

Matthew 14:22-33 (#2) 9.20.20 (20073)
Faith Under Stress

I. Faith is a knowledge base that emerges under stress. Jesus uses the teachable moment. Matt. 14:22-33 (traumatic times are filled with teachable moments)

- A. The storm is real. Life is surprising and frightening.
 - 1. And Jesus sent them into it (!)
- B. Jesus is more real than the storm.
 - 1. Standing off and getting their attention.
- C. Faith is the knowledge of these things. A kind of knowledge that emerges under pressure
 - 1. It grows best in times of crisis, not in times of ease. Jas 1:1-4; 1 Pet.1:6-7
 - a) The Storm is important. No storm, no increased awareness of Jesus's person and power.
 - b) The struggle is important. Several hours of rowing against the wind, about 3 miles into a 5-mile journey across the northern section of Galilee. They started at dusk the previous evening and it is now between 3 and 6am.
 - c) *Rowing for their lives for much of that time.*
 - 2. It focuses first on Jesus as the sovereign Lord, not on the condition of the world.
 - a) Truly you are the Son of God! Lord, save me!!!
 - b) Why did you doubt? = why did you start focusing on the wind and the waves instead of on me?
 - c) The year 2020 has been a very hard year on several fronts and many Christians are freaked out because they are thinking about.
 - (1) Political upheaval
 - (2) Covid crisis and the frustration of the mask thing
 - (3) Conspiracy theories Isa.8:12
 - (4) Now, the devastation of the fires.
 - 3. It relies entirely on sheer grace, not on human skill.
 - a) Lord Save Me!! This is not about Peter's success in walking a few steps. self-reliance is not the goal of a Christian. Walking with Jesus through trauma is the goal. They walk back to the boat together.
 - b) The Lord is with us in the trials and gets us through them. He does not insulate us from all trauma, but he enables us to walk with him through it.
 - 4. It leans into God, not away from him. Especially during crises.
 - a) Peter doesn't get mad because he's sinking, as if Jesus let him down. But cries out to the Lord to save him.
 - b) Peter didn't question why Jesus "let him sink." If he had, the response would have been, "Why did you take your eyes off of me and put your confidence in the wind and the waves?"
 - c) *It is about Peter starting well and failing and being singlehandedly rescued by Jesus, then walking with Him.*

II. Some pastoral advice to Christians for navigating trying times.

- A. Assume that the Lord loves you and is doing something good in you and through you. Rom.8:28; Gen.50:20
 - 1. We stand constantly in his grace. Rom. 5:1-5.
 - 2. He choreographs even the evil to accomplish his will in and through us. **Rom.8:28**
 - 3. Assume that no matter what happens, he is out in front of you in time and space. He has a good, long-term plan.
- B. Do whatever is in front of you in the crisis, but trust God's providence with how it turns out. Jas.4:13-16
 - 1. Much stress results from assuming we know how everything ought to turn out.
 - 2. There is much to do, but we must do everything with an open hand, letting the Lord produce what he decides. "If the Lord wills..." means that God is actively and providentially involved in all our own plans (Phil.2:12-13)
 - 3. Be patient and open with the final outcomes. (Jas5:7-8)
- C. Focus past this age to keep this age in perspective. 2 Cor.4:16-18
 - 1. Many people figure they will think about heaven when they get there (assuming of course that they will get there). But their current mind-set is entirely enmeshed in this world.
 - 2. It is quite possible to live this life with the next life in view. Like working well in the last two weeks before your vacation.