

Pentecost #10

8-9-2020

Matthew 14:22-33

J.V.Trautwein

Celebrate (Introduction)

“Elijah finds the presence of God not in an earthquake, wind, or fire, but in the sound of sheer silence. When the disciples face a great storm on the sea, they cry out with fear. Jesus says: ‘Take heart, it is I; do not be afraid.’ Amid the storms of life, we gather to seek the calm presence of Christ that soothes our fears. In comforting words of scripture and in the refreshing bread and cup of the eucharist, God grants us peace and sends us forth to be a sign of God’s presence to others.”

Opening Hymn: [“O God, Our Help In Ages Past”](#)

Psalm 85:8-13

Let me hear what God the Lord will speak,
for he will speak peace to his people,
to his faithful, to those who turn to him in their hearts.^{8a}
⁹ Surely his salvation is at hand for those who fear him,
that his glory may dwell in our land.
¹⁰ Steadfast love and faithfulness will meet;
righteousness and peace will kiss each other.
¹¹ Faithfulness will spring up from the ground,
and righteousness will look down from the sky.
¹² The Lord will give what is good,
and our land will yield its increase.
¹³ Righteousness will go before him,
and will make a path for his steps.

Hymn of Praise: [“Joyful, Joyful We Adore Thee”](#)

Prayer of the Day

“O God our defender, storms rage around and within us and cause us to be afraid. Rescue your people from despair, deliver your sons and daughters from fear, and preserve us in the faith of your Son, Jesus Christ, our Savior and Lord. Amen.”

1st Reading: [1 Kings 19:9-18](#)

2nd Reading: [Romans 10:5-15](#)

The Gospel: [Matthew 14:22-33](#)

Hymn of the Day: [“Blessed Assurance”](#)

The Message: ([Video](#))

History has proven that life has not always been kind to mankind. He has faced every conceivable situation: wars, pestilence, famine, tornados, earthquakes, forest fires, volcanic eruptions, floods, draught, pandemics, persecution, slavery, torture, and on and on. In every occasion, God has been sought to bring a miracle to bring relief and resolution to the distraught times. In the midst of this pandemic we also seek a miracle to end that which has changed our lives. Even those who have denied God seek this miracle.

This leads us to ask what is a miracle. Is a miracle the fact that a seemingly inescapable situation of peril suddenly changes or is resolved without any logical explanation? This is the case with our gospel lesson of Jesus' walking on the water and saving His disciples and Peter. The meaning of this event depends upon the translation of the Greek word for upon or on. This word can also mean by. Therefore, was it upon or on the sea or was it by the sea. In either case does it change the real miracle which occurred? Not really, for whether Jesus walked upon or by the water is not what is important even though it would not be beyond the power of God to walk upon the water.

The dramatic event as translated and recorded is not what is important, Miracles, after all, were not what Jesus wanted to be known for. Just recall when the devil tempted Jesus in the wilderness by having Jesus gain power over the people by performing miracles or magical events. Jesus rejected such attention getting spectacles to gain followers. Jesus didn't want to be known as some kind of miracle worker or magician. Therefore, the real miracle behind this story is to be found in the fact that Jesus rescued the desperate disciples in their sea of turmoil. The miracle became real when they realized they needed Jesus in order to survive.

It is interesting to note that just before this story was the feeding of the 5,000. The crowd was so awestruck by Jesus that they began to speculate who He really was. This speculation led them to the point of being ready to declare Him the long-awaited messiah right there and then. Jesus saw this and didn't want His disciples caught-up in such a scenario. He also knew that as long as His disciples were there the crowd would see that everything was in place for such an anointing. Therefore he demanded His disciples to get into their boat and leave. This left Jesus alone deflating the crowds wishes so they began to disperse without any further incident. Finally Jesus was able to withdraw to Himself in order to deal with His mourning of John the Baptist's tragic death.

In the meantime His disciples had set sail and soon were being tossed about by a sudden violent storm. They were struggling to make headway but were unable to make much progress. They just could not reach the other side and were fearful of their lives.

Meanwhile, after time of being isolated for meditation and prayer, Jesus began His journey around the sea by land to rejoin His disciples on the other side. When He got to the high ground

on the northern shore He was able to see the disciples' boat still struggling against the remaining winds. Jesus saw their peril and went to them. After such a traumatic night and without any sleep, the disciples thought they were seeing things, perhaps an image of a ghost approaching them. Their fear was so great that they helplessly cried out for they saw no way to escape their certain demise.

Jesus immediately put their fears to rest, "Take heart, it is I; do not be afraid." These words brought assurance and calm to these distraught disciples for they now recognized that it was Jesus. They quickly found out that without Jesus their lives were in turmoil, full of fear and uncertainty. Today we can easily identify with the disciples in that storm threatened boat. We too are engulfed with the turmoil and fear brought about by the pandemic and societal conditions. We too need to recognize the power of God's presence within our lives as found in the life and message of Jesus. We too must come to the realization that when Christ is the center of our lives we experience the assurance that will calm the waters around us. When we fail to realize this we continue to be ravaged by fear and uncertainty.

That night long ago the disciples discovered that without Jesus they could only struggle to stay afloat. Without Jesus their lives were faced with danger and fear with only a hoped for destination and a lost sense of direction. The real miracle which happened that early morning was that His disciples realized how much they needed Jesus in their lives.

The miracle which is extended to us is that Jesus is no phantom or ghostly image but He is real when through faith, we open our lives to Him. Through all of our present day troubled waters we know and hear His voice, "Take heart, It is I; do not be afraid," with this the miracle becomes a reality for we know we are in God's loving care.

The story is not complete without Peter. He wanted to be a special part of this miracle. "Lord, if it is you, command me to come to you on the waters." Jesus' reply was just "Come." That simple answer demanded not only a belief but also a deep faith in response. Peter, like most of us, answered the command by beginning the journey. But, also like so many of us, he became distracted and disheartened by the external pressures or troublesome surroundings. The miracle was lost until Jesus responded to Peter's plea, "Lord save me." Jesus responded by reaching out to him and saving him.

When we come to the point of saying we cannot do it alone, we cannot live this miracle of God's love by ourselves, that is, when we realized that our ultimate salvation comes from God. When we say with Peter, "Lord save me" then we can begin to understand what the miracle of God's grace is all about. It is God through Jesus who reaches out and takes our hand even when our faith may waver. "You of little faith, why did you doubt?"

With such a demonstration of love and compassion as found in the feeding of the 5,000 and then by saving His disciples and Peter from the turmoil of the sea, we begin to understand the real miracle which God gives us. This miracle begins to become a reality when we live the message of Christ. It is then, through faith, that we come to know that He saves us from all the

fearful calamities of life even death. The true miracle which Jesus taught is that God is always there for us when we call out, "Lord, save me." That is the miracle of God's grace. We find this miracle to be a reality in our lives when we live the life of love which God has miraculously shown us. For us today this means that we must make personal sacrifices so that others may live. The world is calling out to us, "Save us." It is up to each individual to answer this plea by how we respond. Our response could be a part of a miracle.

Anthem: ["Bridge over Troubled Waters"](#) Simon and Garfunkel Anthem

Offering

We give thee but thine own, what-e'er the gift may be; all that we have is thine alone, a trust, O Lord, from thee.

The Prayer

Ever present and loving God, In the midst of a worldwide crisis we come to you seeking your healing and comforting presence. We pray that your presence be made known to those who are sick and dying so that your eternal love may surround and enfold them. During this time of uncertainty, fear has entered many of our lives. Open our lives to realize that you are with us in order to lead us to a place of peace. Help us to open our lives so that we may reach out in love and compassion to all those who may need a helping hand. We continue to pray for all the care-givers who are placing their lives in jeopardy in order to bring healing and comfort to the sick and dying.

We pray for all who need your comforting and healing presence especially Pam Ash, Danny Brackbill, Heidi Brackbill, P Parker Brennan, the Elshafei family, Betty Fultz, the Johnson Family, Robert Karner, Ray Lambert, Donna Mayhew, Bev and Jim Mertz, Nic Nelson, Wendy Neumann, Elise Oliver, Peter Olsen, Dottie Reitz, Robert Reitz, Colin Shea, Jerry Shea, Tommy Shimer, Jack Smith, the Spiegler family, Linda Stephens, Randy Stephens, Kirk Strobel, Yongyin Sun, Esther and Buck Trautwein, Pastor Jack, and all those who are suffering pain, and sorrow as a result of this pandemic.

We ask this in the name of Jesus. Amen

The Lord's Prayer

The Benediction

The Lord bless you and keep you;
The Lord make His face shine upon you;
The Lord lift up His presence upon you and give you peace. Amen

And now my brothers and sisters
Live on knowing God's love,
The joy of living this life of love,
And the peace which only come through the power of His presence within you.

So live on in Love, Joy, Peace, and Power.

Closing Hymn: ["Jesus Calls Us; O'er the Tumult"](#)

*Offering to be sent to:

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