**Facing the Waves**

There are so many things that demand our attention now days. Things like: Worrying over Work or school, troubles with family or friends, Things breaking down and costing money, Government, technology, virus outbreaks, your team losing, or even someone not excepting my friend request on Facebook or whatever app is “in” (You know who you are). All these things need your attention. It gets overwhelming and it is easy to see why sometimes Church, fellowship and prayer get put to the side to make room for all these things.

The problem with this scenario is the number one “thing” that is supposed to be first in our life is taking a backset. Which means life is in the driver’s seat and taking you for a ride.

Then there are times when everything starts going wrong in life, we find ourselves in the midst of a storm, and we wonder where God is but we forget we left him sometime back on the side of the road and forgot to go back and pick him up.

We want to be in control of our lives and we want to do things our way until we become overwhelmed and then we go looking for God. Sometimes our troubles may seem so big that we doubt whether God can or will help us.

These things may be a wakeup call from God but other times it may be we have just left God so far back that he isn’t in the picture at all and we are left taking our chances by ourselves.

As I have found over and over, with every situation we face, there are answers to life’s problems and they are recorded in the bible. We just need to know where to go to find them

There is a historical event recorded found in the New Testament about the disciples being tossed around in a boat on rough seas which can teach us many things including how to handle being tossed around in the storms of our everyday life.

Matthew 14:22-33: Immediately he made the disciples get into the boat and go before him to the other side, while he dismissed the crowds. 23 And after he had dismissed the crowds, he went up on the mountain by himself to pray. (Even Jesus, the son of the living God, needed time alone to pray) When evening came, he was there alone, 24 but the boat by this time was a long way from the land, beaten by the waves, for the wind was against them. 25 And in the fourth watch of the night Jesus came to them, walking on the sea.But when the disciples saw him walking on the sea, they were terrified, and said, “It is a ghost!” and they cried out in fear. 27 But immediately Jesus spoke to them, saying, “Take heart; it is I. Do not be afraid.”

28 And Peter answered him, “Lord, if it is you, command me to come to you on the water.” 29 He said, “Come.” So Peter got out of the boat and walked on the water and came to Jesus. 30 But when he saw the wind he was afraid, and beginning to sink he cried out, “Lord, save me.” 31 Jesus immediately reached out his hand and took hold of him, saying to him, “O you of little faith, why did you doubt?” 32 And when they got into the boat, the wind ceased. 33 And those in the boat worshiped him, saying, “Truly you are the Son of God.”

Here we find Jesus with his disciples and He has just finished teaching & feeding 5000 people (with 5 loaves of bread and 2 fish). This was an extraordinary miracle for the Disciples to witness and showed them that Jesus had the ability to perform amazing miracles. Immediately after this Jesus tells his disciples to leave in the boat. They were probably asking themselves “why isn’t he coming with us?” But Jesus goes off to pray setting up the situation for him to revel who he really was to his disciples.

Then the disciples are in there boat when a storm comes up and there is Jesus walking on the water out to them. Peter sees that it is Jesus and decides he wants to walk on water too. Jesus invites Him to come join Him and Amazingly Peter steps out of the boat and starts walking on the water.

**Jesus provided Peter a foundation to stand on and no matter what you are going through in life He can provide you a foundation as well. You Just need to trust in Him.**

Peter’s trust wavered and when he **took his** eyes off Jesus, and sees the waves, doubt and fear took control and he started to sink.

Peter had enough faith in Jesus to step out of the boat. He knew Jesus had the power to do miracles, He had just witnessed the feeding of the 5 thousand, but when it was a matter of Life and death his faith faltered.

We can believe all the miracles God has done in the Bible and we can believe he does miracles in other people’s lives today but when it is about “Me” we don’t trust him to do a miracle in my life today. Maybe we think “why would God do this for me” or maybe we just can’t wait for God but whatever the reason is we end up leaving God out of the picture.

Usually we don’t mean for this to happen it just does. I tend to find myself in this situation over and over. Usually I think I am on the right path, following God, reading my bible, praying, going to church. I feel a close relationship with Christ. Then something pops up. Usually just something small but it starts me worrying. Then something else comes along and gets me frustrated. Next thing you know I am letting all these things control my actions, my attitude and even my time. Then the enemy will start throwing in doubt. Telling Lies like: “God can’t or won’t help you”, “you can handle this yourself” or even “Why do bad things always happen to me”

**Next thing you know all these waves keep coming at you and you feel like you are going to drown**

All the troubles and worries in life are the waves. They are there to distract you from the goodness and mercy of our loving father. The minute you take your eyes of Jesus you begin to sink and the troubles and worries seem to grow bigger and bigger and Christ becomes smaller and smaller in your life. But Christ is waiting there for you to call out “**Lord, save me**” so he can reach out his hand and tack hold of you like he did Peter.

When things are going well it is easy to say you trust in Jesus but the true test is when you are in the middle of a storm with waves all around. Peter knew Jesus could do miracles he just lost sight of who Jesus was in the midst of the waves

**As we grow in faith God should become bigger and our troubles and worries show become smaller.**

It reminds me of that old story of the tightrope walker who was walking back and forth across Niagara Falls doing al sorts of tricks and final takes a wheel barrel across. A guy on the other side runs up and says “you are amazing. I bet you could do anything on that rope”. The tightrope walker says “do you think I could push someone across in this wheelbarrow”. The man says “Yes I know you could.” the tightrope walker says “all right then, climb in”

We have trust up to a point but then we start seeing the waves. Christ is asking you to get in the Wheel barrow and he let him carry you across, over and through the troubles of life. The Bible tells us over and over and gives us Gods promise that he will take care of us if we trust in him.

* Psalm 55:22 - Cast your burden on the Lord, and he will sustain you; he will never permit the righteous to be moved.
* Proverbs 3:5 - Trust in the LORD with all your heart; and lean not on your own understanding. In all thy ways acknowledge him, and he shall direct thy paths.
* Philippians 4:19 - And my God will supply every need of yours according to his riches in glory in Christ Jesus.

Sometimes the Lord will call us to do something and then when we step out in faith we meet all kinds of resistance. If you do anything meaningful, resistance will come. It becomes scary and the wind really starts to blow against us. At this point we have a choice to keep our eyes on Jesus and stay the course, or begin to doubt and sink like a rock.

In this story, the disciples had been struggling in the storm for some time (till the forth watch of the night around 3 -6 AM). Sometimes God will let us struggle through something before coming to us. It is in our struggles that we find our faith and learn to trust in God.

James tells us that God uses trials to bring about perseverance

James 1:2-4 Consider it pure joy, my brothers and sisters, whenever you face trials of many kinds, because you know that the testing of your faith produces perseverance. Let perseverance finish its work so that you may be mature and complete, not lacking anything.

So now look at verse 30 again

Matthew 14:30-31 But when he (Peter) saw the wind he was afraid, and beginning to sink he cried out, “Lord, save me.” 31 Jesus immediately reached out his hand and took hold of him…

Jesus waited for Peter to ask for his help but as soon as he did Jesus immediately reached out his hand. So many times we find ourselves in trouble but asking God for help is our last resort instead of our first thought.

When you are in the midst of a storm and the waves are overcoming you, don’t take your eyes off Jesus, ask Him to step in to the situation and have faith to step out of your comfort zone, trusting that he will deliver you through.

Psalm 34:17-18 When the righteous cry for help, the LORD hears and delivers them out of all their troubles. The LORD is near to the brokenhearted and saves the crushed in spirit.

* **It is in the middle of the storm that the presence of Christ becomes more real to us.**

It is in the midst of the storms that we realize how much we need Jesus. If life was easy and we had everything we ever wanted would we see a need for Jesus in our life

Matthew 14:32 -And when they got into the boat, the wind ceased.

When Jesus got onboard all their troubles ended. He showed his disciples his authority over all creation and the disciples declared “Truly you are the Son of God.” This should be our response when we see Christ do amazing things in our lives.

* **Remember God has control over the Storms in your life but you need to be willing to step out in faith and invite Him in.**

Matthew tells us how to weather these storm

Matthew 7:23-27 “So then, everyone who hears my words and puts them into practice is like a wise man. He builds his house on the rock. The rain comes down. The water rises. The winds blow and beat against that house. But it does not fall. It is built on the rock. But everyone who hears my words and does not put them into practice is like a foolish man. He builds his house on sand. The rain comes down. The water rises. The winds blow and beat against that house. And it falls with a loud crash.”

In this story the Storm hit both houses but only one remained standing – those the listen to the Word and practice it.

Christ will call those that are his to do something that requires them to leave the safety and security of their boat (their comfort zone) to follow him. Many will ignore Christ call, but a crazy few will step out on the water. Will you be one of those that step out in faith or will you stay in the boat? Jesus is always looking for those who are willing to walk on water when He calls them to.

Don’t let the waves take you over or keep you from following God’s plan, Keep your eyes on Jesus. Trust that he will guide you through the rough waters. He may not always let you float through the rough times but he will deliver you safely to the other side. Sometimes he may even let you sink a little to test you or you may let the waves take you over but just remember when you find yourself in the midst of a storm all you need to do is call out to Jesus and he will bring you safety to the other side.

**🡪The first thing we need to do is invite Jesus into our lives to calm the storm**

In John 16:33 Jesus said “I have told you these things, so that in me you may have peace. In this world you will have trouble. But take heart! I have overcome the world.”