Matthew 14:22-33 - Step Out Of The Boat

**BEFORE THE READNG** Let me ask you a few questions today…

How many would like to move forward in your relationship with Christ?

How many have felt like you’ve been stuck in a rut?

In talking to a lot of people – I’m finding that people are not satisfied with where they are. They want more.

The problem lies in the fact that too many churches tell people that they need to move forward but don’t give them an opportunity to move forward.

People have dreams and ministries locked up inside them – not knowing how to go to the next level. It is my desire that I personally and this church move to the next level What is it that God wants us to attain, Both individually and as a church?

I came across this: “The richest place on the earth is not the diamond mines of South Africa or the gold caches of Ecuador. It is not the oil fields of Saudi Arabia, or in the uranium excavations of the Balkans. Neither is it in the mineral deposits of the Dead Sea.

No, the richest plot of land on this planet is in your very own neighbourhood. You might even have passed by it this morning.

It’s the cemetery.

That’s right! The graveyard is the wealthiest place in all of creation. Beneath those rectangular pieces of sod lie countless unsung melodies and unwritten poems. The grassy plots overflow with brilliant ideas that could have transformed entire communities, rehabilitated the lost and borne hope to the weary. Our burial grounds reek with unattained successes and unrealized dreams.”

These are things that could have been done but weren’t because people couldn’t bring their dreams to realization.

READING Matt 14:22-34

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 towards 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 worshipped him, saying, ‘Truly you are the Son of God.’

FIVE THINGS REGARDING MY RELATIONSHIP WITH GOD

Before we start moving forward… we need to discover some things about where we are in our relationship with God.

1. God Has A Plan For Me And Its Good – v.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.*

The disciples had just been involved in some intensive situations. They had to deal with the murder of John the Baptist and go through the grieving process of that. Immediately afterwards they were thrown into a ministry situation where they were to feed 5,000 people and the only food they had was five loaves and two fish.

Ministry is draining at times. It’s exhausting. Sometimes we run on adrenaline. When the adrenaline drops… so do we.

Knowing this… Jesus decided that it was in the best interest of the disciples that they get away for a while. They needed some R and R. They needed to be refreshed and spend some alone time with God.

It’s… Come apart before you come apart. It’s at times like this that we often resist God because we don’t feel that He understands our life and the direction that we’re going.

There was an officer in the navy who had always dreamed of commanding a battleship.

He finally achieved that dream and was given commission of the newest and proudest ship in the fleet.

One stormy night, as the ship ploughed through the seas, the captain was on duty on the bridge when off to the port he spotted a strange light rapidly closing with his own vessel.

Immediately he ordered the signalman to flash the message to the unidentified craft, "Alter your course ten degrees to the south."

Only a moment had passed before the reply came: "Alter your course ten degrees to the north."

Determined that his ship would take a backseat to no other, the captain snapped out the order to be sent: "Alter course ten degrees--I am the CAPTAIN!"

The response beamed back, "Alter your course ten degrees - I am Seaman Third Class Jones."

Now infuriated, the captain grabbed the signal light with his own hands and fired off:

"Alter course, I am a battleship." The reply came back. "Alter your course, I am a lighthouse!"

No matter how big or important any of us think we are, God’s Word stands forth as an unchanging beacon. All other courses must be altered to His.

\* If God’s plan for me is good then I must take heed to listen to God every day.

*Prov 3:5-6 Trust in the LORD with all your heart, And lean not on your own understanding; In all your ways acknowledge Him, And He shall direct your paths.*

As God directs your path… He will lead you and He will remove any hindrances. He wants you in His perfect will more than you do.

What’s the first point? God Has A Plan For Me And Its Good!

2. God Sees Everything I’m Going Through – v.23

*And when He had sent the multitudes away, He went up on the mountain by Himself to pray. Now when evening came, He was alone there.*

Mark 6 gives us a bit more **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.

Let me draw a picture for you.

As he sends them away He finds a place that overlooks the lake. The lake is surrounded by mountains that slope into the Galilean Sea. On a clear moonlit night one could easily look over the water and see what was taking place.

In this case… Jesus saw that his disciples were struggling against the wind that was whipping over the mountains into the sea. Jesus was alone but He could see what was taking place. He was praying for them.

Don’t you think that this is reflective of our life today? God knows everything about us. He sees everything that we're going through.

Think about what we went through when we were thinking about reordering the church. Our plans had to be restructured. There were some wonderful ideas put forward. Loads of hoops to jump through with the Diocese. And of course the money to find. But it all came together, eventually. But the result was as many of you know a bit different from where we started.

God knew what was needed and when it would be needed.

*Isa 65:24 Before they call I will answer;
    while they are still speaking I will hear.*

 God is there even when I don’t see Him!

 God Has A Plan For Me And Its Good!

 God sees everything I’m going through.

3. God’s Help Is Always On Time – v.26-27

When the disciples saw him walking on the lake, they were terrified. ‘It’s a ghost,’ they said, and cried out in fear. But Jesus immediately said to them: ‘Take courage! It is I. Don’t be afraid.

Ask yourself this question… Why does God sometimes delay? Why did Jesus take so long to get to them?

The answer is this… If God delays… He’s got a good reason.

Do you remember the story of Lazarus in John 11?

Jesus waited two more days after hearing about the death of Lazarus. Why did He wait?

His delay was so that God would be glorified.

Often… we don’t understand God’s delays but God always has a reason.

Joseph was promised that he would someday be great and that his brothers would bow down to him. 16 years later he finds himself in a prison and no closer to his dream.

The whole time Joseph was in prison… God was building character inside him. His time in prison was not in vain.

God Has A Plan For Me And Its Good!

God sees everything I’m going through.

God’s help is always on time.

4. God’s Purpose Is Always For Our Growth – vv. 28-29

*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 towards Jesus.*

God doesn’t give us a test with all the answers but in the middle of the test – He will give us a peace.

I like what Psalm 131:2 says…

*Instead, I have calmed and quieted myself,   like a weaned child who no longer cries for its mother’s milk.     Yes, like a weaned child is my soul within me. (NLT)*

This is the third storm we see about Peter’s life.

We all have storms that come into our life and they all have purposes of growth.

God wanted Peter to let go of his security blanket and trust him. How many of us hold on to things from the past?

While Martin Luther was in a monastery… he would often go into the confessional booth and weep and cry for up to four hours at a time.

People would say that he was mad… but God was allowing him to go through things so that he could move on to the next level, and we know where that led.

That’s what God is doing in many of our lives today… allowing us to experience things that are going to be important for that next level in our lives.

We must step out of the boat in faith if we intend to go to the next level.

Remember: God Has A Plan For Me And Its Good!

 God sees everything I’m going through.

 God’s help is always on time.

God’s Purpose Is Always For Our Growth.

5. God’s Word Never Fails – v. 34

*When they had crossed over, they landed at Gennesaret.*

They arrived just where Jesus intended for them to be – at Gennesaret.

When you listen to the voice of God:

· Listen intently

*Jer 33:3 Call to me and I will answer you and tell you great and unsearchable things you do not know.*

God is reliable. You don’t have to depend on others to listen for you. You can listen directly to God.

· Take time to listen

· Be open to change

Some of you are in a season of change right now.

The disciples were headed one way and God said, “Get in the boat and go to the other side.”

Is God trying to get your attention to make some changes in your life.

Perhaps you’ve been praying for change but God had delayed answering you.

Know that God’s delays are to change us so when the answer comes – we will be thankful.

· Stay submitted

As long as we have a heart that is submitted… God will make sure we land in the right place.

God Has A Plan For Me And Its Good!

God sees everything I’m going through.

God’s help is always on time. It's God time not mine

God’s Purpose Is Always For Our Growth.

God’s Word Never Fails

Are you willing to let go today and lean upon Jesus for what He desires for your life?

CONCLUSION

Listen to this story that really speaks of letting go.

A man’s daughter had asked the local minister to come and pray with her father. When the minister arrived, he found the man lying in bed with his head propped up on two pillows.

An empty chair sat beside his bed. The minister assumed that the old fellow had been informed of his visit. "I guess you were expecting me," he said. "No, who are you?" said the father.

The minister told him his name and then remarked, "I see the empty chair; I figured you knew I was going to show up."

"Oh yeah, the chair," said the bedridden man. "Would you mind closing the door?"

Puzzled, the minister shut the door.

"I have never told anyone this, not even my daughter," said the man. "But all of my life I have never known how to pray. At church I used to hear the pastor talk about prayer, but it went right over my head. I abandoned any attempt at prayer," the old man continued, "until one day four years ago my best friend said to me, Johnny, prayer is just a simple matter of having a conversation with Jesus.

Here is what I suggest. Sit down in a chair; place an empty chair in front of you, and in faith see Jesus on the chair. It’s not spooky because he promised, ’I’ll be with you always.’

Then just speak to him in the same way you’re doing with me right now."

"So, I tried it and I’ve liked it so much that I do it a couple of hours every day. I’m careful though. If my daughter saw me talking to an empty chair, she’d either have a nervous breakdown or send me off to the funny farm."

The minister was deeply moved by the story and encouraged the old man to continue on the journey. Then he prayed with him, anointed him with oil, and returned to the church.

Two nights later the daughter called to tell the minister that her father had died that afternoon.

"Did he die in peace?" he asked.

"Yes, when I left the house about two o’clock, he called me over to his bedside, told me he loved me and kissed me on the cheek. When I got back from the shops an hour later, I found him dead.

But there was something strange about his death.

Apparently, just before Daddy died, he leaned over and rested his head on the chair beside the bed. What do you make of that?"

The minister wiped a tear from his eye and said, "I wish we could all go like that."

God Has A Plan For Me And Its Good!

God sees everything I’m going through.

God’s help is always on time.

God’s Purpose Is Always For Our Growth.

God’s Word Never Fails

AMEN