**A Stroll on a Stormy Sea**

**Text: John 6: 15-21**

1. The Authority of Christ

 a. Jesus made the disciples get into the boat

 b. He sent the multitudes away

2. The Omniscience of Christ

 a. He came to them

3. The Protecting Hand of Christ

 a. The disciples cried out in fear

 b. It is I – means (I AM) or (Yahweh) – (life application commentary)

4. The Love of Christ (Matthew’s gospel)

 a. Command me to come to You on the water

 b. Immediately Jesus stretched out His hand

5. The Omnipotent Christ

 a. When they got into the boat the wind stopped

 b. Immediately the boat reached the shore

\*\*\* Let’s stand for the reading of God’s Word.

**John 6:15-21 ( KJV )****15. When Jesus therefore perceived that they would come and take him by force, to make him a king, he departed again into a mountain himself alone.****16. And when even was *now* come, his disciples went down unto the sea,****17. And entered into a ship, and went over the sea toward Capernaum. And it was now dark, and Jesus was not come to them.****18. And the sea arose by reason of a great wind that blew.****19. So when they had rowed about five and twenty or thirty furlongs, they see Jesus walking on the sea, and drawing nigh unto the ship: and they were afraid.****20. But he saith unto them, It is I; be not afraid.****21. Then they willingly received him into the ship: and immediately the ship was at the land whither they went.**

**Introduction:**

I have joked with some of the people at our church. I told them that I have a spot in Israel picked out to live in during the millennial reign of Jesus Christ. I would love to live on any spot on the shores of the Sea of Galilee. It is truly one of the most beautiful places in the whole world. I had the opportunity to spend two wonderful nights there and longed to remain longer.

In the story we have before us we find the disciples on the Sea of Galilee all by themselves fighting the waves and the wind and running out of any hope for survival, when Jesus approaches them strolling on a stormy sea.

I want to begin this morning by thinking about:

**1. The Authority of Christ**

When we come to the realization of who Jesus is there is no doubt of His great authority. When Jesus approached a demon possessed man one day the demons that were inside of him began to fear. So they…

**Matthew 8:29-32 ( NKJV )****29. …cried out, saying, “What have we to do with You, Jesus, You Son of God? Have You come here to torment us before the time?”****30. Now a good way off from them there was a herd of many swine feeding.****31. So the demons begged Him, saying, “If You cast us out, permit us to go away into the herd of swine.”****32. And He said to them, “Go.” So when they had come out, they went into the herd of swine. And suddenly the whole herd of swine ran violently down the steep place into the sea, and perished in the water.**

So we see that even the demons of hell recognized Jesus as One with great authority… We too should see Him in this way and the story we have before us shows this.

\*\*\* First, think with me of how…

**a. Jesus made the disciples get into the boat**

For this to mean anything to you I need to back up just a little and read verse 15. Look there with me…

**John 6:15 ( KJV )
When Jesus therefore perceived that they would come and take him by force, to make him a king, he departed again into a mountain himself alone.**

The disciples were probably thinking, “Finally, someone is taking notice that Jesus is the Messiah, and they want to make Him their king. So it must not have made sense to them when Jesus wanted to flee the area.

During the years of Jesus’ ministry the Romans governed Israel. Of course this didn’t sit well with the Jews, so they were looking for a king to lead them in a revolt against Rome.

***Masada***

While in Israel I saw several places, cities and sites where the Jews did revolt against Rome. Masada was one of those places. There were roughly 900 rebels who had gone to the top of a mountain in southern Israel to escape bowing to Caesar.

Caesar saw them as a threat and wanted to make an example out of them, so he commanded his army to attack. The face of the mountain was too steep to gain entry onto their shelter so Caesar commanded his army to build a road to the top of the mountain… this task took 3 long years to complete. When I heard that the Romans had spent that many years working to get to these people I quickly realized the grip that the Romans had on the Israelis in those days. After 3 years and the Jews seeing that the Romans were about to break into their fortress on top of the mountain, they all committed mass suicide. When the Romans finally broke through they found all of the men, women and children dead. They would rather die than to bow to Caesar and be his slaves.

I tell you this to emphasis the extreme conditions of the day. The multitudes of Jews in Israel in the time of Jesus desired a king that would end Roman occupation in their land, and when they saw Jesus doing astonishing miracles they were sure He was the one to free them.

Even the disciples were of this mindset because later, after the resurrection they asked…

**Acts 1:6 ( NKJV )****…“Lord, will You at this time restore the kingdom to Israel?”**

So when Jesus makes the disciples get into the boat they must have wondered why.

\*\*\* Notice secondly:

**2. The Omniscience of Christ**

They didn’t understand but they obeyed and set off for Capernaum.

As they rowed their way to their destination they ran into some trouble. A storm came up quickly and caught them by surprise.

The Sea of Galilee is 650 feet below sea level and is about a 150 feet deep. There are massive hills that surround it on all sides. All of this combined is a recipe for disaster. Wind storms came suddenly upon the great lake and it would have been frightening for the disciples to have to live through an experience like that.

If the storm would not have come and there were normal conditions on the lake the trip from Bethsaida to Capernaum shouldn’t have been that big of a deal. Both towns are on the Northern part of the lake and they shouldn’t have had to have rowed out from shore more than a mile or two. But the storm was a bad one… it had carried them way off course.

John’s gospel tells us that they were 3 or 4 miles off of shore, where Matthew’s gospel says they were in the middle of the lake. So by all accounts they were pushed off of course by this raging storm.

John says of this storm…

**John 6:18 ( KJV )
And the sea arose by reason of a great wind that blew.**

Matthew says…

**Matthew 14:24 ( KJV )****But the ship was now in the midst of the sea, tossed with waves: for the wind was contrary.**

No matter how hard they rowed they were going further and further off of course. I’m sure they were doing everything in their power to keep the boat afloat. My dad taught me as a young man to always keep the bow pointed into the waves because if a big wave broadsides you it could capsize the boat. So this must have been a priority high on the list of things to do along with bailing water.

Think with me for a moment… They are rowing, trying to keep the bow of the boat aimed into the waves and trying not to get too far off of course, and they are bailing water out of the boat to keep it from sinking and in the midst of their distress, making things even worse, they see a ghost of all things…

Notice that:

**a. Jesus came to them**

Look at verse 19 with me…

**John 6:19 ( KJV )
So when they had rowed about five and twenty or thirty furlongs, they see Jesus walking on the sea, and drawing nigh unto the ship: and they were afraid.**

Matthew gives a few more details in his gospel… look with me to Matthew 14:25-26.

**Matthew 14:25-26 ( NKJV )****25. Now in the fourth watch of the night Jesus went to them, walking on the sea.****26. And when the disciples saw Him walking on the sea, they were troubled, saying, “It is a ghost!” And they cried out for fear.**

This really was a bad situation getting worse… Here they are in the middle of the Sea of Galilee and a great storm is raging and Jesus is nowhere to be found. They had gone through another storm with Him back in Matthew chapter 8 on this same Sea and everything turned out Okay. If you’ll remember, they woke Jesus up from a peaceful sleep during a raging storm and accused Him of not caring about them because they were all going to die. Jesus gets up and says… “Peace be still.” And the raging sea obeyed Him and it made the disciples marvel. They wondered, “Who is this that even the wind and the waves obey Him?”

But now Jesus was nowhere to be found and all hope of surviving this storm was minimal at best. And out of nowhere a ghost appears. Is it the death angel come to seal their fate? Verse 19 tells us that the disciples “***were afraid***.” Matthew’s gospel says that ***“they cried out for fear.”***

While they were rowing and bailing and holding on to whatever they could they were screaming and starring at this apparition… My friends they were terrified.

The night was divided up into 4 watches… **first watch** was from 6 to 9… **second watch** was from 9 to 12… **third watch** was from 12 to 3… and the **fourth watch** was from 3 to 6…

Matthew’s gospel says…

**Matthew 14:25 ( NKJV )
Now in the fourth watch of the night Jesus went to them, walking on the sea.**

Jesus waited until the fourth watch, just before dawn, to go to them.

In another instance Mary and Martha sent word to Jesus that their brother Lazarus was ill and about to die. Jesus purposely waited for Lazarus to die before He made His way to Bethany to resurrect him.

With Mary and Martha and the disciples here in this storm, Jesus purposely allows them to see their inabilities and need before He intervened. Did Jesus not care? No, Jesus cares but He also wants us to see our need for Him.

You know it seems that the disciples had forgotten everything that Jesus had taught them in their time of distress.

They forgot that their heavenly Father knows what they are in need of before they ask Him (Matthew 6:22…)

They forgot that not even a single sparrow fall to the ground without the Father knowing about it, and the very hairs on your head are all numbered (Matthew 10:29-30).

It was nighttime so He couldn’t physically see them in the stormy darkness, but He knew exactly where they were because…

**Proverbs 15:3 ( NKJV )****The eyes of the Lord *are* in every place,    Keeping watch on the evil and the good.**

And…

**Hebrews 4:13 ( NKJV )****And there is no creature hidden from His sight, but all things *are* naked and open to the eyes of Him to whom we *must give* account.**

Friends, Jesus knew where they were the whole time and He knows where you are too. He may wait till the fourth watch to get to you, but know this, He’s coming!!!

Notice thirdly…

**3. The Protecting Hand of Christ**

What the disciples saw that night was no ghost; it was Jesus the Son of God. They were nearly 4 miles out to sea and Jesus was walking to them on the stormy, raging waters… obviously when the disciples saw this they were terrified but Jesus quickly calls out to them over the howling wind…

**John 6:20 ( KJV )
But he saith unto them, It is I; be not afraid.**

***a. It is I***

The Greek word used for, “It is I” is (ego eimi). It literally means “I Am”. Just as God spoke to Moses and told Him His name was “I Am.” Jesus told the disciples, “Don’t worry for the great “I AM” is here. Yahweh is here. They should have immediately remembered the power Jesus had over the wind and the waves. Maybe Peter did remember because it was Peter who made an odd request.

\*\*\* In this odd request we plainly see:

**4. The Love of Christ**

The wind and the waves are still raging. The threat of capsizing still a real possibility and Peter opens his mouth and asks a question that makes the other disciples gawk at him…

**a. Command me to come to You**

For this request we have to turn to Matthews’s gospel…

**Matthew 14:27-28 ( KJV )****27. But straightway Jesus spake unto them, saying, Be of good cheer; it is I; be not afraid.****28. And Peter answered him and said, Lord, if it be thou, bid me come unto thee on the water.**

Did Peter remember the time in this very place when Jesus calmed the Sea… When the wind and the waves obeyed Him? After the Sea calmed that day Peter looked into Jesus’ eyes and asked, “Who is this man?” I think he remembered and that’s why he asked Him to do the physically impossible, to walk on water. Can you imagine the faith it would take to walk on a peaceful lake? How about a stormy, unsettled, violent lake that threatened their very existence?

Peter was a life-long fisherman on the Lake of Galilee so no one on board knew better about the dangers of the storms there. It is very likely in all the years of fishing that lake that he had fallen into the water during a storm or had known someone who had. Peter knew the dangers all too well yet he still had a desire to go to Jesus walking on the water.

Peter was happy to see Jesus, by all calculations they were in the boat rowing for about 9 hours and many of those were fighting the wind and waves… now Jesus appears out of nowhere and assures them that there is nothing to be afraid of…

Peter, ready to get out of the boat and the whole situation, desires to go to the Lord. I don’t believe that Peter asked to walk on water for the sake of marveling himself; he simply wanted to go to Jesus. Peter knew it was safer to be with the Lord out on the water, no matter how violent it was, than to be in the boat without Him.

Notice with me that Jesus rewards the faith that he has…

**Matthew 14:29 ( KJV )
And he said, Come. And when Peter was come down out of the ship, he walked on the water, to go to Jesus.**

Peter sincerely loved the Lord and this is what made him the leader of the disciples… when a list of the 12 is given in the gospels Peter’s name is always at the top.

Peter’s faith was weak at best, but notice that the Lord did not reject it… but encouraged it… He said come… When Jesus said come… it was an act of love toward Peter… John, who was one of the silent ones in the boat later said…

**1 John 4:16 ( NKJV )
“And we have known and believed the love that God has for us. God is love…”**

John is saying in essence, ***“through the experiences we have had with Jesus we have come to know and believe the love that God has for us…”***

Jesus calling Peter to walk on the water was one of those experiences…

The story continues…

**Matthew 14:30 ( KJV )
But when he saw the wind boisterous, he was afraid; and beginning to sink, he cried, saying, Lord, save me.**

You hear people saying things like, “Why did he doubt? Why did he fear? Why did he take his eyes off of Jesus?” But you never hear anyone reminding us that there were 11 other men in the boat who were dead silent. I don’t read anywhere in the 3 gospel accounts of this story where any of them said anything until it was all over.

You know it’s easy to criticize Peter for sinking but at least he gave it a shot. He had enough faith to ask Jesus to command him to walk on water.

When Peter got his eyes off of Jesus and onto the waves he began to sink…

***Dad and his coat***

Several years ago my dad and my uncle Frank went fishing in the bay at Port Isabel. Dad’s boat was tied up at a dock at “Outdoor Resorts” when they decided to go out for a day of fishing. Dad bent over to undo the tie line and the boat suddenly moved backward as he went forwards and into the water. It was a cold day so dad had on his coat. The coat immediately filled with water which became very heavy. Dad said he began to sink and every time he would try and lift his hands to swim upward he would actually sink deeper. My uncle reached into the water and grabbed his jacket and pulled upward with all of his might to get dad’s face up to the surface. He said even when he had a hold on the boats edge he could not pull himself up into the boat. They had to start the engine and go to shore where dad could touch bottom and walk out.

Knowing my dad’s situation I began to think about Peter and his position. Here he was some 4 miles off shore and was probably fully clothed when he egresses the boat and begins to walk toward Jesus. Being fully clothed would have made it hard for Peter to get back into the boat once he left it. Knowing this, he went out anyways… We should applaud his faith and use it as an example to live by.

When he did begin to sink I’m sure he was thinking of nothing but drowning and with no time to spare he cried out to the Lord… **“Lord, save me.”**

**b. Jesus stretched out His hand**

He was safe the whole time because…

**Matthew 14:31 ( KJV )
“…immediately Jesus stretched forth *his* hand, and caught him, and said unto him, O thou of little faith, wherefore didst thou doubt?”**

When Jesus asked him this question he was tired from rowing all night, he was scared to death by the storm they were in, then out of nowhere he sees what he thinks to be a ghost or an apparition of some sort and then he is close to drowning as he sinks into the waves… never had he ever been through a trial as difficult as this… Yet Jesus was there for him… There to hold his hand… There to save him in what could have been a tragic end.

Reminds me of a song that I remember my cousin Mary singing…

**He Was There All the Time**

*He was there all the time… He was there all the time… waiting patiently in line… He was there all the time.*

Peter’s little faith was better than no faith at all… Like I said before, there was a boat full of other disciples who could have shown some faith…

Do you remember when Peter denied the Lord? I say, “at least he was there”, where were the other disciples? They were silent just like here in this story… Listen, Peter had a little faith and it was rewarded by the Lord… At least he began to go to the Lord. Yes he wavered and began to doubt, but the Lord was faithful to bring him the rest of the way.

The devil try’s to make us wonder if God cares about us… He causes us to think thoughts like, “Why does God allow His children to go through ntough times like these? And when we get our attention on the problems and the tough times, we begin to sink, but when we cry out to Jesus, like old Peter did, He will come and rescue us.

It’s interesting in light of the story in front of us that Peter would later write 1 Peter 1:6-7…

**1 Peter 1:6-7 ( NKJV )
6. In this you greatly rejoice, though now for a little while, if need be, you have been grieved by various trials,****7. that the genuineness of your faith, *being* much more precious than gold that perishes, though it is tested by fire, may be found to praise, honor, and glory at the revelation of Jesus Christ,**

Peter was going through a trial on the Sea that day and he was found to have genuine faith… no matter how small, it was still genuine.

\*\*\* Notice in closing…

**5. The Omnipotent Christ**

\*\*\* Notice with me that when they both (Jesus and Peter) got into the boat…

**a. The wind stopped**

Just as it had done in a earlier time when they were crossing the Sea and Jesus said.. “Peace be still…” this time as Jesus gets into the boat the violent storm just simply stops and everything becomes calm… What a miracle!!!

But that’s not all, notice with me that just as immediately…

**b. The boat reaches shore**

If you will remember, they were some 3 or 4 miles away from shore, but now when Jesus comes into the boat the wind and waves cease and they are immediately and MIRACULOUSLY arriving safely to their destination.

\*\*\* The account in Mark tells us that when…

**Mark 6:51 ( NKJV )****“…He went up into the boat to them, and the wind ceased. And they were greatly amazed in themselves beyond measure, and marveled.”**

When I read this I think, “Really, they were greatly amazed and marveled?” I know the things that Jesus did were impressive but they had seen Him do these awesome things over and over and over again… I would think that eventually they would come to expect that Jesus had great power and wos accustomed to using it. But the account of Mark gives us more insight as to why this astonished them…

\*\*\* Look with me to Mark 6: 52…

**Mark 6:52 ( NKJV )****For they had not understood about the loaves, because their heart was hardened.**

But now these hard hearts were softened their blinded eyes were seeing better than they ever had before…

\*\*\* Verse 33 of Matthew 14 says that…

**Matthew 14:33 ( NKJV )****Then those who were in the boat came and worshiped Him, saying, “Truly You are the Son of God.”**

**\*\*\* Prayer and Invitation**