

**"...AND THEN JESUS CAME"**

Matthew 14:22-33

**Do you ever get the feeling  
that your life is like a puzzle?**

**No matter how you try to  
put the pieces together  
it seems to come out wrong?**

I bet Jesus' disciples could relate.  
He tells his disciples to pile into a boat  
and cross the sea.

Hell's join them later, he says,  
but He wants to spend some time  
alone in prayer first,

which is of course the reason  
why Jesus never got rattled when  
things seemed to come out wrong.

In abiding with His Heavenly Father,  
he knew that God had a plan,  
even when he couldn't see how  
the pieces fit together.

At any rate, his obedient disciples  
set sail, and at first, everything is fine.

But then the darkness descends.  
And the wind begins to howl.  
The rain comes suddenly, in sheets,  
and the waves hammer against the hull.

<sup>25</sup> During the fourth watch of the night  
Jesus went out to them,  
walking on the lake.

When they saw him, they  
were terrified, thinking he  
was a ghost.

But Jesus says, to them,  
"Take courage, it is I."  
The original Greek  
translation says,

"It is I AM."  
I AM is the Old Testament  
Name for God.

In other words,  
they were at the mercy  
of the storm, and then God  
showed up.

They were gripped by fear,  
**and then Jesus came.**

Last week the Scriptures  
gave us **a man with an evil spirit.**

Plagued by the many  
competing voices inside his head,  
he raged out of control,

doing harm to himself,  
agonizing in his tortured mind...  
**and then Jesus came.**

Do you hear the power in that?

He lost his job, a victim of downsizing.  
He was drinking his unemployment check.  
His life was going down the tube...  
**and then Jesus came.**

The cancer had done its worst,  
the end was near;  
fear gripped her heart...  
**and then Jesus came.**

The operation failed, and now she was gone.  
Standing at the grave, he had no idea how  
he would make it through another day without her...  
**and then Jesus came.**

In the story that the Bible tells,  
we find our own stories.

The details may not be identical,  
but the essentials are there.

It's the story of your life,  
your BROKENNESS,  
your FEAR and ANXIETY and PAIN.

Storms come in all shapes  
and sizes, and my guess is that  
most of us are  
either **entering** a storm,

**coming out** of a storm,  
or **in the midst** of a storm  
right now.

But there are two things

we need to know about storms.

1. Storms never take Jesus by surprise.
2. He has authority over them, as we will see.

I supposed we could get sidetracked  
in this story by people who wonder

how smart, sophisticated people  
like us could believe that Jesus  
could walk on water,

But why not?  
He walked across time and eternity  
to become a baby in Bethlehem.

He walked through  
the mess of our sins,  
into the pain of the cross,  
and beyond the locked  
doors of death.

[Surely he can walk on water.](#)

But the truly incredible  
part of the story is this;  
**so can you!**

V. 28 - Simon Peter says,  
**"Lord, if it's you,  
tell me to come to  
you on the water."**

And Jesus said, **"Come."**  
It's an invitation to relationship.

An invitation to step out in faith,

even when everything seems  
to be falling apart and  
turning out wrong.

The boat in this story  
represents our comfort zone,  
the familiar things we look to  
for a sense of safety and control.

So 11 disciples choose to stay in  
the boat,

but Peter realizes that the  
safest place when waves of  
fear and doubt come is with Jesus.

Do we dare to stand up  
and take that first step  
toward Him?

In the Gospels, Jesus is  
continually preparing His disciples  
for bigger things...

teaching them to say the  
things He says and  
do the things He does.

But the point is that  
God will use them, not when  
they have their act together,  
not when they have overcome  
all doubts and questions,  
but as they learn to  
dependent on Him.

St. Paul says in Philippians 4:13  
**"I can do all things through  
Christ who strengthens me."**

So Peter finds himself supernaturally  
empowered to do what would  
otherwise be impossible.

He's actually walking on the water.  
Eyes focused on Jesus.

But then, not so much.  
At some point his eyes  
became **fixed on the storm**  
rather than the Savior.  
And He went under.

I do that too, more often than  
I would like to admit, and so do you.

So let's just leave Peter there,  
underwater for a minute, gasping  
for breath.

Because in the end I don't think  
this is so much a story about  
Peter's great faith

as it is a story about who  
God is for us.

He's the One who invites us  
to step out into the deep,  
the One who invites us to  
trust Him for what only He can do.

But He's also the One who  
rescues us when we're in

over our heads.

<sup>30</sup> But when he saw the wind,  
he was afraid and, beginning to sink,  
cried out, "Lord, save me!"

**And then Jesus came.**

Jesus took him by the hand  
and raised him up.  
Which is *exactly* what He does  
for you and me in our baptism.

**We were slaves  
to our old nature,**  
stalled and stuck in our  
former way of life

that didn't work and couldn't work  
because it was all about us,  
making God peripheral,  
if not unnecessary.

**We were dead in  
trespasses and sins,  
and then Jesus came,**

reaching out to us with  
forgiveness,

bearing the scars of our redemption  
and raising us up to life that is  
NEW and BETTER and MORE.

Underline it.

Circle it.

Mark it in red.

\* Put an asterisk by it...

## Where Jesus is, there is LIFE with a capital "L."

Remember that the next time  
the wind begins to howl and  
the waves start crashing.

<sup>31</sup> "You of little faith," he said,  
"why did you doubt?"

The word doubt here literally  
means to be divided in two.  
To be of two minds.  
Which is no way to live.

To believe without evidence  
is to be gullible.  
But to doubt without evidence  
is to be foolish.

So Jesus is asking Peter to  
make up his mind.  
He's inviting you and me  
to be all in,  
to doubt our doubts.

**But the truth is that  
even when faith falters,  
Jesus doesn't.**

His hand is always  
outstretched for you.

Might that make a difference when  
**you're drowning in a sea of unpaid bills?**

Might that make a difference when  
**waves of discord and conflict threaten  
to undo relationships** with the very

## people you love most?

Might that make a difference when,  
no matter how hard you try to  
fit the pieces together, your life  
doesn't seem to work?

**But then again, maybe its  
not you who is floundering**

right now on a sea of  
confusion and uncertainty.

**Maybe it's a neighbor** down the street.

Or **a colleague** at work.

Or **a friend** from school.

I wonder what it will be like  
when they talk about their situation  
a month from now, or a year from now.

**Will they mention your name?**

What if, when they told their story,  
it went something like this:

"I was sinking. It was such a trying, difficult time,  
**and then (Megan, Dan, Diane, Tracy) came.**

**As imperfect as we all are, we take Him with us.**

We are...

His HANDS,

His EYES,

His EARS,

His FEET,

His VOICE...

We are the Body of Christ...

Gathered for worship - then scattered

for the sake of those

who cry out for help

in the midst of their storm.

<sup>32</sup> And when they climbed into the boat,  
the wind died down.

<sup>33</sup> Then those who were in the  
boat worshiped him, saying,  
**“Truly you are the Son of God.”**

This is our testimony.  
This is the Easter Hope  
we have for an unbelieving world  
that is trying to fit the pieces together.

So keep your eyes open this week.  
Because every occasion is  
an opportunity to reach out

and share who God is,  
and what He has done.

**until Jesus comes.**

Amen.