

Study Guide

Sermon Series: Greater is He Who is in You Than...

Scripture Passage: Matthew 14:22-33

Sermon Title: Fourth Watch

March 29th, 2020

Introduction

This week's passage comes on the heels of one of Jesus' most famous miracles, the feeding of the 5,000. Jesus was presented with a situation in which the surroundings were dire—5,000 famished men (in this context it would have been normal to only count the male participants. So we can surmise that were also women and children present, which makes a more realistic attendance somewhere between 10-15,000 people). Jesus took a difficult situation and commanded the disciples to feed the crowds. All they had were 5 loaves and 2 fish, a very small amount, but in the hands of Jesus it was more than enough. Immediately after Jesus separates himself for prayer, while sending the disciples ahead to the other side of the lake, where again they find themselves in a dire circumstance, where they are asked to place their small offering (their faith) in Jesus' hands and he would make the difference.

Read: Matthew 14:22-33; Exodus 3

Discussion Questions

1. When was a time when you felt that following Jesus led you headlong into a storm? Think about and discuss how sometimes being obedient to Jesus' call in your life has made things more complicated.
2. Reflect on this idea of being a long way from land. Land for the disciples was safety, it was security. The water was uncertain, it was dangerous, it meant that there were more questions than answers. Discuss what you have learned about God and yourself in seasons when there have been more questions than answers.
3. In verses 22-33 there are 180 Greek words, and exactly in the middle of the passage is this Greek phrase, "*ego emi*," "I am." This is a direct reference to Exodus 3 when God instructs Moses that he will lead his people out of slavery, and he struggles to believe that he has the strength or faith to lead such a flight. Moses required a higher degree of authority for his word, he didn't believe that God telling him to go tell the people was enough. Where have you felt God leading you to do or say something bold, but you doubted whether your voice would be heard, or your actions accepted?
4. What do you want Jesus to help you with right now? Have you expressed that to him? As an expression of spiritual and community formation we invite you to verbalize these needs to God, with one another. Out loud, ask Jesus, in the presence of your small group, for the help that you need.

As Paul writes in Philippians 4:6 "Do not be anxious about anything, but in everything by prayer and supplication with thanksgiving let your requests be made known to God."

And James 5:16 "Therefore confess your sins to one another, and pray for one another, so that you may be healed. The prayer of the righteous is powerful and effective."

Pray

Jesus, we need your help right now. The concerns of our lives, our families, our community, our world is more than we can bear, and many of us feel as though we are sinking. We cry out to you for rescue, help us Jesus to fix our eyes on you—even as there is so much around us which seeks to divert our gaze. Give us faith that will embolden us to step out of the boat and come to you wherever you lead. And may our courageous trust help reveal your faithfulness and goodness to those around us, so that they might believe and so put their trust in you. Amen