The Miracle in the Storm

Matthew 14:22-33
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.
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.
24 But the ship was now in the midst of the sea, tossed with waves: for the wind was contrary.
25 And in the fourth watch of the night Jesus went unto them, walking on the sea.
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.
27 But straightway Jesus spake unto them, saying, Be of good cheer; it is I; be not afraid.
28 And Peter answered him and said, Lord, if it be thou, bid me come unto thee on the water.
29 And he said, Come. And when Peter was come down out of the ship, he walked on the water, to go to Jesus.
30 But when he saw the wind boisterous, he was afraid; and beginning to sink, he cried, saying, Lord, save me.
31 And immediately Jesus stretched forth his hand, and caught him, and said unto him, O thou of little faith, wherefore didst thou doubt?
32 And when they were come into the ship, the wind ceased.
33 Then they that were in the ship came and worshipped him, saying, Of a truth thou art the Son of God.

Introduction
• Life is much like the ocean.
  o It is seldom calm
• As quickly as the winds from one storm subside
  o The horizon dances with the clouds of another storm that is quickly approaching.
• Serving the Lord doesn’t exempt you from the storm.
  o The storm in our txt overcame the disciples while they were doing exactly what Jesus told them to do.
  o However, they learned a valuable lesson that evening
    ▪ One I want to share with you this evening.
• They discovered that Jesus was their miracle even in the midst of their storm!

Sent into the storm
• Jesus had just multiplied the five loaves and two fish to feed the hungry multitude
  o Although we enjoy the rush of the miraculous we must face the reality of good things coming to an end.

The Miracle In the Storm
The last service of the revival finally ends
The camp meeting closes out
Youth camp wraps up
Conference concludes
  • Everyone has to go back home.
    ▪ I always hated coming home from youth camp

• These times test our spiritual mettle
  ▪ What do we do when the fervency of the moment fades
    ▪ When the music dies
    ▪ When our friends are no longer there
    ▪ When the atmosphere changes so drastically
  ▪ When we go from the mountain top to the deep dark valley

• Faithfulness to God is about more than just the mountain top
  ▪ It means that we keep on keeping on even when the way gets rough
    ▪ Even when the opposition gets strong.
      ▪ Its one thing to shout at camp meeting.
      ▪ Its another thing to worship on a Wednesday evening

• When Jesus commanded his disciples to get into a ship and to go wait for him on the other side of the sea, he knew that they were sailing into a storm.
  ▪ As a matter of fact, it could be argued that he sent them into the storm.
    ▪ He knew before that little ship ever cast off that a storm was gathering on the horizon.
  ▪ The weather may have been fine where they were
    ▪ Skies may have been blue
  ▪ Everyone may have been elated by the miracle that they had just taken part in
    ▪ But He knew where they were going.
  ▪ When they got on that boat, camp meeting was coming to an end.
    ▪ He may have been the only one that knew it, but he knew it.

• He could have turned the storm away, but he didn’t.
  ▪ He could have planned a different route for his disciples, but he didn’t
  ▪ He could have delayed their launch until the storm was gone but he didn’t
  ▪ He could have given them some warning of what lay before them, but he didn’t
  ▪ He knew that regardless of what came upon them, he was going to take care of them.
  ▪ He knew that no storm could wrestle them away from the safety and security of his hand.
  ▪ He also knew that they needed to discover that miracles are not just things that occur on sunny afternoons when the multitude is gathered.
  ▪ He knew, like only he could know that they needed to see the miracle in the storm!

• There are times in your life that God will send you into the storm.
The Miracle In the Storm

- Times that he will allow you, without any forewarning to sail headlong from the mountain top of joy to the deep valley of despair.
- There are times when he sends you into circumstances that he already knows are going to be contrary, where the wind is going to blow against you.
- Where the seas are going to rise and the storm is going to toss you to and fro.
- He knows that you will face some turbulence; he knows that you will walk through some valleys, he knows that you will endure some storms.
- But, he also knows that the storms will teach you things that you can’t learn anywhere else.
- It’s not that he wants you to suffer, or that he delights in your hardships but rather that the wants you to learn, like his disciples, the reassurance that comes from seeing the miracle in the storm.

- Defeat often teaches us more than victory.
  - Adversity does more to strengthen us than comfort and ease.
  - And storms, as terrible and tragic as they are, teach us far more than the peaceful times of our lives.
  - We learn more about the provision of God, more about the blessings of God, more about the confidence of trusting in him when we are in the storm than we do in times of plenty and periods of blessing.
  - When Solomon commanded us, in Ecclesiastes 7:14, to be joyful in the days of prosperity but, in the day of adversity to consider;
    - he was recognizing the timeless truth
    - that when things go well we enjoy them
    - but it is in times of trouble and despair that we really stop to reflect upon our lives.
  - There’s something about storms that cause us to stop and consider ourselves.
    - To consider our ways
    - To consider the path we have trod and the direction we are going.
    - Something about trial and adversity causes us to cut through all of the facades of life and strike to the heart of the matter.

- So Jesus, knowing full well that he is sending his disciples into the terrible storm, bids them farewell, and sends them into the storm!
  - This wasn’t a minor little squall.
  - This wasn’t just an evening thunder-boomer.
  - These were seasoned fishermen, experienced sailors.
  - And on that night they encountered a storm the likes of which they had rarely seen before.
  - I have often marveled at the ferocity of the storm that would strike fear into the hearts of men like Peter and James and John.
  - Men of the sea, men who grew up on the decks of their daddy’s boats.
These guys have seen a few storms.
They've experienced the rough waters.
They've always made it through.
But on this night, with this storm, it was different story!

Fear struck their heart.
Here they are, all alone, Jesus is not with them.
And all of a sudden the quiet night sky gives way to a ferocious storm.
The stars disappear one by one as the dark ominous cloud grows to cover the horizon.
The wind whips against them, the waves toss the boat to and fro, first they lose their way, then they lose their strength, finally they lose their hope.
It seems as if the storm will destroy them.

When it seemed as if all hope was lost, someone noticed something out there in the storm.
An other-worldly shape moving across the waters.
Fear gripped them.
Someone cried out, it’s a spirit.
Then with one voice, Matthew 14:26 says, they cried out for fear.
It was all they could stand.
As if the storm was not enough, there seemed to be spirit walking across the waters!

But after a moment, they recognized that what they saw, out there in the dark, walking on the waves, was the miracle in the storm.
I don’t know who realized it first, but someone came to the sudden understanding that we are not alone in this terrible tragedy.
Jesus is right here with us!
Right at the moment when it seemed as if they would be swallowed by the storm never to be heard from again, there comes a familiar voice drifting upon the wind, “Be of good cheer, it is I; be not afraid!”
Matthew 14:27

The miracle in the storm
Can I tell you tonight that Jesus is the miracle in your storm.
He is right there with you
In every storm of your life
You never face the winds alone
You never struggle against the stormy seas by yourself.
He will not leave you
He will not forsake you
He is right there with you
Even when you can’t see him
Even when his hand isn’t evident
Even when it seems as if you are all alone.
If you would listen to the wind you would hear a voice calm and gentle speaking into your storm driven ship: “Be of good cheer, it is I; Be not afraid!”

Somebody needs to realize that the miracle that you’ve been looking for is walking right beside you!

The provision that you so desperately need is striding across your storm.

You are on a collision course with the miraculous provision of God!

He hasn’t abandoned you, and he hasn’t forgotten you.

He sent you into the storm, but he didn’t send you there to die!

And he didn’t send you there alone!

Perhaps our greatest challenge is to trust in him.

We may know every scripture about the provision of God

We may know beyond a shadow of a doubt that he watches over us and he will take care of us

But it is difficult when we find ourselves in the throes of the storm to remember to cast our cares upon him.

I want to remind you tonight of the words of Hebrews 10:23 -- “For He is faithful that promised...”

We serve the faithful God

He has not forgotten you

He knows right where you are

He knows exactly what you face

He is in the midst of the storm with you!

He is your shield

He is your strong tower

He is your refuge even in the storm

Let me tell you a little bit about the miracle in the storm.

When the disciples saw Jesus, he was walking on the water.

The same waves that tossed their boat, the same sea that threatened to destroy them

Jesus was literally walking across the water.

Where his feet touched it turned solid like glass, calm, still and steady.

As the storm tossed the water to and fro

As the wind blew with all of its terror.

The master of it all brought it all under his authority and he walked on the water!

Here’s the lesson you need to learn:

- It is impossible to walk on water.
- Water wasn’t designed to hold you up.
- Even the phenomenon of surface tension which allows certain aquatic bugs and spiders to walk across the water, falls far short of ever explaining how Jesus could walk on the water.
• That which seemed inadequate to support him, proved by the miraculous power of God to be more than enough.

• Watch this.
  o Because, if you aren’t careful you will get caught up in the story and miss this.
    ▪ Jesus, comes walking across the water.
    ▪ He receives ample support from that which was not sufficient to support him.
    ▪ **The lesson to be learned is that God can take that which seems to be insufficient in your life and make it more than abundant!**
    ▪ Water is not a stable surface, until God shows up!

• Some of you are wondering how you are going to make it.
  o You’ve done the math, you’ve made the calculations, you don’t have enough!
  o There isn’t enough time, there isn’t enough money, there isn’t enough strength...
    ▪ But I come to tell you that you need to factor God into your equation because with him little is much!
  o You may not be able to pay your bills on what you make and it may seem impossible to pay your tithes and ever make ends meet.
    ▪ But God can do more with 90% of your income than you ever imagined being able to do with all of it!
  o I can’t explain it, but he walks on the water!
    ▪ That’s the miracle in the storm!

• Get this: When Jesus walked where it was not possible to walk he was sending a message to his disciples that said that, with my help you, too, can walk through impossible places!
  o Have you ever considered it?
    ▪ He rides the wind,
    ▪ he moves through time and space;
    ▪ he could have simply appeared on the boat.

• Why walk across the waves?!?
  o Because those disciples needed to see the miracle in the storm
    ▪ They needed to know that when they encountered the impossible,
      • they had a savior who was more than able to accomplish the impossible!
  o When they were overwhelmed,
    ▪ when they didn’t know where else to turn
      • they needed to know that my God – He walks on the water!
  o Impossibility doesn’t hinder him!
  o
• Somehow, through the storm, through the fiercely blowing wind, through the waves and the spray of the seawater – Peter got the message!
  o Something rises up in Peter
    ▪ He said, if he can do it, so can I!
  o If he can walk on the water, then he can empower me to do the same!
    ▪ If he can walk across the impossible situation in my life, then he can empower me to walk on it as well!
• Peter said, Lord, if it’s you, bid me come unto thee on the water.
  o And Jesus said Come!
• Some of you in this place tonight need to hear the master’s voice.
  o He’s not just saying that he’s here with you in your storm.
    ▪ He’s inviting you out upon the waves,
      ▪ to walk upon the waters with him!
  o He will bring you through your impossible situation!
    ▪ He will enable you to walk on the stormy water of your life.
  o He will take that which is insufficient
    ▪ and make it to be more than enough for you
      ▪ If you will but trust in him!
      ▪ If you will put your faith in him!

• What happened next is the most known portion of this story.
  o I won’t belabor the point.
• You know how that Peter stepped out of the boat
  o and walked upon the waves.
• You know how that in one moment
  o he was standing upon his stormy seas
  o and how that in the next he was distracted by the howling wind
    ▪ and began to sink beneath the waves.
• You know how that he cried out to Jesus
  o and how Jesus reached forth and grabbed his hand
    ▪ and how that together walking hand in hand,
      ▪ they walked back to the boat.
  o But I want to point out one more thing this evening.
• It is easy to see Peter’s ups and downs in this story.
  o When they set out on the journey all was well, he was in good spirits.
    ▪ When they encountered the storm, he was afraid for his life.
  o When He saw Jesus he was filled with faith and even walked on the water.
    ▪ But when he noticed the wind, fear struck again and he began to sink.
      ▪ However, when Jesus rescued him he was encouraged in his faith and walked again upon the water.
  o Peter’s experience in all of this was a series of highs and lows.
    ▪ Mountaintops and valleys.
    ▪ Periods of calm interrupted by powerful storms.
What I want you to see this evening is that Peter wasn’t all that different from you and me.

In Romans 1:17 Paul used the phrase “from faith to faith.”

This phrase seems to be a very brief explanation of the cyclic nature of our lives.

- All of us have faith and all of us trust in God.
- But, if we were honest tonight, we could all say that at times our faith is stronger than it is at other times.
- We have our highs and lows, our ups and downs.

When a torpedo is fired towards a target, it leaves the ship on the correct course to reach its target.

- However, while it is on its way, its course must be altered through a series of midcourse corrections.
- As the water, the currents, the waves and the elements begin to steer the torpedo off of its course, ever so slightly to the right or to the left, its course is electronically corrected to insure that it hits its target.
- The result of these corrections is a zig zag course.
- The torpedo ventures the left a while, then to the right a while, then back to the left, then back to the right.
- But this seemingly meandering path is really a series of precisely calculated corrections that help the torpedo arrive at its intended target.
- I can’ help but believe tonight that this is similar to our lives.
  - None of us walks a perfectly straight line of faith without any deviation.
  - We all go through our valleys and our mountaintops.
  - We all have our troughs and peaks as we make our way towards heaven.
  - I can’t help but believe that it is a journey from faith to faith that will eventually bring us to our intended end.
- The highs and lows, the ups and downs, the triumphs and defeats, they all work together to carry us from one faith experience to the next.
- From faith to faith we make our way from earth to heaven.

Close

I don’t know where you are tonight and I don’t know everything that you face but I do know that your current circumstance is all about a faith experience with God!

- I come to encourage you to take your eyes off of what you do not have and instead to focus on what you do have.
- Little with God in it I much!
- Weakness with God in it becomes strength.
- Sorrows with God in them give way to joys.
- And troubles with God in them give way to triumphs.
• When they arrived back at the ship, Jesus, with one command sends the storm away, calms the seas, and restores peace to their lives.
  o And as they worshipped him there on the sea, in their little boat, it began to dawn on them that it was never about the storm!
  o Jesus only wanted them to learn about the miracle that resides in the storm!