

Matthew 14

August 27th, 2017

Take Courage, It is I, Don't Be Afraid

No introduction today. We got to much to talk about in God's Word. We have before us today the account of Jesus walking on the water. And not only Jesus walking on the water, but also someone who is not Jesus, named Peter walking on the water. Ok so some background for how this day came to be.

Our lesson for today is from Matthew 14. Let's talk about the day that Peter is having. Because these are real people and real events and context is important to know Peter being one of Jesus' disciples. Time and time again he kind of takes this leadership role as Jesus' disciple. Anyway this day that Peter is having what has to be one of the most memorable days in his life. And if you want to talk about a guy who looked back at a day that he just had and went, "My God I wish could have done that better." It was Peter. If we look at the day that Peter had it was really this roller coaster of a day.

To start the day off. Jesus and the disciples had just heard that John the Baptist was beheaded. John had spoken out against the government at that time, there was no first amendment rights for the Israelites living under Roman occupation. John was thrown into prison, and eventually beheaded, the circumstances for that are another story, but Jesus and the disciples had just heard about this. John was a very significant figure. First off, He was a prophet. A great prophet of God who spoke the truth. Jesus said about him there was no man born of a woman greater than John. What a prophet does is they speak for God. John did that. He prepared the way for Jesus by speaking to people about him. John was a valuable person to the one true faith and to the one true God. Not only did Jesus have a professional relationship with John, and a spiritual connection with him because they had the same faith in the true God. John was also family for Jesus. They were related. A relative you respect and admire personally and professionally is beheaded because they were speaking the truth. And it's not just Jesus who is close to John, two of Jesus' disciples were disciples of John first.

So they just heard about John's beheading. And Jesus decides that he needs to get away for a while and be alone, to grieve. Dealing with the loss of someone that close to you, it would have been hard to deal with crowds of people crowding upon Jesus wanting Jesus to heal them, to touch them, to bless them. So many people were coming to him, that a parallel account says that they didn't even have a chance to eat. So Jesus and the disciples need to be alone. So they sail across the lake.

The crowd hears about Jesus leaving. But they can't get enough of him. There are still more people that are sick that want to be healed. More questions that they want answered. So they follow the disciples and Jesus on shore. There is a boat out on the lake and a crowd of people just following along the shoreline waiting for Jesus and the disciples to land. And when they do they just press upon Jesus again. You might expect him to just stay on the boat, or say I just need some me time. But no the text says, And Jesus had compassion on them. Even though he must have been emotionally and

physically drained, and he knew that his disciples must have felt the same way. He still has compassion on the people. He continues to heal them and teach them.

Friend died, sailed across a lake. Dealt with another crowd of people, taught another class. It has already been a long day. The disciples need a break so they come to Jesus and say, Jesus it's getting late. Send these people home to get something to eat. And Jesus says you give them something to eat. 5000 men, not including women and children, so maybe a crowd of 10,000. The disciples say, "Are you kidding me Jesus, even 8 months salary wouldn't be enough to feed this crowd." And then Jesus takes 5 loaves of bread, and two small fish and after he prays he breaks them time and time again, hands them to the disciples who wait on a this massive crowd. After the meal is done, then the disciples have to bus the tables, or clean the hillside and they collect 12 basketfuls of food.

The disciples needed a break. Still dealing with the death of John, still exhausted from dealing with the crowds, more exhausted now because they just waited on a party of thousands of people and cleaned up after. And if you have ever waited tables you know how exhausting that must of been So Jesus says to get back in the boat and head back across the lake. How did that go? Of course, just their luck, it is not easy sailing. Just as evening arrives, instead of being able to sleep peacefully on that boat ride back home. The wind is against them. There are big waves. All night they are battling. And in the fourth watch of the night, so between the hours of 3 am to 6 am. After the day that they just had they are battling sailing all night, they look out and there they see what they think is a ghost walking on the water towards them. And grown men, scream in fear.

And Jesus says, "Take courage, it is I. Don't be afraid."

Where do you fit in here? Have you had those days when it feels like you are in an episode of 24 that every minute you are putting out a fire just trying to survive. Or maybe its expanded out a bit to being a week, or a month, or a year or longer where you feel like you are a little boat on a big lake just getting beaten down by the waves and you aren't sure how much more of it you can take. Every time you think you are going to get a break, the hits just keep on coming. Every time you think you think it can't get any worse, it does. I'm not trying to be depressing but that is life sometimes. And if you have felt that way or you feel that way. Listen to Jesus' words to you today.

"Take courage, It is I. Don't be afraid."

Take courage. Courage is the ability to stand up for what is right in the face of adversity. Courage is being strong when everything looks tough. Are we courageous? That's a great quality. Courage doesn't have to be running into a burning building to save a kitten. It doesn't have to be saving a captured soldier behind enemy lines. Courage is a virtue that you and I can show in our every day lives. Courage is bringing your children to hear God's word when the sinful nature that is in everyone of us is giving you a thousand excuses to just stay home another week. Courage is letting people know that you are a Christian not with a bumper sticker or a necklace, but with by the way you

conduct yourself. Courage is putting an end to gossip by defending people behind their back. Courage is showing self control when the rest of the world tells you that you deserve to let loose every once and a while and lose yourself to the evening. Courage is forgiving people who don't deserve to be forgiven. Courage is trusting God loves you even when things get really bad.

Take Courage it is I. Do you know why you can do that? Because this is Jesus that we are talking about here. The one through whom the whole world was created. The one who healed the sick even when he just heard about a close friends death. The one who kept teaching and preaching all afternoon. The one who fed the thousands of people who walked out into the middle of no where without any food, and instead of Jesus teaching them a lesson to always be prepared, he fed them. This is Jesus who loved each and every one of us so much that he was willing to leave heaven, live a life of suffering for you and after 33 years of obedience that you and I couldn't give to our God, he would sacrifice himself on the cross for our sins. Take courage Jesus is with you. He is there to give you comfort when times get tough. He is there to give you strength when fighting the good fight is to hard. As first corinthians 10 says No temptation has overtaken you except what is common to mankind. And God is faithful; he will not let you be tempted beyond what you can bear. But when you are tempted, he will also provide a way out so that you can endure it.

Take courage. Jesus is here.

Don't be Afraid. Peter saw Jesus walking toward him on the water and he heard what Jesus said, he took courage, he knew it was Jesus, he knew the power that God had. He knew that could give him the ability to face his fears and to do things that he never could do by himself so he said, "Jesus if it is you tell me to come out. Jesus said come and Peter walked on the water. Peter was able to do what Jesus was able to do because Jesus gave him the ability to do it.

And then the wind blew, and Peter became afraid. He lost his courage. He doubted Jesus. How. How can a man walking on the water be afraid of the wind or a wave. How can someone who God has blessed with so much power be afraid of something far less powerful. Isn't that crazy. If you are walking on water why are you afraid of drowning? It's like a bird being afraid of heights. You can fly, you don't need to worry about that bird.

I mean that's the question that we all have to answer. How can we be afraid? How can we be afraid of world events when the God of the universe who is in control of all things promises to watch out for you. Take courage it is Jesus don't be afraid. How can we be afraid to talk to people about Jesus when he says that his power is in his word, a gentle whisper of love about your savior can change an eternity. Take courage It is Jesus don't be afraid. How can we be afraid? I'm not saying that things in this world aren't scary. But Jesus is telling you that he is with you. And he will always be. He will be always there for you to give you the strength and the power you need to persevere. It doesn't mean that there will not be waves. It doesn't mean that we won't have long stressful days where we are pushed to our limits. But it does mean that God has set those limits. And he will

not push you beyond what you can handle. He will give you the strength and the power to do things that you never thought were possible. He can heal the sick. He can provide for those with nothing out of thin air. He can walk on water. He can calm the storm and he will help you. He forgives your sins and takes away your guilt. Because he loves . Take courage. He is Jesus. Don't be afraid.