

Rev. Dustin Daniels | River Bible Church
Matthew 14:22-27 | A Terrifying Surprise
Sunday July 14, 2024

WELCOME:

- Please turn your Bibles to Matthew 14.
- Bibles in the back—our gift to you.
- Notes are in the foyer, so take them home with you.

REVIEW:

As we continue our verse-by-verse study of Matthew's Gospel, we are surrounded by familiar stories.

Last week, we looked at *The Miraculous Meal*. (Feeding of the 5,000).

This meal is so important that it is found in all four Gospels.

It is where Jesus takes a little boy's sack lunch and turns it into a Messianic Banquet.

Several key points...the first begins with relationships.

LW KEYPOINT 1:

It's one thing to be isolated and physically alone; it's another to feel alone but surrounded by those you love.

God didn't design us to be lone ranger Christians—that's why the Lord Jesus instituted the local church in Matthew 16:18.

LW KEYPOINT 2:

Getting rid of people is not the solution.

After a long day of ministry, the 12 Disciples told Jesus that He needed to send the crowd away so that they could fend for themselves.

And Jesus said, No...guys, people are the ministry!

People are to be loved with grace and truth—they are not a project to fix.

Ministry is not a set of tasks to complete - ministry is people to love.

LW KEYPOINT 5:

God ordains crises in our lives so that we are conformed and transformed into the image of Christ.

Being transformed into the image of Christ is God's great goal for your life.

God not only ordains things to happen—but also trials in our lives to test us—and the test is for His Glory and our good.

Rather than praying for God to take away our trials and make things more comfortable, we are to ask the Lord how best He can be glorified in the trial itself.

And in doing so, The Lord draws us into a deeper relationship with Him.

LW KEYPOINT 7:

God's provision is based not on your performance—but on His grace.

There are only two religions:

The first is the "religion of works," where you try to earn God's favor.

All religions (but one) fall into this category of works-based-righteousness.

The false teaching that if I'm a good enough person - I'll get to heaven

The second religion is Christianity—although it's not a religion but a relationship.

The relationship is based on accepting God's grace, where we understand that God has chosen to love us because His love is based on Himself, not us.

Grace is a gift we don't deserve—and because of God's favor in our lives, we are the most joyful people on the planet! - regardless of circumstances.

We saw God's grace and favor on the Israelites last week as Jesus fed them that Miraculous Meal.

INTRODUCTION:

Today, we are going to look at another famous Bible passage.

This is part one of Jesus walking on the water.

This passage is one of the most loved, one of the most questioned, and one of the most abused passages in all the Gospels.

For our purpose, I want us to look through the lens of Christology.

Christology is the study of how Jesus Christ is God.

Christology focuses on the union of Jesus having two natures: divine and human.

We saw those natures in action last week, and it's important to see them again today and next Sunday.

It's important because if we don't focus on Jesus, this passage can quickly turn into a TED Talk—a motivational speech.

We don't give motivational speeches; we teach the full counsel of God's Word.

Please stand for the reading and honoring of God's Word.

SCRIPTURE:

Matthew 14:22—Immediately he made the disciples get into the boat and go ahead of him to the other side, while he dismissed the crowds.

Matthew 14:23— After dismissing the crowds, he went up on the mountain by himself to pray. Well into the night, he was there alone.

Matthew 14:24— Meanwhile, the boat was already some distance from land, battered by the waves, because the wind was against them.

Matthew 14:25— Jesus came toward them walking on the sea very early in the morning.

Matthew 14:26— When the disciples saw him walking on the sea, they were terrified. "It's a ghost!" they said, and they cried out in fear.

Matthew 14:27— Immediately Jesus spoke to them. "Have courage! It is I. Don't be afraid."

These are the very words from the authoritative, inerrant, inspired, and infallible Word of Almighty God.

PRAY:

*How happy are those whose way is blameless,
who walk according to the Lord's instruction! (Psalm 119:1)*

EXEGESIS:

Matthew 14:22— Immediately, he made the disciples get into the boat and go ahead of him to the other side,

Our first question is, "What's the hurry?"

Last week, Jesus fed over 20,000 people from a boy's sack lunch.

John's Gospel tells us what happened after the meal.

John 6:14—When the people saw the sign he had done, they said, "This truly is the Prophet who is to come into the world." *miracle itself.*

John 6:15—Therefore, when Jesus realized that they were about to come and take him by force to make him king, he withdrew again to the mountain by himself.

A couple of things to note:

1. Nobody forces Jesus to do anything.
2. Nobody can make Jesus king—Jesus IS King. *—And He's not running for office.*

Regardless...

Matthew 14:22—Immediately (Jesus) made the disciples get into the boat...

Immediately, at once, without delay—When Jesus heard the grumblings of the crowd, He didn't hesitate to take control of the situation.

Matthew 14:22—Immediately (Jesus) made the disciples get into the boat...

Made is literally 'compelled,' an unusually strong word—Jesus forced the 12 Disciples into the boat and told them to leave!

Why? Because He didn't want the Disciples getting caught up in worldly politics.

The scene here is that the 12 Disciples are arguing with Jesus.

They don't want to leave—they want to stay.

The Disciples liked what they were hearing.

The crowd is talking about political strategies and creating a slogan, “Vote for Jesus—Free food for life!”

People start to chant, “Jesus, Jesus, Jesus!”

Jesus is seeing the big smiles on the Disciple’s faces?—They start to join in.

The Disciples probably think *This is it! This is what we have been waiting for!*

The enthusiasm of the crowds and the disciples to make Jesus king was very much like the third temptation in the wilderness, in which Satan offered Jesus “***all the kingdoms of the world, and their glory***” (Matt. 4:8–9).

Jesus, what better time to establish your kingdom than at Passover? You can easily conquer Rome! After all, You’re the Son of God!

The crowd is ready to follow Jesus—but they are only willing to follow Jesus on their terms.

Jesus knows that His Disciples still have strong opinions of what the Messiah should be doing. — *Politically.*

And what Jesus is doing doesn’t look like the Messiah they’ve been hoping for.

So, Jesus didn’t want the 12 to get caught up in the delirium that was about to happen.

Crowds do foolish things—Jesus is never impressed with crowds.

Jesus makes the 12 get into the boat and, by doing so, stops the political campaign in its tracks.

Jesus didn’t come from Heaven to Earth to plot a political coup.

See Psalm 2

This is not about a Messianic insurgency.

The political ambitions of the 12 Disciples and the crowd were not part of Jesus' mission—and yet, Jesus knew that this was a very real temptation for His Disciples.

This political temptation is so strong for the entire nation...

Matthew 20:20—Then the mother of Zebedee's sons (James and John/ "Sons of Thunder") approached (Jesus) with her sons. She knelt down to ask him for something.

Matthew 20:21— "What do you want?" (Jesus) asked her. "Promise," she said to him, "that these two sons of mine may sit, one on your right and the other on your left, in your kingdom."

It's a political question.

So, yes, the political posturing was alive and well within the 12 Disciples.

And let's not forget about Simon the Zealot!—

The Zealots were a Jewish religious party who believed in political resistance and rebellion. (AKA violence).

This political posturing is still on the Disciple's minds even after Jesus was resurrected from the dead!

Their still thinking about politics!

It's the last question they ask Jesus before His ascension.

Acts 1:6—So when they had come together, they asked him, "Lord, are you restoring the kingdom to Israel at this time?"

Acts 1:7— He said to them, "It is not for you to know times or periods that the Father has set by his own authority.

In other words, don't worry or bother with worldly politics.

Acts 1:8— *But you will receive power when the Holy Spirit has come on you, and you will be my witnesses ...*

In other words, Jesus is saying that you've been divinely commissioned to be the light and salt of the world—go and be that light.

Matthew 14:22— ... *Immediately he made the disciples get into the boat and go ahead of him to the other side, ~~while he dismissed the crowds~~.*

John's Gospel tells us that the other side is Capernaum.

Capernaum is home for most of the Disciples.

So the 12 are going home without Jesus—and Jesus dismisses the crowd.

Matthew 14:23— *After dismissing the crowds, he went up on the mountain by himself to pray. Well into the night, he was there alone.*

Here, we see both the divinity and humanity of Jesus.

This union of His natures is called the Hypostatic Union.

20,000+ people were the beneficiaries of Jesus' divinity through *The Miraculous Meal*.

Now, Jesus needs to get alone to pray, which points to His perfect humanity and dependence on God the Father. *AS A human.*

Remember, this prayer time is long overdue.

Jesus wanted to Pray before *The Miraculous Meal*, not after.

Jesus still hasn't grieved John the Baptizer's death.

So, consider how Jesus is both God and Man.

One moment, Jesus is multiplying the ^{loaves} and fish by His Messianic powers.

Immediately afterward, we find the same Messiah getting away from the crowds to be alone to pray.

Matthew 14:23— Well into the night, (Jesus) was there alone.

Well into the night—Jesus prayed for hours.

Jesus sent the 12 away around 6 or 7 PM - and Jesus prays through the night.

Question: Why did Jesus pray if He's God?

Answer: He had to pray because He's also the perfect human being.

Prayer is not a task.

Prayer is about a relationship, and Scripture reveals that God is three persons: God the Father, God the Son, and God the Holy Spirit.

In other words, God has always been in community.

Each person of the Trinity has a distinct role within the Godhead.

Jesus' role is that of mediator between God the Father and us as mankind.

What does a mediator do?

A mediator approaches two people (or two parties) for reconciliation.

And that's Jesus' role.

So Jesus completely depends on God the Father, and that's why He's praying.

AS Jesus is Praying.

Matthew 14:24— Meanwhile, the boat was already some distance from land, battered by the waves, because the wind was against them.

As darkness descended upon the Disciples, so did a storm.

This shouldn't be a problem for the 12—most of the guys were fishermen.

However, the storm is a problem.

Matthew 14:24— *battered by the waves, because the wind was against them.*

Now, this is the second storm recorded in Matthew.

In the first storm, the storm itself was so fierce that the 12 thought they would drown. (Matt. 8:23)

Mark and John's Gospel fill in some gaps...

Mark 6:48—(Jesus) saw them straining at the oars, *- working hard*

John 6:19—...they had rowed about three or four miles.

I'm no fisherman and don't know how to row a boat, but I'm guessing that when a boat travels three miles in about six or seven hours— it is not doing well.

It was not for lack of effort, either.

The 12 didn't give up, but they were really struggling.

Matthew 14:24— battered by the waves, because the wind was against them.

+ "Battered or Buffeted" is better understood: *tormented or tortured.*

This is a Greek term that can refer to demonic hostility.

So, just as within the last storm, there is a very real possibility that Satan is stirring up wind and the waves to drown the 12.

Matthew 14:25— *Jesus came toward them, walking on the sea very early in the morning.*

The picture here is that Jesus is not only walking on the sea but in the middle of it.

In a routine trip across the Sea of Galilee, the 12 wouldn't have been more than a mile or two at the very most away from the shore.

However, the storm had carried them several miles south, out into the middle of the lake.

So put yourself in their shoes.

The 12 Disciples are exhausted.

The day prior, they heard the news about John the Baptizer.

The next day, Jesus is teaching, and the 12 are ministering to this massive crowd.

And then Jesus feeds everyone, and afterward, the crowd wants to force Jesus to be king.

These Disciples are emotionally, spiritually, and physically spent.

And now they find themselves in the middle of a storm.

It's dark, it's late, it's wet, and they are doing their very best to get to home.

But it seems hopeless.

And the worst part was that Jesus was not with them.

Matthew 14:25— Jesus came toward them walking on the sea very early in the morning.

Matthew points us to some OT imagery.

Job 9:8—(God) alone stretches out the heavens and treads on the waves of the sea.

Isaiah 43:16—This is what the Lord says—
who makes a way in the sea,
and a path through raging water,

The Psalmist uses the sea as an analogy.

Psalm 69:1—Save me, God,
for the water has risen to my neck.

Psalm 69:2—I have sunk in deep mud, and there is no footing;
I have come into deep water,
and a flood sweeps over me.

Psalm 69:3—I am weary from my crying;
my throat is parched.
My eyes fail, looking for my God.

And it's at this moment where the 12 Disciples see their God come to save them.

Matthew 14:25— Jesus came toward them, walking on the sea very early in the morning.

It's right before dawn—4:00am.

These guys have been in this boat and this storm for 9-10 hours.

It's interesting how Jesus waited to save them.

It reminds us of how Jesus waited several days after Lazarus had died before He came to Bethany.

Just as Jesus purposely allowed Mary and Martha to wait, Jesus also allowed the disciples to wait.

Why would Jesus do that?

God's ways are not our ways—they are better, higher and glorious. (Isa. 55:8)

Jesus waited because
Because He knew what was best for them and the Father's glory.

When Jesus came walking on the water, he fulfilled a role reserved for God alone in the Old Testament.

Once again, we see the perfect union of Jesus' divinity and humanity. *As He walks on water.*

As God, the winds don't affect Jesus—the wind obeys its Creator.

The waves can't drown Jesus—the waves are His obedient servants.

But the 12 Disciples don't realize that yet.

Matthew 14:26— When the disciples saw him walking on the sea,

The Disciples are looking intently at Jesus—but nobody recognizes Him. *—Why?*

Matthew 14:26— When the disciples saw him walking on the sea,

In Scripture, “the sea” often represents the forces of evil— because it is so powerful, uncontrollable, and deadly.

So, “the sea” is a power only God can control.

Think of the Israelites crossing the Red Sea.

Think of Jonah—of the storm, the calming of the storm, and that huge fish.

Think of the apostle Paul traveling to Rome.

God is sovereign over all creation; therefore, Jesus has no problem walking on the sea.

Miracles point us back to the first four words in Scripture:

Genesis 1:1—*In the beginning, God...*

Why did Jesus specifically walk on the sea? Two reasons:

1. He fulfilled those OT passages we discussed.
2. He wanted to make something obvious to the 12 Disciples— and that is that He is God.

Jesus is the same God who spoke all creation into existence. (Genesis 1:3).

There is nothing He can't do!

And He wants the 12 to know and believe that.

Matthew 14:26— *When the disciples saw him walking on the sea, they were terrified.*

Question: Why did they not recognize Jesus?

Answer: Because they weren't looking for Him.

Fear and faith can't live in the same heart. *At the same time.*

Fear blinds them—so they couldn't see Jesus.

The Disciples are so scared that they're not living in reality.

Matthew 14:26— When the disciples saw him walking on the sea, they were terrified. "It's a ghost!" they said,

Their fear ~~instantly~~ ^{Wow} turned into terror.

Looking closely, they finally discerned the figure of a man, but He was not swimming; He was walking on the surface of the ~~storming~~ ^{raging} sea.

They quickly think: **"It is a ghost!"**

What else could it be? —Because people don't walk on water.

I doubt that it ever crossed their minds that they were seeing Jesus. ^{bc of fear}

The term ghost is the Greek *phantasma*—we get the English word, *phantom*.

In other words, this is a creature of their imagination.

Some Disciples think this ghost is coming directly for them, and Mark's Gospel says this...

Mark 6:48—Very early in the morning ^{Jesus} he came toward them walking on the sea and wanted to pass by them.

This incident reminds us of God passing by Moses, giving Moses a glimpse of God's glory. (Ex. 33:19, 22; 34:6)

Just as Yahweh God trained Moses, Jesus is training the 12.

Jesus provides visible evidence of his deity.

And Jesus provides this evidence in the coolest way!

He's answering their question from the first storm!

+ **Mark 4:41**—Who then is this? Even the wind and the sea obey him!"

They were more fearful of Jesus calming the wind and the waves than they were of the storm itself.

+ **Matthew 14:26**— "It's a ghost!" they said, and they cried out in fear.

+ **KEYPOINT 1:**

*Fear robs us of seeing the truth.
Fear is a thief ? steals our joy.*

+ **Matthew 14:27**— Immediately Jesus spoke to them. "Have courage! It is I.
Courage is contrary to fear.

Courage is the mental and moral strength to overcome fear.

The term *overcome* is used twenty-eight times in the New Testament.

The term means to conquer, overcome, overpower, prevail, triumph, or be victorious.

Why should the 12 have courage?

+ **Matthew 14:27**— Immediately Jesus spoke to them. "Have courage! It is I."

"It is I" is an intentional echo of God's self-revelation in the OT to "I am."

+ **Genesis 17:1**--When Abram was ninety-nine years old, the Lord appeared to him, saying, "I am God Almighty.

"It is I" is an intentional echo of God's self-revelation to Moses.

Exodus 3 begins, “I am the God of ... Abraham, ... Isaac, ... Jacob” (3:6), and leads to “I am who I am” (Ex 3:13–14).

+ **Isaiah 45:5**—I am the Lord, and there is no other;
there is no God but me.
I will strengthen you,
though you do not know me,

+ **Isaiah 45:6**— so that all may know from the rising of the sun to its setting
that there is no one but me.
I am the Lord, and there is no other.

+ **Isaiah 45:7**— I form light and create darkness,
I make success and create disaster;
I am the Lord, who does all these things.

Jesus repeatedly crafted metaphors for Himself regarding this “I AM” statement:

“I am the way, the truth, and the life” (14:6)

“I am the vine, you are the branches” (15:5)

“I am the good shepherd” (10:11, 14)

“I am the door” (10:9)

“I am the bread of life” (6:48)

“Before Abraham was born, I am!” (John 14:6; 8:58)

+ **KEYPOINT 2:**

Every time Jesus said, “I am,” He equated Himself as God.

+ **Matthew 14:27**— Immediately, Jesus spoke to them. “Have courage! It is I.
Don’t be afraid.”

It ends with Jesus—probably screaming...*Don’t fear—I AM is here!*

* Baptisms *

PREACH:

I want to close by looking at this passage again and pulling some practical thoughts—for you to apply to your life today.

Matthew 14:22— Immediately he made the disciples get into the boat and go ahead of him to the other side, while he dismissed the crowds.

KEYPOINT 3:

Jesus intentionally sends His disciples into a storm/trial.

Jesus did this on purpose—it's the same with us today.

God the Father's great goal for our lives is to be conformed into the image of His Son, the Lord Jesus Christ.

The primary means of conforming and transforming— is through pain.

There is no other way.

Matthew 14:23— After dismissing the crowds, he went up on the mountain by himself to pray. Well into the night, he was there alone.

KEYPOINT 4:

Jesus is praying for ^{us} you in the middle of ^{our} your storm.

Whatever storm you're in right now—you are not alone.

Matthew 14:24— Meanwhile, the boat was already some distance from land, battered by the waves, because the wind was against them.

KEYPOINT 5:

Jesus is not going to solve your problem your way.

He will solve your problem His way—a higher and better way.

Matthew 14:25— Jesus came toward them walking on the sea very early in the morning.

KEYPOINT 6:
Jesus is both human and divine—He is ~~your~~ Deliverer.

Matthew 14:26— When the disciples saw him walking on the sea, they were terrified. "It's a ghost!" they said, and they cried out in fear.

KEYPOINT 7:
Many times, when Jesus does arrive, we don't recognize Him.

Matthew 14:27— Immediately Jesus spoke to them. "Have courage! It is I. Don't be afraid."

KEYPOINT 8:
We are commanded to have courage and not live in fear.

We are not to fear man, the future or death—we are to fear God.

The 12 Disciples received a terrifying surprise in this passage—and as disciples ourselves, we have or we will.

The question becomes, "Will I trust God in the storm?"

PRAYER
BAPTISM — Video "Praise Pa in the Storm"
BENEDICTION

*May the Lord bless you and protect you;
²⁵ may the Lord make his face shine on you
and be gracious to you;
²⁶ may the Lord look with favor on you
and give you peace." ' (Numbers 6:24).*

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