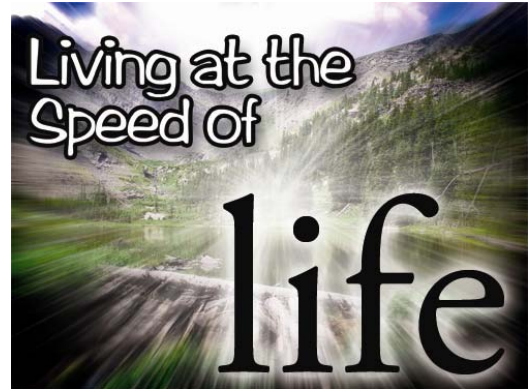


RTM

reaching/teaching/ministering curriculum

May 31, 2009
Take that Risk!
Matthew 14:22-36



MINISTERING HELPS

Group Prayer

After each prayer request is mentioned, have the class say together out loud...

And we know that in all things God works for the good of those who love him, who have been called according to his purpose.

Romans 8:28 (NIV)

How does saying this verse over each request change the way you think about it?

Go After Absentees

Talk about ways that you can stay in touch better over the summer months, when people are away and on vacation more.

REACHING HELPS

Harvest Saturday is June 20. On that day, we will meet in the Fellowship Hall to pray over the 100+ unchurched families that we will discover through VBS and then make an effort to contact them and invite them to church the next day.

We need every adult class to have at least ONE person who will be willing to be here representing their class.

Who will be the one to represent your class?

TEACHING HELPS

We continue our sermon series called LIVING AT THE SPEED OF LIFE.

Jimmy Smith will be preaching today, and challenging us to be willing to step out and follow God, especially when it means risk or getting outside our comfort zone.

Today we will take a look at the story of Peter walking on the water, and get some clues about how we too can step out and do amazing things in the strength of the Lord.

Take that Risk!

Matthew 14:22-33

Denis Boyles knew it would be challenging to interview a man on a roller coaster—especially when the interview took place *during* an attempt to set a world’s record for continuous riding. After several times around the track, Denis was so overcome with fear he could hardly talk.

Then the man showed him how to use his body and feet to lean into the loops, twists and turns. Writing in *AARP Magazine*, Boyles explained how that took away the terror. It also taught him a lesson about risk and fear. The roller coaster *felt* risky though it was quite safe. Driving his car to the amusement park posed a far greater risk of injury. Risk and fear are easily confused. Peter experienced this as he saw Jesus walking on the water. At the risk of waves and wind he stepped out onto the sea after having been tossed and turned all night in a boat that had the potential to sink.

THE CONTEXT OF THE PASSAGE

If Jesus were a modern day teenager, he would have been voted most popular. At this point in his life, Jesus had turned water into wine (Jn. 2:1-12), healed every kind of sickness (Mt. 4:23-25), stood toe to toe with the hypocritical spiritual leaders (Mt 12:22-45; Jn. 2:13-22) and preached the Kingdom of God to thousands (Mt. 4:23). Most recent was the miracle of feeding five thousand men with simply five loaves of bread and two fish. Christ was known, no doubt, throughout the entire Middle East for his signs and wonders. People traveled miles and miles to see Jesus, not as the Messiah, but as a healer and provider. Jews and Gentiles alike were enamored with Jesus’ ability to heal the most disgusting diseases while showing compassion on the most disgusting of civilization. Jesus appealed to the masses not because of who he was, but what he did and what he provided. This was not Jesus’ heart though. Jesus did not come to be popular. Matthew 14:22-36 reveals that relationships mattered most to Christ.

After feeding 5000 men, Christ gave specific instructions to his disciples to depart to Capernaum. The disciples did not want to go alone so Christ *made the disciples get into the boat*. The language indicates that they may have argued with Jesus, wanting to stay to see what Jesus would do next. Regardless of reason or circumstance, the disciples got on the boat and began rowing across the lake.

John describes this event in chapter six of his gospel. There, John records that the people were determined to make Him king in their own way and for their own purposes. Jesus would not allow it so without argument Jesus simply dispersed the crowd. They bedded down for the night wherever they could near Bethsaida Julias, which was a few miles inland from the northeast shore of the lake. Having dispersed the crowd, Jesus turned His attention to His relationship with His Heavenly Father. Jesus had little time to rest or to spend unhurried hours with the disciples. He only had time to pray, after which He would miraculously encounter the disciples in the middle of the furious wind at sea.

Teaching Plan

Introduction...

Get your group talking by asking them what is their favorite miracle that Jesus did? Why was it special to them. Use the time to hear lots of testimonies of the amazing power of Christ. Remind them that Jesus is still just as mighty to do miracles as he was then.

Today we will look at an amazing miracle of Jesus. We will look at His calling of Peter to walk on the water.

Just as Jesus called Peter to risk on that night, He sometimes calls us to risk. How can we not only get out of the boat as Peter did, but not sink? Lets see if we can find clues about this from today’s passage of scripture.

1. THE SOURCE OF POWER: MATTHEW 14:22-23

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. When evening came, he was there alone. **Matthew 14:22-23 (NIV)**

Jesus found the source of his power in the Father. Having given much, he needed time to recharge. He did this in three ways. He made his prayer personal, private and prolonged.

Jesus' prayer was personal. Jesus *went up to the mountain* to pray. It was a time of purposeful communion with the Father. His prayer was flagrant, intentional and full of purpose. He went away from the world He was living in, away from the people He was living with and sought the solitude of the mountain. Jesus understood that His time on earth was important, but He also understood His time with the Father was most important. He needed the Father's presence and power. Therefore, He purposefully went up to the mountain to pray.

Jesus' prayer was private. Scripture records Jesus praying both publicly and privately, but this time, Jesus went *alone* to pray. He needed time with the Father to meditate and converse in a personal one-on-one manner. He needed to focus and refuel His own relationship with the Father. This communion was independent of others and totally dependant on the Father. Jesus understood the importance of getting away with God on a personal, private manner.

Jesus' prayer was prolonged. Jesus spent hours in prayer. A few short verses span possibly 6 hours of prayer. He was praying "*When evening came,*" somewhere between 6- 9 p.m. He does not appear to his disciples until between 3-6 a.m. Even with a distant walk, Jesus would have spent a considerable amount of time in prayer with the Father. The amount of time is important because it is a reminder that God not only wants to hear from His children independently and privately, but He also seeks to have extended periods of time of undivided attention.

So, what did Jesus pray for ...

John MacArthur notes, "Jesus' temptations neither began nor ended with the three in the wilderness immediately after His baptism. At the end of that session, the devil only "departed from Him until an opportune time" ([Luke 4:13](#)). The enthusiasm of the crowds and the disciples to make Him king was very much like the third temptation in the wilderness, in which Satan offered Jesus "all the kingdoms of the world, and their glory." ([Matt. 4:8-9](#)) "What better time to establish your kingdom than the Passover season, and in what better way than by marching triumphantly into Jerusalem at the head of thousands of faithful, enthusiastic supporters?" the devil may have asked. Jesus would surely gather many more thousands on the way to the Holy City and His supernatural power would guarantee victory against any opposition. He

1. The Source of Power... Matt. 14:22-23

1. Using the "Context of the Passage" section, help everyone to understand that this happened in the early part of Jesus ministry, when he was extremely popular with a great many people. Remind the group of some of the amazing things that Jesus had done up to this point and that people were gathering probably not because they all believed in Him as the Messiah, but because no one knew what amazing miracle might happen next.

2. Read Matthew 12:22-36

3. Remind them Jesus had just fed the 5000 with 5 loaves and 2 fish. As we begin looking at the story, we find Jesus sending off the disciples and sending away the people.

- ▶ How much work do you think it took for the disciples and Jesus to deal with the 5000+ people that day?
- ▶ Why is ministering to others sometimes so exhausting?
- ▶ What can happen to people who give, give, give and never take time to recharge physically, spiritually or emotionally?
- ▶ Jesus even got away from the disciples. What was Jesus doing to recharge?
- ▶ If you could pick the perfect "recharge" what would it look like?
- ▶ In reality, what are some ways we could/should be recharging on a daily or even more frequent basis? (Talk here about the importance of quiet time... share your testimony about how spending time with God each day helps you to stay recharged.)

could easily conquer the ‘Herods’, and even mighty Rome would be no match for the Son of God. He could bypass the cross and avoid the agony of having to take the sin of the world upon Himself.”

Jesus turned His back on this evil just as He did on every other occasion and came before His heavenly Father to pray. He took time out of His relentless schedule and joined in intimate, refreshing communion with God. As in the Garden, He doubtlessly longed to be restored to the glorious fellowship He had had with His Father. He prayed for His disciples as He did in John 17. Jesus prayed for continued strength as He continued in the will of the Father. Jesus, alone on the mountain may have even prayed for you! (John 17:9-12). Ultimately His prayer was focused on continuing in the Glory of God and leading other to it.

2. GETTING OUT OF THE BOAT: Matthew 14:23-29

²⁴ *But the boat was already a considerable distance from land, buffeted by the waves because the wind was against it.* ²⁵ *During the fourth watch of the night 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.*

Matthew 14:24-29 (NIV)

When Jesus was finished praying He walked to His disciples. The disciples were in the middle of the sea, rowing a boat and trying to survive a storm. Waves pounded the boat and frequently crashed over the railing. Fear best describes the men at this point, but as they looked out on the waves their fear turned to terror as Jesus came to them walking on the sea through the very danger that threatened to destroy them. Jesus knew exactly where they were.

The disciples, on the other hand, had no idea what they were seeing. Their first thought was that it was a ghost or some form of a spirit. In their panic, they could not help but cry out. Immediately, Jesus calmed their fear by proclaiming, “*Take courage! It is I. Don't be afraid.*”

Why did the Lord do this amazing thing? Remember, at

2. Get out of the boat... v.24-29

1. Talk about the situation that the disciples were in on the boat. Focus on their exhaustion from the day, as well as, the somewhat dangerous conditions they were facing on the boat.
2. Do you really believe that Jesus was actually walking on the water? Does it matter? If you doubt this story happened, then how can you believe that other stories are true or not?
3. It says that in their moment of exhaustion and crisis, Jesus came to them. Is that true today? It seems as if the disciples didn't know what to believe when they saw Jesus. Do we have to have it all together for Jesus to help us in our time of need? Does Jesus only act when we are full of faith and prayed up? (no)
4. What were Jesus' first words to them on the lake? When the disciples began to realize that it was Jesus and not a ghost, what effect do you think it had on them emotionally? When you are going through a stressful time or crisis, how beneficially would it be to take time to remember that the Lord is with you saying what He said to the disciples?
5. Peter not only took comfort, but he was also curious and wanted to experience what Jesus was experiencing.
 - ▶ Is it OK to want to do the amazing things Jesus did? How does the following verse connect to us and doing the things that Jesus did...

¹² *I tell you the truth, anyone who has faith in me will do what I have been doing. He will do even greater things than these, because I am going to the Father.* ¹³ *And I will do whatever you ask in my name, so that the Son may bring glory to the Father.* ¹⁴ *You may ask me for anything in my name, and I will do it.*

John 14:12-14 (NIV)

- ▶ What was Peter giving up or risking by stepping out of the boat and into the water?
- ▶ What was the importance of Peter asking Jesus to tell him to come?
- ▶ Why are we so afraid to risk doing amazing things with God today?

this point, Jesus is not only working to convince the world that He is the Messiah, but also His disciples. He also is training up the leaders that would lead the church after His departure. He did not have to walk on the water to save them, but His doing so gave them an unforgettable reminder of the power and extent of His divine protection. It was not to teach them to walk on water but to teach them that God can and will act on behalf of His own. We will never find ourselves in a place where Christ cannot find us; and no storm is too severe for Him to save us from it. There is no reason for God's people to fear. The place of security is not the place of favorable circumstance but the place of obedience to God's will.

Peter, BOLD Peter, EMOTIONAL Peter, CHARASMATIC Peter, took a faith step. In response to hearing Jesus he cried out, "If it's you Lord, I want to be where you are." Peter has taken much flack for his action but just think about his statement. "Lord, if it's you, I want to be where you are." So Peter stepped out knowing that his task was illogical, unreasonable, unrealistic, improbable, unthinkable and yet possible because Christ had called him to such.

The Sea of Galilee is 12 1/2 miles long, and from 4-7 1/2 miles wide. Its surface is 682 feet below the level of the Mediterranean and it is from 80-160 feet deep. The Sea of Galilee is of an oval long and six broad. It is 60 miles northeast of Jerusalem and 27 east of the Mediterranean Sea. The river Jordan enters it at its northern end and passes out at its southern end. In fact, the bed of the lake is just a lower section of the Great Jordan Valley. Its more remarkable feature is its deep depression, being no less than 700 feet below the level of the ocean. The scenery is bleak and monotonous, being surrounded by a high and almost unbroken wall of hills, on account of which it is exposed to frequent, sudden and violent storms. The great depression makes the climate of the shores almost tropical. This tropical climate was felt by the traveler going down from the plains of Galilee. In summer the heat is intense, and even in early spring the air has something of an Egyptian balminess. The water of the lake is sweet, cool and transparent; and the beach is pebbly and has a beautiful sparkling look. It abounds in fish, now as in ancient times. There were large fisheries on the lake, and much commerce was carried on upon it. The Sea of Galilee would have been very easy to drown in, and Peter, being a fisherman, knew it.

STAYING ABOVE THE WATER: Matthew 14:30-33

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." **Matthew 14:30-33 (NIV)**

Peter did many things for which he can be faulted. But he is sometimes faulted for things that reflect his love, courage and faith as much as brashness or cowardice. This is one of those love and faith things. Although Peter was sincere, he did not comprehend the reality or the extremity of what he was asking to do. From the relative safety of the boat the feat did not seem so terrifying. But once Peter got out of the boat and walked on the water and came toward Jesus, the situation appeared radically different. Peter temporarily took His eyes off the Lord and, seeing the wind, he became afraid, and

3. Staying above the water... v.30-33

1. What was it that caused Peter to start sinking? What does this tell us about starting something with Jesus and continuing to do it in Jesus?
2. How did Jesus respond to Peter when he began to sink? What does that say about the Lord and us when we get started in a next step but fears and doubts start to work on us?
3. Why does Jesus let us fail sometimes? What do you think Peter learned about the Lord in this situation?
4. From this story, what do we learn...
 - ▶ about how to stay above water?
 - ▶ about storms in the midst of us risking for God?
 - ▶ about what Jesus does when we slip in a next step?
 - ▶ about the ratio of Jesus followers who get out of the boat, versus the number who stay in the boat and never risk for God?
5. What was the end result of all these things?

beginning to sink, he cried out, saying, “Lord, save me!” His faith was enough to get him out of the boat and allow him a considerable distance from the safety of the boat, but it was not enough to carry him across the water.

Faith is strengthened by its being taken to extremities it has never faced before. Such strengthening is basic to Christian growth and maturity. “Blessed is a man who perseveres under trial,” James says; “for once he has been approved, he will receive the crown of life, which the Lord has promised to those who love Him.” The Lord takes us as far as our faith will go, and when it ends we begin to sink. It is then that we call out to Him and He again demonstrates His faithfulness and His power, and our faith learns to extend that much further. As we trust God in the faith we have, we discover its limitations, but we also discover what it can become.

Peter, in a moment took his eyes off of Jesus. He realized the illogical position he was in and began to sink. He was probably fully clothed and would have had great difficulty swimming through the high waves. In his fright, he could think of nothing but drowning. But as soon as he cried out ... “Lord, save me,” he was safe, because immediately Jesus stretched out His hand and took hold of him. When Jesus rebuked him, saying, “O you of little faith, why did you doubt?”, Peter must have wondered at the question. The reason for his doubt seemed obvious. He was bone weary from rowing most of the night, scared to death by the storm and then by what he thought was a ghost, and now it seemed he was about to drown before he could reach the Lord. He had never been in such a situation before, and it may be that his actually walking a few feet on the water added to his shock. Peter’s weak faith, even in rebuke, was better than no faith and so the Lord took him where his own faith could not.

Having saved Peter, Jesus returned to the boat. When they stepped in, the wind and waves stopped. The most spectacular miracle was accomplished without Jesus saying a word or raising a hand. The moment He and Peter got into the boat with the other disciples, the wind stopped. It was as if the wind was simply waiting for the miracle to be finished; and when it had served its purpose, it stopped.

Immediately the men in the boat recognized Jesus as “God’s Son.” They were more than simply amazed, as the crowds and they themselves had always been. They were taken past amazement to worship, which is what Jesus’ signs and miracles were intended to produce. At last they were beginning to see Jesus as the One whom God highly exalted. (Phil 2:9-11)

References

<http://net.bible.org/dictionary.php?word=Galilee,%20Sea%20of>

MacArthur’s New Testament Commentary’s

The Bible Knowledge Commentary

Adam Clarke’s Commentary on the New Testament

Points for Application...

1. How desperate are you to get recharged and stay recharged for God? What drastic things do you need to do to reorder your life and schedule so that you are allowing God to refill you with his word and bring energy to you spiritually, emotionally and physically?
2. How desperate are you to allow God to do something great through you? What has God put on your heart that you have not been willing to do? What is keeping you from it? Challenge your group to not be one of the disciples that are in the boat just along for the ride. Challenge them to risk for God and get out of the boat.
3. When we risk for God it doesn’t mean that from that point every moment is “happily ever after.” Storms and trials come in the midst of risk, yet the Lord is there and will keep us above the water if we keep our eyes on him and our faith in him. Are you sinking a little in the midst of a risk? Renew your focus and faith in Jesus and let him work in you to accomplish more than you ever could in your own strength.