

“Lessons from the Lake”

Matthew 14: 22 – 33

Jesus has a two-fold concern in this passage. He desired to be in the presence of his Heavenly Father and also to be present with his disciples in their distress. Some may ask, “Why did Jesus need to pray?” First of all, seeking solitude was an important priority for Jesus. He made room in his busy schedule to be alone with the Father. Spending time with God in prayer nurtures a vital relationship and equips us to meet life's challenges and struggles. It also helps us grow spiritually and become more and more like Jesus. Secondly, Jesus consistent prayer life provided a living example for his disciples and enabled him to identify with our humanity. The disciples evidently saw something about Jesus in his praying for they asked him to teach them to pray. What are some lessons we can learn from the lake?

1. Bad times don't always mean the absence of God. (vs. 24). Jesus had told the disciples to get into the boat and go on to the other side of the lake and then he went up on a mountain alone to pray. The disciples had obediently gone and now were about half way across the lake and surrounded by a storm that was getting progressively worse. Where was Jesus when they needed him? Why do we often think God abandons us in the bad times? He had seemed to neglect them, leaving them hour after hour, wrestling with the storm until they were almost exhausted. Bad times come to all of us and we must remember God does not give his people license to sail around the storms of life, but strength to go through them.
2. It really is darkest just before the dawn. (vs. 25). The Romans divided night into four watches; 6-9 pm, evening; 9 -12 pm, midnight; 12 – 3 am, cock-crowing' and 3 – 6 am, morning. Jesus had spent most of the night in prayer, letting the disciples struggle until the fourth watch, just before dawn. Just when the disciples were about to give up thinking all was lost, Jesus came to them walking on the water. It is that way in our own lives sometimes. It is the testimony of many who have been rescued by the coming of the Lord just when all seemed lost and no hope remained. Jesus saw them in the darkest hour of their extremity. Jesus comes to meet his people's needs. The one who had been praying for them and watching them was now near, yet they did not know him.
3. Times of stress find it difficult to experience God. (vss. 25 & 26). Take note, “Jesus went to them”. He walked on the sea to get to the disciples, to bring to them the reality of his presence. No matter what the difficulties are in our lives, Jesus comes to us in the midst of the storm and stress. He desires his presence to be our assurance, but just like the disciples, we do not always comprehend his presence when we find ourselves in what seems like a hopeless situation and we are about ready to give up. Whatever it is that frightens you, allow the grace of our Lord Jesus Christ to bathe your heart and mind as he comes to you to meet your need.
4. It is Jesus who reveals God to us. (vs. 27). Into the fear and despair of the disciples came the remarkable words, “Take courage! It is I. Do not be afraid”. When Jesus says, “It is I”, we are reminded of God speaking to Moses as he said,

"I Am", which literally means "I will be who I will be". Jesus words to the disciples indicate that he is Lord of the storm. His words and actions let us know that he is the one who can help us through all of our storms of life.

5. Recognizing Jesus should lead us to worship him. (vs. 33). He is worthy of our worship, the Son of God, in reality he is God. The one who delivers us from our storms should indeed be the recipient of our worship. Give him the glory and honor due unto him.

We learn from the lake that Jesus always understands our circumstances and he is never far from us. When we are tossed about on the waves of some sudden storm, we can be assured Jesus' eye is upon us and suddenly in our extremity he comes to us in marvelous ways. If the darkness of the night and the fury of the storm are upon you and you are beginning to sink in despair and doubt, cry out to Jesus as did Peter, "Lord, save me ", and he will.

Remember: Jesus Christ is no security blanket against storms, but he is perfect security in the storms. He has never promised you an easy passage, only a safe landing.

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