

Walking on Water

Harmony M.B.C., Sept. 9, 2012 (Morning)

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Read first 4 verses, then introduction:

Mat. 14:22 And straightway Jesus constrained his disciples to get into a ship, and to go before him unto the other side, while he sent the multitudes away.

Mat. 14:23 And when he had sent the multitudes away, he went up into a mountain apart to pray: and when the evening was come, he was there alone.

Mat. 14:24 But the ship was now in the midst of the sea, tossed with waves: for the wind was contrary.

Mat. 14:25 And in the fourth watch of the night Jesus went unto them, walking on the sea.

Mat. 14:26 And when the disciples saw him walking on the sea, they were troubled, saying, It is a spirit; and they cried out for fear.

Mat. 14:27 But straightway Jesus spake unto them, saying, Be of good cheer; it is I; be not afraid.

Mat. 14:28 And Peter answered him and said, Lord, if it be thou, bid me come unto thee on the water.

Mat. 14:29 And he said, Come. And when Peter was come down out of the ship, he walked on the water, to go to Jesus.

Mat. 14:30 But when he saw the wind boisterous, he was afraid; and beginning to sink, he cried, saying, Lord, save me.

Mat. 14:31 And immediately Jesus stretched forth *his* hand, and caught him, and said unto him, O thou of little faith, wherefore didst thou doubt?

Mat. 14:32 And when they were come into the ship, the wind ceased.

So, Christ sets the agenda for His disciples here in v. 22. The statement suggests that they had every intention of just staying close to Him, and going where He went. This is a good and safe agenda for the people of God, but truth is, it is not always followed. And in this case, it is the Lord Himself that changes their plans for them (“constrained” them to get into a ship and go out ahead of him to the other side of the sea). Sometimes the Lord assigns us things to do that puts us into a situation that we seem to be out of His sight, out of touch with Him...but we ought to know that is impossible to be true since He sees everything and He is always with us. But, truth is, WE sometimes get to places, even in obedience to Him where we feel like there is an entire sea of unknowns between us and Him. So, this is where the disciples are in our text. Now they are out in the middle of the sea and the waves are high, the ship is jumping around, and the wind is resisting their progress. This sort of describes places we get to in our own lives, doesn't it. We get to places, even when we are trying to do what the Lord constrains us to do, and we find that it seems like swimming upstream in a strong current; it seems like rowing a boat against the wind; it seems like the winds of change are whipping about us with such a fury that we can't think; it seems like the winds of trial are rocking the ship of our life so badly we can't even focus on how to go forward.

Now, since the Lord has drawn such a parallel picture for us here, in a real situation these disciples found themselves in, we ought to look for the spiritual lessons it can give us. So, let's

look at what happens in the next few verses and see what He will teach us.

I. V.25 - In the worst of our life experiences, Christ is able to come to us in a miraculous way

- ❖ Illustrate: In Acts 18, Paul begins missionary work in Corinth. He meets with awesome opposition (see v.12 - reveals a conspiracy of huge proportions among the Jews at Corinth to have him killed); but the Lord comes to him in these trying hours and encourages him - Acts 18:9-10 Then spake the Lord to Paul in the night by a vision, Be not afraid, but speak, and hold not thy peace: 10 For I am with thee, and no man shall set on thee to hurt thee: for I have much people in this city.
- ❖ Illustrate: Michael gets lost at Benny's farm - man in truck stops and asks if we are looking for a little boy
- ❖ Illustrate: We wreck the truck while helping the Channel's move - man on tractor suddenly shows up

II. V. 26 - Being human, we as the disciples of the Lord may sometimes misinterpret His presence

- ❖ Illustrate: Squanto, the Indian enslaved by another Indian tribe is introduced to the Pilgrims at Plymouth Rock in the spring of 1620. I'm sure none of these Pilgrims recognized that Christ had come to encourage them and provide a way for them to survive in the form of a barbarian Indian (discuss previous winter's hardship and death in this colony, Squanto teaching them how to plant corn with fish for fertilizer that following spring).
- ❖ Illustrate: Unknown Author writes:
The man whispered, "God, speak to me"
And a meadowlark sang.
But the man did not hear.

So the man yelled "God, speak to me"
And the thunder & lightning rolled across the sky.
But the man did not listen.

The man looked around and said, "God, let me see you."
And a star shined brightly.
But the man did not see.

And, the man shouted, "God, show me a miracle"
And a life was born.
But the man did not notice.

So, the man cried out in despair, "Touch me, God, and let me know you are here"
Whereupon, God reached down and touched the man.
But the man brushed the butterfly away and walked on.

III. V.27 - If we are listening, we will be able to hear Him encouraging us, calming us, and identifying Himself

- ❖ "Peace I leave with you, my peace I give unto you...." (**John 14:27**) isn't just some bible

verse we read.

- ❖ Neither is His admonition to us (in the same verse) where He says, “Let not your heart be troubled, neither let it be afraid.”

IV. V.28 - When we can feel the Lord is with us, we may become emboldened to do great things for Him

- ❖ v.29 - The Lord will encourage us to great things when we are moved to do them
- ❖ We are usually made bold when we see and understand clearly the power of Christ
- ❖ Also, we WILL be able to do those great things we have a heart and faith to do (Peter really did walk on the water)

V. V.30 - All our best intentions sometimes fall flat when we are overwhelmed by the violence and chaos of the world around us

- ❖ Somewhere in Peter’s trip, his viewpoint changed (i.e. the windstorm hadn’t changed, the size and violence of the waves hadn’t changed, and the obvious presence of Christ standing on the water hadn’t changed)
- ❖ The oversized terror that Peter got himself into is shown clearly by his cry to be saved (remember that Peter could swim very well - see **John 20:7** (he jumps in a hundred yard out and swims to shore).
- ❖ When this happens, we need to be like Peter, and be ready to call on the Lord for help (our fear is real in such times, and the threat actually exists because we see it as a threat)

VI. V.31 - We can expect to be reminded about where it was we made the mis-step (O thou of little faith, wherefore didst thou doubt?)

- ❖ Notice that Peter’s problem came about because of doubt
 - “Doubt makes the mountain which faith can move.” (Anonymous)
- ❖ The Lord thinks of our preservation and encouragement even when we doubt
- ❖ Part of His lesson for us in our doubting times is to make us think about how unfounded it is (why did you doubt? In the face of the fact that He was walking on water, YOU were walking on water, this One before you was omnipotent)

VII. V.32 - When we know and feel the Lord’s presence, life calms down

- ❖ It was the same ship that was rocked powerfully by the winds and seas when Jesus wasn’t in it
- ❖ The Lord can calm the storms of life wherever we are