

I.N.I.

Reformation Sunday II

October 29, 2017

Matthew 14:22-32

In Christ Jesus, who is our strength and ever present help in time of trouble, Dear Fellow Redeemed,

Ever have one of those awe-filled, stirring moments? You know when your heart pounds, you get a lump in your throat, goose bumps up and down your arms, maybe even tears in your eyes? There are many things that can cause such a reaction. In life it could be a marriage proposal, the birth of your first child, a wedding or a graduation. In sports it could be a walk-off home run or a last minute touchdown pass. In the world it could be living through a hurricane, witnessing a horrible car accident or being saved from a near death experience.

Well the disciples were going through one of those awesome moments that they no doubt never forgot. As they struggled with the storm on the Sea of Galilee they saw what they thought was a ghost walking on the water, but it was Jesus. Then they saw their fellow disciple Peter get out of the boat and also walk on the water, for a ways, and then begin to sink. They saw Jesus grab Peter and they heard Him say **"O YOU OF LITTLE FAITH, WHY DID YOU DOUBT?"**

When Jesus and Peter got into the boat we are told **THEN THOSE WHO WERE IN THE BOAT CAME AND WORSHIPED HIM, SAYING, "TRULY YOU ARE THE SON OF GOD."**

The disciples had seen Jesus perform many miracles. They had just seen Him feed 5,000 men, not counting women and children with 5 loaves of bread and 2 fish. But this miracle was different. This one affected them individually and saved them. It was much like the time Jesus calmed the storm and saved them from certain drowning. At that time we were told, **IN FEAR AND AMAZEMENT THEY ASKED ONE ANOTHER, "WHO IS THIS? HE COMMANDS EVEN THE WINDS AND THE WATER, AND THEY OBEY HIM."**

We just heard in our first sermon that it is only through hearing the song of our father's that we learn to know Jesus. This new song of salvation through Jesus is as old as the promise to our first parents Adam and Eve. But it is not just the faith of our father's, but a song we need to hear, believe in, and sing too! And that is done when the Holy Spirit works on the individual heart. Then the Gospel becomes a personal gift to us, when it has been experienced in our own hearts.

What was Luther searching for in his life? Peace! Peace with God. He was in desperate need of a God who would have mercy on him, a miserable, lost and condemned sinner. He found no peace in the church of his day. He found no peace in his own heart. He only found peace in the Word of God, as recorded by the forefathers of Christianity—the prophets and the apostles. He knew the forefathers, but it wasn't until the love of Christ came into his heart through faith that he could sing this **NEW SONG** of praise!

And once he learned this **NEW SONG**, it was his life-long mission to get that **NEW SONG** into the hearts and lives of all of the people of Germany and beyond. Even though some of the people of Luther's day—and some today look upon the Reformation as a political and social movement bringing freedom and prosperity to the downtrodden, the Reformation is a matter of the individual heart being led to repent of his sins and then see in the clear Gospel message the Grace of God in Christ.

This **NEW SONG** of the Good News of Jesus life, death and resurrection, once it enters the heart, is not just a momentary change, it is a continuous experiencing of God's grace in our daily lives.

Much like the disciples we will stand in awe with mouths open day by day as we hear “Jesus still loves me” even though I failed again today---“Jesus still forgives me” even though I knew I was doing wrong and I still did it. How amazing it is to hear Jesus tell us over and over again, **I WILL NEVER LEAVE YOU NOR FORSAKE YOU.**

How awesome to hear our Good Shepherd declare to us weak and stumbling sheep: **I LAY DOWN MY LIFE FOR THE SHEEP...MY SHEEP HEAR MY VOICE, AND I KNOW THEM, AND THEY FOLLOW ME. AND I GIVE THEM ETERNAL LIFE, AND THEY SHALL NEVER PERISH; NEITHER SHALL ANYONE SNATCH THEM OUT OF MY HAND.**

Jesus did not rebuke Peter for his attempt; but for his failure: **"O YOU OF LITTLE FAITH, WHY DID YOU DOUBT?"** Peter was not blamed for his getting out of the boat, but for not remaining in the ship of faith. His fault lay not in undertaking too much for the Lord but in his relying too little upon the Lord's strength, not trusting in His Word. Jesus said that if we had faith as small as a grain of mustard seed we could move mountains. How weak and small our faith is, but how strong and great our Savior is. Notice Jesus grabbed hold of Peter's hand. Jesus won't let go. His holding on to our hand is what saves us, not our holding unto His. That is faith!

Jesus is the one who came to live that perfect life of obedient love for us. He suffered and died upon the cross for us. He washed us clean of all of our sins. He rose from the dead and assures us of a resurrection to eternal life. Through the Holy Spirit He has called us to be His brothers and sisters in faith. Knowing all of this, having seen and heard all of this we too will worship our Lord and Savior and say along with those stunned disciples **"TRULY YOU ARE THE SON OF GOD."**

And it all leads back to the hearing and reading of His Word. The disciples were not afraid when Jesus spoke to them. Peter was confident in His Lord when he heard Jesus' Word. We also will have the same confident, courageous faith in Christ, without the fear of our unknown future or our spiritual enemies, the more we come to Jesus in His Word. Jesus has done the impossible—saving all of us and all of lost mankind. He can and also does the impossible every day in and through us walking by faith in Him and His Word.

That power and grace that the disciples saw that night on the Sea of Galilee and again on the cross of Calvary and the empty tomb filled their lives with a New Song that they sang the rest of their lives, even moving them to give their lives for the cause of the spread of that Gospel song.

Martin Luther spent the rest of his life literally singing the New Song of the Gospel message to others as well.

May the New Song of the Good News of a Savior slain and risen again for us sinners be the song we sing this afternoon and may we not be afraid to sing it every day of our lives to all whom we meet until we can sing no more.

Then on Judgment Day the Lord will call each of us to His heavenly home to continue to sing a song of praise to Him for our deliverance throughout eternity.

How awesome is that!

Amen.