

Sermon Study Guide

Pastor: Pastor Ashwin Ramani

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Sermon: Faith Arise – Faith Amidst the Storm

IN Opportunities to connect and pray as a group

1. When have you had a 'stretching' time whether in your work-world, physically or personally?
2. What are usual reactions to times of 'storms' in life?
3. Review any information you have on the Sea of Galilee. Watch:
<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=GloffUv0xKk>

UP Time that is devoted to the Word of God

1. What took place just before this event (Matt 14:22-33)? What might be significant about the phrasing 'Immediately Jesus made the disciples get into the boat'? (Matt 14:22)
2. Consider Jesus' timing in this passage. What was His purpose when He responded 'immediately' and when He delayed?
3. Review both Storm #1 (Mt 8:23-27) and Storm #2 (Matt 14:22-33; Mk 6:45-52).
Briefly describe the circumstances? What was a 'memorable moment' for the disciples in each storm?
What was the difference in how the disciples understood Jesus?
4. What did Jesus mean by saying "It is I"? (Matt 14:27)
How does this relate to Exodus 3:14; Job 9:4-8 and Hebrews 12:2?

OUT Seek to be the Community of God's people in your community

1. Where in your life are you feeling stretched or exhausted?
How does this study of Jesus and Peter walking on the water give you new insight about 'walking by faith' (2 Cor 5:7)
2. Which of the following phrases will you use this week to bolster your 'little faith' and call upon God's great faithfulness?
 - a) Pastor Ashwin said, "After you have been through a storm, you have a revelation of God as you have never had before. It is through the storms we see God – not just what He can do but who He is!"
 - b) Pastor Ashwin quoted Max Lucado, "When you recognize God as Creator, you will admire Him. When you recognize His wisdom, you will learn from Him. When you discover His strength, you will rely on Him. But only when He saves you will you worship Him."
 - c) Matthew 14:32-33

UP – IN – OUT reflect a balanced life including a focus on our personal relationship with the Father (UP), staying connected to the Body (IN), and reaching our world (OUT).

THE WORD (NIV)

Matthew 8: 23 – 27 (Storm #1)

²³ Then he got into the boat and his disciples followed him. ²⁴ Suddenly a furious storm came up on the lake, so that the waves swept over the boat. But Jesus was sleeping. ²⁵ The disciples went and woke him, saying, "Lord, save us! We're going to drown!" ²⁶ He replied, "You of little faith, why are you so afraid?" Then he got up and rebuked the winds and the waves, and it was completely calm. ²⁷ The men were amazed and asked, "What kind of man is this? Even the winds and the waves obey him!"

Matthew 14:22-33 (Storm #2)

²² Immediately Jesus made the disciples get into the boat and go on ahead of him to the other side, while he dismissed the crowd. ²³ After he had dismissed them, he went up on a mountainside by himself to pray. Later that night, he was there alone, ²⁴ and the boat was already a considerable distance from land, buffeted by the waves because the wind was against it. ²⁵ Shortly before dawn Jesus went out to them, walking on the lake. ²⁶ When the disciples saw him walking on the lake, they were terrified. "It's a ghost," they said, and cried out in fear. ²⁷ But Jesus immediately said to them: "Take courage! It is I. Don't be afraid." ²⁸ "Lord, if it's you," Peter replied, "tell me to come to you on the water." ²⁹ "Come," he said. Then Peter got down out of the boat, walked on the water and came toward Jesus. ³⁰ But when he saw the wind, he was afraid and, beginning to sink, cried out, "Lord, save me!" ³¹ Immediately Jesus reached out his hand and caught him. "You of little faith," he said, "why did you doubt?" ³² And when they climbed into the boat, the wind died down. ³³ Then those who were in the boat worshiped him, saying, "Truly you are the Son of God."

Mark 6:45-52 (Storm #2)

⁴⁵ Immediately Jesus made his disciples get into the boat and go on ahead of him to Bethsaida, while he dismissed the crowd. ⁴⁶ After leaving them, he went up on a mountainside to pray. ⁴⁷ Later that night, the boat was in the middle of the lake, and he was alone on land. ⁴⁸ He saw the disciples straining at the oars, because the wind was against them. Shortly before dawn he went out to them, walking on the lake. He was about to pass by them, ⁴⁹ but when they saw him walking on the lake, they thought he was a ghost. They cried out, ⁵⁰ because they all saw him and were terrified. Immediately he spoke to them and said, "Take courage! It is I. Don't be afraid." ⁵¹ Then he climbed into the boat with them, and the wind died down. They were completely amazed, ⁵² for they had not understood about the loaves; their hearts were hardened.

Exodus 3:14

¹⁴ God said to Moses, "I AM WHO I AM. This is what you are to say to the Israelites: 'I AM has sent me to you.'"

Job 9:4-8

His wisdom is profound, his power is vast. Who has resisted him and come out unscathed? ⁵ He moves mountains without their knowing it and overturns them in his anger. ⁶ He shakes the earth from its place and makes its pillars tremble. ⁷ He speaks to the sun and it does not shine; he seals off the light of the stars. ⁸ He alone stretches out the heavens and treads on the waves of the sea.

Heb 12:2

² ...fixing our eyes on Jesus, the pioneer and perfecter of faith...

Sermon Study Summary

In previous sermons, Pastor Ashwin spoke about faith, the power of belief and the power of unbelief. This week we examine how storms can become a means of stretching and growing our faith, and understanding more deeply God's great faithfulness.

In Matthew 14:22-33 we see the role of faith for the disciples in a literal storm of their lives. We are encouraged to read this passage and consider the Christian life as a walk of faith, based on unseen realities. In this passage, the disciples were unable to see that Jesus was fully aware of the storm they were facing. His purpose for their experience of the storm was to stretch their faith and deepen their understanding of Jesus' unfailing faithfulness and capacity to save. Further, we are challenged to consider how God might be using the storms in our life to reveal Himself more deeply to us and strengthen our trust in Him.

Faith seems like an easy thing to give testimony to when life is going well and circumstances are calm or predictable. Storms of life catch us off guard and reveal our faith, how small it can be. These storms are intended to test our faith but can also be used to grow our faith by strengthening our confidence and trust in Jesus. Some storms in life can be a result of our disobedience, for example, Jonah. Other storms, such as the one faced by the disciples here, occur when we obey God! It can help to keep the image of a rubber band being stretched to become more useful; or a bow and arrow in the hands of an expert archer, stretching and straining the bow until the purpose is in sight. Being 'stretched' is not comfortable or pleasant but essential for our growth.

In Matthew 14: 22, we read that "Jesus made the disciples get into the boat," in which the original language implies that they were forced or compelled to do this. The disciples were likely tired after a long day and hesitant to venture out this time of day on the sea that was prone to strong storms but they obeyed. Jesus orchestrates the events for the disciples to enter the storm, and then Jesus stays on land to disperse the crowds and to pray in solitude. This scenario is quite different than the previous account of the disciples caught in a storm on this sea in Matthew 8:23-27. In Matthew 8, Jesus was physically present with the disciples; He calms the storm as quickly as they become afraid. In Matthew 14, Jesus' absence accentuates the disciples' perspective that they were alone in their storm and fears. Jesus has a clear purpose in mind that was unknown to the disciples. Jesus has a heavenly perspective and was fully aware of their distress but He did not come to their rescue right away.

The disciples made every effort to fight the storm and fear was consuming them, they had forgotten about Jesus, and then...Jesus show up, walking on the water. In Job 9:4-8 we read that God alone can 'march on the waves of the sea' and when Jesus did this, He demonstrated that no matter how chaotic the storm appeared He was still in command. For the disciples, panic sets in and they think that Jesus is a ghost, but Jesus immediately responds to this internal storm of fear by saying "Take courage, it is I, do not be afraid." (vs. 27) J

Jesus uses familiar words that we see in Exodus 3:14 when God is instructing to Moses what to tell the Israelites, "I AM." In spite of the storm around them Jesus offered internal peace and calm with the assurance of His presence. Peter's extraordinary response to this truth of Jesus' trustworthiness was to have Jesus call him out onto the water with Him. Jesus invited him to come and Peter's faith set an example for the other disciples. A moment later, Peter's focus shifts from Jesus to the storm around him and he begins to sink. The word *immediately*, is used a third time in this passage to illustrate Jesus' reaction to Peter's wavering faith and we read in vs. 31 "Jesus immediately reached out and grabbed him" – saving him, a personal act of deliverance. Peter's faith was little, but Jesus' faithfulness is great! Even when Peter's focus was on the storm, Jesus focus was constantly on Peter. Pastor Ashwin points out that the "entire episode was designed by Jesus to stretch the disciples...to give this revelation that Jesus is worthy of worship because He is divine!"

For the first time, the disciples made the confession as a group in vs. 33 "Truly you are the Son of God." It is a memorable moment, that through the storms we see God- not just what He can do but who He is!