**Calvary Fellowship 9.25.2022 Matthew 14:1-33 “The Storm before the Calm”**

* **So those of U who have been at Calvary for a while know that I wasn’t the best student - I did great in college, but 1st-12th was a little shaky**
* Some of the reason for that is my parents didn’t understand the concept of homework - they thought homework was something I was making up
* I would tell them I couldn’t go to work at my step-dad’s cold storage facility in Boston where I went 3-4 days a week after school
* They would say, “Listen, U go to school all day. If you’re not smart enough to finish your work in school, that’s your problem. Now it’s time to work.”
* So I spent most of my afternoons & evening operating forklifts & pallet jacks at the age of 12 being told that students in Cuba finished their work at school
* I said, “Wow. Cuba seems like paradise. Why did U leave again?”
* **So when I was in the 8th grade, we had a pop quiz in our science class**
* I did great on the test - I only missed 3 questions - the problem was, JP, the kids who sat next to me, he only got 3 questions wrong also
* The issue was, we had written the same answers for the questions that we each got wrong - so I got called to the teacher’s desk
* He asked me, “Robert, did U copy off of JP’s paper?” - I said, “No ma’am.”
* She said, “That’s weird b/c on question #20 he wrote, “I don’t know” as the answer and on question #20 U wrote “Me neither”
* Seriously, she made me retake the test - the 2nd time I got 3 wrong, but it was a different 3, so she gave me 6 wrong & a 70% - I was thrilled
* **The Bible is going to challenge us today - it’s going to challenge us & show us that faith is needed most in moments of testing**
* Faith isn’t really needed when you’re doing nothing - No 1 woke up this morning & boldly in faith ate breakfast - Well, I guess that depends on who cooked it
* But the need for faith necessitates action - why? B/c faith is acting like God is telling the truth - it’s not an emotion or simply talking about faith
* At its core, faith is about trust & the reality is, your life will be defined by the level at which U believe God is telling the truth
* **So I want us in our time together to look at 3 storms - Jesus has just finished giving his message on the kingdom parables**
* And immediately He’s thrown back into the action w/ problems & challenges
* There’s people in jail, there’s people who are hungry, & people needing help
* And if you’re walking through a storm today, this message is gong to equip U w/ how to deal w/ the storms & how to walk through them
* B/c most of us pray for God to move the storm & sometimes He does
* And other times, He empowers us to be victorious in the storm ‘’
* So wherever U are - if you’re coming out of a storm, if you’re in the storm, or you’re about to enter the storm, God has a word for U to give U hope…

**———(v. 1-12)———**

**#1 - The Storm Gives a Better Perspective**

* **Now, we talked about this situation a little bit when we taught Matthew 11 & John initial imprisonment, but here’s a little bit of background**
* Herod the Tetrarch is Herod Antipas - he was the 4th son of Herod the Great
* Herod the Great is the guy who killed the all the babies in Bethlehem (Matt. 2)
* Tetrarch means 1/4 ruler - so he rules 25% of Israel w/ 2 of his brothers (map)
* Herod Archeleus ruled 1/2 the kingdom of Israel - mostly to the south
* Herod Philip ruled 1/4 of Israel - the Northeast area of Galilee
* Herod Antipas ruled the other 1/2 - the northwest area of Galilee
* A lot of Jesus’ ministry took place around the area that Antipas ruled
* Philip had a wife named Herodias - who by the way was also his niece
* Herodias is the daughter of Aristobulus IV - Herod the Great’s oldest son
* He was supposed to be Herod’s heir, but Herod suspected him of treason & ended up having him killed in his late 30’s
* So Herodias decides to leave husband/ uncle Philip & marry his ½ brother Antipas, who, if you’re keeping score at home, is also her uncle - super creepy
* To marry her, Antipas divorced his wife, who was the daughter of King Aretas - the king of the Nabeteans (modern day Jordan) - whose capital was Petra (pic)
* Aretas was so angered by how his daughter was treated that he destroyed most of Herod’s army & would have killed Antipas as well, had not the Roman army intervened - so this was an International crisis
* So John the Baptist spoke out about this & had John arrested to garner favor w/ his wife/ niece Herodias
* So if you’re keeping score at home, we have 2 brothers who married their niece & the only 1 getting punished is the man of God who said they shouldn’t do that
* **Listen, this is 1 of my least favorite stories in the Bible b/c I love John the Baptist so much - he’s probably my favorite Bible character**
* He’s a man of God who was doing all the right things & somehow it seems like evil wins the day - But we need to keep zooming out, b/c evil isn’t winning
* John is dead & Herodias & Antipas are saying, “My problems are over.”
* After the whole situation w/ the Nabeteans, Antipas was on the outs w/ the emperor - then Tiberius Caesar died & his successor Caligula didn’t like him
* Antipas went to Rome to try & buy the title “King of the Jews” from Caligula
* And Caligula was so fed up w/ Antipas, that Caligula took everything that belonged to Antipas, his wealth, position, & title & give us to Agrippa - who was Antipas’ nephew - who was actually Herodias’ brother
* Antipas died not long after John - and he’s just a footnote in history - John’s legacy is that U can’t tell the story of Jesus w/o talking about John
* **And here’s what John knew - that’s this life isn’t all there is**
* “And do this, knowing the time, that now it is high time to awake out of sleep; for now our salvation is nearer than when we first believed. The night is far spent, the day is at hand. Therefore let us cast off the works of darkness, and let us put on the armor of light.” (Romans 13:11-12)
* As believers, we have an understanding that this life isn’t the end of the game
* There’s an eternity that we know is coming - but if U think all there is is this life, then you’re going to try to get everything U can here & now b/c this is all there is
* **It’s like going to Disney World - have U ever been to Disney w/ a person who only has a 1 day pass? It’s miserable**
* So a few yrs ago I was speaking at this conference in Orlando & we decided to turn it into a family vacation & we went to Magic Kingdom after the conference
* Well, a friend of mine (who is also a pastor) texts me & says, “Are U at the Magic Kingdom?” - I said yes & we agreed to meet up for lunch
* So we end up at Cosmic Rays in Tomorrowland - my wife hates Cosmic Rays, but somehow we always end up there
* It is the worst designed restaurant in the world - there’s a different line for everything - a line for chicken - a line for beef - a line for venison - whatever
* But in my family, we can’t agree on anything, so everyone wants something different & we end up in a bunch of lines
* Well, I meet up w/ my friend Travis & his family & we have a great time w/ them
* But they are strategizing how to ride everything before 11pm
* I say, “What time did U get here?” - They said, “7AM” - I said, “Are U crazy?”
* They said, “We’ve got 1 day passes & we are riding everything today.”
* They asked what we were doing & I said, “Listen, we do our 3 fast passes, 1 other ride & this lunch & if we miss anything, we’ll catch it next time b/c I’m out”
* Why? B/c this isn’t the end for me - I have an eternity to attend this kingdom
* But if U think that this life is a 1 day pass, you’ll run over anything & use anyone to get what U think U deserve, need, or want
* Herod lived his life like this was all there was & in the end, his life was a waste
* John lived like there was another kingdom that was coming & that’s why his legacy is still speaking to us 2,000 year later
* **If salvation hasn’t invaded your future, you’ll spend your entire life trying to get everything U want b/c U think this is all there is**
* Here’s what salvation does - it frees U of that & brings a peace, joy, & contentment into your life that allows U to really live
* And you’ll know that no matter how challenging this storm is, there’s hope b/c there’s an eternity that we’re

**———(v. 13-21)———**

**#2 - The Storm Reveals God’s Provision**

* **Now I want U to understand what’s happening here**
* Jesus is teaching & healing, but it’s getting dark & the area where they are is deserted - but this isn’t by accident - Jesus wants to do something
* U need to know - this is the only miracle that’s recorded in all 4 Gospels
* When U read this story, 1 of the things you’re going to learn is that this is a test
* It’s a test for the people Jesus is going to feed, but that test comes later & it’s recorded for us in John 6 - He gives them a tough teaching to accept
* But the immediate test is for the disciples, the followers of Jesus
* **It was the trust test - Jesus presents them w/ an impossible situation & then asks them to trust Him**
* Here’s why He does that - b/c it’s easy to talk about trusting Jesus when we don’t have to actually trust Him
* But when things get tough, that’s when our trust is revealed
* Couple of things U need to know - 1st, the feeding of the 5,000 is only counting the men - so it’s closer to the feeding of the 20,000 w/ women & kids
* **So why do this miracle at all? 1st, b/c Jesus cares about the men, women, & kids who were there & He wants to meet their needs**
* But there’s another reason - He wants to elevate the fish of His disciples
* “Then Jesus lifted up His eyes, and seeing a great multitude coming toward Him, He said to Philip, ‘Where shall we buy bread, that these may eat?’ But this He said to test him, for He Himself knew what He would do. Philip answered Him, ‘Two hundred denarii worth of bread is not sufficient for them, that every one of them may have a little.’ One of His disciples, Andrew, Simon Peter’s brother, said to Him,**‘**There is a lad here who has five barley loaves and two small fish, but what are they among so many?’” (John 6:5-9)
* **There’s a principle Jesus wants to teach His disciples that is important for us to understand as well**
* It’s that My obedience + God’s blessing = Abundance
* Here’s the part of this story that blows my mind - if this little boy would have kept his own lunch, it wouldn’t have even filled him up
* Now before U start to think that these loaves were like long loaves of Cuban bread & the fish were 20 pound bass
* First, barley loaves were what the poorest people in Israel ate
* B/c barley is what people fed their animals
* We would probably do better to think of them as rolls
* 2nd, the fish this kid had were called “opsarion” - this is basically the size of a sardine - this kid didn’t have much to offer
* The disciples said that 200 denarii wasn’t enough to feed everyone
* A denarii was a Roman coin that represented a day’s wage
* They were saying that it would take 200 days (7 months) worth of money to feed everyone & that wasn’t even enough
* So what’s Jesus trying to do here? He’s trying to elevate their faith
* He wants them to see that 5 rolls & 2 sardines is better than 7 months worth of money when Jesus is involved
* **Here’s how our mind works - we think, “If God wants me to give, He should give me more than 5 loaves & 2 fish” - that’s not the way it works**
* U take a step of faith & honor God w/ your $$, then He multiplies it - the test is, ‘Do U believe God can provide for U?”
* Some never get past this test - they stumble at this teaching over & over again
* And God, in His grace doesn’t let us move on before we pass the test
* There is a connection to giving & faith - lots of people say they have faith, but when someone throws their sardines in, that’s when it gets real
* **When I was in college, I owed $2,000 in tuition from my last 2 semesters**
* I had just gotten married & we had no budget for that
* I was paying $50 a month, but I wasn’t going to graduate until I had paid it in full
* So my life was completely on hold until I paid this off
* Then 1 day the dean of the school called me into his office & showed me a piece of paper - my balance was zero - Someone paid off my debt
* God had put this in that person’s heart & caused him/ her to do this for me
* And I remember being 23 years old & thinking, “Someday, I want to do this for someone else.”
* **A few months ago, someone I know who’s in college stopping taking classes b/c of a tuition issue**
* They didn’t have the money & didn’t want to go into debt over college
* So I reached out to the school & said, “How much does this person owe?”
* And I went to my wife & said, “Honey, I feel like God is telling us to help b/c I wouldn’t be where I am toady if someone hadn’t helped me.”
* So we paid the bill & I’ve never been so happy & then something I didn’t expect happened - God started blessing us like crazy
* In the next week, money just showed up that I had never expected & we saw God do something so unexpected in our lives
* That’s why whenever we talk about giving at Calvary, it’s never really about the money - it’s always about trust
* It’s us giving Jesus our 5 rolls & 2 sardines, knowing that He can do more w/ it that we ever could on our own
* “So when they were filled, He said to His disciples, 'Gather up the fragments that remain, so that nothing is lost.’ Therefore they gathered them up, and filled twelve baskets with the fragments of the five barley loaves which were left over by those who had eaten.” (John 6:12-13)
* When my daughter Livi was really young, she’d do these daily tea parties
* Olivia would pour her invisible tea & I’ll chug it & ask for more
* She’ll give me a plastic cracker the tea set came w/ & I will eat until I’m stuffed
* The problem is, as she got older, she didn’t want to use air tea & plastic treats
* She wants to work w/ live ammo - so we give her water & a saltine crackers
* Somehow she’d gets the water all over her & the cracker started sticking to her body & she looks like a human croqueta
* **We might have the tendency to think that’s what happened in this story**
* Everyone had a tiny bite & then said they were full, but that’s not what John records in the story
* He says everyone ate & was “filled” - that word is literally “glutted” or “stuffed”
* They were so full they couldn’t even more - ever eaten that much? Me neither
* Seriously, this was like Thanksgiving - when you’ve had a couple of platefuls of food & U unbutton the button on your pants to create some room
* Then U say, “OK, I’ll have the cake & pie. I don’t want to be rude & say no.”
* The crowd was full & the disciples were holding 12 baskets full of fragments
* By the way, when Carey & I got married I told her I didn’t eat leftovers
* I said, “If U find a verse in the Bible about eating leftovers, I’ll do it.”
* Verse 12 is what she showed me & I had to obey the Bible
* **Here’s the point - why 12 baskets? B/c there were 12 disciples that Jesus was trying to engage & cause them to see God’s resources & ability**
* How did it all start? W/ 5 rolls & 2 sardines
* And do U know how U get out of a financial storm? When U trust God w/ your 5 loaves & 2 fish & He does the thing that only He can do

**———(v. 22-33)———**

**#3 - The Storm Shows God’s Power**

* **There’s something important here that I don’t want us to miss - it was the 4th watch of the night - Jews divided the night into 4 watches**
* Kind of like how we talk about people who work 1 shift, 2nd shift, or 3rd shift
* 1st watch was 6PM-9PM/ 2nd - 9PM-midnight/ 3rd - midnight -3AM/ 4th - 3AM-6AM - the point is, the disciples had been struggling for hours
* Listen, too often we look on at pain or difficulty or a storm & think, “What did I do wrong to deserve this?” - the disciples didn’t do anything wrong
* But Jesus wanted to reveal Himself to them on the the thing they were most afraid of - they feared the storm & Jesus showed up walking on top of it
* **Then Peter asks to walk on water & he does for a little bit**
* Now listen, we get on Peter for all the dumb things he says & does, but let’s remember, he’s the only person to have walked on water
* Most of us would never let anyone forget that - we’d be bringing up our walking on water in every single conversation we have for the rest of our lives
* Our email address would be [bigsteps@waterwalker.com](mailto:bigsteps@waterwater.com) - we’d write a book called, “Aqua Faith” - We’d start a youth group & call it “Liquid” - we’d all do that
* **But here’s what people in the storm know - it’s the secret of the storm**
* That the storm doesn’t signify Jesus’ absence - instead, it shows us how close He is - and that He is wanting for U to see Him in the middle of your storm
* B/c eventually the storm passes, but what U experienced & learned about who God is are the things you’ll take w/ U for the rest of your life
* That’s why the disciples don’t fear the storm after this episode - they learned who the Lord of the storm is - that the wind & sea obey Him
* And here’s the other thing - this isn’t the 1st time that they are afraid of the storm - but it was the last time
* This is why we face the same tests in life over & over - it’s b/c God is waiting for us to pass the test so we can move to the next level
* Most of us think we want a life of smooth sailing, but what we really want is a life of purpose - Antipas had a life of smooth sailing & it amounted to nothing
* U & I have the privilege to walk w/ Jesus & He hasn’t left us in the same way He hasn’t left them - He is letting the storm grow our faith
* So if you’re in a marriage storm, fix your eyes of Jesus & you’ll get through the storm - hang on to Him & each other & don’t give up b/c He’s w/ U
* If you’re struggling w/ your kids, then fix your eyes on Jesus & do what He’s telling U to do - be courageous & watch Him work in your family
* If you’re struggling w/ your mental or emotional health, remind yourself that the storm down’t last forever - how your feeling doesn’t last forever
* “Weeping may endure for a night, But joy comes in the morning.” (Psalm 30:5)
* And I know that it’s hard to see, but as a big brother who has endured a few storms in his life, can I share this truth w/ U?
* It’s hard to see when you’re in the storm, but you’ll see it when U leave it
* On the other side of the storm, you’ll learn that God hasn’t been doing this to us
* He’s been doing this for us & the storm in a strange way becomes a gift
* Not b/c you’d ever wish it on anyone, but b/c it produced something in U that nothing else could & it made U more like Jesus & it grounded your faith
* And it gave U a trust in God that served U in the next season of life
* In this regard, Christianity has a leg up on any other belief system of philosophy - why? B/c if you’re a secular person, your suffering has no meaning
* If U subscribe to any other belief system or religious idea, then god is separate from suffering & cannot relate to it
* But in Jesus, we can fix our eyes on Him b/c He suffered w/ His creation & for His creation & He understands suffering like no 1 else
* B/c Jesus in His suffering was seeking us & now the key to handling suffering is to seek Him…