

The Gospel According to Luke

“Foiling Four Fear Factors”

Part One

Chapter 8:22-39

Introduction

The four episodes in the remaining verses of Chapter Eight would have made a great first century reality television series. It would have been called ***Faith Factor***. The cameras would follow twelve men and their mentor as their faith was challenged in dramatic confrontations with the four circumstances of life that instill the most fear:

1. On the boat, the disciples were confronted with the fear of **storms**. The storm on the sea metaphorically represented any and all of the storms of life.
2. On the shore, the disciples were confronted with the fear of **Satan**. The demoniac of Gadera represented the worst case of Satanic possession and oppression imaginable.

As we press on in Chapter Eight (next week) we'll encounter the two additional circumstances of life that instill the most fear: **Suffering**, and **separation of the soul from the body at death**.

Two of the episodes involve *physical* danger, and two involve *spiritual* danger. These four pretty well sum up all the circumstances you might fear in this life and in the next.

The disciples were not playing for a million-dollar prize; no one got voted off, or fired (although one of them would quit and commit suicide before it was over). They were being prepared, day-by-day, to walk by faith and to overcome their fears.

The episodes in your life can get pretty dramatic! They will fall into one of these four categories: Storms, Satan, suffering, and separation at death. In them and through them you are being prepared, day-by-day, to walk by faith and to overcome your fears.

We'll organize our thoughts around two points: #1 Faith In Jesus Foils Your Fear Of Storms, and #2 Faith In Jesus Foils Your Fear Of Satan.

#1 Faith In Jesus Foils Your Fear Of Storms (v22-25)

A friend of mine was taking sailing lessons. One time, while I was visiting him in San Clemente, a storm blew in. He grabbed his gear and headed for the marina at Dana Point. He and all the others in his class were waiting for a storm so that they could have a lesson from their instructor in rough weather sailing.

Jesus gave His disciples the ultimate, rough weather sailing lesson as they crossed the Sea of Galilee.

Luke 8:22 Now it happened, on a certain day, that He got into a boat with His disciples. And He said to them, "Let us cross over to the other side of the lake." And they launched out.

Luke 8:23 But as they sailed He fell asleep. And a windstorm came down on the lake, and they were filling *with water*, and were in jeopardy.

It was five miles across the Sea of Galilee. Because of its location, it was and is subject to treacherous winds and waves.

Jesus was exhausted – so exhausted that the storm itself did not wake Him. He was physically exhausted from ministering to others.

There was a spiritual purpose to His sleeping; God would use it to test the disciples.

Luke 8:24 And they came to Him and awoke Him, saying, "Master, Master, we are perishing!" Then He arose and rebuked the wind and the raging of the water. And they ceased, and there was a calm.

At least four of these men were experienced fishermen. They ate storms for breakfast! Not this time; not this storm. Fearing for their lives, they woke Jesus. He rebuked the storm and there was an immediate calm. The sea was like glass; there was no wind at all, no residual waves. It would have seemed surreal.

Jesus took the opportunity to teach His disciples about rough weather sailing:

Luke 8:25 But He said to them, “Where is your faith?” And they were afraid, and marveled, saying to one another, “Who can this be? For He commands even the winds and water, and they obey Him!”

Seems a little harsh at first, doesn't it? You have to look back a few verses and remember what Jesus said when they started this sailing trip. He said, “Let us cross over to the other side of the lake.” He didn't say, “Let us cross under”! There was a certainty they would arrive at their destination – storm or no storm along the way. Knowing they were going over, and not under - coupled with the example of Jesus asleep - should have overcome their fear.

We speak metaphorically about ‘the storms of life.’ Episode One of *Faith Factor* is a picture of how you should act in life's storms. You may as well sleep, and be at peace, since God is always in control. You, too, will arrive at your destination. You will be conformed more-and-more into the image of Jesus; you will become like the Lord; you will awake in righteousness, in heaven.

Jesus asked, “Where is your faith?” When the disciples ask, “Who can this be? For He commands even the winds and water, and they obey Him!,” they are giving you insight on how to discover greater faith. Your faith is in Jesus as He is revealed in God's Word. You see, the Bible contains many verses that declare only God can command the wind and the waves. Jesus must be God; and, since He is God and the Creator of all things, you can stand by faith on His promises, overcome your fear, and find peace in the eye of your storms.

When the storms of life hit you, think back on Jesus' promises to you. In fact, search out some promise from God's Word to bring peace in the midst of the storm. Jesus is with you in the storm. If He seems asleep, then maybe you should sleep, too!

#2 Faith In Jesus Foils Your Fear Of Satan (v26-39)

C.S. Lewis said this about Satan:

“There are two equal and opposite errors into which our race can fall about the devils. One is to disbelieve in their existence. The other is to believe, and to feel an excessive and unhealthy interest in them.”

The Bible tells you that there is a personal devil, named Satan, loose on the earth today. He, along with a host of fallen angels we call demons, take unbelievers **captive...to do his will.**¹ The devil and his demons have a host of strategies by which they hold unbelievers captive. You don't have to be demon possessed to be the devil's prisoner.

Demon possession is a dramatic expression of Satan's enslavement, so Luke gives you the ultimate example of demon possession.

Luke 8:26 Then they sailed to the country of the Gadarenes, which is opposite Galilee.

Luke 8:27 And when He stepped out on the land, there met Him a certain man from the city who had demons for a long time. And he wore no clothes, nor did he live in a house but in the tombs.

Luke 8:28 When he saw Jesus, he cried out, 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!”

Luke 8:29 For He had commanded the unclean spirit to come out of the man. For it had often seized him, and he was kept under guard, bound with chains and shackles; and he broke the bonds and was driven by the demon into the wilderness.

These details are real; I don't want to take anything away from their horror. But the truth is, you don't encounter too many unbelievers like this in Kings County. The unbelievers you encounter are no less enslaved, however. Like this demoniac, they are prisoners of the devil's *perversions*, of the devil's *priorities*, and of the devil's *power*.

They are prisoners of the devil's *perversions*. The demoniac had **an unclean spirit**. **Unclean** means *lewd* or *morally filthy*. That's a good

¹2 Timothy 2:26

way to describe the perversions that occur all around you, promoted by otherwise "normal" unbelievers.

They are prisoners of the devil's *priorities*. Not too many unbelievers are living in [the tombs](#). But you'd never know it by their priorities. They are living as if this life were all that mattered; they are ignoring eternity. If this life is your priority, [let us eat and drink, for tomorrow we die](#).² Unbelievers might as well live in the graveyard since that is as far as their priorities will take them.

They are prisoners of the devil's *power*. The demoniac had supernatural strength to break chains, but the demons within him turned their strength to his destruction. The devil lures many unbelievers with the promise of some power in this life. Often those who achieve power find their lives being destroyed along the way.

Jesus [had commanded the unclean spirit to come out of the man](#). There was a delay in responding. It wasn't that Jesus lacked the authority; it was that this episode was going to teach a larger lesson than a simple exorcism.

[Luke 8:30](#) Jesus asked him, saying, "[What is your name?](#)" And he said, "[Legion,](#)" because many demons had entered him.

This was for the benefit of the disciples. One demon had been doing all the talking, but there were a [legion](#) of them encamped within the man. A Roman legion was six-thousand men; the word here probably just means *a lot*. (We know there were enough to affect an entire herd of swine). This was a freaky, scary encounter with Satan – something the disciples had never experienced. It was Jesus versus all the destructive power of Satan and his demons.

Now that they had the proper perspective, Jesus continued:

[Luke 8:31](#) And they begged Him that He would not command them to go out into the abyss.

The [abyss](#) is also called the [abusso](#) or the bottomless pit in the Bible. It's a place where especially evil demons are incarcerated – sort of

²1 Corinthians 15:32

the Pelican Bay of Hades! In the Revelation of Jesus Christ, demons from the **bottomless pit** are released on the earth to torment unbelievers (Revelation 9).

Luke 8:32 Now a herd of many swine was feeding there on the mountain. So they begged Him that He would permit them to enter them. And He permitted them.

Luke 8:33 Then the demons went out of the man and entered the swine, and the herd ran violently down the steep place into the lake and drowned.

No one knows why the demons wanted to go into the pigs. The text doesn't say, and anything anyone says is pure speculation. The encounter isn't giving you tips on how to perform exorcisms; it isn't exploring the psychology of demons. Remember what C.S. Lewis urged – that you not “feel an excessive and unhealthy interest” in Satan and demons.

Jesus must have known the effect they would have on the herd of swine. He allowed them to enter the herd to reveal something important: Demon possession is not the only way that Satan enslaves unbelievers. You learn that from the response of the local citizens:

Luke 8:34 When those who fed *them* saw what had happened, they fled and told *it* in the city and in the country.

Luke 8:35 Then they went out to see what had happened, and came to Jesus, and found the man from whom the demons had departed, sitting at the feet of Jesus, clothed and in his right mind. And they were afraid.

Luke 8:36 They also who had seen *it* told them by what means he who had been demon-possessed was healed.

Luke 8:37 Then the whole multitude of the surrounding region of the Gadarenes asked Him to depart from them, for they were seized with great fear. And He got into the boat and returned.

It is generally agreed by Bible teachers that these men were Jews who were raising pigs in Gentile territory despite the prohibitions against pork in the Jewish dietary laws. At any rate, the loss of the herd was a substantial financial setback for them. The *physical cost* of having Jesus around was more important to them than the *spiritual cures* He offered. **They would rather the man remained possessed as long as they had their possessions!** Their own desire for possessions held them captive as much, or more, than the demons had held the demoniac.

Jesus respected their wishes for Him to leave. The Lord must be welcomed, He must be invited. He won't force Himself on you.

Luke 8:38 Now the man from whom the demons had departed begged Him that he might be with Him. But Jesus sent him away, saying,
Luke 8:39 “Return to your own house, and tell what great things God has done for you.” And he went his way and proclaimed throughout the whole city what great things Jesus had done for him.

The former demoniac was ready to go anywhere with Jesus. Jesus sent him home - to family, friends, and neighbors. Jesus first sends **you** home. Don't ever minimize the importance of living-out the Christian life in front of your family and friends. You are God's missionary right where you live... There, where you work... Anywhere you play... It is in the daily, almost mundane, grind of living that you can make a difference.

I want to suggest to you that your conversion to Jesus was every bit as miraculous as that of this demoniac. The number of demons, and the degree of depravity, are only to show that no amount of Satanic opposition can stand against the Lord. You have just as much reason to proclaim throughout the whole city what great things Jesus has done for you.

Conclusion

Episodes one and two of *Faith Factor* were pretty dramatic... But so will be episodes three and four, as we continue in Chapter Eight:

1. We'll see a case of chronic, incurable suffering.
2. We'll see death, and death at its worst – the death of a child.

Storms, Satan, suffering, and the separation of the soul from the body at death are what strike fear into human hearts.

Jesus still asks, “Where is your faith?” It's an important question, both for Christians and not-Christians:

1. If you are a Christian, “Where is your faith?” is not a *rebuke* so much as it is a *reminder*. God has saved you and promised never

to leave you or forsake you. He's on the boat with you in every storm; and greater is He that is in you than the devil and his demons in the world. You need have no fear of either storms or Satan.

2. If you are not a Christian, **"Where is your faith?"** Storms are either brewing or blowing in your life... Satan is active, and he's coming with even greater power and evil in the near future. We touched on the release of the demons from the **bottomless pit**. It happens during the Great Tribulation. You'll be there if you don't give your life to Jesus before it breaks-out. Whatever you are trusting in, it is not going to be enough to get you through life and give you eternal life.