

Sermon 12Th Sunday Pentecost (A Sermon by Rev. Ron Friedrich)

Series A

MATTHEW 14:22-33 [GWN translation]

22 Jesus quickly made his disciples get into a boat and cross to the other side ahead of him while he sent the people away.

23 After sending the people away, he went up a mountain to pray by himself. When evening came, he was there alone.

24 The boat, now hundreds of yards from shore, was being thrown around by the waves because it was going against the wind.

25 Between three and six o'clock in the morning, he came to them. He was walking on the sea.

26 When the disciples saw him walking on the sea, they were terrified. They said, "It's a ghost!" and began to scream because they were afraid.

27 Immediately, Jesus said, "Calm down! It's me. Don't be afraid!"

28 Peter answered, "Lord, if it is you, order me to come to you on the water."

29 Jesus said, "Come!" So Peter got out of the boat and walked on the water toward Jesus.

30 But when he noticed how strong the wind was, he became afraid and started to sink. He shouted, "Lord, save me!"

31 Immediately, Jesus reached out, caught hold of him, and said, "You have so little faith! Why did you doubt?"

32 When they got into the boat, the wind stopped blowing.

33 The men in the boat bowed down in front of Jesus and said, "You are truly the Son of God."

The story today continues from one week ago. Remember? Jesus fed 5,000 people with five bread loaves and two fish.

Remember, the story one week ago began when Jesus tried go in a boat to a quiet place to be alone. But many people followed Him, walking around the lake, meeting Jesus as He got out of the boat. Jesus felt sorry for all the people, and He continued to help them.

At the end of the day, Jesus still wanted to have some time alone. Jesus told the 12 Disciples to get back in the boat and go back home, to the city of CAPERNAUM. No doubt, the Disciples thought it was strange that Jesus did not get in the boat with them. Jesus sent them away, to cross the lake at night alone, without Him.

Then Jesus sends the crowd of people away to go home. They saw the boat leave with the Disciples, so they also begin their long walk back home.

At last (pah!) Jesus is alone. That was a long day!

Now Jesus goes where? Up the mountain. And do what? Pray.

Jesus? Pray!? Jesus, Himself, is true God. [?]He needs to pray? Why? Jesus prayed to whom? In the Trinity [3-in-1], Father, Son, and Holy Spirit are all equal.

Jesus is true God. But Jesus is also true man. The Bible says that Jesus came to earth and accepted a body same as ours. Jesus depended on the Father, same as we must depend on God our Father every day. We really can't understand what all that means for Jesus. But what that means for us is that Jesus also accepted our sin, our guilt, our punishment. Jesus died on the cross for us, and instead He gives us life. Jesus gives us hope. He gives us a place with Him in His home, heaven

Back up on the mountain, Jesus prayed. What did He pray? He prayed for whom? The Bible does not inform us what Jesus said. Remember, that night on the mountain, Jesus was alone.

But one week ago we learned that Jesus went away to be alone because he heard that the king killed His friend, John the Baptizer. That reminded Jesus that He is going to the cross, and He also will die soon. No doubt, He prayed for Himself as He later did in GETHSEMANE.

Many times when Jesus prayed, the Bible says He prayed for His Disciples, and He prayed for us! Jesus continues to pray for us today. Romans 8:34 says, *"Christ has [finished] died, and more important, He [came] back to life. Christ has the highest position (place) in heaven. Christ also intercedes (prays) for us. What will separate us from the love Christ has for us? [Nothing!]"*

Jesus prays for us, for what? 1 John 2:1 explains: *"My dear children, I am writing this to you so that you will not sin. Yet, if anyone does sin, we have Jesus Christ, who has God's full approval. [Jesus] speaks on our behalf when we come into the presence of the Father. [Jesus] is the payment for our sins, and not only our sins, but also for the sins of the whole world."*

Back on the mountain, Jesus prays. He prays for Himself, He prays for His Disciples, and He prays for us.

But remember, where are the 12 Disciples? They are in the boat, on the lake, during the night, and a storm comes on them. They were in a lot of danger. Really? Where is Jesus? What is He doing? If Jesus sees them, and He is praying for them, are they safe? Yes!

Think about the storms and trouble in your life. Where is Jesus now? What is He doing now? If Jesus sees us, and He is praying for us, are we safe? Yes!

Storms continue to come. Troubles in our lives don't stop. But we are in God's care.

The Bible says that Jesus came to the Disciples, walking on the water. They did not recognize Him. They thought He was a ghost.

So also, in our troubles, sometimes God brings us help how? He makes the problem worse! Example: We have a problem with sin. God took away our sin, how? God let our sin kill His Son, Jesus, on the cross. But through Jesus' death, we have eternal life.

In our daily lives, God will often guide us, how? God will use trouble to lead us away from some greater danger that we can't see. Or God will use trouble to encourage us to turn back to Him for help.

The Bible story continues.

Jesus calls to the 12 Disciples, "Peace! It's me [Jesus]. Don't be afraid!"

In our troubles, the Holy Spirit brings peace to our hearts, so we can trust God and not be afraid.

Then Peter asked Jesus to say the word that will let him walk on water, also. Jesus said, "Come." And Peter did it! But the storm was still all around Peter. In the boat Peter had something he could hold. Outside the boat, there was nothing to hold. While Peter kept his eyes looking to Jesus, Peter was fine. But the storm bothered him. He looked away from Jesus to look at the storm. Faith melted away. Now Peter was in serious trouble! "Lord, save me!" Jesus grabbed Peter and brought him back to the boat. Then Jesus calmed the storm.

What about us? What is our "boat"? Where is our safe place? Home? A job? School? Church? Medical care? Sometimes we think, "I need to escape! I need to be free! Jesus, please say the word so I can get out of this boat! I need to leave home. I need to quit my job. I need to quit school. I need to quit church." For a short time we may enjoy "just Jesus and me," but soon we see the troubles did not go away, and we have nothing we can hold. Jesus, with love, leads us back to the "boat" and calms our storm.

The important lessons of this story are:

- (1) No matter what happens, Jesus still loves us, forgives us, and cares for us.
- (2) No matter what happens, we must keep our eyes on Jesus and trust Him.

Amen.