


From: Ryan Hall ryan_hall@ucg.org 
Subject: Pastor's Note & Announcements
Date: August 6, 2021 at 6:55 PM
To:

Greetings Brethren,

In *Matthew 14:22-33* we find a powerful reminder of what can happen when we allow outside influences to disrupt and change our thoughts. This is a critical part of our walk because what we allow to influence our reasoning, will eventually lead to what we chose to focus on and eventually our response. This can and will determine the outcome of our situation.

In this section of scripture, Jesus had the disciples board a boat and start their journey across the sea without him. Sometime in the middle of the night, the disciples got the shock of their lives. Jesus decided to come join them on this journey, not by setting sail on his own boat, but he came to them in a miraculous way. Jesus walked on the sea.

That alone is a big deal, but what made this situation even more interesting was the conditions surrounding this miraculous event. Matthew recounts that the sea was very rough and the disciple's boat was being tossed around by the wind and waves. This was not a calm sea, but they were experiencing a significant storm with high waves and strong winds.

Now I'm sure they were already on edge due to the storm, but what happened next took their nerves to a whole different level. It's humorous for us to read now, but in their position, I'm sure no one was laughing. During the night as they stood watch over the storm, battling the waves in that boat, they see someone on the water walking directly toward them. In their minds, that's not natural. In fact, they think it's a ghost and are terrified. Seeing their distress and possibly hearing them cry out in fear, Jesus calms that fear by saying, "*Be of Good Cheer! It is I; do not be afraid.*"

This is significant. Jesus understood the situation, he saw the fear, He knew what they were battling with the storm and He said, "*It's ok. Don't fear. I'm here.*" Peter then seems to set his fear and concerns about the storm aside and trust that this was Jesus. He then requested to be allowed to come out of the security of the boat and walk on the water just as Jesus was walking. *Jesus* responded, "*Come*". Peter then did the impossible in what looked like an impossible situation. He too walked on water in the midst of a troubled sea.

You see, Peter assessed the situation, heard his masters voice, and was assured it was Him. He then exercised faith to obey and follow through. It's

not recorded how many steps Peter took on the water, but we know that he began to walk toward Jesus. However, as he walked, something got inside his thinking and reminded him of his surroundings. The waves and the wind stirred around him and grabbed his focus. This change of focus away from Jesus allowed fear to return. Peter forgot how he got to where he was and how it was all made possible. This forgetfulness brought on by fear removed faith in what Jesus commanded him to do and he began to sink into the sea.

Thankfully our savior is full of mercy and compassion and understands our human nature and weaknesses. He reached out and helped Peter. He then reminded them all of what fear and the lack of faith will result in our lives, doubt.

Jesus teaches us through this interaction that we can't allow this world to use fear to insert into our minds doubt. We can't have doubt in the power of our Mighty God and His Son. That's why we don't let the surrounding world take our attention. We focus on God's faithfulness and in Christ's leadership so that we don't forget who has called us and who possesses true power.

God has called us to carry out His will in a time when Satan is doing everything in his power to make us think we're facing an impossible situation. We can only do the impossible when we focus on what's most important. Yes, the waves are there, the wind is strong, but we serve the one who commands them. We serve the one who makes the impossible - possible.

In *Hebrews 6:19* it's recorded that "*Our Hope, our assurance is Jesus Christ – He is the Anchor of the Soul which is both sure and steadfast.*"

This powerful truth is a reminder that even when this life tries to toss us to and for, we have an anchor, we have surety, we have hope, because we have a guarantee that something is holding on to us. As the intensity of the winds grow stronger and the waves become more powerful, let's never forget where I faith must be focused. In the midst of the storm, we can do the unthinkable because of our hope and focus is in the faithful God and in Jesus Christ.

Have a Wonderful Sabbath,

Ryan Hall

Announcements:

1. Service time: 2:00 PM
2. Carol Petit Update: Carol is now home resting and recovering. The 2nd CT scan revealed no more bleeding. The doctors said that the body will absorb the small amount blood that's present. Her vertigo is also gone at this point. The knot from the fall has also gone down some, but she still has a tightness and soreness in her head.
3. Amethyst Rose Kelly (Newborn) – Although she continues to improve, she has had a few set backs this week. Her need for oxygen support has returned due to her saturation levels dropping into the 80's without support. Doctors are unsure at this time why and scans have not revealed any concerns. She is eating well and has surpassed her birth weight. Please pray that her lungs will continue to improve.
4. Let's please remember to keep in our prayers those who have been infected with the Covid-19 virus and those suffering the after effects of it as well. Also keep in your prayers the possible regulations and mandates that the government is considering putting into place here locally as well as how it will impact the FOT sites around the world. It affects us all and more than ever before we need God's guidance and protective arm around us.
5. Fall Holy Days are approaching fast. Mark your calenders: Feast of Trumpets September 7th (Combined AM/PM Services), Atonement Spetember 16th (One Service),
Feast of Tabernacles September 21st -27th, Last Great Day/8th day September 28th.
6. Pre Feast Church Picnic: We are planing a Pre-Feast picnic to stir up that all improtant feast fever! The tentative date is next week August 14th following services at the park across from the church hall. Sack lunches, water will be provided. Feel free to bring drinks, extra snacks, and desserts. It would be great if we could have a hymn sing (festival themed hymns), sharing inspiring stories of past feast expeirences, etc. More information will be made available tomorrow. Any question please ask myself or, Daniel Miller, Amanda Miller, or see information table.
7. I would like to have the first Sabbath school take place on August 28th. If you are interested in helping come to pass, please contact me asap.
8. House Keeping Reminder: Per owners of building - No food is allowed in the meeting room. ALL food must be eaten in the dining area.

If I have overlooked anything, please let me know and I will get it sent out asap.

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