**“Is it Time to Get out of the Boat?”**

Series: “Letters to the Church”

June 14, 2020

Matthew 14:22-34

* There are **moments** in our lives when God sends us places we would rather not go.
* There are **seasons** in our lives when Jesus sets us up for a faith-building opportunity.
* There are **times** when we find ourselves in a storm, and after straining at the ores by ourselves for hours, we finally see Jesus coming to rescue us. When we see Jesus …..
  + What will we **say**?
  + Will we ask as **Peter** did; **“Lord, if it is you, tell me to come to you on the water.”**

**John recorded the reason why after feeding the 5,000, Jesus was in such a hurry to dismiss the crowd and send the disciples into the boat:**

**Join me in the gospel of John 6:14**

14 After the people saw the sign Jesus performed, they began to say, “Surely this is the Prophet who is to come into the world.” 15 Jesus, knowing that they intended to come and make him king by force, withdrew again to a mountain by himself.

* **The crowd wanted to make Jesus King;** but the Lord knew that:
  + their **motive** were **not spiritual** and
  + that their **purpose** was **outside of God’s will**.

If the disciples had stayed, they possibly would have gone along with the crowd. So, **Matthew** records in chapter 14, **verse 22**…..

**Matthew 14:22-24**

22 **Immediately** Jesus made the disciples get into the boat and go on ahead of him to the other side, while he dismissed the crowd. 23 After he had dismissed them, he went up on a mountainside by himself to pray. Later that night, he was there alone, 24 and the boat was already a considerable distance from land, buffeted by the waves because the wind was against it.

This experience of Jesus, sending the disciples into the storm, **can be an encouragement to us** **when we go through the storms of life**.

When we find ourselves in the storm, we can take courage because we know that …..

1. **Jesus sent me into the storm:**

This storm came because **they were in the will of God**. Not like Jonah who was outside of God’s will.

You can be sure that **Jesus knew the storm was coming**, and he sent them directly into the storm. Jesus knew they were **safer** in the storm **in God’s will** than, on land with the crowds **out of God’s will.**

**Someone once said that there are two kinds of storms:**

* Storms of **correction**, when God **disciplines** us; and
* Storms of **perfection**, when God helps us to **grow**.

**Jonah** was in a storm because he **disobeyed** God and had to be **corrected**.

The **disciples** here were in a storm because **they obeyed Christ** and had to be **perfected**.

Many Christians falsely believe that obedience to God’s means **“smooth sailing.”** They forget that Jesus said;

**“In the world you shall have tribulation”** (John 16:33).

When you find yourself in the storm because you have obeyed the Lord, just remember that, **Jesus** **sent you into that storm**.

**Matthew 14:23**

23 After he had dismissed them, he went up on a mountainside by himself to pray.

In the storm, we must remember that…..

1. **Jesus is praying for me**

**But the gospel of Mark chapter 6 and verse 48…. Says…..**

“He saw the disciples straining at the oars, because the wind was against them.”

Just because Jesus sent them into the boat, does not mean He wasn’t aware of their situation. This scene is a picture of us. The people of God are **out on the sea, in the middle of the storm**. Yet Jesus Christ is in heaven **“making intercession for us”** (Rom. 8:34).

**Jesus saw** the disciples and **knew their difficulty**, just as He **sees us** and **knows** our needs.

**Hebrews 4:15-16**

15 **For we do not have a high priest who is unable to empathize with our weaknesses**, but we have one who has been tempted in every way, just as we are—yet he did not sin. 16 **Let us then approach God’s throne of grace with confidence, so that we may receive mercy and find grace to help us in our time of need.**

Jesus feels the burdens that we feel and knows what we are going through, and just as he was praying for his disciples then, He is praying for his disciples today.

That should give every believer confidence, knowing that, Jesus Christ, our Savior, is praying for us.

Well, He is praying for you, and He **sees** you, right where you are.

**Matthew 14:25**

25 Shortly before dawn **Jesus went out to them**, **walking** on the lake. 26 When the disciples saw him walking on the lake, they were terrified. “It’s a ghost,” they said, and cried out in fear.

27 But Jesus immediately said to them: **“Take courage! It is I. Don’t be afraid.”**

**So, take courage…..**

1. **Jesus will not leave me alone**

* Storms have a way of making you feel alone; but God’s Word says that God never leaves us alone in the storm.

The prophet Isaiah even recorded these words;

**“When you pass through the waters, I will be with you”** (Isa. 43:2).

Notice that Jesus waited until the boat was **far from land**.

I’m sure the disciples felt like they were on their own, in over their heads. **Have you ever felt that way?**

* Our greatest difficulty is **giving** our problems to God.
* **Trusting** Him to work things out for His glory.
* **Taking our hands off** the situation and allowing God to act in His time and according to His will.
* **Believing** that God not only can, but **that He will** take us through the storm.

When we **refuse** **to trust God**, we show that we think **our God is too small** to save us.

* **Have you ever wondered *WHY* Jesus chose to walk on the water and come to His disciples just before daylight?**

Could it be that Jesus wanted to show His disciples that the very thing they **feared at that moment (the sea**) **was** **the very means He chose to come and save them.**

Often the **very things we fear**, are the very things that bring us into a deeper love for the God we serve.

* **Have you ever wondered why the disciples didn’t recognize Jesus?** 
  + **Could it be because they weren’t expecting Him.**
* Instead, their fear caused them to think the worst. These grown men cried out; “**It’s a ghost**.”
* **Fear** and **faith** cannot live in the same heart, because **fear** has a way of **blinding our eyes to God’s presence**.

**Matthew 14:28**

**“Lord, if it’s you**,” Peter replied, **“tell me to come to you on the water.” 29 “Come,”** he said.Then Peter got down out of the boat, walked on the water and came toward Jesus. 30 But when he saw the wind, he was afraid and, beginning to sink, cried out, **“Lord, save me!”**

When we cry out to Jesus …..

1. **Jesus will help me grow in my faith**

Just as Jesus wasn’t present for this storm, the disciples would face many storms once Jesus left them and ascended to the Father.

* **Our challenge is to understand the purpose of the storm.**

Over the years in reading this chapter, I have learned a new appreciation for Peter. When I was younger, I use to focus on Peter’s sinking due to a lack of faith.

Now, I am amazed that **Peter was the only one in the boat with the courage to leave the boat to go to Jesus, in the storm.**

**That’s faith.**

* Peter risked being, the **only one** to get out of the boat,
* Peter risked going it **alone**, and
* Peter risked the danger of the **storm**.

When is the last time when, “**Stepped out alone?”**

I’ve wondered many times whether **I would have the courage to; leave the boat and go to Jesus?**

**“Anybody can sit in the boat and watch**,” but it takes a person of real faith to risk **leaving the safety of the boat and walk on the water**.

* **Why did Jesus say Peter to sink?**

**Matthew 14:31**

Immediately Jesus reached out his hand and caught him. “You of little faith,” he said, “why did you doubt?”

Peter’s **faith began to waver** because he **took his eyes off the Lord** and **began to look at the circumstances around** him.

**“Why did you doubt?”** Jesus asked him (Matt. 14:31).

This word translated “**doubt”** carries the meaning of **“standing uncertainly at two ways.”** Peter started out with great faith but ended up with little faith because **he saw “two ways; instead of one.”**

**Now, here’s a lesson for each of us.**

* When Peter saw that he was “**beginning to sink**” he immediately cried out to Jesus for help.

I wonder if this incident was what Peter was thinking of years later when he wrote in **1 Peter 3:12**….

**“For the eyes of the Lord are over the righteous, and His ears are open unto their prayers” (1 Peter 3:12).**

* **The storms of life teach us to trust God.**

It has been said that;

**“Faith is not believing in spite of the evidence, but obeying in spite of consequence.”**

**Matthew 14:32-33**

And when they climbed into the boat, the wind died down. 33 Then those who were in the boat worshiped him, saying, “**Truly you are the Son of God.”**

Finally…. You can be certain…..

1. **Jesus will bring me through the storm**

* Because Peter was willing to get out of the boat, we are still talking about this passage today.

Peter asked; and Jesus said, “**Come.**”

Even after Peter began to sink; **Jesus and Peter walked on the water together and went back to the boat.**

Peter’s experience turned out to be a **blessing** to the **other disciples**, to **himself** and even to **us** today.

When they saw the power of Jesus, as He calmed the storm, all they could do is to **fall down and worship Him.**

**In** **Matthew 8**, when Jesus calmed the **first storm**, the disciples said, **“What manner of Man is this?”**

But now their response is, **“Truly, you are the Son of God.”**

* The disciples had helped to feed 5,000 people, and then God permitted them to **go through a storm**.
* In the Book of Acts, they won 5,000 people, and then the **storm of persecution began**.

**In Matthew 14:34….**

The ship landed at Gennesaret, near Capernaum; and Jesus healed many people.

* **Do you think these people knew that Jesus had come through a storm to meet their needs?**

But that’s not the only storm Jesus went through.

Jesus endured the **storm** **of** **the cross** so that we would never have to face the **storm of God’s judgment poured out on our sins.**

**Is it worth getting out of the boat to discover that; Jesus** **“Truly is the Son of God?”**

* That’s a question only you can answer.