, unexpected storm.

Since storms come unexpectedly what is the best policy? The best policy is to prepare all the time. According to Jesus, to prepare all the time means to secure our faith in God almighty who can command even the winds and the water and they obey him.

A week ago, I was in morning daily bread devotion. And I needed my eyeglass. So I took out case and opened to take out my eyeglasses. And I was surprised to find that there were no eyeglasses. Several times in my life I lost my case with eyeglasses. But I never lost eyeglasses having case. It was the first time. So I was shocked in way and embarrassed too. What happened? So I thought about where I visited after I came to center, and two places, my office and restroom. So I searched hard for my eyeglasses but I could not find it. I even asked one of prayer coworkers there, “Can you go and look for it in the restroom?”, but he could not find it. I even asked him to pray together and we prayed. Why? Because I needed it. I needed to find it for sure. So finally I realized I really needed to find it I need to wear my eyeglass, my extra eyeglass which I carry in my car all the time to find the lost eyeglass. I have to see very well to find the lost eyeglasses. I went to my car, opened the door to take my extra eyeglasses, and see there was my lost eyeglasses on the top of the board, dash board.

What I am saying is ‘when we need eyeglasses they should be there all the time. When the storm hit us we need to have the faith all the time. Otherwise we will be very embarrassed and shock and we will lose suffer. We will suffer loss. In order to teach them to overcome the power of death in their practical lives Jesus did his best to plant faith in them all the time. To plant faith in God Almighty secures personal salvation and salvation of other people. It works for both. We can be saved and when God uses us to save others our faith works for others too.

First, it secures our personal salvation. Let’s read **Mark 10:24-27** **“24The disciples were amazed at his words. But Jesus said again, “Children, how hard it is to enter the kingdom of God! 25It is easier for a camel to go through the eye of a needle than for someone who is rich to enter the kingdom of God.” 26The disciples were even more amazed, and said to each other, “Who then can be saved?” 27Jesus looked at them and said, “With man this is impossible, but not with God; all things are possible with God.”**

Salvation is not possible with men. Salvation is only possible with God who is almighty. Only with God with whom nothing is impossible salvation is possible.

Let’s read **Genesis 15:4-6**

**“4Then the word of the Lord came to him: “This man will not be your heir, but a son who is your own flesh and blood will be your heir.” 5He took him outside and said, “Look up at the sky and count the stars—if indeed you can count them.” Then he said to him, “So shall your offspring be.” 6Abram believed the Lord, and he credited it to him as righteousness.”**

Abraham believed God’s promise. “So shall your offspring be”. Although you will be 100 years old your offspring will be as numerous as the stars in the sky. Abraham believed what was impossible to believe, and the Lord credited his faith to him as righteousness.

Let’s read **Romans 4:17-25**

 **“As it is written: “I have made you a father of many nations.” He is our father in the sight of God, in whom he believed—the God who gives life to the dead and calls into being things that were not. 18Against all hope, Abraham in hope believed and so became the father of many nations, just as it had been said to him, “So shall your offspring be.” 19Without weakening in his faith, he faced the fact that his body was as good as dead—since he was about a hundred years old—and that Sarah’s womb was also dead. 20Yet he did not waver through unbelief regarding the promise of God, but was strengthened in his faith and gave glory to God, 21being fully persuaded that God had power to do what he had promised.22This is why “it was credited to him as righteousness.” 23The words “it was credited to him” were written not for him alone, 24but also for us, to whom God will credit righteousness—for us who believe in him who raised Jesus our Lord from the dead. 25He was delivered over to death for our sins and was raised to life for our justification.”**

When Abraham believed God’s promise, “So shall your offspring be” God credited his faith to him as righteousness. God does the same thing for us. When we believe that Jesus was delivered **over to death for our sins and was raised to life for our justification** God credits our faith to us as righteousness, meaning salvation.

Let’s read **Romans 3:21-24**

**“21But now apart from the law the righteousness of God has been made known, to which the Law and the Prophets testify. 22This righteousness is given through faith in Jesus Christ to all who believe. There is no difference between Jew and Gentile, 23for all have sinned and fall short of the glory of God, 24and all are justified freely by his grace through the redemption that came by Christ Jesus.”**

So this righteousness of God is given through faith in Jesus Christ to all who believe. There is no difference, no prejudice, apart from age, gender, nationality, color of skin, or anything.

The faith in God also can be used by God to save many others. Let’s read **Mark 11:22-24**

 **22“Have faith in God,” Jesus answered. 23“Truly I tell you, if anyone says to this mountain, ‘Go, throw yourself into the sea,’ and does not doubt in their heart but believes that what they say will happen, it will be done for them. 24Therefore I tell you, whatever you ask for in prayer, believe that you have received it, and it will be yours.”**

It was few days before Jesus was crucified. It happened at the temple. And Jesus planted faith in God almighty in the hearts of his disciples. It was to prepare them for the future work of God’s salvation.

The same thing happened to the life of Apostle Paul. Let’s read **2 Corinthians 4:7-18.**

 **“7But we have this treasure in jars of clay to show that this all-surpassing power is from God and not from us. 8We are hard pressed on every side, but not crushed; perplexed, but not in despair; 9persecuted, but not abandoned; struck down, but not destroyed.10We always carry around in our body the death of Jesus, so that the life of Jesus may also be revealed in our body. 11For we who are alive are always being given over to death for Jesus’ sake, so that his life may also be revealed in our mortal body. 12So then, death is at work in us, but life is at work in you. 13It is written: “I believed; therefore I have spoken.” Since we have that same spirit of faith, we also believe and therefore speak, 14because we know that the one who raised the Lord Jesus from the dead will also raise us with Jesus and present us with you to himself. 15All this is for your benefit, so that the grace that is reaching more and more people may cause thanksgiving to overflow to the glory of God. 16Therefore we do not lose heart. Though outwardly we are wasting away, yet inwardly we are being renewed day by day. 17For our light and momentary troubles are achieving for us an eternal glory that far outweighs them all. 18So we fix our eyes not on what is seen, but on what is unseen, since what is seen is temporary, but what is unseen is eternal.”**

Jesus asked his disciples, “Where is your faith?” One of the test to see if we have faith is to see how we respond when we lose the objects of faith. For example, if we believe the power of money we will be very unstable if we lose money. If we believe in the recognition of people we will be very irritated when people criticize us. If we believe our performance as the foundation of our life, we will become very frustrated when we do not perform properly. When we lose the objects of our faith we can know what we truly believe.

Jesus’ disciples in a way believed something. Probably they believed Jesus who was sleeping in front of their eyes because he was tired. To them Jesus was a human being who was so tired and so who had to sleep like a baby. But they did not understand such peace and calm Jesus had despite all the storms and the boat was being swamped. They did not know Jesus is the Almighty Creator God who can command even the winds and the water and they obey him. So when that happened, in fear and amazement they asked one another, “Who is this? He commands even the winds and the water and they obey him.”

We may face many storms in our lives. But it is so clear that Jesus wants us to have faith in him who is Almighty Creator God all the time and live as victorious army who first wins and then seeks battles. Jesus gave us faith and blessed us to keep our faith all the time not to treat and solve our private problems and stay home. It was given to secure victory first and seek battles. Go out and seek battles, and experience victory he has prepared for us in our lives.

**One word: Where is your faith?**