

Sunday 9nd August 2020

Good morning and welcome to worship with us at MPN.

Wherever you join us from and whenever you join us we are glad to have you with us for this time of worship.

A reminder that we meet on Zoom for a catch-up on Sunday's at 12, if you need contact details, these change every week get in touch and we will send them on to you.

Who Do You Trust?

- **Have you ever played the game “What’s the time Mister Wolf?”**

In the game, someone is chosen to be the wolf, and everyone else starts off in a straight line. Each person can ask the wolf what time it is, and if the wolf says it is two o’clock you take two steps closer to the wolf.

The wolf waits till everyone gets closer and when he says its “dinner time” he will try and catch as many people as possible to eat for dinner (although not literally).

Today we will hear about Peter asks Jesus if he can walk on water?

It reminded me a little bit about the game “What’s the time Mr Wolf” because Peter is always trying to get close to Jesus, but every time he does so he takes greater risks. In this story he nearly sank into the sea until Jesus grabbed him and hauled him into the boat and saved him.

Peter only began to sink when he took his eyes off Jesus and noticed the water and the waves and the wind, and he got scared and lost sight of Jesus. Imagine what he could have done had he trusted Jesus and kept his eyes upon him.

- **I wonder who are the people in your life that you trust today?**
- **I wonder what kind of things Peter could have done had he trusted in Jesus?**

Call to Worship

Joseph with his technicolour dream coat must have felt so very alone. Jesus withdrew to solitary places intentionally to be alone.

Peter went to be with Christ and then felt incredibly afraid. Jesus disperses a crowd who were nothing but a gathering of individuals.

Gather today with the worldwide Church even if you feel alone. Withdraw with intention today to be with God. If you have any fear, bring it to Christ that he may help you walk. As the individual that you are, worship as you can.

Reading Matthew 14:22-33

Talk 2 (Morag)

My niece and nephew have a cocker spaniel called Teddy. Teddy is a year old and a bit of a handful. He is not really fond of me but that's another story for another day. But Teddy loves outside, especially in the rain and the mud but his biggest love is water. Teddy has no fear when it comes to his jumping in for a swim, he just goes for it and no matter how high he needs to jump, he goes for it and goes into the water. There is no thinking of how safe it is, or will he drown. Teddy wants a swim and he is confident he can get into the water and do just that.

Today we take up our story. Jesus and the disciples have just had the feeding of the five thousand and Jesus we are told made the disciples get into the boat. And go on ahead of him to the other side. While Jesus dismissed the crowd. Jesus then went to find some time for himself to pray up on the mountain side.

The disciples were alone on the boat and a storm comes and their boat is far out from land. And then they see someone on the lake, they don't recognize Jesus they think it may be a ghost. They are scared and full of fear.

But It's Jesus and he says to them "Take courage! It is I. Don't be afraid."

This is what Jesus says to all of us, be brave, it's ok, don't be afraid and come and follow me.

Peter like many of us answers "Lord, if it's you- tell me to come to you on the water."

And Jesus tells him to come.

Peter needs to make sure that it really is Jesus and he has been him do some miraculous things and I walking on water would surely add to the experiences of Peter.

So at first Peter is a bit like the puppy he has no fear, he has set his mind on stepping out into the water and is determined to walk towards Jesus. But he started to see the enormity of the situation. He was in a storm, the wind and waves all around him. He was not in the safety of the boat now and walking on the water. Fear was starting to take over. Instead of having courage and keeping his eyes on Jesus, he started to believe in the situation around him and faith in what had gone before him and he asked Jesus to save him.

I know for me that staying in the boat is the easiest thing in life I can do, and yet the times I have had the courage to step out of the comfort zone are the times that God has led me and opened doors for me and if I had stayed in the boat life would have been much duller and I would not have had the journey and experiences I have had. This week I have found this poem and it speaks to us this morning:

Many a ship has sailed from port to port
with no interference from Me,
because Strong Will has been at the wheel.
Multitudes of pleasure cruises
go merrily on their ways,
untouched by the power of My hand.

But you have put your life into My keeping,
and because you are
depending on Me for guidance and direction,
I shall give it.
Move on steadily,
and know that the waters that carry you
are the waters of My love and My kindness,
and I will keep you on the right course.

Frances J. Roberts

When we give our lives over to God, and listen and really go where he sends us we know that His love, that never runs out will guide us in the right course for our lives. But like Peter was experiencing out there in the storm, in the storms of life we still need to cry out to Jesus for help as he meets us in the storms of life. But sometimes we try to fix the storms on our own and we shift our focus, just like Peter from the experiences of the past where God was faithful to us, to what we can do to help ourselves. It's then like Peter we start to sink.

Jesus response to Peter is "You of little faith ...Why did you doubt." The Niv says

But in the Greek there is a more pastoral tone from Jesus.

"little one, you lack confidence in me, is this what caused you to waiver." This is more in line with the "Do not be afraid. It's me."

Henri Nouwen writes:

"At issue here is the question: "To whom do I belong? God or to the world?" Many of my daily preoccupations suggest that I belong more to the world than to God. A little criticism makes me angry, and a little rejection makes me depressed. A little praise raises my spirits, and a little success excites me. It takes very little to raise me up or thrust me down. Often I am like a small boat on the ocean, completely at the mercy of its waves. All the time and energy I spend in keeping some kind of balance and preventing myself from being tipped over and drowning shows that my life is mostly a struggle for survival: not a holy struggle, but an anxious struggle resulting from the mistaken idea that it is the world that defines me.

As long as I keep running about asking: "Do you love me? Do you really love me?" I give all power to the voices of the world and put myself in bondage because the world is filled with "ifs." The world says: "Yes, I love you if you are good-looking, intelligent, and wealthy. I love you if you have a good education, a good job, and good connections. I love you if you produce much, sell much, and buy much." There are endless "ifs" hidden in the world's love. These "ifs" enslave me, since it is impossible to respond adequately to all of them. The world's love is and always will be conditional. As long as I keep looking for my true self in the world of conditional love, I will remain "hooked" to the world-trying, failing, and trying again. It is a world that fosters addictions because what it offers cannot satisfy the deepest craving of my heart."

— **Henri J.M. Nouwen**

Jesus knows that Peter has a conflict of doubt and fear and also that he has put his faith and trust in Jesus. He knows like all of us life changes at times and it's a struggle to sometimes just hang on at times to our faith but we also know like Peter that Jesus is in all the storms with us and has gone before to show us the way.

Jesus knew he would build the Church with water logged stones like Peter and yet that is what he did. He trusted we would get enough of his message and helped by the Spirit to keep going, keep letting him work in and through us. That the more we trusted the more we would step out of the boat. When the storms of life would come, we would learn to fix our eyes on him and walk towards him.

There have not been many storms in life that all of the world has walked together like the situation now with Cov-id 19. When we have needed so much to depend on our walk with God. When we have been separated from those we love and unable to meet in person to worship and support each other. And yet we are seeing signs of

God in places that we never thought we would. In all storms Jesus works with us and in us and in the most unusual places.

If there was ever a time for us to get out of the boat and out of our comfort zone it is now. If we sit in the comfort of waiting for the storm to pass, we will miss the amazing journey that God has for us. But if we climb out of what we know and what we like and try to move to the places and the people that God calls us to we have that opportunity to serve God where he calls us to.

Many of you will know the Ian White song All I know.

“A ship that’s in the harbour, is still and safe from harm, but it was not built to be there, it was made for wind and storm!” (Ian White)

We could also stay safe and not step out in faith in the world but for the last few weeks we have heard Jesus teaching on the kingdom here on earth. We can’t build the kingdom by keeping our faith to ourselves and when we do step out in faith and live by the kingdom values, there will be storms that follow us but Jesus will be with us and by his grace we will continue to live for him and build his kingdom.

To God the Father,
God the Son,
God the Holy Spirit
Amen.

Blessing

As we go into another week with God

Jesus, you are the Son of God.

Even the wind and the waves, the stormy seas, are calmed by your Spirit.

We might never walk on the surface of water, as if immune to life’s troubles, yet, neither do we need to sink.

For you, Lord, are with us.

Your hand is upon us.

Your love is for us.

Your commitment to us is endless.

As we leave this time

We go with the blessing of God Almighty

Father, Son and Holy Spirit

Be with you and all those that you love

And remain with you

Now and forever more

Amen.