

**“A Trip to Be Remembered”**

**Luke 8:22-40** <sup>22</sup> One day Jesus said to his disciples, "Let's go over to the other side of the lake." So they got into a boat and set out. <sup>23</sup> As they sailed, he fell asleep. A squall came down on the lake, so that the boat was being swamped, and they were in great danger. <sup>24</sup> The disciples went and woke him, saying, "Master, Master, we're going to drown!" He got up and rebuked the wind and the raging waters; the storm subsided, and all was calm. <sup>25</sup> "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." <sup>26</sup> They sailed to the region of the Gerasenes, {<sup>26</sup> Some manuscripts Gadarenes; other manuscripts Gergesenes; also in verse 37} which is across the lake from Galilee. <sup>27</sup> When Jesus stepped ashore, he was met by a demon-possessed man from the town. For a long time this man had not worn clothes or lived in a house, but had lived in the tombs. <sup>28</sup> When he saw Jesus, he cried out and fell at his feet, shouting at the top of his voice, "What do you want with me, Jesus, Son of the Most High God? I beg you, don't torture me!" <sup>29</sup> For Jesus had commanded the evil {<sup>29</sup> Greek unclean} spirit to come out of the man. Many times it had seized him, and though he was chained hand and foot and kept under guard, he had broken his chains and had been driven by the demon into solitary places. <sup>30</sup> Jesus asked him, "What is your name?" "Legion," he replied, because many demons had gone into him. <sup>31</sup> And they begged him repeatedly not to order them to go into the Abyss. <sup>32</sup> A large herd of pigs was feeding there on the hillside. The demons begged Jesus to let them go into them, and he gave them permission. <sup>33</sup> When the demons came out of the man, they went into the pigs, and the herd rushed down the steep bank into the lake and was drowned. <sup>34</sup> When those tending the pigs saw what had happened, they ran off and reported this in the town and countryside, <sup>35</sup> and the people went out to see what had happened. When they came to Jesus, they found the man from whom the demons had gone out, sitting at Jesus' feet, dressed and in his right mind; and they were afraid. <sup>36</sup> Those who had seen it told the people how the demon-possessed man had been cured. <sup>37</sup> Then all the people of the region of the Gerasenes asked Jesus to leave them, because they were overcome with fear. So he got into the boat and left. <sup>38</sup> The man from whom the demons had gone out begged to go with him, but Jesus sent him away, saying, <sup>39</sup> "Return home and tell how much God has done for you." So the man went away and told all over town how much Jesus had done for him. <sup>40</sup> Now when Jesus returned, a crowd welcomed him, for they were all expecting him.

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As I was pondering and preparing for this sermon it struck me that this little trip across the Sea of Galilee must have been truly life changing for Jesus' disciples. They had taken a big step by leaving everything behind to follow Jesus, but on this trip he confronts their doubt and reveals himself as being more than just some prophet who was a likely candidate to be the Messiah. He revealed himself to be the Son of God, the Lord over all creation whom even the demons recognized and had to obey him. He had the authority to calm storms, cast out demons, heal uncleanness, and raise the dead. This Jesus was saying and doing things that only God himself could say and do. The point of this trip for Jesus' disciples is begged in the question "Where is your faith?" The answer to it shows us that faith is integrally connected to knowing Jesus is present with and

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more importantly who Jesus in fact is. Belief in Jesus is incomplete until we come to know him personally as the Son of God who is Lord over creation.

The trip began with Jesus and his disciples getting into a boat and Jesus saying, “Let’s go to the other side of the lake.” If their starting point was up in the northwest corner of the lake, then it was about a twenty kilometer trip to the southeast corner of the lake; not an easy row and would still have taken several hours with a sail. If they were in the middle of the lake when the storm arose it would have been a five kilometer swim to get to shore if the boat capsized. Needless to say, getting into the boat with Jesus is risky. In this instance their lives were in danger. The storm was getting the best of them. So, they went to Jesus who was very unconcernedly asleep and there they simply stated their fear of dying. They didn’t ask him to do anything. Presumably, we could say that they didn’t think he could do anything in the face of the storm. But, to their amazement he rebuked the storm and the lake went calm. Then he turned to them and asked, “Where is your faith?”

Their problem was similar to the problem that Christians have today. We say we believe that Jesus died for our sins but we cannot imagine that he would possibly get involved in our lives. Being a disciple of Jesus isn’t a day trip about “me and my faith.” It is a day trip about learning who Jesus is. Speaking for us all, “me and my faith” is littered with doubt and will fail us. Just as the disciples faith failed them in the midst of the storm. Salvation does not depend on our faith. It depends on who Jesus is as Son of God and Lord of all creation and it is comforting to know that when our faith fails us, he is still Son of God and Lord of all creation and will act to save us in ways that we cannot imagine to be possible. It is to his faith and faithfulness and obedience as Son of God and Lord of creation that we must cling not to our own faith. Faith in our own faith leads only to disillusionment. Thus, the clichéd responses of “You’ve just got to have faith” and “You just got to believe more” are not valid. It is the simple fact that Jesus, the Son of God and Lord of all creation is with us in the boat that matters.

Finally, they crossed the lake and the first thing that happened was a confrontation with evil. A man possessed by a legion of demons immediately confronted them. A legion was a Roman battle group of between four to six thousand soldiers. This man embodied evil like we cannot imagine. The thing that is amazing here is that the demons cower before Jesus because they know exactly who he is. In all of the Gospels it is only the demons who know exactly who Jesus is. Everybody else had trouble figuring him out. So, Jesus cast the demons into a herd of pigs that do the lemming thing into the lake. The townspeople come and are astounded to find the man in his right mind. Yet, Jesus and his authority scared them so much that they begged him to leave. So he and the disciples got back into the boat and returned from whence they came. When they got back Jesus resumed his typical work of raising the dead and healing those who had illnesses that made them unclean or untouchable.

This little day trip had to have gotten the attention of the disciples. Jesus revealed himself as Lord over all creation and as the Son of God with authority to cast out evil. I can’t help but believe that Jesus took the disciples on this trip to

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point out that they had truly underestimated who he is. He was more than just a prophet Messiah. He is the Lord of all creation son of the Most High God.

I wish we could feel the reverence, the fear, the awe that would have overcome them when they realized that the Son of God, the Lord of all creation was there present with them. Speaking for myself, I can remember full well the days when I believed in Jesus as my savior but had no awareness of him in my life. I remember full well how back in college when his constant presence in my life became a reality to me. That was when I realized that Jesus was in the boat with me rather than I was just trying to get in the boat with him. But I stand here in all honesty today saying that the sheer awesomeness of Jesus being the Son of God and the Lord of all creation is a hard thing to grasp. I guess the day trip for me hasn't quite made it to the other side yet. Though, I can say that the course of events that landed me in Canada was very much like the storm in the middle of the lake.

I think the point of this day trip for the disciples wasn't to increase their capacity to believe. I think it was simply for Jesus to reveal to them who he truly is. The point of this trip wasn't to get them to believe more. I think it was to get them to rest in the steadfast love and faithfulness of God who was there with them and who is here with us. I think for us this day trip gives us a trip guide within which we may find our place. It invites us to look at ourselves and ask “Am I just struggling to get in the boat counting the costs of the risks involved in going to the other side of the lake?” Or, “Am I in the midst of a storm realizing that my faith is getting me nowhere, complaining to God, and then suddenly realizing that I am in the boat with the Lord of all creation?” Or, “Am I on the other shore in the face of brute evil realizing that it is only the presence of God that stands between me and utter chaos?” Where are you at in this trip to be remembered?” Amen.