

## **Matthew 20-02-02b**

Let's pick up our study now. We are looking at Matthew 8. We've detoured over to Luke chapter seven and John chapter four. And just by way of conclusion, again, and I mentioned a couple of these things during the break and sort of stole my own thunder here, but John came to Jesus as a disciple.

He is one of the first. Peter and Andrew and John and James, Philip began in the days of John the Baptist. So John was present at the wedding feast of Cana.

John was present when Jesus returned to Cana. John was present when Jesus eventually went to Capernaum. The story of the nobleman is very fascinating because John saw this one first.

Jesus is at Cana when the nobleman from Capernaum has his request made and his son is healed. And he believes in a short time, Jesus himself is going to go to Capernaum and the episode with the centurion is going to take place. And you think about the timing of that and think about John having seen both of these and the one that he selects to include in the gospel under the influence of the Holy Spirit, of course, but it is in the service of his theme.

Again, the gospel is organized on the signs and Jesus on this occasion says, except you see signs and wonders, you will by no means believe. And it is literally illustrated by this nobleman who once he sees the sign, he and his whole house come to faith and believe. He believes the word of Jesus for healing.

He eventually believes in Jesus as the Messiah. The centurion by contrast is a man that has believed in God and been active in the service of God as a Roman for years. It takes time to build synagogues and establish cordial relations with the Jewish elders and so on.

And it is not until this sign is seen that it is believed. And of course, John, again, at the end of his gospel says, Jesus did many signs, but these are written that you might believe that Jesus is the Christ, the son of God, and that believing you might have life through his name. These signs are written.

Here, it's all about the signs and about this generation seeks a sign. Jesus gave them so many signs, but no sign was enough for most of them. And he said, you're only gonna get one more sign and it's the sign of Jonah.

And they themselves are going to follow the Lord into a Jonah like disappearance under the waves of the sea, being scattered among the Gentile nations until the point that they emerge and wash off the digestive juices of the great fish. And then they will be able to stand and testify in obedience. But let's return now to Matthew chapter eight.

We saw the fulfillment of prophecy. He took our infirmities and bore our sicknesses.

Verse 18, we saw this last time when Jesus saw great multitudes about him, he gave a command to depart to the other side.

And you have these two encounters with followers. A scribe came and said to him, teacher, I will follow you wherever you go. Jesus said to him, foxes have holes, birds of the air have nests, but the son of man has nowhere to lay his head.

We talked about the significance of the choice of illustration here. Most commentators, and they are very worthy in their observations say, well, this is reminding this scribe that this is not the path of fame and fortune, that it's going to be obscure and not comfortable necessarily. The road to discipleship is paved with a lot of sharp rocks and things of this nature.

Taking nothing away from that, this is a pair. And as we look at the context, the second comment immediately after, Lord, let me first go and bury my father. Jesus says, follow me and let the dead bury their own dead.

So you have foxes and birds, and then you have death. And you have this right in the context of Jesus saying, let us depart. There's huge crowds.

Jesus says, let's go. And at that moment, we have these two exchanges recorded. And with all of the other things that you could say about them, let me just leave you with two thoughts in this regard.

The scribe says, this is what's going to happen in the future. You're leaving, I will follow you wherever you go. I will follow, this is future tense, right? This is what's going to happen up ahead.

What does Jesus say? The future is not certain. Now, does Jesus lay his head down? He's going to in the boat. He can lay his head down and sleep almost anywhere, but it's not predictable.

It's uncertain. A fox is going to return to his den sooner or later. A bird is going to return to its nest sooner or later.

There's a predictability to it. But when he says the son of man has nowhere to lay his head, he lays his head somewhere every night that he's not up all night praying, but it's not a fixed certainty. He doesn't have a headquarters.

It kind of reminds me of churches such as ours that you never know where we're going to meet. We might meet here, we might meet there, we might meet elsewhere. We have no fixed location.

The son of man had no fixity in the future. And so what does it require if you are in fact going to follow him wherever he goes? What are you committing to, among other things?

An uncertain future. I don't know how the day is going to end.

I don't know where we're going to be, but it's not a predictable thing. There are guys who at the point that they're proposing to their wives say, you know, we're probably not going to be rich. We're probably not going to be famous, but we'll certainly have an interesting life.

And that comes true. You don't know what it holds, but you know, whatever it is, it's going to have qualities that go beyond security and predictability. So this is looking to the future.

Now look at the second comment. Another of his disciples, this is not one of the 12, this is the larger group of disciples, followers, says to him, Lord, let me first go and bury my father. This is a claim from the past.

My past has a claim on me. I've got a father. Evidently he's old and perhaps near death.

And this beyond the claim to honor your father and mother and so on. As long as the father and mother are being honored and you are supportive and not contrary, you don't necessarily have to be the one to fulfill it. You just make sure it is fulfilled.

Not everybody can be everywhere doing everything all the time. And sometimes we leave it to others. But the feature I want to focus on here is not that Jesus says you're free from the commandment to honor your father and mother, that your days may be long in the land, which the Lord thy God giveth thee.

This is a claim on him from the past. It's his heredity. It's his family connection.

It's his household that has hooks in him. And he says, Lord, I know you're departing, but I live around here and my dad is sick and I need to stick around until that responsibility is discharged. And Jesus' reply is twofold.

There are others who can bury him and these others are not interested in following or they would be there as well. The old man could be there as well. Carry me thither that I may see him or whatever.

But this is, he is evidently the only interested party in the household. That household has a claim on him from the past. You see the difference? The scribe is looking to the future.

I will follow you wherever you go. And Jesus says, that's just remember, it's not so much fame and fortune. It's, if you're looking at the future, just remember, you don't know what it holds in terms of circumstance.

You do know what it holds in terms of relationship. This is a claim from the past. Let me bury my father.

Jesus says, let that take care of itself. The household can take care of the household. They're not here.

They're not interested. You follow me. We know from the other gospel, he actually tells the guy, follow me.

When you've got a clear indication from God, some call it a call, but it's an opportunity. And it is clear that it's available, but you say, well, but I've got these circumstantial claims. We have to look at those closely.

Are there others that can fulfill those responsibilities? Is there a way that it can be handled that frees us to follow? The command to follow, the opportunity to follow is paramount. This can easily be abused. People can justify all kinds of things, leaving their family in the lurch and abdicating responsibilities that are theirs.

But the principle here is, whether it is the uncertainties of the future or whether it is the claims of the past, nothing should get in the way of following the Lord Jesus in genuine faith, recognizing that God will provide. God has provided. He's provided other people that can bury this man's father.

And Jesus is going to lay his head somewhere, but you need to be prepared for an interesting life. Well, that's as much as I'll say about that. We now come to verse 23.

Now, when he got into a boat, and isn't it interesting, you look at 18 and you look at 23, Jesus saw great multitudes. He gave a command to depart to the other side. And you could just skip right down to verse 23.

Now, when he got into a boat, his disciples followed him. But right here, we have those two conversations because this is about the Lord moving. He is going to go somewhere and do something.

Are you with him or are you not? You can be left behind. I would write a whole different book if I was going to title it Left Behind. Left behind on the shore of the Sea of Galilee, you're going to miss the power of the Lord demonstrated over wind and wave, over demons, over hogs, over all kinds of things.

You're going to miss it if you're left behind. If you let concern over the future with its provision get in the way, if you let claims of the past, entanglements with family and household and such get in the way, you're going to miss it. So he got into a boat, his disciples followed him.

What does a boat do? Jesus could have gotten into a palanquin. I like that word. We had it in Canticles on Thursday night and I thought I would just work it in again.

He could have gotten into a palanquin. He could have gotten into a caravan, could have

ridden a camel. There's all kinds of ways.

Jesus typically traveled overland. It was evidently an overland journey from Jerusalem all the way up to Galilee, from Galilee to Jerusalem, Judea to Galilee, back and forth, back and forth. He's traveling the road.

Why does he get into a boat here? Couldn't he have just traipsed around the coast? You know, they've got paths and roads all the way around the Sea of Galilee. Why does he get into a boat? It's an important detail. You say, well, he can't very well still the wind and the waves if he's, well, possibly not, but a boat floats on top of the troubled sea or the calm sea, but it floats.

It preserves human individuals. You're not swimming in the sea. You are not submerged in the sea.

You're on top of it. You are cool, calm, and dry, as the deodorant commercial used to say, up in the boat in most cases. So this already foreshadows dominance over the troubled circumstance.

You know, the wicked are like the troubled sea when it cannot rest. So he gets into a boat and his disciples followed him. Notice, we just had two conversations about following.

Jesus is going to depart. Are you going to follow with an uncertain future? Are you going to follow, although there are claims from the past? And you remember that Peter lives in Capernaum and he's having to leave home. He's got a mother-in-law, which means he has a wife, which means he's probably got children.

And he is leaving that behind. The claims of his household, John and James, their father Zebedee, all of that is in this area and they are getting in the boat. His disciples followed him.

If we are disciples, we will follow him, follow his example of faith and obedience, even in suffering. So his disciples followed him. Suddenly a great tempest arose on the sea so that the boat was covered with the waves.

This is not what boats are supposed to do in the ancient day. You don't want a boat being covered with waves. You want the boat to ride on top of the waves.

But he was asleep. We're very familiar with this story. His disciples came and awoke him saying, Lord, save us, we are perishing.

And you know that this was an unusually strong storm because you've got at least four professional fishermen in this boat. And, you know, have they grown up on this sea their whole lives? Zebedee runs a fishing business. His sons have grown up and it's Zebedee

and sons.

They've been on this lake since infancy. And it's a big lake, it's a sea. So if they are convinced that they're perishing, what kind of a storm is this? This is a monstrous freak storm.

It's a freakishly strong storm. And when four professional fishermen say, we're dying here. And they've already done all of the usual nautical things one does.

If there were any hatches, they battened them. If there were any sheets, they took them in. If there was any gear on board, they secured it.

They've turned the boat into the wind, but the wind keeps changing direction and the boat is swamping. The boat is filling with water. And they are certain that they're gonna die.

And you think about Peter, you think about John. For them to be convinced that they're dying, this is wild, wild beyond imagination. Jesus is asleep in the water, in the boat.

He's wet. These were not covered boats. He wasn't in a stateroom on a mattress.

He was curled up on a fishnet or something in the back. And he's soaking wet. The boat is tossing wildly.

There's shrieking winds. There's crashing waves. Jesus is unconscious.

He is asleep. So they go and wake him up. Why? I am at the end of all of my professional knowledge and it looks to me like we're going to die.

This is in the minds of Peter, Andrew, James and John, certainly. The other guys are probably just white knuckle petrified, hanging on for dear life, hoping Peter, Andrew, James and John know how to keep them afloat. But having done all and being convinced that shipwreck is imminent, drowning is imminent, they turn to Jesus and wake him up.

Now, good thing or bad thing? To wake Jesus up. I would think good thing. They thought it was a good thing.

What time I am afraid, I will trust in thee. You know, asking it shall be given. Turn to the Lord in a time of stress.

What's wrong with that? Jesus is going to wake up. Have you ever awakened just cranky? Maybe you got awakened by something that shouldn't be awaking you at that hour and you just wake up cranky and you just rebuke everything in sight. Jesus is going to rebuke the disciples.

He's going to rebuke the wind. He's going to rebuke the waves. And then he's going to

get back in the boat and fall asleep again.

He's just put out with everything and everybody when he wakes up. But first and foremost, what does he say? Lord, save us, we are perishing. And Jesus says, oh, fear thou not, the gentle Jesus.

Come to me, you're heavy laden, to comfort and rest. And oh, I know you're concerned, but let me allay your fears. Jesus basically kind of verbally smacks him.

He says, why are you afraid, you men of little faith? What's the matter with you? Is the colloquial version of this. What is the matter with you? Where's your faith? Now, this is very instructive to me because something goes wrong. I want to go to the Lord and say, Lord, fix this.

Something seems imminently catastrophic. I want to go to the Lord and say, Lord, imminent catastrophe. Save, help.

What does Jesus say? Wrong answer. Really? This is the only place on this Sunday morning, anywhere in the world that somebody is going to say, when you're in distress, don't just go crying to the Lord in your prayers. I don't think anybody is brave enough to say that.

I'm a little concerned myself. But what does Jesus say? What's the matter with you? Where's your faith? They are turning to him saying, Lord, save. Is that not faith? Do you remember the man, the nobleman in John? Go your way, your son lives.

He believed that word, but that wasn't biblical faith. That wasn't saving faith. That wasn't constructive, fruitful faith for righteousness.

That was believing in the fix. What are these guys doing? The very same thing the nobleman did. Lord, we've got a problem, fix it.

Jesus says, you think I'm just a problem fixer? Where is your faith? Now, if they had had the faith, what would that faith have told them? If Jesus is asleep, he's asleep for a good reason. Leave him alone. If he wants to wake up, he'll wake up.

If this storm isn't waking him up, why should I? Right? What's the second thing their faith should have told them? I don't need to wake the master because we can't perish. We can't perish. Who's in the boat? The boat can't sink.

If it does sink, Jesus will handle it. It's Jesus' boat. Jesus gave the command to depart.

Jesus got into the boat and the disciples followed him. It's a clear path. You don't need to pester the Lord with the fact that it's an exciting journey.

Didn't he just tell the scribe, if you follow me, you don't know where you're going to be

laying your head. What is Jesus doing right here? Laying his head. He's not a fox with a hole in the ground.

He's not a bird with a nest. He's a man in the middle of a record-setting storm with his head in the back of a boat. The disciples in the midst, and isn't it completely understandable? I would have probably awakened him long before they did.

First sign of choppy seas, I'd be, hey, you know, let me drop a paddle next to him and wake him up so he'll know what's going on. But ideally, what does faith tell us? It's Jesus who gave the command to go. Jesus got into the boat.

I'm following the Lord Jesus. However dire the circumstances, I am with Jesus and Jesus is with me. Remember the point in our first session this morning? It's personal.

This is why Matthew subtracts out the intermediaries for the centurions. It's one-on-one, it's personal. I am his and he is mine as my savior, as my guide, my comforter, my example.

He is the way to the Father. He is my great high priest. He has sacrificed himself on my behalf.

I have been purchased with the precious blood of Christ, which makes me valuable. I wasn't intrinsically valuable. This is why Barbies can cost so much on eBay.

Is the piece of plastic itself with the cheap hair and the faded clothes and the cardboard box, what's the intrinsic value of that stuff? Three or \$4, but if it's a collector's item, if it's a rare one, if somebody is willing to pay \$10,000 for that doll, is it its intrinsic value or is it what someone is willing to pay that establishes its value? The Lord Jesus Christ was willing to purchase us with his own blood, which is precious. So in the eyes of God, how precious am I? I'm not going to drown unless God wants me to drown. I'm not going to sink unless God wants me to sink.

If I am following the Lord and the Lord is in the boat, that's the necessary concomitant. But if that's true, if I do my spiritual gut check and I am where I'm supposed to be, doing what I'm supposed to do, the Lord said depart, I departed. The Lord got in the boat, I got in the boat.

The boat's having a rough time, but if the Lord is there, faith says, calm down, let the Lord do the Lord's thing. He just got through saying where he lays his head may be a strange, unpredictable place. Well, nothing's more unpredictable than this freak storm and Jesus soaked to the skin, sleeping right through it.

That's where he has laid his head. I'm with him, leave it be. Extremely difficult to do, but remember, these are the disciples.

They've heard Matthew chapter five. They've heard Matthew chapter six. They've heard Matthew chapter seven.

They know Jesus is the Messiah. They know he's the son of God. They know he's the coming king.

They know he's the prophesied anointed one. He's in the boat. Faith should take that information and draw conclusions.

It seems almost impossible to us, but it shouldn't. This is the way our minds and our hearts ought to work. I look at a circumstance.

I don't constantly have to be appealing to the throne of grace saying, Lord, here's a situation. Many times we try to deal with problems through prayer when we're supposed to be dealing with problems through faith. Waking up the Lord, this is just like a prayer.

Lord, save. He says, where's your faith? Faith is the solution to this problem, not prayer, not appeal, not request. But I'm requesting to you because I trust you and you'll know how to fix it.

Jesus says, you should already have the means of calming yourself on the inside, even if the circumstances outside are severe. Why are you fearful? Where is your faith? Have you so little faith that you're letting this make you afraid? You can almost read into this, you're unlikely to ever see a storm like this again. Soak it up, enjoy it.

It's a memory. Remember that time we were on the lake with the Lord and I never saw waves that high. Never saw so much water in the boat, but we didn't sink.

Boats are a lot easier to float than unaided people. And Jesus is about to float an unaided person, you remember? A little bit later, another episode on the sea. So he arose and rebuked the winds and the sea.

He rebuked the disciples first, then he rebuked the wind and the waves. And there was a great calm. So the men marveled saying, this is real interesting in Greek, by the way, which is from the Aramaic.

I'm sure they were all talking Aramaic to each other. But this potapos word in Greek is P-O-T-A-P-O-S, potapos. And it means what sort, what kind.

We had the idea of it when he said, you all will not believe unless you see signs and wonders. You type of people, you all. Well, this, they say, what kind of a man is this? What sort, what category? How do you classify a man like this? He's not like the rest of us.

What kind of man is this that even the winds and the sea obey him? You get the idea that they could have known this by faith, but they didn't because their faith was small.

And instead they were in the grip of fear. So they learned it by experience.

What does Jesus say in John 4? Unless you see signs and wonders. Well, this is a marvel and a wonder. And it makes them think about Jesus afresh.

You can learn either way, but it's a lot more traumatic going through the fear and the lack of faith than it is to be calm inside so that the storm outside doesn't instill fear. So they say the wind and sea obey him. In the authority theme that Matthew is presenting here, what do we see in the first three miracles that he records? They are miracles of healing the body, right? There is the leper.

There is the centurion's servant, and there is the mother-in-law, right? And those are all maladies. And Matthew sums that up. He takes our infirmities and heals our diseases.

Now, this is a second set of three. This is the first, and it's the wind and the waves. And you get the idea that this may have been a supernaturally severe storm.

You can imagine if you're Satan and the Lord of glory and his best and most important eventual communicators and followers are all in one spot. This is like a summit meeting between the president of the United States and the prime minister of Britain, and you've got them all in one place. What a wonderful time to wipe them out.

So why don't I just drown them with the troubled sea? And it is an implication perhaps that there is a demonic force at work here. He's going to encounter demons as soon as he gets out of the boat, right? So what kind of a man that the wind and sea obey him that they cannot escape his authority? He's got authority over the wind and waves, authority over disease in these different manifestations, different contexts, near, far, looking at something in view of the law, looking at something in view of the Gentiles, looking at something in view of the fever that prevents service. Now here's the wind and the waves.

Then in verse 28, he came to the other side to the country of the Gergesenes or the Gadarenes, Gerasa, Gergesa, Gadara. Gadara was a city, Gerasa was the region, and they're easily confused. It doesn't make a whole lot of difference which term you use, but there met him two demon-possessed men.

If you look at this, keep your finger here and turn over to Mark chapter five, verse one. Just real quickly, another instance of what we were just talking about in Mark chapter five, verse one. They came to the country of the Gadarenes.

When he come out of the boat, immediately there met him out of the tombs, a man with an unclean spirit, a man. So which account is true? Did two men meet him? Did a man meet him? Well, if two men met him, a man met him. There, one is contained within the other, but there are reasons why, and it's fascinating to look at the thematic reasons why details are added or omitted.

Here we have two men coming out of the tombs, exceedingly fierce so that no one could pass that way. Suddenly they cried out saying, what have we to do with you, Jesus, you son of God? Have you come here to torment us before the time? Very fascinating statement in the form of a question here. Have you come to torment us before the time? In Luke chapter eight, you also have the singular, but you have a lot more details.

When Jesus stepped on the land, there met him a certain man from the city. Who had demons for a long time. He wore no clothes, nor did he live in a house, but in the tombs.

When he saw Jesus, he cried out and fell down before him. And with a loud voice said, what have I to do with you, Jesus, son of the most high God? I beg you do not torment me. For he had commanded the unclean spirit to come out of the man for it had often seized him.

He was kept under guard, bound with chains and shackles. He broke bonds and was driven by the demon into the wilderness. Jesus asked him saying, what is your name? And he said, legion, because many demons had entered him.

They begged him that he would not command them to go out into the abyss. They begged him that he would not command them to go out into the abyss. Heard many swine is feeding, et cetera.

Back to our passage. What have we to do with you, Jesus, you son of God? Have you come here to torment us before the time? So there is an ongoing conversation. Luke says, Jesus had been telling them to come out and they are protesting and asking questions and making these requests.

So this is a compressed account. In Luke, it is, don't send us into the abyss. In Matthew, it is, have you come to torment us before the time? And a lot of people take this as meaning there is a coming time of torment.

Have you come to torment us early? My understanding of this, my reading of it is there is a time of judgment coming and they are saying, have you come to torment us before that judgment time? I think the judgment is probably an extinguishing of being. And are you going to give us a hard time before that time of judgment, the time of judgment? Have you come to pull the wings off of flies before you smash them, kind of a thing. I don't think that there is a scheduled time of torment.

And are you moving up the schedule and you're going to torment us early? They know that there is a fixed time and that it is not yet. They know the time of their judgment is not yet. And so they're asking him, are you coming here to torment us? A good way off from them, there was a herd of many swine feeding.

So the demons begged him saying, if you cast us out, permit us to go away. And there's a textual reading here, instead of permit us, the better manuscripts say, send us. It's

actually the verb apostello, apostle us, send us forth.

And it's the better reading in this case. King James has permit us, but it is send us. And send makes sense on a number of levels, both textually and thematically, because it is the authority of Jesus that is in view.

And instead of a passive permission, this is an active sending. And the demons recognize his authority in it. And if you are going to cast us out, if you're going to remove us, this is ekballo, cast us out.

If you're going to throw us out, send us not to the abyss, but into the swine. Well, this is fascinating on so many levels and we won't be able to finish it this morning, but think about this. The trip across the lake arrives directly in the vicinity of this man that Matthew's talking about, the two men that are mentioned.

And they have just seen Jesus exert authority over the wind and the waves, which there was a common belief that weather was controlled by angels slash demons. Here is this man who is demon possessed, but you see the, what have we to do with you, Jesus, you son of God. The demons keep on trying to mess up the timing of Jesus revelation of himself.

And to, this is why he's constantly having to tell them to be quiet. And even some of the people that he heals, he says, tell no one, just go do what you're supposed to do and let that be your witness. There is a time for revelation.

Sometimes we know things we've been long at the study of the word of God, but it's helpful to remember that we don't necessarily always tell everything we know to anybody who has an ear. There is a perspicacity. There is a sensitivity.

There is a sense of self-control. You see it with the centurion. You could imagine he built this synagogue.

He is excited about the word of God. He knows who Jesus is. He's the long awaited centuries ago prophesied Messiah who wouldn't want to go see him, who wouldn't find a reason to say, let me go talk to him.

Let him come under my roof. What a great thing that would be. But as was pointed out on the break, he is putting the Lord ahead of himself.

And he says, as great as it would be for me, what an honor to have the son of God come under my roof. Not only am I not going to have him come here, I am not going to go see him and create a spectacle. Here's a Roman centurion talking to Jesus.

It will throw everything off. He is thinking about the Lord Jesus. What if the disciples have been thinking about the Lord Jesus in the boat? Well, if the Lord needs his sleep that bad,

we'd better leave him be.

Save us, we are perishing. It's all about me and my concern instead of, I know who the Lord is. I know what he can do.

I will trust that he knows best. If he's asleep, he's sleeping for a good reason. Why should I be afraid? I'm with the Lord.

The centurion has this incredible faith. It's not just believing that Jesus can heal. It is understanding that Jesus has a presence and has a timetable and has a crowd around him and what his presence and what his house might do and he stays at a distance.

It's incredible sensitivity. It's incredible self-control. So the demons are begging Jesus saying, if you cast us out, permit us to go away into the herd of swine.

We've got a lot of questions here about why are there swine? Because this is still Israel. The region of Gerasa here is a Jewish district. It's not trans Jordan to the point that it's not Jewish.

Why do the demons want to go into the swine? They can't make an appeal to stay in the man. They know they're leaving. And this is one of those first-class conditions, if, and it's true, since you are going to cast us out, send us here.

And Jesus is going to agree. What is up with the demons? We know they don't want to go to the abyss. And we have a question.

Well, if they don't go to the abyss, do they have to be in a body? Do they, do they just require embodiment? Why are they so keen to go into the swine? And what is the whole thing about, can there be a demon possessed animal? I didn't know that. I knew people could be, could have a demon, have an unclean spirit, but evidently back then, at least on this occasion, there are demon possessed animals. Can there be demon possessed animals then, now? Well, these are fascinating questions that we'll look at in our upcoming study next week.

But think about the faith that would stay calm in a storm that scares professional fishermen. This is the faith the Lord expects. They are rebuked for their lack of faith and for their fear.

Jesus says, you shouldn't be afraid. Where's your faith? You don't need to ask me about this. Your faith is the answer.

And as we look at our circumstances, our opportunities, our challenges, it's always good to pray, pray without ceasing, rejoice evermore, but don't substitute. I think Jesus is illustrating for us here that we shouldn't substitute prayer for faith. We already have the answer.

We have the knowledge that we need. We have the presence of the Lord in our lives. And if that is true, that we are in the boat and he is in the boat, then we really do have nothing to fear.

And it is a matter of practicing our faith, not pestering the Lord. Think about that centurion. I'm not gonna get in the Lord's way.

I don't wanna cause him a problem. I will let him know the need. He can handle it from where he is.

And here's a centurion who doesn't even have the presence of the Lord and still trusts him. But that presence is coming. And I like to think that in the early days of the church, the centurion hopped the fence and he's a church age believer and he received the Holy Spirit and he got to learn from the apostles and the early doctrines of the church.

And what a privilege for him to, as a centurion, be the point of the spear of Gentile faith. But it's a lot to think about and we'll pick up our study here next time. We'll close in a word of prayer.

Father, thank you for the wonderful way your word speaks to us and your spirit can minister it to our hearts in a way that is effective and memorable and challenges us to increase our faith. We pray that as we reflect on these things, the word will bear fruit in our lives, bear the fruit of the spirit so that our love, our joy, and our peace increase along with our patience and our self-control. May we be worthy representatives of the Lord Jesus Christ on this earth as his body until that day that he returns and takes us to himself.

We pray it in Jesus' name, amen.