



9th Sunday of Matthew

Over the past few Sundays, we've seen how the gospel is good news for everyone, of every background. Then, last week, we've seen how the disciples are tasked with "feeding" the people with "spiritual bread," that is, the gospel. Now, they are sent out on a boat to cross the "Roman" sea to spread the gospel. But a storm arises, which represents suffering for the sake of the gospel, and when Jesus comes to them, walking on the sea, they think he's a phantom. Perhaps, this means that they believe Jesus's teaching has no substance, and, as a result, Peter starts to sink. But, Jesus reaches out and saves Peter. What he lacked was trust in what Jesus had taught them.

Scripture: Matthew 14:22-34

Bottom Line: Trusting the gospel saves us from drowning

Discussion Questions

1. The passage says that Jesus "dismissed" the crowds. In Greek, it actually says he "released" them. The word implies a "deliverance" from something, such as an acquittal from a capital charge. What might Jesus have released the people from? How does this change your understanding of Peter's cry for "salvation"? How do we, today, need "releasing" and how might that happen?
2. What sort of storms do you encounter today for being a Christian? How does your trust in the gospel help you "weather" the storms? How might you deepen your trust?
3. Peter lacked trust. How have you lacked trust in Christ? How had Christ grabbed your arm to keep you from drowning?

Moving Forward

Πίστις is what Peter lacked. It's usually translated as "faith" or "belief." The problem is that English speakers often understand faith and belief as a set of propositions to be understood, such as the creed. But what Jesus is talking about here is "trust." Trust implies action. Peter failed to act and trust that "feeding" the people with the gospel is the right thing to do, especially when a "storm" arises. Indeed, all throughout history, the saints of been persecuted for "walking the narrow path," and following Jesus's command to love. The real test of trust is will we continue to live as Christians even when it seems like we're losing? It seemed like Jesus had "lost" as he hung on the cross, but trust tells us that he rose from the dead. This week, how will you put your trust into action?

Changing Your Mind

"Jesus immediately reached out his hand and caught him, saying to him, 'You of little trust, why did you doubt?'" (Matthew 14:31)