

Matthew 14:22-36 | Tom Grass

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[0 : 00] I tried to select songs today. I selected the songs that would give us a spirit of worship! and focus on who the Lord is. And not on ourselves. Sometimes we sing songs and they're about me.

I will. I will. I will. But other times there are songs that are he is, he is. And that's kind of what I was looking for in these songs that we sang before the message.

And I intend to go through the passage, the teaching, if you will, or any application pretty quickly.

And then go to the third part of the message, which will be worship.

And then end with two songs of worship. So if you can be patient, because our regular rhythm is that we have a message, we end, we have one song.

So be mindful of that. Prepare your mind for that. But do it in a spirit of worship to God, where you're submitting to him and who he is.

[1 : 03] And that's what I hope to get out of these verses today, that we see Christ in a new way, in our personal circumstances, situation, and then also see him as he is.

And as you look at this passage in Mark, what stood out to me, which kind of sent me in this direction, was the disciples in the boat bow down and worship him when he gets in the boat.

And they say, truly are the son of God. And then they go across the sea to back to Gennesaret. And the people there bring all kinds of people when they heard him. And they said, if I could just touch the hem of his garment, I will be made well.

And that reminded me of homage or bowing down. You know, we bowed down. King of creation, Lord of all. And those people that touched the hem of his garment were bowing down before the Lord.

And so that's where my mind is today about these verses. So hopefully this will go well and you'll benefit from it. And at the end, we will have a time where we forget about ourselves a little bit and remember and worship the Lord.

[2 : 16] That's my hope. We are in a very familiar passage. You know, Jesus walks on the water. Peter walks on the water.

Jesus had just fed the 5,000. And there's a potential that some of the people there after he fed them said, hey, let's make him our king.

Surely this would be a good thing, right? I mean, right? Being on the government dole is not a bad thing. Give me money, give me money. I mean, we hear that today a little bit, you know. Yeah, that sounds great. Let's make Jesus king.

He can provide for our physical needs by way of food and bread and things like that. So that's kind of part of the background here. This section in Mark is in Mark chapter 6 and John chapter 6.

And both of those accounts give a little bit extra insight into what we read here in Matthew. So if you've been reading through the book of Matthew as we have been studying it, you would know some of these parallels.

[3 : 21] I'm not good at jokes, I don't think. My kids tell me, Dad, that's not funny. But I'm going to try. So here we go.

All right? I'm not Mark Manella. And I'm not David Vineyard. But I'll try. This is a family joke. And it's not about a boat. It's about a bus. My wife and Jeff's uncle, Fred, he's in his 70s now, in the 1960s, and so he was involved in Southern California in the aerospace industry.

And if you knew Fred, you would know him as an intellectual, an introvert, a brainiac, and a very quiet man. And as a matter of fact, one time he went to whatever it is in California, Disney or whatever that is out there, right?

Or Universal Studios. And he said there were people there and they were talking. I mean, that's not the joke line there. That's bad when I think it's funny and you don't.

So Fred, this very intellectual man who in the summers, he did so much for aerospace and it was so deep that way as a professor-type person, you know.

[4 : 36] In the summer, he'd go out west in Montana and chart stars and live out there off the land basically for months. And that was like his thing, you know. He'd work really hard all year and then he'd go out there by himself.

Okay. So Fred was summoned for jury duty in L.A. and so Fred would drive there some days and he would park his car and when jury duty was over, he'd get in his car and come back home. But some days he took the bus. And I don't know how many days this went on. So he'd take the bus in the morning and in the evening he'd come back on the bus. One time he went down there and he drove his truck down there and he gets out of jury duty and he, Fred, if you know a person like that, you might say a little absent-minded, gets on the bus.

And Fred's on his way home sitting on the bus, you know, down in L.A. and he mumbles or says something, man, I'm on the bus. And then some dude next to him goes, yeah, we're all on the bus. And for our family, that's been a funny joke over the years and didn't go over well here. It's so good that my son Joel actually has a tattoo on his leg that says we're on the bus, you know.

[5 : 55] But these disciples are not on the bus, they're in the boat. And allegedly they're all on the boat. And they weren't in jury duty, they were doing other things.

So let's just open them with a little word of prayer. Lord, we thank you for your word. Thank you that we can come to you and just let our guard down this morning and experience you in a new way, I hope, this morning and understand from your word what you have for us.

In Jesus' name, amen. Maybe something that's familiar with you but feels out of control beside your life is maybe driving on snow or ice.

Have you ever been in that situation where you really don't have an out? You can't go anywhere. There's nowhere to pull over to go and if you pull over that's not a good situation, right?

So you're like, well, I'll just keep going. I remember one time I was coming home from work and out where we live, it's a two-lane road, no shoulder, and there's a gully and there was so much snow and wind was blowing, you couldn't see the road, you couldn't see the center line, you couldn't see the gully, it was all snow.

[7 : 04] One uniform level of snow. So you're driving, thinking you're on the road and hoping you're on the road, using your perception, which is gone, to stay on the road, right?

And you're like, well, I can't pull over, there's no shoulder, I'm not, so you just keep going, you know, and I feel like maybe the disciples felt that way in the boat during the storm, you know, they're familiar with the Sea of Galilee, they're in the boat, but they're in a spot, they can't turn around and go back, they could, or should they go forward, and that's where we find them today.

So, maybe there's a time in your life when everything was out of control and you just wanted Jesus to show up and straighten it out. You may have cried out, Jesus, help me.

Maybe you've done this or know people have done this where things are tough and you make a vow with God and you say, Lord, if you get me through this, I will do that. I had a brother who one time was going through some things and I don't remember what his, I think his vow was, I'll go to Mass every day, if you do this, Lord, I will do that.

And we know, people do that, Lord, if you take care of this, I'll do this, you know. The context, which we just talked about briefly, he had just fed 15,000 people in John chapter 6, we learned that after the people saw the miraculous signs that Jesus did, they began to say, surely this is the prophet who has come into the world.

[8 : 38] Jesus, knowing that they intended to come and make him king by force, withdrew again to a mountain by himself. It's plausible that Jesus wanted the disciples away from the crowd to keep them away from this messianic surge, you know, this throng of people wanting to make Jesus king.

And so he wanted to remove the disciples from that, say, get on a boat and go to the other side of the Sea of Galilee. And Jesus went off to pray. And we do know from the other accounts that Jesus did see the disciples in the sea struggling.

They were having a hard time keeping the boat under control. So Mark chapter 6, if you turn, I mean, Matthew chapter 6, if you turn your Bibles there.

We'll read a few verses, make a few comments, and then... And today's message, there's three points, the three things we'll talk about are topics.

The storms of life, faith, and doubt, and then worship. So those are the three things. Storms of life, faith and doubt, and worship.

[10:00] Certainly, you know, we should be able to identify with all these things. Matthew 14, verse 22 to 27. I'm in Matthew 6.

Matthew 14, verse 22. Immediately, Jesus made the disciples get into the boat and go before him to the other side while he sent the multitudes away.

And when he had sent the multitudes away, he went up to the mountain by himself to pray. Now when evening came, he was alone there. But the boat was now in the middle of the sea, tossed by the waves, for the wind was contrary.

And we learn that Jesus did see the disciples straining in the boats at this time from the Gospel of Mark. Now in the fourth watch of the night, which is about 3 a.m., Jesus went to them walking on the sea.

And when the disciples saw him walking on the sea, they were troubled, saying, It is a ghost. And they cried out with fear. But immediately, Jesus spoke to them, Be of good cheer.

[11:13] It is I. Do not be afraid. Jesus knows when you're going through the storms of life. Jesus knows. If you're in one, he knows.

You either have just been through one, you're in one, or you're going to be in one. That's pretty much how life goes, isn't it? You're in a storm, you've been through a storm, or one's coming and you don't know about it.

Sometimes, I believe, we create our own storms. That's not good. Stop it. When we make up our own storms in our own minds, we create these scenarios and this stuff and this junk that we build a case about something in our own head.

And yet, you have to be careful. You know, Paul, I think it said, take every thought captive. Are you creating a storm in your life?

Judge yourself in that way. I do. I make a big deal about something and it's not, or I get anxious and worried about things, or I make things around me seem like there's something they're not, or what people are doing to me or saying to me.

[12:32] You know, obviously, their loss of job is a real storm, right? Some of us have experienced that. Medical conditions, finances, war. I've never been in a war.

There are people in the world right now in that. Persecution, and all these things, family problems. We're all, at some point, are in a storm. In the next couple of verses, 24 to 27, read these.

When the disciples saw Jesus, verse 26, walking on the sea, they were troubled, saying, it's a ghost, and they cried out with fear. But immediately, Jesus spoke to them, saying, be of good cheer.

It is I. Do not be afraid. Is fear bad? It's common. Is it bad? Can be, right?

It can also be good. It can create awareness. If you're, you know, you can, you get that feeling like, I don't feel safe. You're walking out to your car, some different places, you know, it's like you watch your surroundings when you're buying gas.

[13:49] I would encourage you to be careful of your surroundings. Make sure if you're sitting in a car, you don't have the key in the ignition when you're by yourself, you know, and your wife's in the store, or whatever the circumstances are, you know, I often think about that scenario.

What would I do? It's not like I dwell on it too much, but sometimes I'm very cautious when I pump gas, you know, it's like, because you could easily look at your phone, right?

But no, I watch my surroundings because I'm alert. I'm not necessarily fearful, but fear is also good because it takes you out of danger. Horses, you know what their defense mechanism is?

You'd think, oh, they're big animals. They'd fight. They run. That's their defense mechanism of fear. Do you know what armadillo's fear mechanism is? Anybody know?

Huh? They cross the road. They jump. They jump. Is it working out very good for them? They're going to cross the road. The car comes. They jump. You'd think if evolution was true, they would have learned by now that I shouldn't be jumping.

[15:01] Boy. That was funny. Yeah, that was a good joke. Better than the first one. We're all on the boat. God orchestrates circumstances in our life.

When life feels out of control, who is in control? God is still in control. In Matthew 14, 12, we're told that Jesus told his disciples, get in the boat and go on the other side.

They were in Christ's will. If you're in that trial, you're in his will. Some people say, if you don't have problems, you're probably not living, right?

That's another way of saying it in a worldly vernacular. But we have an advocate with the Father, Jesus Christ, the righteous one. He ever lives to make intercession for us, we learn in Hebrews. 1 John 17, 20. Some people call it Jesus' high priestly prayer. Jesus not only prayed for those he was with, but also those who would believe through their word.

[15:59] So Jesus, our intercessor. Jesus says, fear not. So if you have fear today, fear not. It's an easy thing to look up.

You could look up Isaiah 41, 10. Fear not. I am with you. Be not dismayed. I am your God. I will strengthen you. I will uphold you with my righteous right hand. 1 John 4, 18 says, there is no fear in love, but perfect love casts out fear.

Fear has to do with punishment, and whoever fears has not been perfected in love. And then the simple one, Psalm 56, 3. When I am afraid, I will trust in you.

Teach that one to your children. I think we taught that one to Joel, and I've never forgotten that one. If you're like me, I have work to do in this area. You might too, right?

If you struggle with fear, anxiety, those kind of things. Then we move on to faith and doubt. Matthew 14, 28 to 31. And Peter answered him, said, Lord, if it is you, command me to come to you on the water.

[17:08] So he said, Come. And when Peter had come down out of the boat, he walked on the water to Jesus. That's where the story ends.

Peter walks on the water to Jesus, and they go to Capernaum or Gerasa, and the other guys row in the boat all night. No. Peter gets afraid. He sinks.

He says he sees the wind, and he gets afraid. You can't see the wind, but you see the results of the wind. I can imagine being in a boat like this, and being in a swale, and then walking toward Jesus, and who knows?

We don't know. Did he see him? You know, in the big waves. It doesn't take much to not be able to see you in front of you when you're in a wave and a big sea like that.

But Peter did exercise faith. That's amazing, really. Come to me. Yeah, sure. Gets out of the boat. Right there. Getting out of the boat.

[18:06] What great faith, you know. But then we see that, verse 30, the wind's boisterous. Peter was afraid. He starts to sink, and he cries out, Lord, save me.

And immediately, Jesus stretched out his hand and caught him and said, Oh, you of little faith, why do you doubt? Lord, save me. You know, I could hear some other preacher probably going crazy with that one.

That's a simple, good prayer. Lord, save me. When you're in fear, doubt, Lord, save me. God, this situation's way out of my control. Save me. Help me.

Take my doubt, my fear away. Give me faith. Little faith. Just before I jump into that, you know, it's normal to doubt and question God.

The important drive or force in our life is to keep trusting God. Do not dwell on our doubts.

Personally, I'm going through a time of doubt and little faith. After losing my job of 19 years, two months ago, I go through times of faith, fear, and doubt.

[19:13] My mind and thoughts wander. Lord, am I now on the right path? I am working, but is this what you want? Did I really hear your voice in this? Am I really doing what you want, Lord, right now?

Lord, is the future in line with what I should be doing? Lord, is this right? Did I make a mistake? Should I be pursuing something else?

There is a line in the, you know, money. I mean, right? If you lose your job, you begin to wonder more about money. You worry about it anyway, and you plan for things.

Some plan better than others. But when you make less than you were making, you go, Lord, I don't know. What's the deal here? How is this going to work out? The Lord's always taking care of us. My wife and I are kids. We raised five kids and all that, and kids went to college, and we've had vehicles. But Lord, what about now, right? What about now, Lord? And it reminds me of a scene in It's a Wonderful Life, which is my favorite movie.

[20:14] George Bailey and Clarence are at the bar having a drink when George is going through this dream, or this Clarence is showing them what's going on. And they get a couple drinks, and

George reaches into his pockets.

Of course, he doesn't have any money in them because it's not the real George's life. It's what would have happened if he wasn't born. And he doesn't have any money. He goes, Clarence, you got any money? He goes, no, I don't have any money. There's not money where I come from.

And George Bailey says, well, it sure comes in handy down here. And I often think of that verse, you know, when I was raising kids, and it's like, Lord, it sure would come handy now.

So, sometimes, if you're like me, you still have fears and doubts.

Sometimes, we're just pathetic, aren't we? We're just pathetic. I know I am. Sometimes I'm just pathetic. The Lord's done so much. You know, in this past year, okay, so the Tashas lived with us while they built their house.

[21 : 17] In July, I, okay, I already said this, but I lost my job. In August, I start two part-time jobs Monday through Friday.

In August, they moved into their house. Now our house is quiet. Now it feels weird. You know, it's like, Lord, is this right? You know, you go from, like, all this stress and all these circumstances to no one's home.

It's quiet. And it just feels like there should be peace and calm, but I'm not content with that either. Right? Are you ever like that? You know, you get through that huge trial.

You know, what's going to happen? I'm going to get laid off. I'm like, we're merging. People are losing their jobs. What's going to happen? You get through it and you go, well, yeah, that did work out, but I'm still kind of not content, you know? So we're terrible, you know?

That's just us. Quickly, I want to read something about little faith. Little faith is okay. You know, Peter, why did you doubt? Little faith is okay. Lord, I believe.

[22 : 18] Help my unbelief. Little faith is often impacted by our surrounding or circumstances. Little faith is true faith. I think that's something you can take away. Little faith is true faith.

Lord, I only believe a little bit. Help my unbelief. That's okay. Little faith will obey the words of Jesus. Lord, I don't feel like doing this, but I'm going to do it anyway.

Lord, my flesh is saying this. You say this. I got a little bit of faith. I'll go that way. Spurgeon said it this way. You do believe, and if you believe, why doubt? If faith, why little faith?

If you doubt, why believe? And if you believe, why doubt? I know I said that fast, but if you believe, why do you doubt? If faith, why little faith?

If you doubt, why believe? They're almost, you know, and if you believe, why doubt? I hope that makes sense to you. Oh, this is a summary of this section here.

[23 : 21] The Christian life, like walking on water, is humanly impossible. It can only be lived by the power of the Holy Spirit. As long as we look away from every other object to Jesus only, we can experience a supernatural life.

But the minute we become occupied with ourselves or our circumstances, we begin to sink. Then we must cry out to Jesus for restoration and divine power. Or, Lord, save me. Right?

From fear to worship, Matthew 14, 32 to 46. Here's two groups of people that remind me of worship. The first are the ones in the boat that came and worshiped Jesus, that truly are the Son of God. And as I mentioned earlier, those that bring the people that need healing and just touch the hem of his garment. In Matthew, verse 32.

And when they got in the boat, the wind ceased. Right there is a miracle over creation, right? And then those who were in the boat came and worshiped him, saying, truly are the Son of God. When they had crossed over, I think one of the other gospels says, immediately the boat was at shore.

[24 : 27] Middle of the lake, immediately to shore. They came to the land of Gennesaret. And when the men of that place recognized him, they sent out into all the surrounding region, brought to him all who were sick, and begged him that they might only touch the hem of his garment.

And as many as touched him were made perfectly well. We've all asked God for healing, I'm sure. You've all had something and go, Lord, would you heal me?

Please heal me. And then you wonder. But these people brought him, and Jesus honored their faith. And I'm going to read just briefly from this little booklet.

It's gems from Tozer. He has a paper or a little booklet, like a 30-page booklet. If you print it out, it's 12 pages printed.

But this is just an excerpt, and it's called The Missing Jewel of Worship. We are called... Now let's transition into putting our mind on the Lord, okay?

[25 : 30] And who he is and what he's about. And then we'll wrap this up and sing a couple songs. We are called to an everlasting preoccupation with God. God is spirit, and they that worship him must worship him in spirit and in truth.

Only the Holy Spirit can enable fallen man to worship God acceptably. As far as that's concerned, only the Holy Spirit can pray acceptably. Only the Holy Spirit can do anything acceptably. Here we go. Man was made to worship God. Man was made to worship God. Of all the created things in the universe, in the world, man has the free will to worship God. What did man do with that? You know, Tozer said it's like he had a harp. God gave him a harp, and he throws it in the mud and says, forget you, God. But, you know, why did Christ come? Well, we know to save us from our sins, but in order that he might make worshipers out of rebels.

[26 : 39] We were created to worship. Worship is the normal employment of moral beings. Worship is a moral imperative. Worship is the missing jewel in modern evangelism.

That's probably more than 30, 40 years ago. That's actually about 60 years ago when he wrote it. We could go on and on about worship, what it means and this and that. Worship comes from the heart. You have to kind of set aside your mind and your thoughts and worship him.

If the musicians want to come up, we'll wrap this up, and I'm going to read a few verses, and as we put our mind on Christ and who he is, there's more that could be said about all of this, about worship.

But Exodus 15, 11, Who is like you among the gods, O Lord, glorious in holiness, awesome in splendors, performing great wonders?

[27 : 47] Isaiah chapter 6, The seraphim calling out to each other, saying, Holy, holy, holy. Some will say that's the trish holy God or the triune God.

The seraphims are calling out, Holy, holy, holy is the Lord of heaven's armies. The whole earth is filled with his glory. Psalm 72, 19, Praise his glorious name forever.

Let the whole earth be filled with his glory. That'll be a day. The whole earth is filled with his glory. I think Psalm 113 says, From the rising of the sun to the setting thereof, let us worship God.

And I mentioned that in our breaking of bread last Sunday. East to west, rising the sun. Continually, there's no end. East to west, there's no end. Continually worshipping God. If you want to flip to Revelation, I'm going to read a few verses out of Revelation, and then we can sing a couple songs at the end here.

Revelation 1, 5, and 6. All glory to him who loves us and has freed us from our sins by shedding his blood for us. He has made us a kingdom of priests for God his Father.

[29 : 05] All glory and power to him forever and ever. Amen. It is right. It is right to give him glory, honor, acknowledge his power.

He's redeemed us. The blood of the Lamb has redeemed us. Revelation 4, verses 8-11. These four living creatures, having six wings, were full of eyes around them, and they do not rest day or night, saying, Holy, holy, holy, Lord God Almighty, who was and is and is to come.

Whenever the living creatures give glory and honor and thanks to him who sits on the throne who lives forever and ever, the 24 elders fall down before him who sits on the throne and worship him who lives forever and ever and cast their crowns before the throne, saying, are you looking at this in your Bible?

Revelation 4, 11. You are worthy, O Lord, to receive glory and honor and power, for you created all things, and by your will they exist and were created.

That's a good reason to worship the Lord. Revelation 5. I think the seraphims may have had six wings. I think it says, one, they cover their eyes because they just can't maybe look at the holiness of God, but I'm not sure if that's accurate.

[30 : 26] Revelation 5, 12-14, saying with a loud voice, you know, verse 11, I looked and heard the voice of many angels and the living creatures and the elders, 10,000 times 10,000, saying with a loud voice, a loud voice in heaven, all these creatures, thousands upon thousands of millions, whatever they are, however many, the loud voice saying, worthy is the Lamb who was slain to receive power, riches and wisdom and strength and honor and glory and blessing.

And every creature which is in heaven and earth and under the sea and such are in the sea, and all them that are in them, I heard saying, everything said, blessing and honor and glory and power be

to him who sits on the throne and to the Lamb forever and ever.

What else can you, what should you say to that? Amen, right? So be it. Are you there? Do you do this? Do you worship God like this?

I have little faith. Let's do Revelation 19.1 and then we'll sing a couple songs. Revelation 19.1, After this I heard what sounded like a vast crowd in heaven shouting.

A vast crowd. Think of the largest crowd you've ever been in and multiply it by a million times, a million times, whatever, right? The largest crowd you've ever been in. Saying with a loud voice, shouting, Praise the Lord!

[31 : 59] Salvation and glory and power belong to our God. Well, when you do see the Lord in all His glory, you should feel awe, respect, and honor, right?

And so just a couple songs here to worship the Lord together. Thank you.