

## RUTHLESS TRUST

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Luke 8:22-25

In seminary, you are required to read books that will form and shape your philosophy and theology. Through reading those books, seminary students are reminded that there is a cost to discipleship. When you respond to God's calling, we must remember that there is a cost to discipleship. Although all of us aren't called to be preachers, all of us are called and/or summoned to lifelong service to God and to the kingdom of God.

There are also conditions to discipleship. It will cost you something to follow Jesus. One of the conditions of discipleship is that we have to cultivate ruthless trust. Brennan Manning is the author of the book, *Ruthless Trust*. He describes ruthless trust as the movement into obscurity and ambiguity. It is a movement into a future that is unsettled. It discloses the acting of God in the present moment. God has a game plan but you don't. You don't even have an exit strategy. The journey is formed as you act out God's plan. You leave what is secure to walk into the unknown without any rational explanation. God knows the end from the beginning. God has the game plan and we don't even have a script. We have to trust God's plan and promise.

In the text, Jesus described the nature of relationships to the disciples. Then he summoned the disciples to cross over the lake. The disciples got into the boat anticipating a journey with Jesus that would result in a smooth and safe passage. If Jesus had told them what they would have encountered when they got in the boat, they would have never gotten into the boat. God never subjects us to nonproductive, or counterproductive enterprises. He anchors you to a narrative that is bigger than your own life. God has a greater purpose for inviting you on a journey in the first place. Jesus knew he wasn't just inviting the disciples on a boat ride. He knew that on the other side of the lake was a new assignment; a new area of ministry. Sometimes we have to get through a storm to get us to our next assignment or a next level in ministry. Jesus knew they would enter new territory. It was the land of the Gentiles where they knew nothing of Moses and the Ten Commandments. They would encounter a man possessed with demons that God would deliver. That man would turn into a street evangelist for God. We always get excited when we talk about new dimensions and new levels. Everybody wants to go to a new place. Everybody wants to go to that higher dimension. We want to experience God's best for our lives. While there is a promise of accessing new levels in God, new levels come with new devils or the same devils with new tricks. The disciples leave with Jesus not anticipating the storm. Every time you run into a storm it is a time for God to get you through it showing you His power. The storm is not to cancel your assignment but for God to show you who He is.

Though storms were not unusual, the disciples didn't set out to run into a storm. If Jesus had told you that it was going to be like this, you would have waited for a better forecast. You didn't anticipate this difficulty. For the entire litany of things you are going through right now, you didn't anticipate this frustration and delay. When we expect a storm, we can handle it. However, when all hell breaks loose and the bottom falls out, we feel like we can't make it. If God had just let the weatherman tell you it was going to be like this, you wouldn't have gotten into the boat. The truth of the matter is, you don't want to go through a storm. The text is about the cost of discipleship and the conditions for being a follower of Jesus. When you get in the boat with Jesus, you have to exercise ruthless trust. It appears that you find more chaos and conflict in the

community of believers than you do in the street. To get in the boat with Jesus is to invite chaos and conflict. Whenever you decide to ride with Jesus it stirs up principalities. The enemy shows up to stop your assignment and to prevent you from getting to the other side. You will always encounter chaos and conflict when you decide to go to the next level with God. The enemy is not excited because you came to church today but he will be when you show up for the next three days of the Revival. The enemy is not excited because you can praise God today but he will be when you put this Word into practice. When you have shown that you are maturing in God it invites chaos and conflict.

It is not the conflict that worries us, it is the kind of conflict we face that frustrates us. What frightened the disciples is that it was a storm that they had not mastered. Some storms and challenges don't frustrate you anymore. It is the kind of storm and the nature of the conflict that reflects the intensity. Whenever you decide that you want God to take you to a new place, there will always be chaos and conflict.

You must learn to manage the contradictions while in the storm. Have you ever gone through something and it appears that God has gone AWOL? You wonder why you are in the middle of the storm because of obedience to God but He is not saying anything. You are struggling and fighting battles but it seems God is not saying anything. We ask, "How can you sleep at a time like this?" The storm produced an environment that you had not anticipated. The storm does not look like the vision God has given you. The disciples said, "Master, we are going to drown." You thought you would have been delivered by now. Getting in the boat does not eliminate contradiction. The text shows us that you can be in the boat and be obedient to God but still experience a storm. **The hallmark of getting in the boat is obedience.** Job's friends will tell you the reason you experienced a storm is because of disobedience but this text cancels that presupposition. You can be in the Will of God and still experience a storm. Ruthless trust may invite chaos and conflict that will force you to face contradictions. You have to learn how to manage your contradictions. Ministry is not always carried out in a context of convenience and comfort. Discipleship is often carried out in a context of frustrations and interruptions. We can work for God all of our lives and still see some prayers not get answered. Storms reveal contradictions of our confession when the reality of this journey does not line up with our expectations. What happens when the contradictions show up in your own life? What are you going to do?

Jesus responded to the disciples by telling the wind and the waves to behave. No matter how bad the storm gets, Jesus is still more powerful. Being in the boat with Jesus asleep is better than being in the boat alone. You should rather be in a storm with Jesus than be in it by yourself. He will bring you out victoriously to a safe landing place. Even if the storm is raging, you can still stand up under it because Jesus is the chief executive. When he tells those winds and waves to behave, even they must obey him. In the text, the issue that Jesus dealt with was not the storm. Jesus only gave the storm instructions. He rebuked the winds and everything settled down. He asked the disciples, "Where is your faith?" Where was your faith? Most of us are on the other side of something. This is not the first time you have been through something and it will not be last. If you got through it the first time, where was your faith then that will help you get through what you are going through now? You may not know how God is going to work it out, but you can rest assured that God will see you through. The storm is not designed to kill you. The wind in the storms is getting ready to take you to a new place. It is called ruthless trust because storms teach you something about following Jesus that you wouldn't learn in any other context. Storms are to transform your understanding about your expectations, covenant, and discipleship. If you are in a place where all you have left is God's presence and promise, you have enough to start all over again. The Word of God shall stand forever. Sometimes it takes wind to get you to a new place. The ability to survive the storm is your choice because it has to do with how you interpret the wind. The same wind that can be an agent of chaos can be the same wind that can take you to another place.

Peace.

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