

VACATION BIBLE SCHOOL

June 23 – 27, 2008

Sail Away With A Bible Adventure!

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Sail Away With A Bible Adventure!

Lesson One: Jesus Calms The Storm

Text: Mark 4:35-41

Primary Lesson: “Anywhere with Jesus I can safely go.”

1. In the adventure of life, we can trust in God to see us safely to our destination.
2. Though we may face difficulties on the way, He will never leave us.
3. Ultimately, He will welcome us home to Heaven.

Secondary Lesson: *The Importance of Hearing the Gospel*

1. The wind and the sea heard and obeyed the voice of Jesus.
2. We must be willing to hear and obey the Word of God.

Supplementary Lessons:

1. For younger classes – *Creation*
2. The miracles of Jesus prove that He is the Son of God.

Introduction:

1. Many events we read about in the Bible were certainly adventurous for those who lived through them.
2. From those stories, we are reminded that in our lives there will also be times of adventure.
3. While some adventures are exciting and fun, others may be frightening and overwhelming.
4. In fact, they may not seem like adventures at all while we are going through them.
5. However, the Bible teaches that no matter what we face in life, Jesus will be with us.
6. He is a source of protection, strength, and comfort.
7. His disciples learned this lesson on a very adventurous night while sailing with Jesus...

I. The Stormy Sea

- A. As Jesus and His disciples traveled by ship, there arose a great storm on the sea.
 1. Matthew 8:24 says that this was a great tempest.
 2. Literally, it was a *mega seismos* – the word used for a great earthquake.
 3. Instead, this was a sea-quake!
- B. This storm was both powerful and very dangerous.
 1. Mark says that the waves beat into the ship.
 2. Matthew says that the waves covered the ship (8:24).
 3. Luke says that the ship was filled with water and they were in jeopardy – meaning great peril or danger (8:23).
- C. There is a very important lesson to learn here: *Even those who follow Jesus will have to face storms and even danger in their lives!*

1. Christians will get sick.
 2. They are not immune from accidents or mistakes.
 3. We all live in a world of tornadoes, hurricanes, wildfires, etc.
- D. However, those who follow Jesus have a refuge in the time of storms.

II. The Sleeping Savior

- A. In the midst of this terrible and dangerous storm, Jesus was sleeping.
1. Jesus was not afraid.
 2. Jesus did not worry.
 3. His complete trust was placed in God!
- B. The disciples assumed that His sleeping meant that He did not care if they lived or died!
1. They asked Him, “Do you not care that we are perishing?” (ESV).
 2. Luke says that they cried, “Master, master, we perish!” (8:24).
 3. Matthew says they begged, “Lord, save us: we perish!” (8:25).
- C. However, Jesus did care about what was happening to His disciples.
1. He cares about what happens in our lives, too.
 2. He cares when we are sick and suffering.
 3. He cares when we are sad over the loss of a loved one.
 4. He cares when we are afraid, anxious or in danger.
- D. If Jesus cared, then why was He sleeping?
1. He was testing the faith of His disciples.
 - a. Would they let fear and doubt cause them to abandon Him?
 - b. Would they turn to Jesus for salvation, or seek it somewhere else?
 2. He was setting an example for them (and us) to follow.
 - a. He was teaching us to have peace in times of struggle.
 - b. That peace comes from being right with God (Phil. 4:6-7).
 - c. Peter learned this lesson well (Acts 12:6-7)!
 3. He was proving His power over the forces of nature.

III. The Spoken Stillness

- A. Jesus proved that He cared for His disciples by arising and acting.
1. If we want to prove our love for the Lord, we must arise and act.
 2. We cannot spend our time in spiritual sleep and be pleasing to God!
- B. Jesus rebuked or commanded the storm to cease.
- C. All He had to do was to speak the words, “Peace, be still.”
- D. Where before there had been a great (*mega*) storm, now there was a great (*mega*) calm or tranquility.
- E. There is great power in the word of God!
1. By His Word, God spoke the universe into existence (Genesis 1).
 2. By His Word, Jesus calmed the stormy sea.
 3. By His Word, God can save man from his sins (Romans 1:16)!
- F. It is absolutely essential for man to hear the Word of God.
1. There can be no faith without hearing (Romans 10:14, 17).
 2. There can be no salvation without hearing the Gospel (Romans 1:16).
 3. There can be no persuasion without hearing (Luke 16:29-31).

- G. If we desire peace in times of trial – if we want God to calm the storms in our lives – we must hear His Word.

IV. The Sad Sentence

- A. When Jesus saw the fear of His disciples, He pronounced upon them a sad sentence or judgment.
- B. He asked, “How is it that ye have no faith?”
 - 1. The idea of this question is, “Do you still have no faith?”
 - 2. Luke says that He asked them, “Where is your faith?” (8:25).
 - 3. Matthew says that He called them, “Ye of little faith” (8:26).
- C. By this time, the disciples should have had faith in Jesus.
 - 1. They had heard many of His teachings.
 - 2. They had seen many of His miracles.
 - 3. They had enough faith to forsake all and follow Him, why did they doubt when a storm arose on the sea?
- D. Like the disciples, we must continually grow in faith.
 - 1. When we stand before God, we do not want to be called one who has little or no faith.
 - 2. Instead, we want to hear the words, “Well done, good and faithful (*full of faith*) servant” (Matthew 25:21).

V. The Shocking Surprise

- A. The disciples were shocked and surprised at the power Jesus had over the storm and other works of nature.
- B. They were stunned at the power of His Word.
- C. They asked, “What manner of man is this?”
- D. We, too, must consider this question – just who is Jesus?
 - 1. He is God in human flesh (John 1:1-14).
 - 2. He is the Christ, the Messiah, the Anointed of God (Matthew 16:16).
 - 3. He is the Savior of the world (John 3:16).
- E. Is He your Savior?

Conclusion:

- 1. What an adventure the disciples of Jesus had!
- 2. Without Jesus, they surely would have perished.
- 3. But with Him, they were saved and taught the power of God’s Word.
- 4. May we learn from them always to listen to and trust in the words of Jesus.

Sail Away With A Bible Adventure!

Lesson Two: Peter Walks On The Water

Text: Matthew 14:22-33

Primary Lesson: "Get out of the boat!"

1. In the adventure of life, we must be willing to follow wherever Jesus leads.
2. Often, this means walking by faith – with complete trust – in God, even when things may appear dangerous or frightening.
3. In order to follow Jesus, we must get out of the boat!

Secondary Lesson: *The Importance of Believing the Gospel*

1. Peter believed – with complete trust – in the words of Jesus.
2. It was only when he began to doubt (or, lose faith) that he began to sink.
3. We must also believe completely the Gospel of Christ.

Supplementary Lessons:

1. For younger classes – *The Bible*
2. The miracles of Jesus prove that He is the Son of God.

Introduction:

1. For the disciples of Jesus, every day must have been an adventure.
2. On this day, the disciples had learned of the death of John the Baptist, had seen the sick healed, and had witnessed the feeding of over 5,000 people fed with only five loaves and two small fish!
3. Following these miracles, the multitude wanted to make Jesus their king – the ruler of their nation (John 6:14-15).
 - a. However, this was not Jesus' mission – to be king of a physical kingdom.
 - b. Instead, He came to shed His blood to purchase His church – His spiritual kingdom, over which He is King (Acts 20:28; Col. 1:13; Hebrews 12:23, 28).
4. In order to dissuade the crowd from this idea, Jesus sent His apostles across the sea in a ship while He went into a mountain to pray.
5. But, the adventure was not over for the disciples of Jesus...

I. Jesus Gives His Followers Peace

- A. By the time their ship had reached the middle of the Sea of Galilee, the disciples found themselves troubled by great wind and waves.
- B. To add to their fears, sometime after three o'clock in the morning they saw Jesus walking on the water!
 1. The Romans divided the night into four watches – from 6-9 p.m., 9 p.m.-12 a.m., midnight-3 a.m., and 3-6 a.m.

2. This tells us that the disciples had been struggling for almost the entire night to get across the sea, and they were still in the middle!
 3. The Sea of Galilee is six miles across; thus, they had traveled about three miles.
- C. Obviously, this was an astounding miracle to witness!
1. It proved that Jesus had power over the laws of nature – even gravity!
 2. As we studied in our last lesson, Jesus has the power to calm a stormy sea.
 3. Here we learn that even in the midst of a stormy sea, Jesus is still in control and even able to walk upon it without any fear of harm!
 4. Truly, He is the Son of God (cf. Job 9:8).
- D. Because it is impossible for a man to walk on water (without God), the disciples assumed that they were seeing a ghost.
1. The Bible says that they were troubled – actually, terrified.
 2. In Jesus' day, there were many superstitions about ghosts and spirits.
 3. Some thought that demons could take the forms of humans and been seen in the night.
 4. Others thought that people who had died could reappear as spirits.
 5. Sailors claimed that seeing a ghost was a bad omen and meant great trouble for the ship and those in it.
- E. But, Jesus speaks and removes all superstitions and fears.
1. He said, "It is I."
 - a. Literally, Jesus says, "I am."
 - b. It was not a ghost or a demon.
 - c. It was not an omen of impending disaster for the ship.
 - d. Instead, it is the Son of God who has power over the winds and waves!
 - e. It is the great "I AM"!
 2. He said, "Be of good cheer."
 - a. This phrase is found in Matthew 9:2, 22; Mark 6:50; 10:49; Luke 8:48; John 16:33; and Acts 23:11 (cheer = comfort).
 - b. It means, "to take heart," or "to be of good courage."
 - c. Jesus does not want His followers to be overwhelmed by doubt and despair.
 3. He said, "Be not afraid."
 - a. Do not be afraid because you think you've seen a ghost.
 - b. Do not be afraid of the wind and the waves.
 - c. Do not be afraid of the dark of night.
 - d. When Jesus is near there is nothing to fear!
- F. His words brought peace to the troubled minds of His disciples.
1. When the disciples cried out, Jesus answered immediately.
 2. Later, when Peter cried out, Jesus responded immediately.
 3. When we turn to the Lord for help, He will answer immediately.

II. Jesus Gives His Followers Purpose

- A. When Peter understood that Jesus was present, he was moved to great boldness.
1. Peter said, "Bid me come unto thee on the water."

2. Peter expressed his love for and desire to be with Jesus.
 3. He also expressed great courage in his willingness to walk over the troubled sea to be with Jesus.
 4. Finally, he expressed great faith and trust in Jesus by waiting for and then obeying His word.
- B. However, there was also doubt in the heart of Peter.
1. He said, “Lord, if it be thou.”
 2. Peter wanted to be sure that it was really Jesus.
 - a. We should have the same attitude that Peter displays.
 - b. We must demand evidence upon which our faith can be built.
 - c. However, Peter already had the evidence before him – Jesus was walking on the water!
 - d. When the evidence is provided, we must take Jesus at His word.
 3. The word “if” can also mean “since” – likely Peter was saying that since it was Jesus, he wanted to walk on the water to him.
- C. Jesus’ answer provided Peter with a work to do, a task to accomplish and a purpose for his life.
1. Jesus simply stated, “Come.”
 - a. This word is both an answer to Peter’s request and a command.
 - b. It was further evidence that Jesus was present in actuality.
 2. Peter was now obligated to obey as a demonstration of his faith.
 3. When God gives us a work to do, **we must obey!**
- D. Peter got out of the boat and walked on the water!
1. In order for Peter to obey the Lord, he had to get out of the boat.
 - a. In the midst of the waves, the boat seemed to be the only place of safety.
 - b. What courage it must have taken for Peter to step out of the boat!
 - c. In order for us to obey the Lord, we often must leave our manmade places of safety and comfort.
 - i. We must leave our house and go into our neighbor’s.
 - ii. We must leave our solitude and tell others about Jesus.
 - iii. We must leave our homelands to evangelize the world.
 2. When Peter got out of the boat, Jesus enabled him to walk on water!
 - a. This is not something that Peter could normally do or do under his own power (cf. John 21:7).
 - b. Only two people in history have ever walked on water – Jesus and Peter.
 - c. Peter is often criticized for his doubts and for putting his foot in his mouth, but he is the only apostle who had enough faith to get out of the boat.
 - d. God will not enable us to do miracles today, but He will enable us to do the work that He commands us to do.
 - i. We can evangelize the whole world.
 - ii. We can help the sick and afflicted.
 - iii. We can strengthen, edify, and build up the church.

- e. Will we have enough faith to do as Peter did – to come when Jesus says, “Come,” and to go when Jesus says, “Go”?
- 3. Notice that Peter walked on the water “to go to Jesus.”
 - a. He had a purpose in his actions.
 - b. He was not trying to have a good time or impress the other apostles
 - c. He was trying to get to Jesus!
 - d. We should never let anything hinder us from being where Jesus is and in a saving relationship with Him.
 - i. Some people are afraid of the water and, therefore, do not want to be baptized.
 - ii. We should learn from Peter never to let our fears or doubts keep us from obeying the commands of Jesus.
 - iii. He will care for us if we are striving to serve Him.
- E. However, he was soon overtaken by fear.
 - 1. In spite of his initial courage and boldness, Peter soon lost his focus.
 - 2. Instead of keeping his eyes and his faith fixed on Jesus, Peter began to look around at the waves that seemed so dangerous.
 - a. Peter saw that the wind was blowing with great strength against him.
 - b. The longer he focused upon the storm, the greater his fear became.
 - c. Too often, we allow ourselves to focus solely upon the troubles and storms of life.
 - i. How much good news do we hear on the nightly news programs?
 - ii. How often do we pause in life to count our blessings?
 - iii. When we talk about other people, how much do we say about the good qualities versus their bad ones?
 - iv. When we talk about the church, do we focus on the negative or the positive?
 - d. If we are not careful, we can find ourselves in the same situation as Peter – fearful, doubting and beginning to sink.
 - 3. Peter began to imagine that the power of the storm was greater than the power of the Savior.
 - a. Had he forgotten that Jesus had the power to calm a stormy sea?
 - b. Had he forgotten that Jesus is the Son of God?
 - c. Peter let his fear and doubt undermine his knowledge about and faith in Jesus.
 - 4. Peter neglected his purpose – to get to Jesus – and, instead, became focused on himself and the world.
 - a. Too often, we allow selfish desires to keep us from serving God.
 - b. Too often, we allow the cares of the world and the lusts of the flesh – sin – to keep us from obeying Jesus.
 - c. We forget that our purpose is to serve, not to be served.
- F. Still, he remembered his dependence upon Jesus and cried out to the only one who could save him.

1. When we lose our way and begin to sink in the trials of life, may we never forget to turn back to Jesus.
2. He is always willing and able to forgive and to save.

III. Jesus Gives His Followers Protection

- A. When Peter cried out, "Lord, save me," Jesus responded immediately.
 1. When it came to salvation, Peter knew that he must turn to the Lord.
 2. Even today, Jesus is the only one who can save us from sin.
 3. A person who is not a Christian must trust Jesus enough to obey what He commands.
 - a. We must hear and learn about Jesus (Romans 10:17).
 - b. We must have faith (believe) in Jesus (John 8:24).
 - i. True faith is belief, trust, and obedience (Hebrews 11:6).
 - ii. A faith that does not obey cannot save (James 2:20-24).
 - c. We must repent of our sins (Luke 13:3; Acts 17:30).
 - d. We must confess our faith in Jesus (Romans 10:9-10; Acts 8:37).
 - e. We must be baptized for the forgiveness of sins (Acts 2:38).
 4. A person who has become a Christian but has begun to sink in a world of sin must do as Peter did and return to the Lord.
 - a. We must repent of our sins (Acts 8:22).
 - b. We must confess our sins (1 John 1:9).
 - c. We must ask (pray) for forgiveness (James 5:16).
- B. Jesus had been already protecting Peter from the storm.
 1. When we obey the Lord, He will also protect us in the trials of life.
 2. Though we may suffer outwardly, we are protected inwardly (2 Corinthians 4:8-18).
- C. He protected Peter by allowing him to walk on the water.
 1. When we obey the Lord, He will be there with us throughout the journey.
 2. He will never abandon us (Matthew 28:20; Acts 18:9-10; Hebrews 13:5-6)
- D. He provided protection for Peter by pulling him back to safety.
 1. Jesus saved Peter from physical death by drowning.
 2. He can save us from spiritual death by drowning in and being overcome with sin.
- E. Jesus also protected Peter by telling him the reason why he had gotten into trouble in the first place.
 1. It is an act of love and protection to tell someone when he or she has done wrong.
 2. Jesus was not being mean to Peter when he called him one of "little faith."
 - i. A lack of faith was dangerous for Peter.
 - ii. He needed to be told his mistake so he could learn from it and do better the next time.
 - iii. He needed to put his complete trust back in the Lord.
 3. Nor was He being cruel when He asked, "Why did you doubt?"
 - i. When we make a mistake or get in trouble, our parents often ask, "Why did you do that?"

- ii. They are not trying to be mean; rather, they are trying to help us learn why what we did was wrong.
 - iii. If we can correct our understanding, thinking and attitude then we can more easily avoid making the same mistake again.
- F. The final protection Jesus provided was His miraculous calming of the storm.
- 1. Once again, Jesus proved His power over the works of nature.
 - 2. Once again, Jesus proved His love and care for His disciples.
 - 3. The storm had been a test of their faith, but, when the test was over, Jesus brought calmness and peace to their lives.

Conclusion:

- 1. The disciples learned that Jesus provides His followers with peace, purpose, and protection.
- 2. They also learned that Jesus possesses great power – even over the laws of nature.
- 3. Upon realizing these things, the disciples understood that Jesus is – of a truth – the Son of God.
- 4. They also understood that He deserves to be worshipped and obeyed with complete devotion.
- 5. We must learn these same lessons if we want to be faithful followers of Christ.

Summary:

- 1. Have you trusted the Lord enough to obey Him?
- 2. Do you trust that He can and will give you peace?
- 3. Do you believe that He provides the purpose for you life?
- 4. Do you know that He will protect you and see you safely to Heaven?
- 5. Do you have “little faith” or “great faith?”

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Lesson Three: “Cast Your Net On The Other Side”

Text: John 21:1-17

Primary Lesson: “Work, and God will provide.”

1. In the adventure of the Christian life, there is work to do.
2. In order to do this work, we must be willing to obey the commands of God.
3. If we will do this, God will provide for us and take care of us.

Secondary Lesson: *The Importance of Repenting of Sins*

1. Peter teaches us a great lesson about repentance in this story.
2. He was willing to change his heart and make up for mistakes he had made.
3. We must also learn to admit when we are wrong and change.

Supplementary Lessons:

1. For younger classes – *God provides for us!*
2. The miracles of Jesus prove that He is the Son of God.

Introduction:

1. The disciples of Jesus had been through one of the greatest adventures of their lives – Jesus had been crucified, buried and resurrected from the grave!
2. Following His resurrection, Jesus appeared to His disciples on several occasions.
3. He was helping to strengthen their faith and to prepare them for the work that they would do beginning on the Day of Pentecost.
4. At His appearing by the Sea of Tiberias, Jesus taught His disciples that if they would work in obedience to His commands, He would be with them and provide for them.

I. Following Jesus Demands Work

- A. Many of Jesus’ disciples were fishermen (Matthew 4:18; Luke 5:1-10).
 1. They understood the meaning of a hard day’s work (Luke 5:5).
 2. Fishing for a living was not an easy job.
- B. Jesus used their understanding of fishing to teach important spiritual lessons.
- C. He said that they would become fishers of men.
 1. As hard as they had worked to catch fish, they would work even harder to save souls from sin.
 2. Being a Christian demands great work.
 3. It is a life of service and sacrifice.
 4. The apostles all suffered persecution and most of them were killed for preaching the Gospel.
- D. However, their hard work would be rewarding – both here and in Heaven.

II. Following Jesus Demands Obedience

- A. The Christian life is a life of work and service to God and our fellow man.
- B. However, for our work to be pleasing to God it must be in obedience to His Word.
- C. The disciples learned the importance of obedience to the Word of Jesus.
- D. On their own, the disciples did not catch any fish.
 - 1. There were seven disciples present on this occasion – Peter, James, John, Thomas, Nathanael and two others (probably Philip and Andrew [cf. Matthew 10:2-4]).
 - 2. While they were awaiting instructions from the Lord about fishing for men, they returned to their former occupation of fishing for fish.
 - 3. They spent all night fishing and did not catch anything.
- E. When the day was breaking, Jesus appeared on the seashore and gave instructions to His disciples.
 - 1. First, He asked if they had anything to eat – that is, had they caught any fish.
 - 2. When they replied that they had no food, Jesus commanded them to cast their net on the right side of the boat.
 - 3. When they obeyed, they caught so many fish that they were not able to pull the net back into the boat – even though they tried mightily.
 - 4. In fact, there were 153 large (great) fish in their net!
- F. After they had caught such a great number of fish, John (the disciple whom Jesus loved) recognized that the one who told them to cast their nets was Jesus!
 - 1. While it was John who first recognized Jesus, it was Peter who first went to Him.
 - 2. First, Peter made sure that he was properly clothed.
 - a. Peter had taken off his outer coat (his “wrapper”) while going about the strenuous work of fishing.
 - b. Underneath the coat, he wore a vest or an undergarment.
 - c. The word “naked” simply means that he had taken off his outer garment.
 - d. However, it is important that Peter understood the need to dress appropriately before standing before Jesus.
 - e. We must be concerned with how we dress in the world, but especially when we assemble to worship God (cf. 1 Timothy 2:9).
 - 3. Then, he jumped out of the boat and swam to Jesus!
 - a. Peter acted with his characteristic enthusiasm.
 - b. He desired – more than anything else – to be with the Lord.
 - 4. However, in his enthusiasm he left the others with the task of bringing the great catch of fish to the shore.
- G. Only when they obeyed the Lord did the disciples succeed in their work!
 - 1. If we want to be successful in the work of the Lord, we must make sure that we are obedient to His Will.
 - 2. Evangelism must be done God’s way (Mark 16:15-16).
 - a. We must go – *across the street and around the world*.
 - b. We must all go – *an individual responsibility*.

- c. We must go without fear or favoritism – *to all nations*.
 - d. We must go with the message of Truth – *preach the Gospel*.
 - e. We must not change the message – *faith comes by hearing*.
 - f. We must baptize – *for the remission of sins*.
3. Too many people try to do things their way instead of God’s way.
 - a. Don’t go, let someone else do it.
 - b. Only go to people we like or those we think deserve the Gospel.
 - c. Don’t preach or teach about sin, immorality, denominationalism, religious error, divorce, etc.
 - d. Don’t teach about the one true church.
 - e. Don’t teach the truth about baptism.
 4. If we do not obey God, we will not be blessed in our work.
- H. Sometimes, the work may seem overwhelming, but the Lord will provide help and strength to accomplish His mission.
1. The disciples understood that the Lord provided the catch of fish.
 - a. While we may do the work, God is the one who blesses it (cf. 1 Corinthians 3:5-8).
 - b. Thus, all of the glory goes to God – not to men.
 2. Jesus provided them with the blessing of fish, but they had to work to reap the benefits of the blessing.
 - a. The fish would have done the disciples no good if they had left them in the net.
 - b. Instead, they had to drag them to the shore.
 - c. God may bless us with abundant opportunities to do good, but if we fail to put in the required work there will be no benefit or reward.
 3. The disciples had to work together to get the job done.
 - a. Peter, who left the others behind while he swam to the shore, even did his part to bring in the great catch (vs. 11).
 - b. Had they spent their time arguing and fighting with one another, the fish would have remained in the water.
 - c. Everyone had a job to do!
- I. When they had accomplished their task, they were blessed by Jesus.
1. He provided them a great catch of fish.
 2. He provided them with the safety of the net – it did not break.
 3. He provided them with breakfast (vs. 9, 12).
 4. He provided them with fellowship (vs. 12-14).
- J. If we are going to follow Jesus, we must work and we must obey!
- III. Following Jesus Demands Repentance
- A. In order for us to follow Jesus faithfully, we must be willing to admit when we are wrong and change the way we are living.
 - B. This was a lesson that Peter had to learn so that he could serve the Lord.
 1. On the night that Jesus was betrayed by Judas and arrested, Peter denied the Lord three times (Matthew 26:56, 69-75).

2. Before, Peter had declared that even if all the other disciples abandoned Jesus, he never would (Matthew 26:31-35).
 3. Peter was stating, in essence, that he loved Jesus more than all the other disciples did.
 4. However, his actions spoke louder than his words – instead of remaining faithful, Peter denied the Lord.
- C. By his example, Peter teaches a great lesson about repentance.
1. Peter was filled with godly sorrow after he denied the Lord (Lk 22:61-62).
 2. Clearly, he desired to return and be with the Lord (Luke 24:12; John 20:4).
 3. Peter had a change of heart and mind – *this is repentance*.
 - a. Repentance is produced by godly sorrow – sorrow that our sins have hurt God (2 Corinthians 7:9-11).
 - b. Repentance is a change of mind, heart, and attitude toward sin – one decides to turn away from sin and toward God (Matthew 21:29;
 - c. Repentance is acknowledged by a change in action – the way that one lives (Luke 17:1-4; Matthew 3:8; Acts 2:38; 3:19; 26:20).
 4. Now, he needed to prove his repentance by a change in action.
- D. Jesus now provides Peter with an opportunity to prove he has repented and changed.
1. Peter denied the Lord three times.
 2. Three times Jesus asks Peter, “Lovest thou me more than these?”
 3. Three times Peter confesses his faith in and love for the Lord.
 4. But, in order to prove his love, Peter must feed the Lord’s sheep – that is, he must teach and shepherd the church (cf. 1 Peter 5:1-5).
- E. In order to serve the Lord, we must be also willing to repent of our sins.

Conclusion:

1. To become a Christian is to begin a life of work – service and sacrifice.
2. Working for the Lord means continuing in obedience to His Word.
3. As we work and obey, God provides for our needs.
4. He also provides us with opportunities to serve Him and our fellow man.
5. Ultimately, He will reward our work with eternal rest in Heaven.
6. A key to working faithfully for the Lord is our willingness to repent.
7. Sin will separate us from God and make our work in vain.
8. Are you a diligent worker in the kingdom of God?

Sail Away With A Bible Adventure!

Lesson Four: Paul Is Shipwrecked

Text: Acts 27:13 – 28:6

Primary Lesson: “Don’t ever give up!”

1. In the adventure of the Christian life, storms will come.
2. However, God is faithful to His children.
3. If we keep on working, serving, trusting, and obeying – if we never give up – God will deliver us to our eternal home in Heaven.

Secondary Lesson: *The Importance of Confessing Faith in Jesus*

1. In our text, there are several confessions that are made – some wrong, one right.
2. But, there is a lesson to be learned from all of them.
3. We must be willing to stand up and speak up for what we believe – what we know to be the Truth.

Supplementary Lessons:

1. For younger classes – *We must love and care for our family and friends.*
2. “God has not given us the spirit of fear” (2 Timothy 1:7).

Introduction:

1. In two of our previous lessons, we have read about storms at sea.
2. On both of those occasions, Jesus was there to calm the storms and rescue His disciples.
3. In our text for this lesson, there is also a storm at sea – however, it is a much larger storm on a much larger sea.
4. And, Jesus is not there in person – He has already ascended back to Heaven.
5. The things that happened to Paul and his companions during and after this storm on the Mediterranean Sea teach us some valuable lessons for our lives as followers of Christ.

I. Man Cannot Save Himself (Acts 27:13-20)

- A. The sailors with whom Paul was traveling tried everything they could to avoid stormy waters.
 1. They had a plan for their journey (vs. 2).
 2. They avoided contrary winds (vs. 4).
 3. They tried to avoid slow winds (vs. 7).
 4. But, their arrogance caused them to ignore good advice (vs. 9-12).
- B. But, the storm came anyway.
 1. The name Euroclydon literally means an east-north-east wind.
 2. But, the word “tempestuous” is the word for a typhoon, a whirlwind.
 3. Thus, this storm was hurricane-like, if not an actual hurricane.

- C. In the midst of the storm, the sailors still tried everything they could think of to escape safely.
1. First, they let the ship go where the wind blew it (vs. 15).
 2. Then, they worked to secure the ship's smaller boat (vs. 16).
 3. They used helps (ropes, chains, etc.) for undergirding (or, frapping) the ship – "*passing cables or chains round the ship's hull in order to support her in a storm*" (Vincent). (vs. 17a)
 4. They lowered the sails (gear) and allowed the wind to drive them (vs. 17).
 5. They lightened the ship by casting freight overboard (vs. 18).
 6. They even cast out the furniture (tackling) of the ship (vs. 19).
 7. They cast anchors out of the ship (vs. 29).
 8. Finally, they cast out their food (wheat) into the sea (vs. 38).
- D. But, none of these things brought them to safety or delivered them from the storm.
- E. Too often, this is how people approach the storms of life – by trying to save themselves.
1. We make plans for our lives without considering God's will (cf. James 4:13-15).
 2. We try to avoid trouble by following man's advice and wisdom.
 - a. Self-help books...
 - b. TV personalities...
 - c. Psychics, mediums, astrologers, and fortunetellers...
 3. In our arrogance, we ignore the wisdom of God.
- F. Far too often, this is how people approach sin – by trying to save themselves.
1. We think we know better than God does what is best for our souls.
 2. We listen to what man says about salvation, rather than what God says.
 - a. Universal salvation...
 - b. Calvinism...
 - c. Faith only...
 - d. Salvation by works...
 3. In our arrogance, we ignore the Word of God (cf. Acts 20:32).
- G. We must learn from the story of Paul's shipwreck that man alone cannot save himself.

II. God Is the Only Source of Salvation (Acts 27:21-26)

- A. While the sailors had been busy trying to save themselves by their own methods, the true source of salvation was available to them.
1. They should have listened to Paul – God's spokesman.
 2. The word "hearkened" is very important to understanding what Paul says.
 - a. The Greek word is *peitharcho* (πειθαρχεω). {Literally, πειθαρχησανταζ}
 - b. This word is translated as "obey" in Acts 5:29 and 32.
 - c. Vincent says that this word "is the special term for the obedience which one owes to authority."
 - d. Thus, in Titus 3:1, it is translated as, "obey magistrates."
 3. This means that when Paul warned them not to set sail, he was speaking by divine authority (cf. vs. 9-10).

4. All along, God was telling them how to be saved!
 - B. Even though they had willfully refused God's instructions, He gave them another chance to hear and obey.
 - C. Consider the manifold glory of the Word of God.
 1. God's Word gives correction (vs. 21).
 2. God's Word gives cheer (vs. 22a).
 3. God's Word gives comfort (vs. 22b).
 4. God's Word gives caution (vs. 22c).
 5. God's Word gives confirmation (vs. 23).
 6. God's Word gives confidence (vs. 24-25).
 7. God's Word gives commandment (vs. 26).
 - D. God did not want them to perish.
 1. God does not want anyone to perish – especially spiritually (2 Peter 3:9).
 2. This is why He gave His only-begotten Son (John 3:16)!
 - E. But, they had to choose to accept His offered salvation.
 1. God did not force His will upon the sailors.
 2. He did provide them with sufficient information to make a wise decision.
 3. He did use the storm to show them they were headed in the wrong direction.
 4. He did use the persuasive preaching of Paul.
 5. But, they – like all men – had to make the final choice (2 Peter 3:10-11).
 - F. Ultimately, their salvation would work the will of God.
 1. God would save them so they could get Paul to Rome (vs. 24).
 2. God would save Paul so he could stand before Caesar (vs. 24).
 3. The result was the salvation of many souls (Acts 28:23; Philippians 4:22).
 - G. When they tried to save themselves, they only went deeper into trouble.
 - H. When they submitted to and obeyed God's will, they found salvation.
 1. It must be understood that when they surrendered to God they did not stop working.
 - a. They still had to lighten the load.
 - b. They still had to guide the ship.
 - c. They still had to swim to shore.
 2. The difference was that they were no longer working to save themselves; rather, they were working in obedience to God (through Paul).
 3. When we face storms in our lives, we must surrender to the will of God.
 4. However, we must keep working and serving in His place of safety until we reach Heaven's bright shore.
 - I. God always saves by His grace and man's faithful obedience (Ephesians 2:8-10).
- III. God Placed Salvation in the Ship (Acts 27:27-44)
- A. As the ship neared land (after 2 weeks in the storm), the sailors cast out four anchors and wished for daylight to come.
 - B. As they were about to jump overboard, Paul warned them, "Except these abide in the ship, ye cannot be saved."
 - C. God not only told them how to be saved, but also how to remain saved – by staying in the ship.

1. There was safety in the ship (vs. 31).
 2. There was unity in the ship (vs. 30-32).
 3. There was nourishment in the ship (vs. 33-34).
 4. There was thanksgiving in the ship (vs. 35).
 5. There was joy in the ship (vs. 36).
 6. There was sacrifice in the ship (vs. 37-38).
 7. There was compassion in the ship (vs. 42-44).
- D. Spiritually, God has placed salvation in the church – the body of Christ.
- E. Thus, at the point of salvation, one is added by the Lord to the church (Acts 2:37-38, 41, 47).
- F. To continue in a saved relationship with God, one must continue in the church (Ephesians 5:23-27; Acts 20:28; 1 Corinthians 15:24).
- G. There are wonderful blessings in the Lord’s church.
1. There is safety in the church (Matthew 16:18).
 2. There is unity in the church (Ephesians 4:1-6).
 3. There is nourishment in the church (Acts 9:31).
 4. There is thanksgiving in the church (Hebrews 2:12).
 5. There is joy in the church (1 Corinthians 14:33).
 6. There is sacrifice in the church (Romans 16:1-5; 1 Corinthians 16:1-2).
 7. There is compassion in the church (1 Corinthians 10:31-33).
- H. Why would anyone want to leave the church?
- IV. Man Must Confess His Faith in Jesus (Acts 28:1-6)
- A. First, the people of Melita confessed that Paul was a murderer.
1. The people of Melita were very kind and hospitable to Paul and the others.
 2. However, when they saw that Paul was bitten by a snake (viper), they assumed the worst about him – that he was a murderer.
 - a. Some people think that any bad thing that happens is a result of sin or wickedness in a person’s life.
 - b. Some think that any good thing that happens is because of a person’s goodness or their being right with God.
 - c. The truth is, sometimes, bad things happen to good people and good things happen to bad people.
 3. God used this “bad” event to work good – to prove that Paul was an apostle of Christ.
- B. Then, they confessed that he was a god.
1. After Paul did not die from being bitten by a poisonous snake, the people of Melita changed their mind about him.
 2. Now, they claimed that he was a god.
 3. The truth was, Paul was fulfilling a promise that Jesus had made to His apostles (Mark 16:15-20).
 4. So, Paul’s “accident” allowed God to prove to Paul’s companions that he was an apostle of Christ.
- C. Though they were wrong in both of their confessions, they should be commended for having enough conviction to speak up for what they believed.

- D. But, the true “good confession” was made by Paul when he said, “I believe God” (27:25).
 - 1. Notice that Paul did not say, “I believe in God.”
 - 2. He believed God – meaning, He trusted completely in God and, therefore, obeyed His Word.
 - 3. In order to be saved from sin, one must believe God.
 - 4. In order to stay saved from sin, one must continue to believe God.
- E. We must be willing to confess our faith in Jesus as the Son of God if we want to be saved.
 - 1. We must confess Christ (Acts 8:37; 1 John 4:2-3, 15).
 - 2. It is essential for salvation (Romans 10:9-10).
 - 3. We must confess to be confessed (Matthew 10:32-33).
 - 4. Everyone should confess now (Philippians 2:11).
 - 5. Everyone will confess on the Day of Judgment (Romans 14:11).
- F. We confess our faith in order to be saved; but we must continue to confess our faith by the way that we live.

Conclusion:

- 1. Try as we might, man cannot save himself.
- 2. Only God has the wisdom, power, mercy, and love to save man.
- 3. We must submit to Him in faithful obedience – including making the good confession.
- 4. Then, we must stay in God’s ship of safety – the church of Christ.
- 5. If we do these things, God will give us all spiritual blessing in this life and Heaven in the life to come.

Sail Away With A Bible Adventure!

Lesson Five:

The Conversion of the Ethiopian Eunuch

Text: Acts 8:26-40

Primary Lesson: "Go on your way rejoicing!"

1. The Ethiopian began his journey in confusion.
2. He stopped during his journey due to submission.
3. He continued his journey with rejoicing – for he became a child of God!

Secondary Lesson: *The Importance of Baptism for the Remission of Sins*

1. The Ethiopian teaches an important but simple lesson about baptism.
2. A person with an honest and good heart will want to be baptized!
3. If God commands baptism for the forgiveness of sins, then who is man to argue with God?

Supplementary Lessons:

1. For younger classes – *Jesus loves us all!*
2. We must dedicate ourselves to studying the Word of God.

Introduction:

1. As we journey through the adventure that is our lives, often there will be times when we are confused and have questions – even about God and His Word.
2. On those occasions, we will have important decisions to make.
 - a. Should I give up or keep reading and studying?
 - b. Should I give up or ask someone to help me?
 - c. Should I simply go on with life or stop and take time to find the answers?
3. How we answer these questions will determine the course of the rest of our journey.
4. If we want to go on our way rejoicing, we must learn to follow the example of the man from Ethiopia.

I. The Ethiopian's Confusion (Acts 8:26-34)

- A. The man from Ethiopia was having his own adventure in traveling from Africa to Jerusalem and back.
- B. The Bible tells us several important things about this man.
 1. First, he was from Ethiopia – the land south of Egypt in Africa.
 2. Second, he was a eunuch – a man in service to those with higher authority.
 - a. Eunuchs could not become Jews in the fullest sense (Deuteronomy 23:1).
 - b. They could be proselytes, but could not enter into the Temple.
 - c. Now, he will learn that he can be Christian and a true worshipper of God (cf. Isaiah 53:6-8; John 4:23-24).

3. Third, he had great authority – literally, he was a potentate, an officer.
 4. Fourth, he served the Queen of Ethiopia. {*The word “Candace” is not a name; rather, it the title worn by the Ethiopian Queens [like “Pharaoh” in Egypt or “Caesar” in Rome.]*}
 5. Fifth, he was the royal treasurer – indicating his trustworthy and responsible character.
- C. The Bible also indicates the spiritual character of this good man.
1. He was a worshipper of God (vs. 27).
 - a. This indicates that he was a proselyte to Judaism.
 - b. It demonstrates his devotion to God; for, as a eunuch, he was not allowed to enter the Temple – but he came to worship anyway!
 - c. Furthermore, he traveled over 1,000 miles – just to worship God!
 2. He was a student of Scripture (vs. 28).
 - a. As he traveled back home, he was reading the Word of God.
 - b. He did not believe that his religion was limited to the Temple.
 3. He was humble in attitude (vs. 30-31).
 - a. He was not afraid to admit that he did not have all the answers.
 - b. He was not afraid to admit that there were things he did not understand.
 - c. He was not afraid to ask for help in finding the truth.
 4. He was honest in heart (vs. 34).
 - a. He realized that there was no shame in asking questions.
 - b. He was willing to listen to and consider what others had to say.
 - c. He was willing to hear the Word of God taught.
- D. The Bible also reveals to us the Ethiopian’s confusion.
1. The Ethiopian was reading from the prophecy of Isaiah (53:7-8).
 2. However, he did not understand the meaning of the passage.
 - a. Was Isaiah writing about himself or about someone else?
 - b. What was the meaning of the sacrifice in these verses?
 3. He was still practicing Judaism after the establishment of the church.
 4. Thus, he needed to be taught about Jesus the Christ and His new covenant.
- E. We must learn to seek out the truth of God’s Word when we find ourselves confused, questioning, or even doubting.
1. We must be devoted enough to keep studying.
 2. We must be submissive enough to keep worshipping.
 3. We must be patient enough to listen to the Word of God.
 4. We must be humble enough to admit we need help or guidance.
- F. The Bible will rid us of our confusion if we are patient enough not to give up.
- II. The Ethiopian’s Conversion (Acts 8:35-38)
- A. Though the Ethiopian was confused, he was sincere in his desire to hear and learn the truth.
 - B. Thus, Philip “began at the same scripture, and preached unto him Jesus.”
 - C. The Ethiopian’s conversion began with his hearing the Word of God (vs. 35).
 1. Notice that Philip began at the same scripture.
 - a. To teach someone the Gospel, we must start where they are.

- b. The beautiful harmony of God's Word is seen in the fact that one can start anywhere in it and soon get to Jesus.
 - 2. Philip preached Jesus.
 - a. He preached Jesus as the fulfillment of Old Testament prophecy (cf. Luke 24:25-27, 44-49).
 - b. He preached Jesus as the Christ – the Messiah (cf. John 4:25-26).
 - c. He preached Jesus as the sacrifice for sin (cf. John 3:16; 10:14-18).
 - d. He preached Jesus as the source of authority – for the Ethiopian desired to obey (cf. Matthew 28:18-20).
 - e. He preached Jesus as the one who commands baptism (cf. Mark 16:16).
- D. The Ethiopian's conversion resulted from his understanding the Word of God (vs. 36).
 - 1. Previously, the Ethiopian had been confused about the teaching of Scripture.
 - 2. Now, he has a proper understanding of God's Word.
 - 3. Thus, he is preparing to become a follower of Jesus.
- E. The Ethiopian's conversion stemmed from his believing the Word of God (vs. 37)
 - 1. The Ethiopian asked what was hindering him from obeying the command of Christ to be baptized.
 - 2. Philip replied that if he believed he could obey.
 - 3. The Ethiopian then demonstrated his faith by three actions.
 - a. He showed his willingness to turn away from his old life and to turn toward a life of following Jesus – **this is repentance.**
 - b. He publicly and vocally acknowledged his belief in Jesus as the Son of God – **this is confession.**
 - c. He submitted in obedience to the Lord's command to be immersed in water for the remission of sins – **this is baptism.**
 - 4. Had he not done these things, he would have shown that his faith was not genuine and, therefore, not a saving faith (cf. James 2:14-26).
- F. The Ethiopian's conversion ended with his obeying the Word of God (vs. 38).
 - 1. All that had been happening in the Ethiopian's adventure was leading up to his opportunity to obey the Gospel (2 Thessalonians 1:8; 1 Peter 4:17).
 - 2. His obedience culminated in his baptism.
 - a. His baptism was immersion – for they went down into the water and, afterward, came up out of the water.
 - b. His baptism was in obedience to the teaching of the Gospel.
 - c. His baptism was for the remission of sins (Acts 2:38; 1 Peter 3:21).
 - d. His baptism was into Christ (cf. Galatians 3:26-27).
 - e. His baptism put him in contact with the blood of Christ (cf. Acts 22:16; Revelation 1:5).
 - 3. Thus, it was at this point that the Ethiopian was saved from his sins and became a Christian – a follower of Christ.
- G. Consider all that was involved in the Ethiopian's conversion...
 - 1. God the Father – for it was His plan that provided salvation.
 - 2. Jesus the Christ – for it was His sacrifice that enabled forgiveness.

3. The Holy Spirit
 - a. It was His inspired Word that was preached by Philip and received by the Ethiopian.
 - b. He also directed Philip to get into the Ethiopian's chariot (vs. 29).
 - c. However, He did not save the Ethiopian directly or miraculously – there was no “direct operation” of the Holy Spirit.
 4. An Angel
 - a. An angel of the Lord told Philip to go to the place where he would meet the Ethiopian (vs. 26).
 - b. But, the angel was not the preacher of the Gospel.
 - c. Nor did the angel save the Ethiopian in some miraculous fashion.
 5. Philip
 - a. He was the preacher of the Gospel – for God has chosen man to sound forth the good news of salvation (cf. 1 Corinthians 1:21).
 - b. Thus, Philip personifies all preachers of the Gospel.
 6. The Ethiopian
 - a. Yes, he had a role to play in his salvation (cf. Acts 2:40; Philippians 2:12).
 - b. He heard, understood, and believed the Gospel.
 - c. He obeyed the Gospel – by repenting of sin, confessing faith in Christ, and being baptized for the remission of sins.
- H. Truly, salvation is by grace (God's part) through faith (man's part) [Ephesians 2:8].

III. The Ethiopian's Celebration (Acts 8:39-40)

- A. The Ethiopian's adventure did not end when he became a Christian; in fact, it had just begun.
- B. But, because he was now a child of God, he could go on his way rejoicing!
- C. There is great joy that comes with being a Christian.
 1. There was great joy in Samaria when they were saved (Acts 8:8).
 2. The Philippian jailer rejoiced when he became a Christian (Acts 16:34).
 3. There is joy because we have hope (Romans 5:2).
 4. There is joy because we have peace (Romans 15:13).
 5. There is always joy for the child of God (Philippians 4:4).
- D. Think of the change in the Ethiopian's life...
 1. He was not going on his way confused.
 2. He was not going on his way deceived.
 3. He was not going on his way saddened.
 4. He was not going on his way lost.
 5. He was filled with joy!
- E. Don't you want the adventure of your life to be filled with joy?
 1. Have you heard and understood the Word of God?
 2. Do you believe the Jesus is the Son of God and Savior of the world?
 3. Are you willing to give up a lifestyle of sin and wickedness?
 4. Will you publicly confess your faith in Jesus the Christ?
 5. Will you be baptized for the forgiveness of your sins?

Conclusion:

1. The same joy that the Ethiopian had can be ours today.
2. We can start a new adventure by becoming a Christian and living faithfully for the Lord.
3. We can go on our way rejoicing!

Summary:

1. This week we have learned that God will be with us – faithful and true – throughout our adventure in this life.
2. However, we also have seen that we must be willing to follow Him wherever He leads us through the teaching of His Word.
3. We have learned that if we will work in obedience to the commands of God, He will bless us abundantly in this life.
4. We have understood that if we never give up, God will see us safely home to Heaven.
5. And, we have seen that our lives can be filled with joy – if we will become and remain faithful children of God?
6. How is the adventure of your life going? Do you need to change directions?
7. You can make the decision to follow the Lord from this day forward and He will lead you safely to His side in Heaven.