

End time Faith

Matthew 14:22-33 (Amplified)

Then He directed the disciples to get into the boat and go before Him to the other side, while He sent away the crowds.

²³And after He had dismissed the multitudes, He went up into the hills by Himself to pray. When it was evening, He was still there alone.

²⁴But the boat was by this time out on the sea, many furlongs [a furlong is one-eighth of a mile] distant from the land, beaten and tossed by the waves, for the wind was against them.

²⁵And in the fourth watch [between 3:00--6:00 a.m.] of the night, Jesus came to them, walking on the sea.

²⁶And when the disciples saw Him walking on the sea, they were terrified and said, It is a ghost! And they screamed out with fright.

²⁷But instantly He spoke to them, saying, Take courage! I AM! Stop being afraid!

²⁸And Peter answered Him, Lord, if it is You, command me to come to You on the water.

²⁹He said, Come! So Peter got out of the boat and walked on the water, and he came toward Jesus.

³⁰But when he perceived and felt the strong wind, he was frightened, and as he began to sink, he cried out, Lord, save me [from death]!

³¹Instantly Jesus reached out His hand and caught and held him, saying to him, O you of little faith, why did you doubt?

³²And when they got into the boat, the wind ceased.

³³And those in the boat knelt and worshiped Him, saying, Truly You are the Son of God!

³⁴And when they had crossed over to the other side, they went ashore at Gennesaret.

Most of the time when this passage of scripture is read, we tend to focus on Peter and how he walked on water at Jesus' command but as soon as he looked at the storm he sank. Then Jesus reprimanded him for his little faith. Why do we focus

on Peter's little faith? We identify with him more easily. We tend to identify with failure. We focus our attention on the storm surrounding Peter that caused him to doubt. We focus on the fact that it was only Peter who had the fortitude to step out on Jesus' bidding. The others were too gripped with fear at the sight of the "ghost" that they had supposedly seen.

We are post-crucifixion, post-resurrection, post-ascension, post-Pentecostal Christians. We are the Body of Christ. We should read this passage of scripture and identify with our Head.

Let us view this account from Jesus' perspective.

At that time Jesus was walking the earth in the flesh, as a man anointed by God and sent for a special mission. He was, as we are, spirit residing in flesh, tempted in all points as we are, yet without sin. He had no consciousness of sin because He was not of Adam's bloodline. He was righteous. The only naturally righteous man who had walked the earth since Adam before the Fall in the Garden of Eden.

As a man, He had just suffered rejection from the people in His hometown, received the sad news of John's murder by Herod, and was grieving, so He went off to be alone. However, His mission followed Him. The crowds found out where He was and being tender-hearted, Jesus had pity on them and healed their sick, fed all five thousand (this was only counting the men, not women and children) with five loaves and two fishes and had twelve baskets full of leftovers!

How would you have coped under the circumstances?

Some of us would throw in the towel after the rejection episode. Others might just shake that off but could not deal with the fear that what happened to John would also happen to them. After the two events combined, most would want to say:

"Tell everyone to go away, I need time alone. I must grieve. How can I go on with my crusade with all this stuff hanging around me? Get another preacher for the service today! I'm going on a sabbatical for a week! I've got to get in touch with God! I've got to hear from God! Why is all this happening to me?"

Could you do as Jesus did? Jesus lived in the spiritual realm. Therefore nothing of the flesh could overcome Him. He was ready for anything. Being human, the sequence of events drained Him but He knew where He could refuel. Jesus went through everything in faith, and then in faith, He sent the disciples off knowing that He would meet up with them.

Jesus communed with the Father all night. That must have been some prayer session! He prayed, alone, not in a prayer meeting, until the wee hours of the morning. He got so fueled up and fired up that He just brought the supernatural into the earth realm. His body defied all laws of weight and mass and He just walked on the water. He was clothed in the glory so that to the disciples, He

looked like particles of electricity, resembling a mist, in human form. He looked like a ghost. The Aramaic translation says that they said “It is a false vision”. Fear from the demonic realm made them see a false vision - something from the demonic realm.

Jesus spoke to that fear immediately and identified Himself. Peter's bold nature kicked in and he decided that if Jesus, by speaking a word could do the miracles he had witnessed, then, by speaking a word He could make him walk on water too! It worked, for a while.

Peter looked around and saw the adverse circumstances, he saw the environment, and fear once more took its toll.

Jesus was still walking on the water. He had been walking on the water all through that storm. The storm was raging when the disciples first saw “the ghost”, the storm was raging when Peter got out of the boat, and the storm was raging when Jesus raised him up out of the water. Guess what - Peter walked on the water again with Jesus after he sank. He walked back to the boat hanging on to Jesus. The Bible says “³¹*Instantly Jesus reached out His hand and caught and held him.*” It did not say that Jesus stopped walking on the water and swam back with Peter to the boat! Jesus' faith withstood the storm, the sea, and Peter's own lack of faith!

When we look around at the storms of life as we often do, it is comforting to know that the One who called us, the One we serve has promised never to leave us or forsake us. We can cry “Help” and His hand reaches out to pull us up and He walks with us until we reach safety.

They both climbed into the boat. Immediately all the turmoil ceased. Everything was calm.

Personally, I believe that the devil stirred that storm up to test Jesus!

Do you know, like Jesus, we can walk on water. We can conquer the storms. We can walk through them, we can defy the elements, we can command the storm.

There are storms raging today. Economic storms, hunger storms, medical storms, emotional storms, mental storms, every kind of storm the devil can toss up is raging around the Body of Christ. Forget the headlines. Forget the forecasts of doom and gloom.

There is a place to refuel. When we get into that place, we must go with a heart of compassion, a heart of love and most of all, faith without which it is impossible to please God.

When we emerge from that place of prayer, in the wee hours of the morning, we will be victorious!

