Bumper: Jesus in the boat calming the storm!

Where is your faith? That is a really good question!

When the storms of life are swirling around us where do we place our ultimate hope?

Jesus was a master in using life circumstances to teach His followers truth about who He was and what He had come to accomplish!

In this powerful scene Jesus is reminding His followers that He is tough as nails!

He has the authority over all of creation, He possesses the grit necessary to speak to the wind and waves bringing calm even in a storm.

Jesus did this to demonstrate His authority, to validate that He knows what He is talking about!

So when He describes knowing a way of life that leads to purpose and productivity He knows what He was talking about.

He also knew what He was talking about when He promised His followers that they would have problems and obstacles as they followed their life’s purpose.

Jesus demonstrated to His disciples that it takes grit to move forward at times because our temptation is to quit.

We are so glad you have decided to join us today here at Southside Church, my name is Wynne Lankford and it is my privilege to serve here as lead pastor!

And I would like to know, how many of you have faced the temptation to quit when the road gets hard?

We all have. There’s been times as your pastor that I have been tempted to quit the ministry and just go do something simpler.

It’s times like that, when the Holy Spirit reminds me that He is with me and He encourages me to persevere and move forward one step at a time.

Jesus had GRIT OVER QUIT for the mission He was given and last week we were reminded that the mission is…….you and me.

We are the center of Jesus affection we are His mission.

And that is not all. Today I want us to see that Jesus has grit over quit in His ministry.

And guess what His ministry is!

YOU!

You are the supreme focus of His ministry.

Jesus gave His life to the mission and was faithful to model a ministry of grit over quit all the way to the cross!

Jesus is not just giving lip service He is backing it up with Grit and tenacity!

**SLIDE 2** Jesus gave His life to help His followers see and understand that He has the power to produce within them everything He was promising!

Jesus had grit, and He would never quit helping and encouraging His followers because He saw something in them that they couldn’t see.

Have you ever had someone see potential in you that you couldn’t see in yourself?

I will never forget a moment I had in the 8th grade.

I had a football coach by the name of coach Gains who began to invest in me.

He said he saw potential in me!

By the way, did you know there is power when you speak words of blessing into someone younger than you?

**SLIDE 3** We believe that here at Southside Church that - **Every Life Matters!**

This is why we are reaching out to everyone including the next generation to remind them of the potential that we see in them!

When you verbalize the potential you see in another person it is life-giving.

Who are you believing in and blessing with your words of encouragement!

Coach Gains not only invested in me on the football field - he invested in me off the field.

He approached me one day and said Wynne I have a job for you.

I believe you have the ability to lead the concession stand we have in the basketball arena!

I will help you get it all set up, you can recruit other workers, mange the schedule the inventory and I will pay you for the hours you work.

Now look at me, do I look like a person you could trust around soda, candy and nachos!

NO!

But that didn’t stop coach Gains he believed in me!

So concessions manager I became! He mentored me, he poured into me and trusted me!

Then there was this one weekend when we had a really big tournament.

The place was packed, the concessions where selling like crazy and the cash boxes were filling up!

Now I’m in the eighth grade, I had never seen this kind of cash in one place.

As I was putting the cash into the bag at the end of the shift I slipped 40 dollars into my pocket.

This was on a Friday night, I went home and that night I couldn’t sleep.

I hid the money in a drawer and all day Saturday in haunted me, then on Sunday I could hardly even stand it.

So on Monday morning I went to see coach Gains, and I told him what I had done and returned the money.

I will never forget what happened in that moment!

He looked at me and said Wynne I was wondering if you would come and talk with me, we did the inventory and found the cash didn’t match the sales.

He looked at me with a stern clarity and said, you get to choose what kind of person you will become, and today you made the right choice.

I’m glad you owned what you have done and stepped up in this moment, it speaks to your potential.

Then he looked at me and said, so will you be there to lead the concessions stand this weekend?

I couldn’t believe it, I just failed miserably yet he still believed in me!

He still saw potential in me!

This is exactly the way Jesus led His followers in ministry!

His ministry was to mobilize a movement that would transform the world!

Jesus is calling you to be His follower.

He sees potential in you!

Jesus will enable you to do more than you think.

His call is based on your potential not on your current performance.

Jesus not only had grit over quit with the mission His father had given Him.

He demonstrated grit over quit in His ministry to mobilize a people into a family that would transform the world around them!

**SLIDE 4** Jesus is calling you to a **ministry that He sees in you** because of the **potential He has placed within you.**

When we accept the call of Jesus to enter His family, we become a member of His family and we begin to discover the ministry He has planned for us!

And He will not quit! Helping us reach our potential!

You are the mission, you are His pursuit, and you are the aim of His ministry…

You are the target of His affection and He died and rose from the dead to give you His power so you can reach your full potential!

Now Jesus is calling us to follow Him, and His goal is aimed at helping us find our unique ministry that is a part of His mission to transform the world!

Jesus will stop at nothing, in fact you could say He has grit and will not quit until you discover your potential in your **ministry!**

So when Jesus asks the disciples “where is your faith?”

He was not scolding them or putting them down.

He was confronting them with the absurdity of not believing in Him after all of the miracles they had witnessed.

You could say that Jesus was frustrated with them because He saw the potential in them as they grappled with faith on the way to achieve the potential He envisioned.

I’m sure coach Gains got frustrated with my immaturity, but he looked past the flaws and saw my potential, leveraging every moment to teach me how to serve!

Many of us can’t see the potential Jesus sees in us, but if you will partner with Jesus in ministry, you will begin to see how His plan will unfold in your life.

Jesus wants you to know that He sees your potential, He will not quit until you are equipped to live it out.

He is patient with us, even when we stumble, to help us become fully equipped to achieve a ministry He has planned for each one of us!

Jesus is calling us to have grit over quit for the ministry He is calling us to achieve!

I was reminded of Jesus patience with us as I was reading though our daily reading in the New Testament this past week.

I came to a passage in Mark Chapter 9 where we witness another moment where Jesus is mentoring His disciples as they are learning how to minister.

Jesus had just gone on a mountain prayer retreat with Peter, James and John.

While they were on the mountain Jesus was transformed in their presence.

It was a brilliant display where Jesus was radiantly illuminated and standing in the presence of Moses and Elijah.

Peter, James and John where blown away by His transformed presence.

A cloud enveloped Jesus, Moses and Elijah and a voice from heaven declared, “This is my son, whom I love. Listen to Him!

They wanted to stay there and camp out in this glorious experience.

Isn’t that just like us, we want the mountain top experiences with Jesus yet that is not where we develop our full potential.

**SLIDE 5 (Mountain)** We learn who we are in the valleys with Jesus, not on the mountain tops.

Jesus said “no, we can’t stay here we must go down”!

I know the temptation is to say “Jesus give me a mountain top experience” but what if Jesus wants to teach you grit over quit in the valley?

Every experience we have with Jesus won’t be a mountain top experience.

Sometimes Jesus’ greatest work in us will be when he is leading us through the valley.

Anyone can praise God on the mountain top. But can we praise God as He is teaching us through cancer.

Shaping us through recovery of an addiction.

Changing us through the loss of a job, or the loss of your home, or struggle in your marriage.

The mountain is attractive but we grow and reach our potential in the valley!

Once God does a work in you in the valley then He is able to celebrate it on the mountain top!

The disciples had this amazing experience, but Jesus knew they needed to return to reality.

He had more work to do in them to grow them into their potential.

In the valley a volatile crowd was waiting for Jesus. When they saw Jesus they ran toward him and as the approached Jesus asked them!

 “What is all this arguing about?”

**SLIDE 6-7 *Mark 9:17-18 (NLT2) 17One of the men in the crowd spoke up and said, “Teacher, I brought my son so you could heal him. He is possessed by an evil spirit that won’t let him talk. 18And whenever this spirit seizes him, it throws him violently to the ground. Then he foams at the mouth and grinds his teeth and becomes rigid. So I asked your disciples to cast out the evil spirit, but they couldn’t do it.”***

And this is when the GRIT of Jesus comes to the surface!

**SLIDE 8 *Mark 9:19 (NLT2) 19Jesus said to them, “You faithless people! How long must I be with you? How long must I put up with you? Bring the boy to me.”***

Now I want to stop right here and speak to this for a moment.

When you read this this response you might immediately think wow that is harsh!

But I want to remind you Jesus was living in community with these disciples.

They are in a relationship, and Jesus wants them to have Grit! REMEMBER THE QESTION IN THE BOAT!

Where is your faith?

They had been together over a year, this would have been sometime after He calmed the storm.

They had seen many miracles. Heard and experienced lots of His teaching, they had observed Jesus’ rhythm of life that was fueled by power of prayer.

So Jesus was giving it to them straight.

Just like coach Gains spoke boldly into my Life, Jesus was speaking boldly into theirs.

I’m thankful that Jesus has Grit and gives it to us straight! Because that is what we need!

I can remember many times in my life where Jesus has been straight with me!

When He has cut right to the heart of the matter asking me, “Wynne where is your faith!

So they brought the boy to Jesus.

And when the evil spirit in the boy came into the presence to the son of God it threw the child into violent convulsions.

He fell to the ground writhing and foaming at the mouth.

Jesus looked into the eyes of the boy’s father and asked, “how long has this been happening”?

The father answered, “Since he was a little boy. This spirit often throws my boy into the fire or water trying to kill him. Will you have mercy on us and help us if you can?”

I want to stop right here and say many of us have been gripped by something that is constantly throwing us to the ground!

**SLIDE 9 (Depression)** Maybe it’s a habit that pulls you back into a spiral of failure, flooding you with shame and guilt.

Maybe it is a negative self-view that pulls you into constant self-doubt and depression.

Maybe it’s a wound in a relationship that keeps you walled up and guarded!

AND you are saying Jesus “if you can”….and Jesus is looking at you and saying what do you mean if I can!

If that is you, then you need to hear what Jesus is saying to this father!

**SLIDE 10 Mark 9:23-27 (NLT2) *23“What do you mean, ‘If I can’?”*** Jesus asked. ***“Anything is possible if a person believes.”***

Did you hear that…..anything is possible for him who has Faith!

Jesus is saying remember me, I’m the one with grit over quit, I will not get off mission and I will not forget my ministry. I am here to offer you anything!

Where is your faith?

**SLIDE 11** Mark 9:24 24The father instantly cried out, ***“I do believe, but help me overcome my unbelief!”***

Maybe the best thing you have heard today is the words of this father who says I need help overcoming my doubt.

Did you know it is ok for you to be real with Jesus! He wants you to be real, be open about where you struggle.

**Jesus cannot help what we won’t admit!**

Look what Jesus does next!

***Mark 9:25-2725When Jesus saw that the crowd of onlookers was growing, he rebuked the evil spirit.***

“Listen, you spirit that makes this boy unable to hear and speak,” he said.

**“I command you to come out of this child and never enter him again!”** **26Then the spirit screamed and threw the boy into another violent convulsion and left him.** The boy appeared to be dead. A murmur ran through the crowd as people said, “He’s dead.” **27But Jesus took him by the hand and helped him to his feet, and he stood up.**

Jesus with ministry grit meets this father where he was and blows his mind!

Jesus wanted the father, His followers and the crowd to see what can happen when you have faith!

Faith will push back darkness, get rid of evil, restore what is broken and unleash our potential in this world.

Jesus demonstrated grit over quit in His ministry modeling that we too can have grit over quit in our ministry.

Jesus wants to give us the power to mend what is broken and push back evil in this world.

Later when the disciples had Jesus alone they asked Him.

**SLIDE 12 *Mark 9:28-29 (NLT2) 28…………, “Why couldn’t we cast out that evil spirit?” 29Jesus replied, “This kind can be cast out only by prayer.”***

Jesus wanted them to lean in and get connected with His father in prayer so they could gain ministry grit in their lives.

When we, like Jesus, connect to the father in prayer and have faith then the potential Jesus sees in us will begin to be unleashed!

Through prayer in faith we too can possess grit over quit in our ministry and speak against evil and it will flee!

In fact this is a promise directly from Jesus to His follower!

If we will have faith in Him and believe in what His power can unleash through us then we will do even greater things that what He did!

**John 14:12-14 (NIV) 12 I tell you the truth, anyone who has faith in me will do what I have been doing. He will do even greater things than these, because I am going to the Father. 13 And I will do whatever you ask in my name, so that the Son may bring glory to the Father. 14 You may ask me for anything in my name, and I will do it.**

We are called into a ministry, a ministry that requires grit over quit, that will push back the evil in this world.

Have you acknowledged the potential Jesus sees in you?

You are His ministry and He is calling you to be a minister in this world!

Have you accepted the area of service Jesus has called you to?

He is calling you to use the gifts He gave you to continue the Ministry He began!

If you don’t know the gifts God has given you, then we want to help!

**SLIDE 13** Go to our website [www.southsidechurchva.org](http://www.southsidechurchva.org) click the serve link, and begin exploring an area to serve.

When you sign up you will be given a link to a motivational gifts assessment that will help you figure out your gifts.

**SLIDE 14** Or you can go to Southside Start and we will help you in this process.

But for some here today, you need to take a more basic step. You need to believe Jesus and accept His call on your life to minister!

Stop fighting his call. Accept that He has called you to Himself.

He wants you to stop resisting His call and allow Him to take you by the hand and lead you in the right direction.

You need to do what I did with coach Gains after I stole that money.

You need to just be honest with Jesus. Tell him you where you fall short, admit your wrongdoing.

Jesus will accept you just like coach Gains accepted me, only better!

Will you be honest with Jesus, reach out your hand, and say YES to Jesus! He will guide you to the next step.

Let’s take the step together right now!

**Let’s pray**…..Jesus will you help me with my unbelief!

Response time

* **SLIDE 15** Say yes to Jesus
* **SLIDE 16** Click the serve link begin to explore ways to serve
* **SLIDE 17** Serve a friend or neighbor by Building a basket and taking the Easter message to them.