



Matthew 14:34–36

34 When they had crossed over, they landed at Gennesaret. 35 And when the men of that place recognized Jesus, they sent word to all the surrounding country. People brought all their sick to him 36 and begged him to let the sick just touch the edge of his cloak, and all who touched it were healed.

Reflection

I wonder what was going through the disciples' minds as they got off the boat at Gennesaret? They had rowed all night, struggling against the wind and the waves and the storm, and then in the early hours of the morning they'd seen what they thought was a ghost. They were terrified, until Jesus called out to them and said 'It is I' or more literally 'I am' – but in some ways this left them even more terrified. Jesus came walking towards them on the water and by saying 'I am' in that same moment he identified himself with God, claiming God's name from the Old Testament, as his own. In the Old Testament, the ocean is frequently symbolic for turmoil, danger, chaos and death, only God has dominion over it, and here is Jesus not only claiming to be God, but demonstrating his absolute authority over creation by, not only

walking on water but also calming both the wild seas and the storm. But if this wasn't enough, Peter then stepped out onto the water himself. And Jesus was encouraging him. They were frozen in terror, but he managed somehow to step out of the boat in faith, and walk towards Jesus. He actually walked on water for a few steps until it seemed to dawn on him what he was doing, and with the whitecaps all around him, and the surging seas, and the sea spray stinging his eyes, his faith began to waver, and he began to sink. His eyes still fixed on Jesus, he cried out, 'Lord, save me!' and Jesus was there, pulling him into the boat. I wonder what was going through their minds as they stepped on to shore remember this night. In the words of one author, perhaps this:

I had never seen Jesus as I saw him then. I had seen him as power. I had seen him as wise. I had witnessed his authority and marvelled at his abilities. But what I witnessed last night I know I'll never forget. I saw God. The God who can't sit still when the storm is too strong. The God who lets me get frightened enough to need him and then comes close enough for me to see him. The God who uses my storms as his path to come to me. I saw God. It took a storm for me to see him. But I saw him. And I'll never be the same.¹

Reflection

Perhaps you can relate to these sentiments

¹ Max Lucado, *In the Eye of the Storm*, (Nashville: Thomas Nelson, 2012), 182

as you reflect over your Christian journey. It's often within the storms of life that we see most clearly, and experience the love and presence of God most intimately by faith. But either way, with thoughts like these in their minds, the disciples disembark at Gennesaret. And there is no rest for them or Jesus. They'd rowed all night, he'd prayed all night, and now Jesus would heal all day with them in tow. Gospel ministry can be like that. Word spread throughout the surrounding countryside and the people brought all their sick to him.

This happened so frequently in the ministry of Jesus it's easy simply to glide past another mention of it. Let's not do that here, although I will be brief. We've seen large numbers of healings in Matthew 4, 8, 9, 12, now 14 and soon again in chapter 15.

What does this signify? Lots of things. Jesus was undeniably, first and foremost, a miracle worker. He performed thousands of historically verifiable miracles. Even his enemies, the Pharisees and Herod, and even secular historians identified him as a miracle worker; and all impossible to explain by scientific methods. People didn't come to him for his teaching, they came to be healed. Jesus' actions spoke even louder than his words. In a world where life was cheap, where life expectancy was low, where even a common cold was more often than not a death sentence, they came to Jesus in their thousands to be saved, to be brought from death to life. He had compassion on them and saved them. Jesus had power over death; he proved it in them, and ultimately, in himself, when he rose from the dead, which is why many of

them would go on to believe him when he offered them eternal life through faith in his name. And that's the link between yesterday's passage and today's. Faith. See in verse 36, in their desperation they:

36 ... begged him to let the sick just touch the edge of his cloak, and all who touched it were healed.

Amidst the storm, Peter sets his eyes on Jesus and steps out of that boat in faith. These people, in their desperation, amidst their storm of sickness, beg Jesus in faith, to be able to simply reach out in faith and touch the edge of his cloak so that they might be healed. And all who touched it were healed. All who come to Jesus in faith are healed. Faith in Jesus saves, sometimes it also brings miraculous healings,

but faith in Jesus always saves. And faith comes right after we realise the desperate and dire situation that we're in because of our sin. And our faith is strengthened when we focus on who we have in our midst. When we realise who Jesus really is, God, fully and finally manifested in the person of the Son, the ultimate meeting point between heaven and earth, and the decisive means of reconciliation between God and humanity. And when we realise who Jesus really is, we worship. Just as the disciples worshipped him in the boat.

Think

Please use what time remains to reflect over both today's and yesterday's passage with their common theme of faith. Consider the faith of Peter and the faith of

the sick amongst these crowds. They're coming to Jesus in a time of turmoil, fear and suffering, in an hour of need, from a position of weakness. Those moments often bring a kind of clarity, a realisation of what's really important in life, and an acknowledgement that ultimately the only place we have to turn is Jesus. He alone has the power to save.

Is your faith in Jesus growing? As you encounter him each day through this app, in the lives of your friends, in the ministry of your church and in your personal walk with him, is your faith growing? And is it resulting in worship? Worshiping Jesus is whole-of-life. It's reflected in everything you do. Colossians 3:17 says it nicely,

17 And whatever you do, whether in

word or deed, do it all in the name of the Lord Jesus, giving thanks to God the Father through him.

As does Hebrews 13:15–16,

15 Through Jesus, therefore, let us continually offer to God a sacrifice of praise—the fruit of lips that openly profess his name. 16 And do not forget to do good and to share with others, for with such sacrifices God is pleased.

Pray

Pray now for faith that will move mountains, faith that will help you walk over troubled waters, get you through the biggest storms in life, and bring great glory

to God through your worship of him. Pray for a faith like this.

And pray that your worship of him would be whole-of-life, not just on Sundays, but in everything you do. In the way you reflect his love to your family, in the way you work hard and with integrity in your workplace, in the way you enjoy every good gift that he chooses to bless you with, in the way you speak his name with boldness and urgency, and in the way you do good in his world for his glory. Pray that that you would worship him with your whole life like this.