

081323 Sermon "Do Not Be Afraid." Matthew 14:22-33

## **KNOW WHERE YOU ARE GOING**

Albert Einstein was traveling from Princeton on a train. When the conductor came down the aisle punching tickets Einstein reached in his vest pocket; he could not find his ticket, so he reached in his trouser pockets. It wasn't there so he looked in his briefcase, but still could not find it. He looked in the seat next to him, but it was not there.

The conductor kindly said, "Dr. Einstein, I know who you are, we all know who you are. I'm sure you bought a ticket, don't worry about it." The conductor then continued on his way punching tickets. Just before he went to the next car he turned around and saw the great scientist on his hands and knees looking under his seat for his ticket.

The conductor rushed back and said, "Dr. Einstein, Dr. Einstein, don't worry. I know who you are. No problem. You don't need a ticket."

Einstein said, "Young man, I too know who I am. What I don't know is where I am going."

I hope you know who you are and where you are going.

Jesus answered and said to them, "Even if I testify about Myself, My testimony is true, for I know where I came from and where I am going; (John 8:14).

The story from today's Scripture is recorded in the Gospels of Matthew, Mark, and John. According to the Bible, there were two occasions when a storm on the Sea of Galilee threatened the disciples. One is Jesus sleeping under the boat and hearing the cry of his disciples and calming the wind and the sea. The other is today's Bible text, at the moment when a storm on the Sea of Galilee tossed the boat in which the disciples were riding and threatened them, Jesus came to them walking on the water. What would be the message?

Even if Jesus is in your boat, or even if Jesus is not in your boat, a storm would come in your life. No matter where you look in the Bible, there is no verse that promises that if you believe in God well, no difficulties will come to your life and only good things will come. What would happen to the land if there was no rain and only sunlight? The land then becomes a desert in no

time. NO RAIN, then NO FLOWERS. OK, if you can have storms in your life even if you believe in Jesus, then why should you believe in Jesus?

Please pay attention to the words of Jesus to the disciples who were afraid of the storm. Jesus said, "Take heart. It is I. Do not be afraid." Many verses in the Bible say that God will be with us in the midst of tribulation. And God promised to guide us to the good path and to provide salvation. We're holding on to Jesus' words in John 16:33, "In this world you will have trouble. But take heart! I have overcome the world."

Since sin entered human history, the battle between good and evil has been going on. forever? No! Until the second coming of Jesus as we affirmed our faith "from thence he shall come to judge the quick and the dead." God did not promise NO STORM, NO RAIN, NO TROUBLE, but God promised to be with you, strengthen you, help you, uphold you with God's righteous right hand, and save you from sin and death!

After Jesus performed the miracle of five loaves of bread and two fish, he went alone to pray and then walked on the sea and came to the boat where his disciples were in trouble. They were afraid because of the storm, and when they saw Jesus and thought it was a ghost, they were afraid again! Then Jesus said, "Take heart! It is I. Do not be afraid." Storm or no storm, I believe our Lord will speak to you the same thing! "Take heart! It is I. Do not be afraid!" There is only one reason why you should not be afraid in the midst of the storm, because the Lord is with you. Believe in the word of Jesus. Hold on to it. And don't be afraid.

In Mark 6:52, it is written about why the disciples were afraid. "for they did not understand about the loaves, but their hearts were hardened." Everyone, when there is a storm, it is easy to forget the grace that God has entrusted in their lives even if it wasn't a long time ago, and God just accomplished something really miraculous. Nevertheless, people's hearts easily become dull or hardened after being exposed to the storm. Because people don't see the Lord who promised to be with them, only Storm. Jesus' disciples were the same.

Being hardened here means that they became insensitive to God's work and God's presence. I think this is important! So, if you don't want your heart to

be dull, in other words, the best way not to become dull spiritually is to remember what God has done every day. Read the Bible every day and remember what God has done.

### **SOAP AND THE GOSPEL**

A soap manufacturer and a pastor were walking together down a street in a large city. The soap manufacturer casually said, "The Gospel you preach hasn't done much good, has it? Just observe. There is still a lot of wickedness in the world, and a lot of wicked people, too!"

The pastor made no reply until they passed a dirty little child making mud pies in the gutter. Seizing the opportunity, the pastor said, "I see that soap hasn't done much good in the world either; for there is much dirt, and many dirty people around."

The soap man said, "Oh, well, soap is only useful when it is applied."

And the pastor said, "Exactly, so it is with the Gospel."

The Bible consistently speaks to us. What we are really afraid of is not the storm, but that we are constantly missing the Lord with us. Today's message is this: We are anxious and afraid of the situation. In a storm, we might think that now everything is over! But that's not it! We need to continue to ask ourselves. "Am I with the Lord at this moment? Am I living with the word of the Lord? Do I still lift my eyes of faith and look at the Lord?" Then there are no worries even in the storm. This is because the Lord, who worked in the past, will eventually silence this storm of your life. We must put all our attention and effort into believing in the Lord with us!

### **God's Grace is Sufficient**

Spurgeon told of an evening when he was riding home after a heavy day's work. He felt weary and depressed, when as suddenly as a lightning flash he thought of 2 Corinthians 12:9, "My grace is sufficient for you." He said, "I should think it is, Lord," and burst out laughing. He said that it seemed to make unbelief so absurd. It was as though some little fish, being very thirsty, was troubled about drinking the river dry, and the river said, "Drink away, little fish, my stream is sufficient for you." Or, it seemed after the seven years of plenty, a mouse feared that it would die of famine, and Joseph might say, "Cheer up, little mouse, my granaries are sufficient for you." Or, a man away up on a mountain saying to himself, "I fear I shall exhaust all the oxygen in the atmosphere." But the earth might say,

"Breathe away, oh man, and fill your lungs ever; my atmosphere is sufficient for you." Little faith will bring our souls to Heaven, but great faith will bring Heaven to us.

Dear beloved sisters and brothers in Christ, are you in the middle of a storm right now? Storm or no storm, Jesus promised to be with you. "Take heart! It is I. Do not be afraid." Fairfield Grace, may God's grace, peace, goodness, and mercy be with you, with your family, with your business, with your studies, and with the lives of your children. Amen.