

Luke Series Slide

Pillars Series Slide

The Dutch master artist Rembrandt- only made one painting that included the sea.

That painting happens to be a picture of the story we're going to read today in Luke's gospel.

Lets take a look at it.

Full size pic of SEA OF GALILEE

This is Rembrandts' "Storm on the Sea of Galilee"- he painted it in 1633- right in the middle of his life.

The original painting was actually stolen as a part of one of the most notorious and expensive art heists in history. In 1990- two guys posed as police officers and were let into a Boston museum in the wee hours of the morning- tied up the 2 security guards and made off with 13 pieces totaling over \$500 million. The thieves were never apprehended...and the painting was never recovered.

Just a little trivia for you— and since it happened in Boston- how is this not a Ben and Casey Affleck movie yet?

Two things are helpful to know when you are looking at a Rembrandt.

First- He is known as the Master of Light and Shadow.

You can see that in this painting. The left side is lit up, with the white of the breaking waves the right side- is deep in shadow.

The second thing to know is that when Rembrandt paints biblical scenes- he often paints himself into the picture. You might notice 13 disciples here.

ZOOMED IN SoG pic

See that guy in the middle of the picture- right on the border of the light and dark- the one facing us with his hand on his head- That is Rembrandt.

In the Light- there are the disciples holding on for dear life- and trying to do something about the boat staying up right in the storm.

In the shadow- there are disciples hurrying to Jesus to see if he cares that they are about to capsize.

Notice- that the disciples themselves are split right down the middle. There are six on the light side- taking on the

storm...and six on the shadow side around Jesus. (Well- one guy there in the red looks like he might be sea-sick)

And Rembrandt finds himself right in the middle- hand on his head- to me- in a quandary- Should I fight the storm- or- go to Jesus.

I love the moment this captures. Because it is a deeply felt conundrum of any Christian- much more any Christian leader.

Is it time for Action- or time for Prayer? Time for GRIT- or time for GRACE?

Title Slide- “Pillar in the Storm: How Faith Works in Chaos”- Luke 8:22-25

Well if you’ve been with us through any of this series on becoming a Pillar- A leader full of spiritual poverty- desperation- helplessness... and spiritual wealth- sure of God’s presence, and equipping to do the hard things he calls you to...you know the answer is not going to be one or the other- ITs going to be BOTH- well kind of.

Now- lets read this very short passage from Luke 8

Luke 8:22-25

22 One day he and his disciples got into a boat, and he told them, “Let’s cross over to the other side of the

lake.” So they set out, 23 and as they were sailing he fell asleep. Then a fierce windstorm came down on the lake; they were being swamped and were in danger. 24 They came and woke him up, saying, “Master, Master, we’re going to die! ”

Then he got up and rebuked the wind and the raging waves. So they ceased, and there was a calm. 25 He said to them, “Where is your faith? ”

They were fearful and amazed, asking one another, “Who then is this? He commands even the winds and the waves, and they obey him! ”

Transition: I’ve got 2 points, 3 paintings and 1 song today to help this passage stick with us.

We’re one painting down- Here’s the first point.

1) In a world of chaos, you don’t want a God you can control. You want a God bigger than the sea.

In ancient cultures- including that of the Hebrews- the sea was symbolic for evil and chaos raging against God and humanity.

And you can imagine why.

Ever been to the beach at night? Vast darkness.
You cant see under the surface. theres always this
potential that something very hungry with sharp teeth is
lurking just under the surface.

Oceans make up 70% of the planet's surface. And with
the lack of underwater exploration available before the
20th century- you are dealing with A LOT of unknown,

It not unreasonable to think there could be a sea monster
down there.

In fact, we still haven't disproven that?

You ever seen an angler fish? or a whale?- They qualify as
sea monsters in my book.

You know 95% of the ocean- TODAY- is unexplored.

So there is still A LOT of places a Sea monster could hide.

You can trace this idea of the chaotic sea throughout
Scripture

Gen 1:2

In the second verse of the Bible- you find darkness and
water.

Those words “Without form ...and void” are the Hebrew words tohuwabohu.

There is an english phrase- TOHU BOHU that comes from this Hebrew word. It means Chaos. Disorder. Confusion.

So instead of saying “Thats messed up”
you can say TOHU BOHU

or Parents to your kids “Get in here and clean this room.
Do something about this TOHU BOHU!”

In this 2nd verse of the Bible, you have the contrast of the Spirit of God- hovering OVER the dark waters...and then from that...

You get Creation. Order. Shalom. Everything working in harmony at the command of its creator.

Genesis 1 is a song... about God making the COSMOS from CHAOS. Brining nothing into something. Its about the God who is LIGHT, overcoming the Darkness. Making sense of the senseless.

In Genesis 6- because the whole world had given itself over to the Chaos of Evil- God UN-DOES creation by turning the whole world back to the TOHU BOHU of a flood- while he preserves humans and animals to start over- a kind of new creation. But we learn- you can take

the Noah out of the Tohu Bohu, but you can't take the Tohu Bohu out of Noah. He ends up drunk and naked about 15 minutes after God restarts and re orders everything.

Then there is Exodus, Gods people are escaping Egyptian slavery and they come to this impossible situation. On one side are the evil Egyptians pursuing them...and on the other side is this vast uncontrollable Tohu Bohu of the Red Sea. God parts the waters of chaos allowing his people to pass through- then closes the waters down top of the evil Egyptians- its this scene where the chaotic waters once again swallow up the evil that belongs to it.

In the prophetic book of Daniel, in chapter 4 these 4 beasts rise out of the sea, and they represent 4 pagan empires that will come to power and oppress God's people.

Then there are the Psalms

Psalm 93:3-4

**3 The floods have lifted up, Lord,
the floods have lifted up their voice;
the floods lift up their pounding waves.**

**4 Greater than the roar of a huge torrent —
the mighty breakers of the sea
the Lord on high is majestic.**

This Psalm compares the chaos and terror of the sea to the greatness of God. As scary as the waves are- God is higher...bigger.

In Psalm 107:4, 10, 17 the Psalmist writes about the way God redeems and saves people in trouble.

Look at the way he describes it.

He says, "They were in desert wastelands...the wilderness"

Some were in darkness and the shadow of death.

Some were prisoners in affliction

Some were fools through their sinful ways

He's talking about Tohu Bohu. Chaos. Death. Sin. Disintegration. Falling apart.

Then, look at **Psalm 107:23-31**

**23 Others went to sea in ships,
conducting trade on the vast water.**

**24 They saw the Lord's works,
his wondrous works in the deep.**

**25 He spoke and raised a stormy wind
that stirred up the waves of the sea.**

**26 Rising up to the sky, sinking down to
the depths,**

their courage melting away in anguish,

**27 they reeled and staggered like a drunkard,
and all their skill was useless.
28 Then they cried out to the Lord in their trouble,
and he brought them out of their distress.
29 He stilled the storm to a whisper,
and the waves of the sea were hushed.
30 They rejoiced when the waves grew quiet.
Then he guided them to the harbor they longed for.
31 Let them give thanks to the Lord for his faithful love
and his wondrous works for all humanity. -**

That sounds A LOT like what happened with Jesus and the disciples in Luke chapter 8.

You see the biblical theme?

The sea represent this untamed out of control TOHU BOHU. This vast darkness out of which chaos and evil arise.

And God- over and over- He tames it. He rescues out of it. Not only does he undo the effects of the

chaos and evil- sometimes- he uses the darkness- the chaos- the evil against itself- like in the case of Genesis 6 flood or the Red Sea against the Pharaohs army.

So now we come to this moment on the Sea of Galilee with Jesus and his disciples.
And remember- Luke is writing so that Theophilus- the guy that hired him- will have a solid account of what Jesus did so that Theophilus can decide if Jesus really is who he claims to be- the Son of God.

So in this passage- They are on a boat.
And Jesus is tired from teaching the crowds- so he lays down for a nap.

Right then a windstorm kicks up and the disciples freak out...So they go to wake Jesus up...

Now look what they say.

Luke 8:24a (end at die)

Master! We're going to die!
In Marks gospel that ask point blank "DONT YOU CARE that we are going to die?"

Luke 8:25

Look at the last verse. After Jesus makes the storm stop cold, you would think that the disciples would cheer...and say, "Gosh. Finally! That's what we expect from you!"

But clearly, that's not what they expected. Because they are more terrified AFTER Jesus stills the storm than they are during the storm.

Which would cause us to ask..."Exacty WHAT did they want Jesus to do with them when they woke him up?"
Scream and carry on?
Say "Woe is me!"

I mean, it looks like they got what they wanted...but they end up terrified.

You know why?
Because they realize the real ocean isn't outside their boat. The real ocean was asleep in the boat with them.

Suddenly, Psalm 93 and 107, and Genesis 1 start coming to mind.
The untamed, uncontrollable, all powerful God...is in the boat with them.

"Who is this that commands the sea?"

The point here is that when they went to Jesus and woke him up- they were undersizing him. They thought the CHAOS was in control. They thought Jesus was small like they were.

They didn't expect that he had control. They were reacting to their circumstance- and just like any crowd of people to their leaders- if we feel our leaders aren't freaking out like we are- we think they don't care.

Zoomed in Rembrandt

I kind of set you up with a false dilemma earlier. Remember when i said in the Rembrandt painting that the disciples were deciding whether to take action or go to Jesus.

Well- the disciples weren't going to Jesus for help... They were going there to accuse him. Of being careless. Of being cold and disconnected from their need.

On the other side of the boat are the disciples who decided just to ignore Jesus altogether. In which case we have a whole new way to look at this painting.

In our most trying times- when life gets hard- often- we don't turn to God in prayerful trust- we don't come to him in spiritual poverty- believing

that no matter how big the storm gets...or how asleep he seems to be- that he is still in control.

Often- we either get mad at God and accuse him of not caring...

Or- we busy ourselves trying to fix the problem without him.

That- as you have heard over and over over during this series- that is the GREY ZONE- No grace. No grit. Just Grey. Spiritual Middle Class

Instead- we get angry with him for not caring enough...or just get busy busy busy getting stuff done to ignore him.

Which side of the boat do you find yourself on today?

8:24b (Start at “The he got up”)

Notice that when Jesus rebukes the storm, which BTW is the exact same verb that’s used when he casts out demons...yet another allusion to the fact that this is as much a statement about God overcoming chaos and evil as it is about God being in control of NATURE.

Notice that Jesus doesn’t conjure. He doesn’t say, “In the name of YHWH...be still.”

He doesn't have to use anyone's name.
He just says "Be quiet. Be Still."

And suddenly...the storm...becomes calm.

Jesus is showing- I am the God who was in Genesis 1. I am the God who parted the waters in Exodus. I am the one the Psalmist wrote about that delivered the sailors who were perishing.

Isn't it interesting that Jesus did SO much of his teaching in front of the sea or on the deck of a boat? Its almost like a sort of remake of Genesis 1:2. The Spirit of God hovering over the chaotic waters. Now, here is the Son of God, with the Tohu Bohu of the deep at his back, under his feet. Unafraid.

Back to 1)

The last thing you want is a God you can control. A God who will freak out when you freak out.

You don't want a God you can manipulate with your emotions.

Because we can't fathom the way he overcomes chaos. We need him to be like the ocean. Uncontrollable. Doing his will his way in his time.

The Israelites had no clue he could part the Red Sea. The Tohu Bohu in Genesis seemed like it could not be tamed.

Those wandering in darkness enslaved and perishing in the sea in Psalm 107 thought they were beyond hope.

And the disciples had no paradigm that Jesus to turn Chaos into Calm.

If Jesus would have submitted to the will of the disciples...if he would have checked in with them and said “What do you guys want me to do?” They would have said something like “AT LEAST SCREAM WITH US AS THE SHIP GOES DOWN?”-

THEY WEREN'T ASKING A QUESTION- THEY WERE MAKING AN ACCUSATION. You don't care.

They didn't even know to ask for what God could really do.

But because Jesus had an ocean of power with his word..he refused to freak out with them and did things according to his will.

Do not think that you know what is best for God to do in every situation.

If God is asleep in a storm...there is a reason for it.

Don't try to control him.- or accuse him.

Trust him.

At the risk of being hokey- "Don't tell God how big your storm is...tell the storm how big your God is.

The disciples didn't have enough spiritual poverty. They thought of themselves as too big and Jesus as too small.

Which is why I love this next painting.

Monk by the Sea pic

German painter Caspar David Friedrich

Peace of the ocean- smallness of the person. Bigness of the God who created the ocean.

to be the kind of leader that God has called you to be- you have to get small first. You have to have a rest and confidence that his Grace will meet you in the chaos.

That his peace will still the Tohu Bohu.

And as that happens more and more you become this...

Wanderer Above the Sea Fog

This is another one of Caspar Friedrich's works.

Notice- here the man has become large in front of this treacherous terrain.

Its not the sea- but it maybe worse. Its a sea of fog-covering deadly rocks.

And I'm not sure if that is a walking stick or a cane- but whichever it is- its a nod to the weakness and dependance of this Wanderer- and yet- he doesn't freak out about what is in front of him- he is unafraid to behold it- and make his way through it.

Both of these paintings are pictures of pillars.

One small, the other impossibly large.

One spiritual poverty- the other a Spiritual Wealth that produces grit.

This wanderer shows us what Jesus is in the boat... and what we become when we recognize Jesus is Lord...a Non-anxious presence.

2) A Pillar is a non-anxious presence who puts faith to work in chaos.

I first encountered the Idea of a Non-Anxious presence by reading Edwin Friedman- a Rabbi and Family Therapist who wrote the book “A Failure of Nerve”

What he observed was that in any anxious system of humans...like a family or a military unit...or a business office...when emotions are running wild- when fear has gripped everyone...when things are like they were on that boat with the disciples in on the Sea of Galilee.

If one person keeps calm. If one person can look at the situation and not freak out- if one person can resist the herd mentality of fear and nonsense- they can change the whole system.

This, ladies and gentlemen, is the work of Pillar.

This is what Jesus is in this situation.

Its what we are called to be when there is a fire... (think about fire drills)

Its how Navy Seals are trained “Slow is smooth. Smooth is Fast”

Now- let me show you how Jesus calls the disciples to this in this text.

8:24-25

First- notice the grace and kindness of Jesus...

They come to him freaked out- wanting him to FREAK OUT

He could have let the storm rage on. The Waves doesn't bother him anyway.

He could have screamed "WHERE IS YOUR FAITH!?!?"
In the chaos of the storm.

But Jesus gives them peace. Even though they didn't come to him believing...he brings peace into the situation.

Now look at the phrase "Where is your faith?"

Don't think of this so much as 'You don't have any faith.'

Its more- Why didn't you guys Get your faith out!?

Its like watching somebody dig a hole with their hands when there is a shovel right beside them.

Jesus isn't saying "You don't have any faith in me?" He's saying "You didn't put it to work."

This tells us a couple of things about faith and the way we "put it to work"

First- its not automatic- it doesn't kick in like an air conditioner when life starts heating up.

Its not passive.

Applying faith to a situation is active. Conscious. On purpose.

Very simply it means applying what you know about Jesus to a situation.

Jesus is saying- "You have seen me raise that widow's son. You have seen me heal thousands of people. You have heard what I have promised you. And not a single thing I've said has failed to be true. You know I love you- and I am doing something about the chaos of the world. When the waves get big...GET THESE THINGS OUT!!!

Remember...and WAIT!

REMEMBER the GOSPEL- Wait for him to Bring NHNE

Explain Gospel

On Jesus- the chaos and TOHU BOHU- of our sin- that breaks us and the world- he took that on. He took the punishment for our sin.

This is like the chaotic ocean being used against the evil Egyptians.

ON the cross- Jesus defeated sin and death...through the sin of men that put him to death.

And he gives to us his right standing with God. He exchanged places with us. He gets the cross...we get the Resurrection from the dead.

KEEP THE CROSS BIG- KEEP YOUR GOD BIG.
KEEP SPIRITUAL POVERTY!

and that will make you a non anxious presence.

Get Small (think of how big God is and what he has saved you from.) to GET BIG.

Monk by the Sea becomes WANDERER ABOVE THE SEA FOG.

Romans 8:31-39

31 What, then, are we to say about these things? If God is for us, who is against us? 32 He did not even spare his own Son but gave him up for us all. How will he not also with him grant us everything? 33 Who can bring an accusation against God's elect? God is the one who justifies. 34 Who is the one who condemns? Christ Jesus is the one who died, but even more, has been raised; he also is at the right hand of God and

intercedes for us. 35 Who can separate us from the love of Christ? Can affliction or distress or persecution or famine or nakedness or danger or sword? 36 As it is written:

Because of you

we are being put to death all day long;

we are counted as sheep to be slaughtered.

37 No, in all these things we are more than conquerors through him who loved us. 38 For I am persuaded that neither death nor life, nor angels nor rulers, nor things present nor things to come, nor powers, 39 nor height nor depth, nor any other created thing will be able to separate us from the love of God that is in Christ Jesus our Lord.

Peter- who was on that boat! Watch him now! he has been arrested and told to stop preaching the gospel. But he keeps talking about Jesus- his death and resurrection and the way he is bigger than any of the Roman authorities that threaten him.

Acts 4 :13

13 When they observed the boldness of Peter and John and realized that they were uneducated and untrained men, they were amazed and recognized that they had been with Jesus.

How- Listen to what Peter writes in his first epistle later

1 Peter 5:6-11

6 Humble yourselves, therefore, under the mighty hand of God, so that he may exalt you at the proper time, 7 casting all your cares on him, because he cares about you. 8 Be sober-minded, be alert. Your adversary the devil is prowling around like a roaring lion, looking for anyone he can devour. 9 Resist him, firm in the faith, knowing that the same kind of sufferings are being experienced by your fellow believers throughout the world.

10 The God of all grace, who called you to his eternal glory in Christ, will himself restore, establish, strengthen, and support you after you have suffered a little while. 11 To him be dominion forever. Amen.

Rembrandt pic

And now- a song.

Horatio Spafford was a successful lawyer and businessman and family man in Chicago in the late 1800s. He was married to his wife Anna and together they had 5 children. in 1871- their young son died from Pneumonia... and that same year they lost their business in the great Chicago fire.

On Nov. 21, 1873, Spaffords wife and kids were crossing the Atlantic headed to Europe. He had planned to go with his family, but had to stay back due to some business emergency and he promised to join them a few days later by taking another ship.

About four days into the crossing of the Atlantic, the ship with his family collided with another ship and sunk.

Mrs. Spafford survived and sent a telegram to her husband "Saved alone, what shall I do?"

Mr. Spafford later framed the telegram and placed it in his office.

Another of the ship's survivors, later recalled Anna saying, "God gave me four daughters. Now they have been taken from me. Someday I will understand why."

Mr. Spafford booked passage on the next available ship and left to join his grieving wife. With the ship about four days out, the captain called Spafford to his cabin and told him they were over the place where his children went down.

That is where Horatio Spafford wrote the song "It Is Well With My Soul

**When peace like a river attendeth my way,
When sorrows like sea billows roll,
Whatever my lot, Thou hast taught me to say,
It is well, it is well with my soul.
-Horatio Spafford, It Is Well with My Soul**

That is putting faith to work.
Or in a more recent song.

**In the seas, sit at ease, minute that He says to cease
Finna be infinity, when He come and get His sheep-
nobigyl., Strength and Song**

Remember when you find yourself here
REMBRANDT PIC

You have to get [HERE](#)
Monk by the Sea PIC

In order to be [HERE](#)
Wander above the Sea of Fog PIC