

Jesus Reigns over Everything

Part 3 – Surprises

Matthew 14.22-33

Surprised by God's Presence

- He shows up where we don't expect
 - "He sent us into this hardship, but where is He now?"
 - We live with the fallacy that it's easier to see God when life is easy
- He shows up in ways we don't expect
 - When He does, it's easy to mistake Him for something else – a ghost, luck, karma...for Xns, my obedience brought this about, etc.
- He is solidifying in their mind that He is who they think He is

Surprised by God's Word

- We sometimes get surprised by what He says
- Most common responses that evoke surprise
 1. Yes – sometimes pleasant, sometimes terrifying
 2. No – almost always disappointing, sometimes infuriating, get to see wisdom later
 3. Wait – frustrating all the way, but helps us know if we want God for God or for what He gives / can give
 4. Follow – what He says most often, takes courage, expects obedience when He says it
- He always responds for our joy
 - Hard to believe sometimes but true (1 John 5.4, John 8.31-32)
 - Key question: will I be faithful to Him in that moment like He is faithful to me?

Surprised in our Failure

- Never frustrated that we are incapable
 - He doesn't expect sufficiency just availability
- Can be frustrated with our distraction
 - How many things clamor for our attention? How many are worth our attention? (much less our affection and allegiance)
- Same response: reaching out to us
 - But you don't know MY story – Isaiah 59.1
 - High School Ring in Harvey – you're never too far gone, "I SEE YOU, I can find you even if you don't think you can find Me"

Questions for Discussion:

1. When was the last time you found yourself genuinely surprised? What was your response? When was the last time you found yourself genuinely surprised by God (something He said or did)? What was your response?
2. In the sermon, we said that God surprises us by showing up in places we don't expect and in ways we don't expect. Where else can you think of in the Bible where He surprised His people? From the responses of the group, what do you see in common? What differences do you see?
3. Read 1 John 5.4 and John 8.31-32. When God speaks through His Word, He intends life and freedom and joy for us. What command / precept / truth can you think of that is personally most difficult for you to believe is for your life, freedom, and joy?
4. Out of the four responses listed above that surprise us (Yes, No, Wait, Follow), which is easiest for you to hear? Which is most difficult? Why? Can you give an example of when God surprised you with His answer? How did it turn out?
5. What tends to distract you the most spiritually? What kinds of things need to be in place to prevent that from happening?
6. Reread Isaiah 59.1. Who in your life needs to know about a God who is willing and ready to reach out and save those far from Him, those sinking, and those struggling?