

Reflection Sunday 9th August Matthew 14: 22-33

Immediately he made the disciples get into the boat and go on ahead to the other side, while he dismissed the crowds. And after he had dismissed the crowds, he went up the mountain by himself to pray. When evening came, he was there alone, but by this time the boat, battered by the waves, was far from the land, for the wind was against them. And early in the morning he came walking towards them on the lake. But when the disciples saw him walking on the lake, they were terrified, saying, 'It is a ghost!' And they cried out in fear. But immediately Jesus spoke to them and said, 'Take heart, it is I; do not be afraid.'

Peter answered him, 'Lord, if it is you, command me to come to you on the water.' He said, 'Come.' So Peter got out of the boat, started walking on the water, and came towards Jesus. But when he noticed the strong wind, he became frightened, and beginning to sink, he cried out, 'Lord, save me!' Jesus immediately reached out his hand and caught him, saying to him, 'You of little faith, why did you doubt?' When they got into the boat, the wind ceased. And those in the boat worshipped him, saying, 'Truly you are the Son of God.'

Why do you wait so long for help?

Is it because we want to be so self-sufficient?

Jesus had sent the disciples off in a boat and went to pray. He had been praying for about 8 hours whilst they had been struggling on.

Whilst praying had Jesus an eye on his disciples struggling at the oars?

We often take a long time to lay aside our resources and trust implicitly in Him. As long as we can set a sail and pull on the oars we almost forget to pray.

When our boat is sinking, when all hope is gone, we look to him and appreciate his nearness. We sometimes forget that he sees us when we cannot see him.

Did he finish his prayer with, "Father, I must go now, my friends need me."

Peter asked to go for a walk on the water too. Simon Peter was always an impulsive man. He was accustomed to doing things and then wondering afterwards "why?"

He was a man of action. When he saw Jesus approaching he wanted to walk towards him.

Jesus did not condemn the request for he saw an opportunity to instruct the disciples.

Throughout the years of their coming ministry they would often be confronted by perils of a variety of types; they would embark on journeys fraught with danger. There was no need to fear. If they kept their eyes focused on him they would be able to walk anywhere. If they lost sight of him they would sink. Yet even in these circumstances he would respond to a call for help.

Peter was distracted by the wind and the waves. This was a problem with Peter on many occasions. He denied Jesus by a fire when he stopped looking at Jesus and looked at a girl. He asked a stupid question on the beach of the Sea of Galilee when he looked at John and not Jesus. Paul later rebuked him because he became more anxious to please the Jewish observers than to adhere to the principles of the new faith (Gal 2:11-13)

The mistake was not getting out of the boat it was taking his eyes off of Jesus.

The cry and prayer was simple – Lord save me – no need for elaborate words or ritual presentation, the cry for salvation is heard by the heart of God.

The cry was heard and Peter found himself standing on water again – I can do all things through Christ who strengthens me.

It was in 2001 John Ortberg wrote a book entitled "If you want to walk on water you've got to get out of the boat."

Are we at times likely to stay in the boat even whilst it is sinking rather than risk walking on water? In these days of challenge when we may ask what will survive this Covid crisis do we need to seriously look at the "boats" we are using for security and start looking more at Jesus.