

10th Sunday after Pentecost
“Walking on water” Mark 6:48-50
July 28, 2024
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Grace to you and peace from God our Father and our Lord and Savior Jesus Christ. Dear brothers and sisters in Christ, our text for the Tenth Sunday after Pentecost is from our Gospel reading, Mark 6:48-50.

“48 Then He saw them straining at rowing, for the wind was against them. Now about the fourth watch of the night He came to them, walking on the sea, and would have passed them by. 49 And when they saw Him walking on the sea, they supposed it was a ghost, and cried out; 50 for they all saw Him and were troubled. But immediately He talked with them and said to them, “Be of good cheer! It is I; do not be afraid.”

So far our text.

The storms of life. You may remember that this was the second time recorded in the Gospels of the disciples crossing the Sea of Galilee with the wind and the waves against them. Back in Mark 4 we heard how Jesus was asleep in the stern of the boat on another occasion and the boat was in danger of sinking. Waking Jesus up in a panic, the disciples witnessed Him speak to the wind and the waves and they were immediately calmed. Their reaction was one of fear and amazement. **““Who can this be, that even the wind and the sea obey Him!”**

In the storms of life, the disciples faith was being tested and strengthened to know for certain who was in the boat with them – the Son of God. And this time, after Jesus calms the storm, this was their beautiful confession of faith as we hear from the parallel account from Matthew 14.

“32 And when they got into the boat, the wind ceased. (that is, Peter and Jesus, for we also learn that Peter’s faith was especially tested in his attempt to walk on water, and he needed to be rescued. So, when they got in the boat, the wind ceased.)
33 Then those who were in the boat came and worshiped Him, saying, “Truly You are the Son of God.”

Why did Jesus purposely send the disciples on this sea crossing in the middle of the night, knowing that they would have to face a fierce storm? Yes, Jesus “made” the disciples get into the boats and cross as we hear from our text. It was another test of their faith in the storms of life. And Jesus for His part went to be alone to pray. We don’t know the words of Jesus prayer like we do in John 16, but it is a safe bet that He was praying for the strengthening of His disciples, and for the multitudes that He had just fed who only saw Him as a prophet and wanted to take Him by force and make Jesus their Bread King. (John 6:15)

The disciples were in danger of this very thinking as we read in our text.

“52 For they had not understood about the loaves, because their heart was hardened.

God indeed uses the storms of life to remind us who is the One who walks on water, the Son of God!

Back in the 80’s there was a popular country singer named Randy Travis. His voice is a rich baritone voice. I say “is” not “was”, and I’ll explain why in a moment. His first album was called “The Storms of Life”, and you may remember his first hit was “On the Other Hand”. Indeed, Randy went through and is still going through a very difficult storm in his life.

He also has recorded Christian Gospel music. There was a song by Randy Travis back in the 80’s called “He Walked on Water”. He sings a beautiful story of a little boy admiring his great- grandfather.

*“And if the story was told, only heaven knows
But his hat seemed to me like an old halo
And though his wings, they were never seen
I thought that he walked on water*

It’s an expression isn’t it when someone is loved so much that one says, “He or she walks on water”. Such a person is one’s hero and mentor. The song goes on.

*Well, he tied a cord to the end of a mop
And said, "Son, here's a pony, keep her at a trot"
And I'd ride in circles while he laughed a lot*

*Then I'd flop down beside him
And he was ninety years old in '63
And I loved him and he loved me
And Lord, I cried the day he died
'Cause I thought that he walked on water*

Then comes the difficult news for a young boy, that his beloved and admired great grandpa of 90 years old, is a mortal like the rest of us. The boy thought he could walk on water and always be with him, but no one is able to conquer death.

Except, except ... the One who truly walked on water, Jesus Christ. The disciples witnessed first-hand what we witness with eyes of faith. The laws of physics do not apply to the Creator of the Universe, who made gravity and buoyancy. Jesus isn't slowed down by the wind and the waves. He controls them. And He wanted His disciples and all of to see that.

At first, the disciples, weak as they were in their faith, let themselves believe in ghosts. No, there is no such thing as a ghost. The souls of the departed do not stay on earth when a person dies. But the soul is judged immediately. The soul who trusts in Jesus goes immediately to heaven. **“21 For to me, to live is Christ, and to die is gain.”**
Philippians 1:21, but the soul who rejects Him goes to eternal condemnation in hell where there is no rescue.

It is so important for a person to believe that Jesus is the Savior, the Son of God, that He commanded His disciples, and all of us included, to be a witness of the Good News. What is the Good News? That Jesus conquered death by His death on the cross. And He rose again to prove it is true! Jesus walks on death! Jesus walks on the serpent's head and crushes Satan! Jesus walks on water!

“15 And He said to them, “Go into all the world and preach the gospel to every creature. 16 He who believes and is baptized will be saved; but he who does not believe will be condemned.

And so Jesus needed to strengthen the faith of the disciples through this storm of life to know that He is with them and with us always. Do not be afraid! It is I...I who walked through the torments of hell so that you would never have to...it is I who paid for all your sins of doubt and despair and unbelief with My blood on the cross!

We who think we can walk on water by our own strength, that we can gain our own salvation are quickly humbled like Peter. Peter showed some bravery by asking Jesus to allow him to walk to Him. But, quickly doubted when he saw the wind and the waves and began to sink. But Jesus reaches out and lifts him up and as the two enter the boat, the wind is immediately calmed and then John reports another miracle in his account in John 6.

Jesus will always lift you up when you are going through a storm in your life! Do not be afraid, Jesus tells us also! It is I!

“21 Then they willingly received Him into the boat, and immediately the boat was at the land where they were going.”

Immediately. No more rowing. Jesus brings them safely to shore. And the next day, Peter makes this beautiful confession of faith after many reject Him.

““Lord, to whom shall we go? You have the words of eternal life. 69 Also we have come to believe and know that You are the Christ, the Son of the living God.” (John 6:69)

He who believes and is baptized will be saved! The disciple of Jesus who is baptized doesn't walk on water, but walks in the water of baptism all of one's life! You and I, baptized believers in Jesus have been given the treasures of heaven immediately in our baptisms – complete forgiveness and washing of our sins, eternal salvation, and victory over death and the devil! Yes, we walk with Jesus over death itself!

As I mentioned, Randy Travis went through a huge storm in life as you may know. He stopped singing and writing music because he suffered a major stroke that left him paralyzed and directly affected his voice. His chance of survival was very slim. And yet, with much rehabilitation he was able to sing “Amazing Grace” recently. Yes, God's amazing grace brought him through that storm of life.

And you may have heard that in May, he released a new song...with the help of AI. Today's technology, with Randy's consent, helped him sing again and it is amazing to hear. Whether you like an AI enhanced voice or not, one thing is for sure. When Jesus comes again, and raises up all the believers and takes them to heaven, their voices will be restored more wonderfully than ever can be imagined. And the voices of the saints will sing praises to the Almighty loving Savior, Jesus, who walked through the greatest storm,

of hell itself to save us. So that we can walk with Him and dwell with Him in the house of the Lord...Forever!

As we heard in Psalm 23 last week:

“You anoint my head with oil; my cup runs over. Surely goodness and mercy shall follow me all the days of my life; and I will dwell in the house of the Lord Forever.

“through Jesus Christ, to whom be glory ...forever and ever. Amen” (Hebrews 13:21)

“And this peace of God, which surpasses all understanding, will guard your hearts and minds through Christ Jesus.” Amen. (Philippians 4:7)