

Matthew 20-07-12a

Greetings, welcome to the Sunday morning services at Grace and Truth Bible Church. It is a joy, as always, to see your smiling faces and your attentive prosopon. That's the Greek word for face-to-face.

And all of you whose faces are on the other side of the technology there, greetings as well. It's a wonderful thing to be able to enjoy fellowship as we do at whatever distance. And we have a wonderful position from which to view the unfolding of human history, never so exciting.

We've come to kind of the climax of the movie here and the scenes are changing in rapid fashion. And it's a great time to be alive. It's a great time to be saved.

It is a great time to be held in the firm hands of God and be securely fixed in Christ and to know that our redemption draw is nigh. We are going to mention a little bit from our study on Thursday night that was centered in Mark chapter four. And then we're going to resume our study in the gospel of Matthew.

We've got to pick up a couple of details back in chapter 10 before we begin our excavation of chapter 12. So we'll be moving around a little bit. It's a good time to flex our spiritual muscles and riffle, turn the pages of our Bibles and see the wonderful divine truth that God has for us this morning.

Let's take a blessing on our fellowship and our study and we'll begin. Father, it is a wonderful blessing to wake up each morning and to know that we are related to you through the Lord Jesus Christ securely and eternally. You are aware of every detail of our life, every circumstance, every challenge, every opportunity, every potential.

And your Holy Spirit is with us to minister the truth of your word, to implement divine power as we draw our conclusions and formulate our courses of action and seek to live our lives in a way that is pleasing and is effectual and reflects those truths. We pray that as we look at these things in your word this morning, that the Holy Spirit will make them real, manifest, clear, and fruitful in our lives. That as we reflect on them in the hours and days ahead, they will be a source of application and of comfort, encouragement, stability, and that the fruit of the Spirit will be evident in us, manifest to others, so that they, especially those who may be seeking and looking for the wonderful status that we enjoy, will see our hope and ask us the reason for it.

We pray that you will bless our study, bless each one that is listening, and bless us all as we seek to represent the Lord Jesus Christ on this earth. We ask it in Jesus' name. Amen.

First of all, I want to, while it's fresh in our minds, I think most of us were here on Thursday night, if you'll turn over to Mark chapter 4, as I know you're surprised that I ran

myself out of time on Thursday night and didn't get to cover all of my points, but I will borrow from Peter to pay Paul, as it were, or borrow from Matthew to pay Mark, and I just wanted to point out a couple of additional things real quickly. The gist of that on Thursday night was we are in the midst of a wind storm. This is a necessary development in human history, in American culture, in world attitudes.

It's necessary. This needs to happen. It is all the same as Judas leaving the upper room and going to find the arrest party and bring them back to the garden of Gethsemane.

These things must come. Woe to him by whom they come, but they must come, and we should be ready. The Lord Jesus warned his disciples that he was going to be betrayed into the hands of men for weeks and months before it actually happened.

As it got nearer on that night, Peter says, John, ask the Lord who it is that's going to betray him, and the Lord Jesus told John, the guy that's got his hand in the dish with me is the one that's going to do it, and identified the culprit. Scripture identifies those who are going to bring about the conditions under which the world is going to believe the lie. We are people of the truth, and it is incomprehensible to me, as I'm sure it is to you, how people can swallow the narratives that are being pitched, the alternate realities that are being invented and presented as true, flying in the face of facts, flying in the face of reason, logic, cause and effect, experience, common sense.

It just seems like the inmates are now running the asylum in many ways. Now, they're not yet running the asylum, but they are trying to get elected to do so, and they're trying to push people out. They are using their cancel culture.

They're using their mob violence to character assassinate, to threaten. Because their ideas don't have enough weight to actually convince and persuade on their own, they have to push them forward by threats and intimidation. They have to shout down the opposition.

They have to threaten the opposition. If you say the wrong thing, it's not illegal to say it, but we'll contact your boss. We'll contact your sponsors.

We'll get you fired. We'll get you defunded. We will achieve by force what we can't achieve by reason and by our solution being the best.

We're just going to use violence to achieve it, and it's social violence. It is character assassination. It is vilification.

This is what the word Satan means. Remember what Satan means? The accuser. What does Scripture tell us about him? He stands before God night and day accusing us.

Well, if you find accusation culture taking the fore, who do you think they're representing? Who do you think is behind them? Whose minions do you think are

motivating them and possessing them and encouraging them and darkening their minds? The God of this world has blinded the minds of the faithless. Otherwise, the light of the glorious gospel of Christ, who is the image of God, would shine to them, but they have chosen no faith. They have chosen apisteia in Greek, faith less.

It says the minds of those that believe not, it's the faithless. They choose to not trust. They choose to not believe.

They choose to not, and it is cause and effect. I'm emphasizing this because it comes up in our Matthew passage this morning, where people think that there's sovereignty and predestination. There's not.

At least not the way they think. God has predestined that if you choose against him, if you reject him, if you reject his son, the Lord Jesus Christ, there are predestined consequences. That group of people is predestined for judgment in the same way that those who choose Christ, those who are in Christ, are predestined to glory.

But it is a category destination. It is a category ordination. Everyone who sends their application in by the end of August can be in the publisher's clearinghouse sweepstakes.

They have, instead of Ed McMahon now, they've got somebody else riding around in the car. But if you send in your application, you're in the drawing. Somebody is going to win \$7,000 a week for life or whatever it is.

But it's a category. All of those who apply are eligible. All of those who send in their money to Amazon can get something they order.

You have order fulfillment. You get free shipping. If you've got Amazon Prime, anybody that has Amazon Prime has certain benefits and blessings.

It's destined. It's policy. It is true for all in that category.

That's predestination. That's for ordination. If any man be in Christ, you can choose to be in Christ or you can choose to not be in Christ.

But if any man chooses to be in Christ, he's a new creation. Old things are passed away. All things have become new.

And in Christ, we are destined for wonderful things in glory. So that's important to distinguish. But in our Thursday night study, we saw this wind storm.

It is a storm of wind. There is not a drop of rain mentioned. It's wind.

Boats in the ancient world were propelled by wind. And for God's plan and program to move forward, things that might be scary to the onlookers and those caught up in it are going to happen. What happened on the night of the arrest when the Lord Jesus was

arrested and put through the three trials and ultimately crucified? Fearful times, right? These things must come.

What did Jesus say to His disciples about them on that night? You know John 14, one through six. Let not your hearts be troubled. You believe in God and you believe in me.

By the way, those two verbs are identical in their construction. It is not you believe in God. So try to also believe in me.

There are two declarative statements of fact. Let not your heart be troubled. You believe in God and you believe in me.

Facts. What is the basis for peace and the basis for not being afraid and not having your heart troubled in these very disturbing times? You believe in God, right? You believe in Christ, right? Your heart should not be troubled. Look to the future.

Look past the trouble. That's what he does in verse two. Let not your hearts be troubled.

You believe in God. You believe in me. In my father's area, in my father's house, in my father's heaven, there are many dwelling places.

I'm going there to prepare a place for you. Notice he doesn't say I'm about to be arrested and tried and it's going to be really scary. He says, look past the present tribulation to the future.

Look at what the goal is. I'm going there to prepare a place for you. The process is going to be ugly, but look at the end result.

The process for a lot of surgeries, the process for a lot of treatments, for medical things, you know, they don't let you watch. They won't let you have a copy of the video. If they made one, when they cut you open and are sticking bones back together and screwing in plates or removing chunks of flesh or whatever else they're doing, you don't get to watch.

It's a scary, ugly process. I have asked if I could watch several times and they always tell me no. I've asked, well, can you film it? Let me see it later.

No. Why? It's me. I'm paying for it.

Why can't I have a film? You pay for a wedding, you get a film. Why can't I have a film? No. And I don't understand that, but c'est la vie.

But Jesus is saying don't concentrate on the ugliness of the process. Concentrate on its goal. By the way, I've also asked if I could watch other people's operations and almost always they tell me no.

So when we got to Mark chapter four, it's similar. God has a deliverance. The Lord Jesus is going to score a huge tactical victory over the opposition in Mark chapter four.

He is going to leave a full day of teaching, go across the Sea of Galilee, and in the evening he's going to meet the man with the legion. And we get four verses describing his awful condition, smashing himself with rocks. They try to bind him and he shatters the shackles and he braids away the bonds that they put on him.

He shreds his clothing. He terrorizes everybody around him. Jesus crosses the sea, which is a long trip for this one man.

The people in the region are uninterested and they're going to ask Jesus to leave. You remember this swine going down into the sea and the rest of it? All of that takes place in the early evening of the same day that Jesus spent teaching the parable of the sower and the seed, parable of the mustard seed, parable of the light on the lampstand, parable of the seed that grows and the man knows not how, but he comes back and reaps a harvest. All of that was in the morning.

Now listen, we have been learning from the word of God for years, right? This is the equivalent of the teaching of the Lord Jesus, the sowing of the seed into our souls. This is the time for it to bear fruit. Jesus told his disciples on the night of the arrest, let not your hearts be troubled.

I go to prepare a place for you. Thomas says, we don't know where you're going. How do we know the way? Jesus says, I am the way, the truth, and the life.

You come to the father through me and no other way. Nobody gets to the father by any way other than Christ. So fix on that truth.

He did the same thing on the day of the storm and the deliverance of the legion of demons. He taught them all morning long. He took the disciples aside.

They asked him questions and he explained the parables. This is the word of God in your soul bearing fruit, 30 fold, 60 fold, a hundred fold. Don't let it fall on hard ground.

Don't let it be choked by weeds and the cares of this life. Don't let your seed be choked by concerns and worries in this life. They are thorns that will grow up and choke the word and render it unfruitful.

Don't have it only go into a shallow depth. And when the sun comes up, it makes it because it has not been implanted. You haven't thought about it.

You haven't reflected on it. You haven't prayed over it. You haven't tried to put it into practice in your life.

You haven't tried to turn it from gnosis knowledge to epinosis practical experiential

knowledge. It's shallow. You got it.

You understood it. It hit the soil, but it's planted too shallow. And any kind of a disturbance comes up, it dies and it's unfruitful.

The word is unfruitful. We certainly don't want the birds coming and carrying it off. We don't want it dying in the sun.

We don't want it to be deep enough to start to come up and try to bear fruit. And then it's choked by thorns and briars and the cares of this life. All you've got to do is look at your phone or turn on your TV and you can see cares in this life.

We've got serious concerns about our future, just routine things. Am I going to be able to live my life? Am I going to be able to go to church? Am I going to be able to express any kind of an opinion that differs from the mob without being mobbed? Those are cares. They're legitimate for every single one of us.

The question is, are you going to let that stuff grow in your field? Or are you going to weed the field, hoe your rows, get that stuff out of there and let the engrafted word, the implanted word bear its fruit? Jesus spent all day preparing his disciples for that storm. Put them in the boat. The wind comes.

It's raw energy. It is raw energy blowing that boat across the sea in record time so that all these things can happen on the same day. And it's a test.

You just heard about the importance of do not fear. Flip over to Matthew chapter 10 real quick. I just want to remind us of something we saw there.

When Jesus was sending out his disciples, remember he said in verse 19, when they deliver you up, do not worry. When you're delivered up, do not worry. Don't worry about how or what you should speak.

It will be given to you. It's the spirit of your father, verse 20, who speaks in you. Verse 22, you will be hated by all for my namesake, but he who endures, who bears up under, who continues, who perseveres, who isn't daunted, who isn't silenced, who isn't rendered ineffective.

Verse 26, this is Matthew chapter 10, therefore do not fear them. This is a command from the Lord Jesus. Do not be afraid.

Let not your hearts be troubled. Do not fear. There is nothing covered that will not be revealed and nothing hidden that will not be known.

This is the power of God that is going to perpetrate justice. I don't know if justice is going to continue in our society or not. There's a lot of injustice.

There's a lot of evil taking over and pushing goodness and righteousness and common sense out. And you can't bet on justice in this life. Was it just that the Lord Jesus was crucified? Was it just that early Christians were persecuted? No, it wasn't.

Who is just? Who has absolute power and who is going to right those wrongs and vindicate people who are doing what they're supposed to? It's God. Do not fear them. Nothing covered that won't be revealed.

Nothing hidden that will not be known. Verse 28, do not fear those who kill the body, but cannot kill the soul. Who do you fear? God.

He's got all the power. Verse 31, do not fear therefore. You are of more value than many sparrows.

Maybe not all sparrows, but you're of more value than many sparrows. Do not fear. If we find ourselves fearful, we've got to go back to our basics.

We know how to beat this. You believe in God. You believe in Christ.

Let not your heart be troubled. Think about the future. This is a process.

This is a necessary evil, if you will. The windstorm puts energy in Mark chapter 4. Flip back over there. I just like to hear the pages moving.

So God uses this wind, and sure, it's scary for sailors, and it whips up waves and puts energy into the sea to the point that there's water coming over the gunwales, and the disciples are bailing. Well, that's okay. You should take steps.

When water's coming over the bow, coming over the gunwales of your ship, yes, you need to bail. That's practical steps. Got water in the boat? Do some bailing, right? Nothing wrong with that, but it's not fearful bailing.

It's not panic bailing. It's practical. Hey, there's water in the boat.

Let's bail it out, right? Do not fear. So in Mark chapter 4, verse 37, a great windstorm arose, and the waves beat into the boat so that it was already filling. But Jesus is back on a cushion, raised up above the bilges there, asleep.

And notice the rain isn't waking him up, because apparently there is no rain. It's just windy. But this is the fastest these professional sailors have ever seen a wind-powered boat move.

They've got practically no sail, just enough to keep it on course, and they're flying, and they're just plowing into these waves. And it's understandable that they would be tempted to be afraid, but at the point that you've got this windstorm and these unusual, highly unusual conditions, just like you and I see today, what's the drill? What did we just

learn? We've been studying signs of the times since last November, before COVID, before protests, before things got burnt, before crazy people started taking over everything and shouting everybody else down and trying to get agendas made into law. Before all of that, we've been studying this stuff for six months and more.

Right? We've had our parables all day long. This is the time for application. Don't panic in the boat.

Jesus is in the boat. This boat cannot sink. Can't sink.

Remember Jesus walking on the water? As long as he's in the boat, the thing cannot sink. As long as Peter kept his eyes on Jesus, we'll see this later, he can't sink, even without a boat. Listen, if the boat sank, the disciples would all be walking on the water with Jesus to finish the trip.

They cannot be harmed by this storm, but they forgot that. You cannot be harmed by this storm. Don't fear those who can only kill your body.

They can only operate in the physical realm, and at worst they can try to take your life. They can't do it unless it's in the plan and purpose of God. And if it is, it's the best thing for us.

Maybe it would be good to check out and not have to see the degeneration of so many things. Don't fear it. Don't worry about it.

Right? Jesus is in the boat. Now, if Jesus is not in your boat, if you're in one of the other little ships, and this is what I didn't get a chance to cover on Thursday night. Remember, in verse 35, when Jesus says, let's cross over to the other side, the next verse says, when they had left the multitude, they took him along in the boat as he was, and other little boats were also with him.

A flotilla leaves the scene of the teaching. How many boats make it to the other side? Only the one with Jesus in it. The other little boats turn back.

The other little boats panic and miss out because what's going to happen on the other side? One of the greatest miracles in the new Testament, one of the greatest, most powerful things Jesus does. The disciples are wowed. They say, wow, even the wind and sea obey him.

How about over a thousand demons obeying him? How about a legion of demons obeying him? What do you think is more powerful? Weather or unseen forces of darkness, principalities, powers, and rulers of the darkness of this age. Jesus is going to command them, is going to dominate them, and is going to judge them right at that time. He's going to move them out of the area, and the disciples in that boat get to see it.

Now, the windstorm right now, by way of analogy, is moving history forward, and the Lord Jesus is going to appear, and he is going to judge the demonic forces that put together the Tribulation Antichrist program. The beast, the false prophet, Satan himself, is all coming, just like the arresting party, and the Sanhedrin, and the evil chief priests and scribes trying to get Jesus off the scene. And in their efforts, they are actually accomplishing the plan and purpose of God.

And without it, we wouldn't have our salvation. These things must come. Woe to him by whom they come.

You look at the bad end for Judas. You look at these that crucified the Lord. What's their fate going to be in the eternal future? But vengeance is mine.

I will repay, saith the Lord. Don't worry about that. Let not your hearts be troubled.

So, when the windstorm arises, and in verse 38, the disciples say, Teacher, do you not care that we are perishing? Many people today, our American heritage, our values, our Christian influence, and presence, and culture, and ability to worship, and teach the Bible as it stands, whatever it says in the face of whatever cultures think that they're being persecuted by it. Do you not care that we are perishing? Well, if they were perishing, of course Jesus would care. Jesus cared enough to give his life for the actual perishing, right? Greater love hath no man than this, that a man lay down his life for his friends.

But what's the problem with this question? It's a faulty premise, right? I've tried to teach my girls from the time they were little, when somebody starts taking him down a road, start by evaluating the premise on which they are basing their challenge to the Bible, their challenge to your faith, their challenge to whatever. What is the premise here? Teacher, do you not care what? That we are perishing. And so the issue is, you're heartless, you're uncaring, you're unconcerned, you don't really care about us.

But what is the faulty premise? They are not perishing. They can't perish. Faulty premise, all your subsequent arguments and conclusions are going to be off kilter, out of plum, out of round, wrong dimension, square peg, round hole, right? So Jesus doesn't bother to straighten out their logic.

What does he do? He says, well, you have failed this test and we're nearly to the other side anyway, so peace be still. And at the point that the propulsion is no longer needed, Jesus stands up and says, peace be still. The wind ceased and there was a great calm.

And this is the amazing part. As I mentioned on Thursday, the energy of wind into water lasts for hours, if not days, and all of that energy is removed. The power, the ability for the chaotic sea to rock the boat is instantly removed because it only has that power by God's permission and at God's behest and for God's purposes.

God has allowed evil a measure of sway to make his point, to accomplish his purpose. All things work together for good. Evil works together for good.

These things have to come. People have to be conditioned that are faithless. The God of this world has to blind their minds and we have to watch it.

Do not be surprised. Remember, do not be surprised at the fiery ordeal that you face. Why are you surprised? These things must come.

You are grounded on a granite foundation of the Lord Jesus Christ. Your house is built on the rock. It does not matter what storms come, wind, rain, or otherwise.

Be it against your house, when it is founded on the rock, that house stands. That is a promise from God. Your house is going to stand.

Just be sure you have built on the rock. Be sure Jesus is in your boat and you are in his boat. Nothing to fear.

Hang on and enjoy the ride. Look at verse 40. Do not let this be the question that gets asked to us at the judgment seat of Christ.

Why are you so fearful? How is it that you have no faith? Where is your faith? You just had a day of teaching about the power of the word in your soul, the ability for it to produce fruit. Why are you fearful? Where is your faith? You cannot have faith unless there is a test. When everything is rosy, what is the reason for faith? Faith comes into operation when there is a challenge, when there is a windstorm, when there is water coming into the boat.

That is when we decide. What are we going to do? What is our plan? Why are you so fearful? How is it you have no faith? Now look at verse 41. Do not let this be me.

I feel like writing my name right out beside that verse in the margin and say, please not Sam. And they feared exceedingly. He says, why are you afraid? Where is your faith? Well, now they are even more afraid.

Who can this be that even the wind and sea obey him? What is John 14? One, let not your heart be troubled. You believe in God and you believe in me. Why are they fearful here? They are saying, who can this be? They do not have a grounded confidence and deep faith in who Jesus is yet.

They will, but remember in these days, the Holy Spirit is not yet given and so on. But do not let this be Sam. Do not let this be, fill in your name here.

Fear exceedingly, not understanding who the Lord is. If your heart is not going to be troubled, remember God, remember Christ. You believe in them.

If you believe in them, you believe in their promises. You believe in what the Word of God says. There is nothing to fear.

God has not given us a spirit of fear, but of power, love, and a sound mind. So since we've decided that fear is not an option for us, we're going to be people of faith. How should we then live in these troublesome times? Well, we're going to pause here and take our break.

When we come back, we're going to return to our study in the gospel of Matthew. And we're going to find, as always, our passage is right on the mark. The things that we're studying right now are exactly what we need in these days.

So let's pause here and take our break. We'll enjoy some wonderful special music and we'll return to the Word of God in the vicinity of Matthew chapter 12 with a look back at chapter 10.