

WATER WALKING (MATTHEW 14:22-33)

Good morning!

If you've got a Bible let's flip to **Matthew 14**. We're in a series on John right now, but you know how when you are reading an article online and it gives you a snippet of the story and you have to click "expand" to get the whole story?

That's what we are doing here.

This text is found in John 6, but we are clicking EXPAND and getting a little more detail of the story in Matthew 14.

Last week Pastor unfolded one of Jesus' most notable miracles in the feeding of the 5000 (more like 15-20k), so that's what is rolling into our text today.

Jesus took 5 crackers and 2 sardines and performed Jesus Math and fed everyone. The people are blown away and they then want to force Jesus to be their king...which if we are honest, I think deep down each of us would like that to happen to us, but Jesus is not interested in being an earthly King yet...another time.

Now as we jump into this, I know we are honoring our grads but what we don't want to do is take the texts that we preach through and build the meaning around ourselves and what they mean for us. That's worshiping ourselves and not God. That's what we don't want to do: make the text about us...

Preachers all over the world do that. Give you an example. Pastor eaten by crocodiles.

That's what happens when we make the text primarily about ourselves...don't want to do that. What we DO want to do is first ask, "What does this teach me about God." Healthier picture of Him and then that would give us application for our own lives.

SO, let's read **Matthew 14:22-33** together. Read along with me.

Now this text breaks down into 2 parts (22-27, and 28-33). The first half we will learn about God and the second half is our response to that understanding.

22-27

So Jesus has performed this great miracle and sends His disciples to the other side of the sea of Galilee..."Makes them get in...." "I'll meet you there!" He does what we see Jesus do throughout the Gospels and retreats to time with the Father by Himself to pray, meditate, rest. He goes up the side of the mountain,

spends time praying, then looks out over the sea of Galilee and can see His friends.

- Just to give you some background.
 - Sea of Galilee situated 700 feet below sea level and surrounded by mountains with the Jordan River cutting between two mountains and feeding the lake. Small enough that on these mountains you can see the whole lake and shallow, relatively speaking. Because of its lack of depth and the wind coming over and down the mountains, prone to big storms that come on quickly. The wind causes waves that average about 10 feet during these storms.
 - The disciples were in a small fishing boat that would hold at max 15 people, during clear weather. When you climb in, the boat sinks in the water a bit. More people sinks deeper. 12-15 people and the water is almost at the lip of the boat. Add in 10 foot waves and DANGER!

Vs 25 says it was the 4th watch (3-6 am) and the disciples have been fighting this storm for nearly 9 hours (dusk-4th watch) and Jesus comes to them.

- Freaks them out...fighting to not sink and now we gotta deal with a GHOST!
- Jesus, knowing their fear, says, “Take Heart, it is I. Do not be afraid.”
 - Now this is amazing. This verse is at the VERY center of this section. One of the things you should be doing in Bible study is seeing literary structure. There’s layers upon layers of meaning and amazingness in Scripture...because it was written by God through humans.
 - So this phrase “EGO EIMI” is the very center of this section. There are 91 Greek words before it and 91 Greek words after it, so this is the climax of the section.
 - Ego Eimi is the Greek transliteration of the name that God told Moses to use in **Exodus 3:14**. “Say to them, ‘I AM’ has send me to you.” I AM is the name of God.
 - What Jesus is saying here is “Have Courage...I am GOD and I’m here so don’t be afraid.

But not only is Jesus SAYING this...He is SHOWING this to be true because when he says it, he is STANDING ON WATER!

- Remember, the storm is raging. The waves are 10 feet high. The disciples are worn out, freaking out, terrified, and Jesus is saying and showing that He is God. He's leaving them no room to speculate otherwise.

How do you know, Brooks, that that is what He is doing? Few reasons.

- 1) The sea represents forces of evil in Bible times because it was uncontrollable, powerful, and deadly. Only God had authority over the sea because He created it.
 - a. See this when Jesus casts demons out of the a man and into a herd of pigs in Matthew 8:23-24. They run into the sea.
 - b. See this in Psalm 89:8-9, "Who is mighty like you? You rule the raging sea; when its waves rise, you still them."
 - c. See this in Job 9:8 when describing God, Job says, "He who alone stretched out the Heavens and *trampled* (literally, 'walked upon') the waves of the sea."
 - i. Only God dominates the sea and here the sea is raging and Jesus is walking upon it. Being Jews, the disciples know these OT passages, so they see this and immediately know, this must be "ego eimi!" I AM!
- 2) We know this is what Jesus is doing because He is revealing the GLORY of GOD.
 - a. One of my favorite things about Scripture is that there is often a parallel in the OT to stuff in Jesus' ministry.
 - i. Like last week's feeding of the multitudes parallels God's providing for Israel with Manna and meat from heaven during the Exodus when Israel is fleeing from slavery in Egypt. The people realize this after the feeding and that's why they want to make Him king.
 - ii. This story parallels when God hid Moses in the cleft of the Rock in Exodus 33 and "passed by" to reveal His glory.
 1. In the water walking story in **Mark 6:48**, it states that Jesus' motivation was to just pass by them, but they saw Him and thought he was a ghost (and we read the rest). This language is the same as in Exodus 33 and readers in NT times would see that Mark was stating Jesus' divinity.
- 3) And then we also know that this is what Jesus is doing because only God gives ultimate peace in crazy circumstances.

- a. Why did Jesus walk on the water? To show His disciples that the very thing they feared, the raging, seething sea, was merely a set of steps for Him to come to them.
- b. Students/Friends: The thing you fear is merely a set of steps for Jesus to come to you.
 - i. I saw a quote from Pastor Burk Parsons that said, “We run to God when trials come only to learn that God’s the one who sovereignly gave us the trials that we might run to Him.”
 - ii. In other words, we see this here. Jesus sees the disciples struggling at dusk, but doesn’t come to them for 9 more hours or so...why would he do that? So that there’s no other hope. And that trial is merely a step for Jesus to come to them.
 - iii. Walking on the water.

JESUS SAYS THAT HE IS GOD INCARNATE AND SHOWS THAT HE IS GOD INCARNATE. TAKE COURAGE, I AM. HAVE NO FEAR.

Now part 2: Our response

28-33

Peter says, “Lord, if it’s you, command me to come.” “Come.” Peter gets out of the boat and walks on water and comes to Jesus. It says he becomes afraid when he sees the wind (waves) and Jesus saves Him when he cries out as he is sinking. Jesus rebukes Peter (needed) for little faith, but then gets in the boat with them and the storm stopes. AND THEY WORSHIP HIM!

THE ONLY RIGHT RESPONSE TO THIS REALITY IS WORSHIP!

I could tell you and preach about stepping out of the boat, students, onto the waves and keep your eyes on Jesus so that you don’t sink, and that’s true and good. But I think there’s a better picture of discipleship here.

What we have in this story is a microcosm of the Gospel.

Think about the text this way:

- Jesus was high above with the Father, convening in fellowship with Him.
- He looks down and sees His people in need of rescue in the midst of a sea of evil.
- So He descends. He comes down from His communion with the Father.

- He walks straight into the thick of evil, the darkness (3-6 am) and he tramples the evil underfoot in a way only God can.
- He rescues those who cry out as Peter did, “Lord, Save me!”
- He climbs into the boat and removes the threat/danger and stays with His people and is worshiped!

Friends, that’s the Gospel of our salvation even before it is completed. So, obedience and worship is the only right response! That they had. And that we have! Because He is God and He is worthy!

So students, as you graduate and embark on this new journey let me just encourage you: **BE A FAITHFUL DISCIPLE.**

- Step into the waves, into the darkness, obey God’s voice and do what He says, Have confidence and courage in Him, fail (because you will) and let God rescue you, rebuke and challenge you, and then join you in the boat on your journey. And worship Him.
 - And really that goes for all of us.

LET’S JUST BE FAITHFUL DISCIPLES! WE DON’T HAVE TO WALK ON THE WATER; WE JUST HAVE TO WORSHIP THE GOD WHO DOES!

I’m praying and the band is coming and we will do just that. Would you bow with me?