

THE PERFECT STORM

Matthew 14:22-33

INTRO (Transition Video) Well, that was funny. Do me a favor this week, invite someone to church next Sunday. We will be back in this beautiful facility and God is doing great things, so there's no reason not to tell everyone about your church. This is the place to be on Sunday morning. If you have been around Christ First Church for a while, then look around and take note of who is not here today, then text, call, or reach out to them on social media, and let them know you would like to worship with them next Sunday. Let's fill this place up.

If you have a Bible, and I hope you do, please join me at Matthew chapter 14. Matthew, the tax collector, in his biography of Jesus Christ, the first book of the New Testament, chapter 14. We will begin reading at verse 22.

Most of you are familiar with the movie, The Perfect Storm. It came out in June 2000, and was directed by Wolfgang Petersen. It is an American biographical disaster drama film, taken from the 1997 non-fiction book of the same name by Sebastian Junger. The film is based on the true story of the Andrea Gail, a commercial fishing vessel that was lost at sea with all hands after being caught in the Perfect Storm, in October of 1991. The film stars George Clooney, and Mark Wahlberg.

Storms come and go. And sometimes, lives are lost. That's true in our physical world, and it is also true about the storms of life. Most of us will never encounter anything physically like the crew of the Andrea Gail did. But some of you have faced the harsh reality of emotional and spiritual storms that was just as frightening. And if you haven't yet, there's a good chance you will at some point in your life.

Today, I want to preach on the subject, THE PERFECT STORM. To get a sense of where I'm coming from, I want you to read with me from Matthew chapter 14.

Before we read, let me give you the backstory to where we are in scripture... At this point, the ministry of Jesus is still in its infancy, but there's a buzz concerning Jesus. John the Baptist, a preacher and cousin of Jesus, has just been beheaded by King Herod. When Jesus gets word of John's death, he wishes to get away and spend some time alone in prayer. He and the disciples get in a boat and cross over the sea of Galilee. Somehow, someone, must have heard where they were going, and when the boat reached their desired destination, an extremely large group of people had already gathered to see Jesus. The Bible says, that when Jesus saw the large group, He had compassion on them and healed the sick. As it got later in the day, the disciples came to Jesus and said, "Master, it's getting late. Send the people home so they can get something to eat." But Jesus replied, "you feed them". The disciples answered, "we only have 5 small loaves of bread and two fish, how can we feed such a multitude?" There was 5000 men plus women and children that had gathered. Then Jesus performed a miracle! He took the bread and fish, and blessed it. He then told His disciples to start handing it out to those seated. The Bible tells us that, everyone had their fill, and was satisfied. And when all had eaten, the disciples of Jesus took up 12 baskets full of leftover. Then the Bible reads...

Matthew 14:22-33 *"Immediately Jesus made the disciples get into the boat and go on ahead of Him to the other side, while He dismissed the crowds. 23 After He had sent them away, He went up on the mountain by Himself to pray. When evening came, He was there alone, 24 but the boat was already far from land, buffeted by the waves because the wind was against it. 25 During the fourth watch of the night, Jesus went out to*

them, walking on the sea. 26 When the disciples saw Him walking on the sea, they were terrified. "It's a ghost!" they said, and cried out in fear. 27 But Jesus spoke up at once: "Take courage! It is I. Do not be afraid." 28 "Lord, if it is You," Peter replied, "command me to come to You on the water." 29 "Come," said Jesus. Then Peter got down out of the boat, walked on the water, and came toward Jesus. 30 But when he saw the strength of the wind, he was afraid, and beginning to sink, cried out, "Lord, save me!" 31 Immediately Jesus reached out His hand and took hold of Peter. "You of little faith," He said, "why did you doubt?" 32 And when they had climbed back into the boat, the wind died down. 33 Then those who were in the boat worshiped Him, saying, "Truly You are the Son of God!"

What is it that makes a PERFECT STORM? In the case of the Andrea Gail, it was a confluence of two powerful weather fronts and a hurricane named Grace, believe it or not.

For the next few minutes, Let's look at this passage, and see what made this storm, A PERFECT STORM. Notice...

I) THIS STORM HAD A SCRIPT: v 22-24 "Immediately Jesus made the disciples get into the boat and go on ahead of Him to the other side, while He dismissed the crowds. 23 After He had sent them away, He went up on the mountain by Himself to pray. When evening came, He was there alone, 24 but the boat was already far from land, buffeted by the waves because the wind was against it."

Okay, here's something that may mess you up! The disciples were in this storm because, Jesus put them there. "Immediately Jesus made the disciples get into the boat and go on ahead of Him to the other side..." According to what lens you view Jesus through, that might seem a little, or a lot, unfair. But what the disciples certainly did not know, and sometimes, what you and I are unaware of as well, is that Jesus often puts us in hard places so that He can develop our faith. Well, that's scary! Yeah, sometimes it is. But look with me at Mark's account of this story. He shares a detail with us we don't have in Matthew's gospel. Notice...

Mark 6:47-48 "When evening came, the boat was in the middle of the sea, and Jesus was alone on land. 48 He could see that the disciples were straining to row, because the wind was against them. About the fourth watch of the night, Jesus went out to them, walking on the sea."

Did you get that? JESUS COULD SEE the disciples! Jesus stayed back and sent the disciples on ahead. Then, He went up on the mountain so that He would be able to SEE. From the vantage point of that mountain side, He could see everything they were going through. He never took His eyes off them. He's praying and watching, praying and watching! Who do you think He was praying for as they struggled in their storm?

Jesus was perfectly in control of the situation. He was controlling the elements of everything that was taking place. HE WAS WRITING THE SCRIPT OF THIS STORM!

You are going to go through hard things from time to time. Sometimes, it'll just be life kicking you in the teeth. The Bible tells us that life is hard, and that in this life you will have trials and hard times. Often life is unfair. AND SOMETIMES God will put you in situations to develop you, to grow you, and to demonstrate His love for you in ways you could never know outside of pain. BUT LISTEN TO ME, God, from His throne in Heaven, is watching you. From His vantage point, there is nothing He doesn't see. He knows when you're hurting. He knows when you're scared. He see you. And He is only a whisper away!

I) THIS STORM HAD A SCRIPT: v 22-24

II) THIS STORM HAD A SAVIOR: vv 25-31a *“During the fourth watch of the night, Jesus went out to them, walking on the sea. 26 When the disciples saw Him walking on the sea, they were terrified. “It’s a ghost!” they said, and cried out in fear. 27 But Jesus spoke up at once: **“Take courage! It is I. Do not be afraid.”** 28 “Lord, if it is You,” Peter replied, “command me to come to You on the water.” 29 **“Come,”** said Jesus. Then Peter got down out of the boat, walked on the water, and came toward Jesus. 30 But when he saw the strength of the wind, he was afraid, and beginning to sink, cried out, “Lord, save me!” 31 Immediately Jesus reached out His hand and took hold of Peter...”*

TELL ME, how cool is this? Jesus is an on time God!

v 25 says that Jesus went out to them WALKING ON THE SEA. Do you understand the importance of that? In this passage, we see the disciples in a terrifying and violent storm. The waves of water are breaking into their vessel. They are afraid they are going to drown in the depths of the sea. THEN JESUS COMES TO THEM WALKING ON THAT THING THAT WAS TRYING TO KILL THEM. He trampled, underfoot, that which was of greatest concern to the disciples. The very thing they were most afraid of, He takes sovereign control over!!! WHOOPIE! Oh what a Savior!

Now look at Peter for a moment. Oh, we love Peter. Here the disciples see Jesus walking on the water, and they all think it’s a ghost. They are scared out of their minds. They already thought they were about to die, then they see a ghost! Talking about having a bad night. But Jesus says, don’t be afraid, it’s just me. WOW! Now Peter says, Lord, is it really you? If it’s you tell me to come to you. NOW, I don’t have a clue what Peter is thinking or doing, but Jesus says COME, so now Peter is committed! Then the Word of God says, that Peter got out of the boat and started walking toward Jesus. HOW AMAZING! But then he started looking around at the storm and he became scared. Then the Bible says in vv 30b-31 *“and beginning to sink, (Peter) cried out, “Lord, save me!” 31 Immediately Jesus reached out His hand and took hold of Peter...”* God is on time, all the time!

I have to hurry...

III) THIS STORM HAD A SOLUTION: vv 31-32 *“Immediately Jesus reached out His hand and took hold of Peter. **“You of little faith,”** He said, **“why did you doubt?”** 32 And when they had climbed back into the boat, the wind died down.”*

When Jesus got into the boat, the situation changed! Do you know why you continue to struggle with the same issues month after month, year after year, with never a solution being found? BECAUSE YOU HAVEN’T LET JESUS INTO YOUR BOAT. You have to ask Jesus into your situation. Look what it says in Mark 6:48b-49 *“...He intended to pass by them, 49 but when they saw Him walking on the sea, they cried out...”* We can rightly assume that when they cried, they cried out to GOD. And when they did, God spoke back! And more than that, He went to where they were, and gave them the help they desperately needed. JESUS IS THE SOLUTION FOR WHAT’S WRONG IN YOUR LIFE.

IV) THIS STORM HAD A SONG: v 33 *“Then those who were in the boat worshiped Him, saying, **“Truly You are the Son of God!”** Someone has said - “A bird sings for no other reason than, that he has a song.” YOU KNOW WHAT I HAVE FOUND? If you learn to sing in your storms, then when you sing in the sunshine, people will listen.*