

THE LORD OF THE SEA

Text: Matthew 14:22,23

Key Words: Faith/Works

Key Thought: Following God's Voice Will Often Challenge Our Faith

There comes a time in all of our lives when God's actions seem to create times of crisis for us. Nothing seems to make sense, no matter how hard we try to figure things out.

These things can happen at any time in our lives. It can and often does happen when we've just come through a spiritual high. The disciples were brought to a point like this immediately after a great miracle - feeding of five thousand men with 7 loaves and 2 fishes.

What a privilege it had to be to experience such a miracle. Yet witnessing a miracle does not mean that we learn the lesson that God has intended. The crowds had to be pacified and dismissed by Jesus. I feel that most of them left with a full stomach but a craving heart and an empty head as to the reason for the miracle.

Jesus challenged the crowd,

*"I tell you the truth, you are looking for me, not because you saw a miraculous sign but because you ate the loaves and had your fill.
27. Do not work for food that spoils, but for food that endures for eternal life, which the Son of Man will give you."*

John 6:26,27

Today, I Want to Offer You Some Food for Thought. It Will Be Found in These Two Areas.

I. THE LORD'S COMMAND TO LEAVE THE SHORELINE

II. TAKING COURAGE TO BELIEVE

I. THE LORD'S COMMAND TO LEAVE THE SHORELINE

The crowds were overwhelmed with the miraculous sign. This crisis was changed to a point of climax as their enthusiasm grew. **They must have thought, here is our king who will supply all our needs.** Jesus was able though to appease the crowd and dismiss them to their homes. The disciples were commanded to leave the area and head out in a boat in the sea of Galilee. This was a very common area to those like Peter who had fished in it for many years.

I. THE LORD'S COMMAND TO LEAVE THE SHORELINE (Contd.)

There is no doubt that they were in the will of God but this time was different. Jesus was sending them into a storm. It wasn't an ordinary storm. The intensity of it grew. Every effort to stand against it was useless. The northern wind was blowing the tiny boat off its course.

Nightfall had come. The winds caused the waves to buffet the boat. No skilled effort would change their off-course direction. The disciples were probably plagued by frustration, anger and discouragement. How could Jesus ever send us into this life-threatening situation? It seemed so much better to stay close to shore.

1162 One (Last) Try Did It

*** A discouraged minister once dreamed that he was standing on the top of a great granite rock, trying to break it with a pickaxe. Hour after hour he worked on with no result. At last he said, "*It is useless; I might as well stop.*"

Suddenly a man stood by him and asked, "*Were you not allotted this task? And if so, why are you going to abandon it?*"

"My work is in vain; I can't make a single impression on the granite" was the minister's reply.

Then the stranger solemnly replied, "*That is nothing to you; your duty is to pick, whether the rock yields or not. The work is yours. The results are in other hands; work on.*"

In his dream the minister saw himself setting out anew on his labour, and at his first blow the rock flew into hundreds of pieces. ***

Why did God allow them (even command them) to go into this place of discouragement? At the last watch of the night (3:00 - 6:00 a.m.), just before sunrise, Jesus began making His way to the boat. The thick darkness deceived the disciples. **Instead of bringing peace, they were terrified!**

A popular belief of their day was that spirits of the night brought disaster. The sea, like the wilderness was regarded as a dwelling place for demons. At this peak time of emotional and intellectual confusion, Jesus' voice rang out above the waves,

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

Matthew 14:27

They thought He was going to pass them by.

I. THE LORD'S COMMAND TO LEAVE THE SHORELINE (Contd.)

Pass me Not (#230)

Pass me not, O gentle Saviour
Hear my humble cry;
While on others Thou art calling,
Do not pass me by.

Saviour, Saviour, Hear my humble cry
While on others Thou art calling,
Do not pass me by.

II. TAKING COURAGE TO BELIEVE

It took courage to believe that this was Jesus. The darkness would only offer a shadow of His figure. His voice would be carried away by the winds and waves. You would think now the trial of their faith would be over. But not for Peter. A new burst of courage entered his being as he felt His Saviour had called.

Jesus had earlier in the evening told them to go into the boat. Their desire was to be with their Master. **In a mixture of doubt and faith Peter said,**

"Lord, If it's you, tell me to come to you on the water."

Matthew 14:28

Without hesitation Jesus said,

"Come."

Matthew 14:29

Only Matthew records this event. The other writers tell only of Jesus getting into the boat. But this story had to be told. It took courage to step out of the boat. **All Peter knew was that he had barely heard the voice of Jesus with the sounds of the wind and the waves beating against their boat.** He couldn't see Him enough to make a positive identification. Let's not stand in piety and condemn this act of courage. How many of us would dare attempt such an act of faith?

II. TAKING COURAGE TO BELIEVE (Contd.)

1492 Pulling on Both Oars

An old Scotsman operated a little rowboat for transporting passengers. One day a passenger noticed that the good old man had carved on one oar the word "**Faith**" and on the other oar the word "**Works**." Curiosity led him to ask the meaning of this. The old man, being a well-balanced Christian and glad of the opportunity for testimony, said, "*I'll show you.*"

So without saying another word, he dropped one oar and plied the other called "*Works*," and they went around in circles. Then he dropped that oar and began to ply the oar called "*Faith*," and the little boat just went around in circles again - this time the other way around, but still in a circle.

After that part of the demonstration, the old man picked up "*Faith*" and "*Works*," and plying both oars together, sped swiftly over the water, explaining to his inquiring passenger, "*You see, that is the way it is in the Christian life. **Human Works without Faith are useless, and Faith without works is also dead, getting you nowhere. But faith and works pulling together make for safety, progress, and blessing.***"

Bible Friend

The combination of Peter's faith and works got him over the sides of the boat into the deep water. It was not the temperature of the water, or the fact that it was over his head, but

...

"|But when he saw the wind, he was afraid and, beginning to sink, cried out"

Matthew 14:30

We all realize that we cannot see wind. What we see is the result of the wind. Peter saw the result of something unseen to his naked eye. The impact was overwhelming for the limited faith he had mustered at that time of his commitment to follow Jesus and he began to sink. He was left with no option but to cry out . . .

"Lord, save me!"

Matthew 14:30

II. TAKING COURAGE TO BELIEVE (Contd.)

Not only did Jesus earlier speak to them immediately to calm their fears; now He reached out immediately to give support to Peter's weakening faith. **It's often not the things we see that challenge our faith, it is rather the results of things that we cannot see that battles against whatever level of faith we have gained in past trials and troubles of our commitment to God.**

After a few words of rebuke, Jesus entered the boat no longer testing the faith of Peter. **At once the wind died and waves stilled.**

John wrote . . .

"and immediately the boat reached the shore where they were heading."

John 6:21

It takes great courage to step out and do God's will, but the results are tremendous.

Is God preparing you to leave the safety of the shore? Is He calling you to step out of the boat into the raging sea that increasingly tests your faith? **Is He requesting courage of you to believe that He will keep you from sinking? Do you need to get to the other side of the storm in your life? Then God has given you this message for a reason. It's our time to act.**

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Date: Aug 20/23

Place: FCA

Time: 10:30 Am

Song: Reign in Me - G

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INTRODUCTION: *John 6:26,27*

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II. TAKING COURAGE TO BELIEVE - *Matthew 14:28; Matthew 14:29; Matthew 14:30; John 6:21*