



CONNECT GROUP NOTES

Sunday 14.01.2024

“Take Courage”

Preacher

Ps. Josh Plumb

Scripture

“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.””

Matthew 14:22-33

Thought

For those of us who are familiar with this passage, it's so easy to view it through familiar eyes. Yet if we allow ourselves to see it with fresh eyes, maybe we will see some things we haven't seen before.

The passage begins immediately after the famous feeding of the 5000, and the disciples are instructed by Jesus to row across to the other side of the sea of galilee - a lake some 21km long and 13km wide. They launch out on their mission, likely buoyed by the thought of the miracle they had just witnessed, yet, very quickly things start to get rough.

The wind and the waves come against them and for 9 hours they struggle. They've done exactly what Jesus had asked of them, but now they're in the fight of their lives in the midst of a great storm.

Can we relate? Do we sometimes think that if we get the equation right, if we just do what He says that life will be easier? What if following Jesus is less about the path of least resistance, but about the path that leads to life - even if that means rough weather?

The disciples are rowing, struggling, persisting, when suddenly a momentum shift occurs. Jesus comes to them walking on the water and He says to them “Take courage, it is I, do not be afraid”.

The shift was not a change of circumstance first and foremost, but rather knowing who was with them.

Jesus, the I AM, the God of their forefathers, the Most Holy, the Name of Names, is with them. He is the one who breathed the world into existence, the one of whom there is no other.



He is the one who stands with us in the midst of the chaos - the unrest, the storms, and the battles, both of the world around us, and of our inner worlds.

He has the power to subdue and command the storms of life, yet true faith is not faith in an outcome, not faith in a change of circumstance, but faith in the person of Jesus Himself and knowing who He truly is.

Today, take a moment to reconcile this thought. To truly know who is with you, to let the atmosphere of your heart be shaped by the knowledge of who He is, regardless of the wind and waves that surround.

Discussion Points

1. When things get tough, do I tend to question God, or do I ask Him what He's trying to show me or teach me in the midst of the storm?
2. Do I know who is with me in the person of Jesus? Above all else, who is Jesus to me?
3. What does it look like to trust in Jesus even when the storms of life rage around me or within me?

Personal application + Prayer

Dear Jesus,

Show me Your glory. Show me who You truly are. Your majesty, Your splendour, Your power, Your gentleness, Your closeness, Your love. May I know what it is to truly take courage in Your presence, in who You are. I open my heart and mind to you afresh right now at this moment. Speak, Lord, your servant is listening.