

## Sermon Notes for Matthew 14:22-23, Epiphany IV

1. The parallels to this account are found at Mark 6:45-52 and John 6:16-21. It is not found in Luke. All four evangelists record the feeding of the 5,000 which happened just before the account on the sea.
2. From John 6:14-15 we learn that the people wanted to make Jesus a (bread) king. Evidently the disciples were tempted by this idea too. The incident of the loaves had left them spiritually insensitive. Mark 6:51-52. Jesus forced the disciples to get into the boat. Matthew 14:22; Mark 6:45. Because of their spiritual insensitivity and danger from the temptation of making him a false king, Jesus purposely arranged this incident on the sea so that they would finally confess that he was the Son of God. Matthew 14:33.
3. Very likely the desire of the people to make him king tempted Jesus severely. That's why He withdrew alone to the mountain to pray. See John 6:15. He must have prayed about eight hours. He left there between 3 am and 6 am (300 and 600 hours) the next morning. Matthew 14:25 and Mark 6:48. Furthermore, Jesus knew that a great battle faced him the next day. John 6:22-59. The disciples, too, might be tempted to join these heathen. John 6:67.
4. The disciples were spiritually insensitive and were very likely tempted to help crown Jesus king. And they faced a severe test the next day. And so Jesus arranged the storm on the sea to make them see their utter helplessness and need for Him. At the same time, He was very likely severely tempted to become king and was facing the unbelieving mob on the next day. But, in His mercy and grace, Jesus came to the aid of his faltering disciples. He taught Peter a dear lesson. Secondly, all of them worshipped Him and said: "You are certainly God's Son!" Matthew 14:33. And the next day Peter, in the name of all of them, said: "Lord, to whom shall we go? You have the words of eternal life. And we believe and know that You are the Holy One of God." John 6:68-69.
5. The phrase in Matthew 14:24 is variously translated "beaten, battered, tormented, tossed by the waves." This verb is elsewhere used of the activity of Satan beating, battering and tormenting mankind. God permitted Satan to afflict Job severely. The thorn in Paul's flesh was a messenger of Satan to torment him. II Corinthians 12:7. God permitted Job, the disciples and Paul to be afflicted for their own good, to cleanse their faith of doubt, to look to Him alone for help.
6. The adverb "immediately" occurs with verbs at verses 22, 27 and 31. Jesus' help is always immediate.
7. Under normal circumstances their boat should have crossed the sea of Galilee in about three hours, from 6 p.m. to 9 p.m. (1800 hours to 2100 hours.) The disciples must have fought the rough sea for at least six hours. Affliction is often long and difficult to endure.
8. As at Luke 24:37 here at Matthew 14:26 the disciples thought they saw a ghost, a disembodied soul. There is no such thing. At death the soul goes either to heaven or hell. It does not wander about. The idea of a ghost shows the disciples' lack of faith. They were insensitive to the loaves of bread. Mark 6:52. No wonder they thought they saw a ghost! Their faith failed them.
9. When Jesus says: "Fear not" He always gives the reason for not fearing.
10. First, all of them cried out for fear, verse 26, and then Peter also cried out for fear, verse 30. Why? Instead of looking only to Jesus (Hebrews 12:1-2), he looked at the fearful waves. No wonder he sank! No wonder Jesus said: "Oh man of little faith, why did you doubt?"
11. First Peter said: "Lord command me" and then he said: "Lord save me." Peter was not as strong as he thought he was. But the Lord did save and help him. The next day he made a great confession. John 6:68-69.
12. Here we have four miracles: Jesus walked on the water; Peter walked on the water; the wind quieted suddenly; the boat came rapidly to land. Though they were in the middle of the lake, John 6:21 tells us that immediately the boat was at the land.

## Sermon Outline for Matthew 14:22-33, Epiphany IV

### Theme: JESUS, HELPER OF THE HELPLESS

**Introduction:** Last Sunday we heard about the showing forth of Jesus, our Substitute, the One who took our place. Today we hear about the showing forth of the Helper of the helpless. Just before our text Matthew tells us of the feeding of the 5,000. Unless God feeds man, man dies. Today's text shows forth Jesus as the Rescuer of doubting, fearful, lost mankind. He is truly the Helper of the helpless. He is true God.

#### I. HE IS THE SAVIOR AND HELPER OF ALL MEN.

I Timothy 4:10 says that God is the Savior of all, especially of those who believe. That is clearly exemplified here in our text.

A. He is the Savior and Helper of all men's bodies  
God makes His sun rise on the evil and on the good, and sends rain on the just and on the unjust. Matthew 5:45. Just as God feeds all the birds and animals, so He feeds all human beings, whether they are believers or unbelievers. On the day before our text, Jesus fed the 5,000. See verses 15-21. When evening came the people had nowhere to go. The disciples could not feed them but Jesus could and did. He fed both the unbelievers and the believers. We know from John 6:66 that on the following day many of these people left Jesus. They were unbelievers.

B. He is the Savior and Helper of all men's souls  
We know from the parallel account at Luke 9:11 that Jesus "began to speak to them about the kingdom of God and curing those who had need of healing." Before Jesus fed their stomachs, He fed their souls. The kingdom of God is about forgiveness of sins and eternal life. Mark 6:34 tells us "He saw a great multitude, and He felt compassion for them because they were like sheep without a shepherd; and He began to teach them many things." He truly came to seek and save the lost. But on the following day (John 6:66) many of these people left Jesus. They were unbelievers.

#### II. HE IS THE SAVIOR AND HELPER ESPECIALLY OF THOSE WHO BELIEVE

A. He foresees their danger. (Matthew 14:14-36; Mark 6:34-56; Luke 9:11-17 and John 6:1-71 are parallel accounts. The preacher should read all four accounts which supplement each other).

The 5,000 wanted to make Jesus their king, an earthly king. Very likely the disciples were tempted too to make Him king. That's why Jesus made the disciples get into a boat and leave. He went to the mountain alone to pray for Himself and the disciples. Then He allowed the storm to toss them about so that they would cry to Him. He foresaw their weakness of faith. They showed their unbelief when they thought they saw a ghost. Peter showed his unbelief when he looked away from Jesus and began to sink.

B. He rescues them in their danger.  
We can easily understand the fears of the disciples. When danger threatens us we think that we are surrounded by ghosts. But Jesus put his disciples into this situation to make them trust Him. He could feed 5,000 people. He could walk on the water. He could foresee and arrange the storm on the sea for the disciples good. He says: "Oh ye of little faith, why did you doubt?" He rescues and helps especially those who believe.

C. Their reaction to Him.  
When the wind stopped they said: "You are certainly the Son of God!" Though they had been spiritually insensitive to the feeding of the 5,000 (Mark 6:52), when the wind stopped "they were greatly astonished." (Mark 6:51). Mark 6:52 describes their condition before their hearts were changed. On the next day when the multitudes left Jesus Simon Peter said: "Lord to whom shall we go? You have the words of eternal life. And we have believed and have come to know that You are the Holy One of God." Jesus is the Rescuer and Helper especially of those who believe.

1. Our text is found at the end of what has been called "the busy day." It is found at Mk. 3:20-5:20. In this section we find the nine agricultural parables. Jesus must have been very tired. They were about to cross the Sea of Galilee, west to east, 10 kilometers.
2. Who caused the great storm which came up suddenly? One great Lutheran scholar writes: "Every disturbance in the realm of nature is a result of sin and therefore displeasing to God. The revolt in nature is a result of the interrupted harmony in the domain of the spirit. A groan of pain is heard in the kingdom of creation (Rom. 8:22)." In other words, Satan caused it as in the Book of Job. But another great Lutheran scholar writes: "In Ps. 107:25 we are told that it is God who 'commandeth and raiseth the stormy wind, which lifteth up the waves.' According to Ps. 135:6, the Lord does whatever He pleases in heaven and in earth, in the seas and in all deep places. Also Ps. 89:9; 148:8; 104:4; . . . 18:11. It was, then, the Lord who sent this sudden storm. And His purpose in doing so, is also apparent, namely to show forth the glory of Christ, His deity, and His divine majesty." As in Job's case, the Lord permitted Satan to rage.
3. Stoeckhardt writes: "This man Jesus is the almighty God and with His human voice quiets the raging sea. Jesus is an almighty man also in His state of humiliation as He walked here on earth. Yes, while He was asleep in this frail ship with His disciples He was ruling heaven and earth, land and sea, with His strong arm even though He was concealing this divine majesty in the form of a servant."
4. Luther writes: "It also happens today that it appears as if the Lord does not see us, and had entirely forgotten about us, as He does here in the ship, and sleeps. He lets the waves overwhelm the ship, He lets the devil and the world rage against the Christians so that it appears that we will certainly sink and drown. In His own time, however, the Lord awakes and shows His might, rebukes the littleness of our faith, the fear and fright of His disciples, listens to our pitiful cries, and 'stills the noise of the people.'" Ps. 65:7.
5. Lenski says: "The disciples had no right to fear, even if they perished in the waves." Compare this with the answer of Shadrach, Meshach, and Abednego in Daniel 3:17-18: "If our God whom we serve can save us from the furnace with its flaming fire and from your hands, He will save us, King. But if He doesn't you should know, King, we won't serve your gods or worship the golden statue you set up." Read Ps. 46:2-3: "We're not afraid even when the earth quakes, the mountains topple into the sea, even when its waters roar and foam, and the mountains shake in the middle of it." The disciples feared. That is not commendable. They sought help from the Lord. That is commendable.
6. In this life we can expect the sea and the waves to roar. Lk. 21:25. But the Bible pictures heaven as a sea of glass. Rev. 4:6. Stoeckhardt says: "Finally all restlessness of our times will subside and there will be a great calm. Yes, 'We expect the fullness of joy and a blessed quietness in the heavenly garden, to which our thoughts are directed.'
7. Vs. 24 speaks of a "great" storm and vs. 26 speaks of a "great" calm. Usually after a big storm the billows continue to roll for some time. But, in this case there was immediate calm. Remarkable.
8. The disciples said: "What sort of man is this . . .?" That is our reaction too when we realize the wonders of the gracious God-man.
9. Mk. says that the disciples took "Jesus as He was." They made no fuss over Jesus. He was one of their number.
10. Jesus censured the disciples on two counts: their cowardliness and their lack of faith. Sinners always have that problem.
11. Jesus' Word quieted the storm. He always did everything by His Word.
12. This is an Epiphany text. It shows the glory of the Lord. Jn. 1:14.
13. Jesus remained asleep even in the great storm. He truly trusted His heavenly Father. Even His enemies said: "He trusted in God." Mt. 27:4

## Sermon Outline for Mt. 8:23-27, Epiphany IV

### Theme: THE DISCIPLES' EXPERIENCE, OUR EXPERIENCE

Introduction: God wants us to rejoice and be happy in our relationship to Him. But midst all this joy there are also bitter experiences which test and cleanse our faith in Jesus. Our life is like that of suffering Job and the wondering disciples. Midst all of this by faith we see Him Who rules heaven and earth for our good.

#### I-THE SETTING OF THE TEXT

Vs. 18 belongs to our text. It tells us that Jesus commanded the disciples to board the boat to cross the Sea of Galilee, from west to east, about ten kilometers. But first two men interrupted Jesus. The first wanted to follow Jesus. But Jesus told him that Jesus did not own or have as much as foxes and birds. "For your sakes He became poor so that through His poverty you might become rich." II Cor. 8:9. Christians are sometimes tested to be as poor as Jesus. They must trust Him to supply all. Mt. 6:25-34. The second man wanted first to bury his father. But Jesus says: "Burial is not a religious rite but simply a matter of necessity." This man put personal desires before the will of the Lord. What is Jesus telling us in vs. 19-22? He is saying that to follow Jesus means to trust that He and He alone can and does supply all needs of body and soul. And then comes our text which tests the disciples' faith. It is our experience too.

#### II-THE DISCIPLES' FAITH TESTED AND FOUND WANTING

A-The cause of the storm. Who caused it, God or Satan? Some scholars think that God caused this storm. See Ps. 107:25; 135:6; 89:9; 148:8; 104:4; Job 38:11. Others think that, like in the case of Job, Satan caused all the trouble but with the limitation of the Lord. Ps. 46:9 says: "He makes wars cease." For a good picture of our text read Ps. 107:23-32.

B-The Lord willed this to happen. Our text tells us in vs. 18 that He commanded the disciples to cross over to the other side. The disciples followed Him. It reminds us of the word "follow" in vs. 19 and 22. To follow Jesus means to trust that He is guiding and protecting us.

C-While He slept the disciples panicked. The difference between Jesus and His disciples is truly remarkable. He was evidently very tired and therefore in great need of sleep. But we would think that a great storm would awaken Him. But it did not. He slept like a baby in a cradle. Or like a little bird on a limb in a great wind. But the disciples lost their nerve. They panicked. Thirteen grown men in a little fishing boat in a great storm is very, very frightening. He is true man and true God, they only sinful men.

#### III-THE RESOLUTION OF THE MATTER

A-In His kindness the Lord shows them their sin. He tells them that they are cowards and this is caused by their smallness of faith. Cowardice is always the result of lack of faith. Why do people run from trouble? Because they lack the courage and faith to face it. Why do people commit suicide? Because they lack courage and faith. Why am I sometimes sad or why do I shirk my duty? Because I lack the faith and courage to be joyful and faithful.

B-By His Word the Lord stops the storm. His Word caused creation. His Word causes conversion. His Word forgives sin. His Word stills storms. His Word stops wars. The great storm suddenly became a great calm. Remarkable.

C-The disciples were amazed. They exclaimed "Who, then, is this man that even the winds and the sea obey Him?" They knew who He was. But every time He helped them it caused new wonder. This God-man is ruler of the world! He said: "All power is given to Me in heaven and on earth." The disciples grew in their faith that day. So must we.