

WALKING ON WATER

Date: March 28, 2020

Scripture: Matthew 14:22-36; Mark 6:45-54

Good Morning! My name is Stephen Perry and I serve as the pastor of student ministry here at The Church of Eleven22. As you know, this Lent season we are working through some of the miracles of Jesus shared with us across the gospel accounts. We are looking at how each of these miracles points us to the greatest of all miracles, which is the resurrection of Jesus Christ from the dead.

The miracle of Jesus we are focused on today is found in Matthew 14:22-36 and Mark 6:45-54 and I want to read through those now.

²² Immediately he made the disciples get into the boat and go before him to the other side, while he dismissed the crowds. ²³ And after he had dismissed the crowds, he went up on the mountain by himself to pray. When evening came, he was there alone, ²⁴ but the boat by this time was a long way from the land, beaten by the waves, for the wind was against them. ²⁵ And in the fourth watch of the night he came to them, walking on the sea. ²⁶ But when the disciples saw him walking on the sea, they were terrified, and said, "It is a ghost!" and they cried out in fear. ²⁷ But immediately Jesus spoke to them, saying, "Take heart; it is I. Do not be afraid." ²⁸ And Peter answered him, "Lord, if it is you, command me to come to you on the water." ²⁹ He said, "Come." So Peter got out of the boat and walked on the water and came to Jesus. ³⁰ But when he saw the wind, he was afraid, and beginning to sink he cried out, "Lord, save me." ³¹ Jesus immediately reached out his hand and took hold of him, saying to him, "O you of little faith, why did you doubt?" ³² And when they got into the boat, the wind ceased. ³³ And those in the boat worshiped him, saying, "Truly you are the Son of God."

³⁴ And when they had crossed over, they came to land at Gennesaret. ³⁵ And when the men of that place recognized him, they sent around to all that region and brought to him all who were sick ³⁶ and implored him that they might only touch the fringe of his garment. And as many as touched it were made well.

Matthew 14:22-36

⁴⁵ Immediately he made his disciples get into the boat and go before him to the other side, to Bethsaida, while he dismissed the crowd. ⁴⁶ And after he had taken leave of them, he went up on the mountain to pray. ⁴⁷ And when evening came, the boat was out on the sea, and he was alone on the land. ⁴⁸ And he saw that they were making headway painfully, for the wind was against them. And about the fourth watch of the night he came to them, walking on the sea. He meant to pass by them, ⁴⁹ but when they saw him walking on the sea they thought it was a ghost, and cried out, ⁵⁰ for they all saw him and were terrified. But immediately he spoke to them and said, "Take heart; it is I. Do not be afraid." ⁵¹ And he got into the boat with them, and the wind ceased. And they were utterly astounded, ⁵² for they did not understand about the loaves, but their hearts were hardened.

⁵³ When they had crossed over, they came to land at Gennesaret and moored to the shore. ⁵⁴ And when they got out of the boat, the people immediately recognized him.

Mark 6:45-54

Both of these passages point to the same miracle from two different perspectives. That's what we get to see in the Gospels of Matthew, Mark, Luke and John; we see the story from a different lens. To get a little context into what's taking place, it's important to understand right before this happened in the book of Matthew, Jesus had just performed another miracle by feeding 5,000 men. When you add all the women and children it's more so around 20,000 people with five loaves of bread

and two fish. We pick up here and as you can imagine, it's been a minute to feed that many people so Jesus tells His disciples to get into the boat to get away from the thousands of people and head to the other side of the Sea of Galilee.

Jesus decided to go up on the mountain and pray and the Scripture teaches in the fourth watch of the night, 3am-6am, so it's dark, the wind and waves are beating against the boat that the disciples are in. I imagine it's a storm of some kind and not just a small one, but a significant one. Now, given that context I want you to put yourself in the shoes of the disciples in the boat if you can. It's dark, somewhere between three and six in the morning, wind and waves are tossing all over on the sea and then you see a man walking on the water dressed in white, as Jesus most likely was. And of course in both accounts we see the disciples thought it was a ghost, probably a pretty crazy situation.

Now, what's interesting is Jesus identifies Himself, but Peter doesn't trust it's Him. Matter of fact, in Matthew's account, Peter asks Jesus to command him to come out on the water if it's really Him. Sure enough, Jesus says, "Come." So Peter gets out of the boat and into the water. At first he's literally walking on the water to Jesus on the sea, but the Scripture says when he noticed the wind, he began to sink. In other words, when he took his eyes off Jesus was when he began to look at his circumstances as being bigger than Jesus. And I want you to notice what happens next. Scripture says, "But when he saw the wind, he was afraid, and beginning to sink, cried out, 'Lord, save me!'"

Peter cried out to Jesus for help. He doesn't cry out to the disciples for a rope or a life jacket, he didn't try to somehow save himself, but out of desperation he cried out to Jesus and said, "Lord, save me!" He cried out to the only one who could help him.

And the same is true for you and for me, we don't have to prove ourselves. We can call out to Jesus who cares deeply for us regardless of the circumstance or the situation.

Then there's a key word, it says immediately Jesus reached out His hand, took hold of Peter and they got into the boat. Not, "once you learn your lesson Peter," not "you gotta prove yourself first Peter." No, immediately Jesus reached out His hand and caught him and praise God, He does the same for us.

This is a powerful miracle here of Jesus walking on water to save the disciples from the wind and the waves. And here's one thing to notice, this messed them up. So much so that when they got back into the boat, they could do only one thing; worship! The disciples were in awe of who Jesus was and what Jesus had done because Jesus did for Peter and the disciples what they could not do for themselves. And that is the gospel.

The gospel declares that it's not about you or me and it's not about what we do. It is about Jesus and what has been done for us through who He is and what He has done on our behalf. And the focal point of the gospel is the resurrection. The fact that Jesus is who He said he was and did exactly what He said He would do. He went to the cross and died a painful death on our behalf and three days later He rose again.

It's an important truth that in this miracle, the disciple whom Jesus called out of the boat was Peter. Peter was also the disciple who would eventually deny Jesus three times and Jesus knew Peter would deny Him. Just like Peter, we are prone to take our eyes off Jesus's victory and put it on the circumstances around us. The resurrection is the great miracle that pulls out of drowning in our disobedience. If Jesus didn't

raise from the dead than we are dead in our sins and hopeless in the situations of life. But He did raise from the dead and we are not hopeless. We have hope because of Jesus. Peter literally was the rock on which Jesus built His church, it was his message, it was his calling, this was deeply personal.

And the truth is, it's deeply personal for us too. God is doing stuff in us, to us and through us today that will prepare us for tomorrow. Let's Pray!

God, thank You so much for the resurrection of Jesus Christ. Thank You that Jesus is exactly who He said He was and He did exactly what He said He would do. Thank You that God, even though there are times when our circumstances are big around us, that You immediately draw near to us when we draw near to You. God, help us today to draw near to You and to remember who You are and what You have done. It's in Jesus name we pray. Amen.