

'He came to where they were' (4) - Storm on Galilee

In considering the subject 'He came to where they were' we have learned that the Lord Jesus has an interest in the individual. When one is lost, helpless, beyond human help 'he came to where they were'. In study 4 we will look at the 'Storm on Galilee'. This incident is recorded by 3 of the gospel writers, Matthew, Mark and John. We will follow the account in Matthew, but make reference to the other 2 records.

Read – Matt 14 v 13, 14 and 22 – 33

v25 "And in the fourth watch of the night **Jesus went unto them**, walking on the sea."

Background:

Matthew chapter 14 begins with the murder of John Baptist. In v8 we have the request of a young dancing girl "Give me here John Baptist's head in a charger." The prophet Jeremiah records "The heart is deceitful above all things and desperately wicked" and the Lord Jesus has similar teaching in Matt 15 v 19. Things have been the same throughout human history and yet 'he came to where we were' - 1 Tim 1 v 15 "Christ Jesus came into the world to save sinners". When the disciples of John came to tell the Lord Jesus of John's death Mark records the words of the Lord to his own, "Come ye yourself apart into a desert place, and rest a while." A lesson for us, that times spent alone with the Lord are essential.

However, "a great multitude" followed them and, as ever, v14 "he was moved with compassion toward them". The verses immediately preceding the incident of the 'storm on Galilee' record one of the great sign miracles of the Lord Jesus. Five thousand men plus women and children were miraculously fed with "five loaves and two fishes". As a result of this great miracle the multitude, according to John, "would...make him a king". The desire of the Lord Jesus was to be alone with his Father, but first he must send the multitude and the disciples on their way.

Storm on Galilee:

v22 'to go before him'. It is the Lord Jesus who instructed the disciples "to go before him", knowing the storm was coming. The Lord Jesus knew, but still he sends his disciples across the sea. God will at times move like this, sending his servants into the storm; but always with a purpose in view. Peter talks about the storms in life 1 Peter 1 v 7 "That the trial of your faith, being much more precious than of gold that perisheth, though it be tried with fire, might be found unto praise and honour and glory at the appearing of Jesus Christ."

At the end of a long and busy day the Lord Jesus still has a care for, and time for the crowd. The disciples would have sent them away empty (see v15), but the Lord Jesus would not send them away until v20 "they did all eat, and were filled".

v23 'he went up...apart to pray'. This is a picture of the Lord Jesus today. His people crossing the sea of life; He has ascended to heaven and there he intercedes for his people - Heb 7 v 25 "seeing He ever liveth to make intercession for them."

It was the desire of the Lord Jesus to be alone, to spend time in communion with his Father. It was the same on several other occasions recorded in the gospels e.g. Mark 1 v 35 "rising up a great while before day, He went out, and departed into a solitary place, and there prayed." Do we follow the example of the Lord Jesus and desire times alone with God? Earlier in this day the Lord Jesus had said "Come ye yourselves apart...and rest awhile."

v24 'in the midst of the sea'. The disciples were in difficulty, the storm had come suddenly and unexpectedly and the "*wind was contrary*". The storms of life at times can come like this, suddenly and unexpectedly finding us unprepared. Do remember that it was the Lord Jesus himself that sent the disciples into the storm and Rom 8 v 28 "*all things work together for good to them that love God*". The storms of life may be uncomfortable, painful or sorrowful, but "*all things work together for good*".

In Mark's account we read "*He saw them toiling in rowing*". Up on the mountain, in communion with his Father the Lord Jesus was watching over his disciples and at the right moment "*He went unto them*".

v25 'Jesus went unto them'. He came to them in their distress "*walking on the sea*". That which had put the disciples in danger the Lord Jesus came walking upon; the danger under his feet. He is in control and He notes every step his people take. Only God can do this Job 9 v 8 "*Which alone...treadeth upon the waves of the sea*".

v26 'cried out for fear'. The disciples did not understand; they did not recognise the Lord. Can it be that this is our experience at times - failing to recognise the work of God, the answer to prayer? In Matt 8 they had witnessed the power and authority of the Lord Jesus over 'winds and sea', but now, as He comes walking on the water 'they are troubled'.

v27 'it is I; be not afraid'. The Lord Jesus immediately speaks words of comfort and reassurance, "*it is I; be not afraid*". What the Lord Jesus said was "I AM; be not afraid". It is the title He used in Gethsemane that resulted in "*the band of men...went backward, and fell to the ground*". How wonderful, He, himself had come. The disciples were troubled, they were agitated and disturbed until He came with words of reassurance "*it is I; be not afraid*". In times of trouble do we remember John 14 v 1 "*Let not your heart be troubled: ye believe in God, believe also in me.*" What a difference the presence of the Lord Jesus made.

v28 'bid me come unto thee'. It was the desire of Peter to go to the Lord Jesus. Whatever the dangers, however impossible it seemed Peter's desire was "*bid me come unto thee on the water*". Do we have similar desires to come to him, to follow him, however difficult and uncomfortable the path might be?

v29 'to go to Jesus'. At the invitation of the Lord Jesus, "*Come*", Peter "*walked on the water, to go to Jesus.*" He responded in faith to the word of the Lord Jesus and took a step onto the stormy sea. He trusted the Lord Jesus and took that step, a step that humanly speaking was impossible. The one who made the sea, whom Peter had already seen exercise authority over the sea said "*Come*" and Peter in faith "*walked on the water*".

v30 'Lord, save me'. The cry that brings every sinner from death to life, in v30 is the desperate cry of a sinking believer. At the moment of desperate trouble, "*beginning to sink*", he cried unto the Lord. What had happened to the brave disciple? Peter had let doubt replace faith and he had turned his eyes from the Lord Jesus to "*the wind boisterous*". Peter had focused on the problem of the storm and took his eyes off the Lord Jesus. Do we have the faith of Abraham? Rom 4 v 20 "*He staggered not at the promise of God through unbelief; but was strong in faith*".

v31 'and caught him'. The cry from Peter immediately brought a response from the Lord Jesus. He will never refuse the genuine cry for salvation, "*Lord, save me*".

v32 'the wind ceased'. Once again the power and authority of the Lord Jesus over the forces of nature is seen. In Matt 8 he 'rebuked the wind', but here no record of a word spoken, his power and authority is such "*when they were come into the ship, the wind ceased.*"

