

## FEARLESS IN JESUS

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### **Matthew 14:15-33**

"When it was evening, His disciples came to Him, saying, "This is a deserted place, and the hour is already late. Send the multitudes away, that they may go into the villages and buy themselves food." But Jesus said to them, "They do not need to go away. You give them something to eat." And they said to Him, "We have here only five loaves and two fish." He said, "Bring them here to Me." Then He commanded the multitudes to sit down on the grass. And He took the five loaves and the two fish, and looking up to heaven, He blessed and broke and gave the loaves to the disciples; and the disciples gave to the multitudes. So they all ate and were filled, and they took up twelve baskets full of the fragments that remained. Now those who had eaten were about five thousand men, besides women and children. Immediately Jesus made His 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 on 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. Now in the fourth watch of the night 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 for fear. But immediately Jesus spoke to them, saying, "Be of good cheer! It is I; do not be afraid." And Peter answered Him and said, "Lord, if it is You, command me to come to You on the water." So He said, "Come." And when Peter had come down out of the boat, he walked on the water to go to Jesus. But when he saw that the wind was boisterous, he was afraid; and beginning to sink he cried out, saying, "Lord, save me!" And immediately Jesus stretched out His hand and caught him, and said to him, "O you of little faith, why did you doubt?" And when they got into the boat, the wind ceased. Then those who were in the boat came and worshiped Him, saying, "Truly You are the Son of God."

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There's a lot going on in this story that Matthew recorded in this first book of the New Testament called, Matthew. So first, we must, as is always imperative in reading God's Word, to look at the Scripture in context to what is the backdrop to this story, how it is developed, and how is it to be understood in relation to the surrounding text. Matthew's given name was Levi but was likely changed by Jesus to Matthew, which means "gift of Yahweh." Matthew was a tax collector. The people were not too fond of tax collectors for obvious reasons. Yet Jesus called to him and said, "follow Me." A despised tax collector was called by Jesus to be His disciple! He was then called Matthew, a gift of God! Right after Jesus had called Matthew to follow Him, the narrative in Matthew chapter 9 tells of

Jesus and many tax collectors and sinners dining at Matthew's home. When Jesus heard that the Jewish religious leaders, the Pharisees, had questioned His disciples as to why Jesus was dining and fellowshiping with tax collectors and sinners Jesus said, "Those who are well have no need of a physician, but those who are sick. But go and learn what this means: 'I desire mercy and not sacrifice.' For I did not come to call the righteous, but sinners, to repentance.""  
**(Matthew 9:12-13)**

Preceding this story it is written that, Jesus was, "preaching the gospel of the kingdom, and healing all kinds of sickness and all kinds of disease among the people." **(Matthew 4:23)** "brought to Him [were] all sick people who were afflicted with various diseases and torments, and those who were demon-possessed, epileptics, and paralytics; and He healed them." **(Matthew 4:24)** Also prior to our passage of Scripture today Jesus gave the sermon on the Mount where He said, ""Blessed are the **poor in spirit**, for theirs is the kingdom of heaven. Blessed are those who **mourn**, for they shall be comforted. Blessed are the **meek**, for they shall inherit the earth. Blessed are those who **hunger and thirst for righteousness**, for they shall be filled. Blessed are the **merciful**, for they shall obtain mercy. Blessed are the **pure in heart**, for they shall see God. Blessed are the **peacemakers**, for they shall be called sons of God. Blessed are those who are persecuted for righteousness' sake, for theirs is the kingdom of heaven. Blessed are you when they revile and persecute you, and say all kinds of evil against you falsely for My sake. Rejoice and be exceedingly glad, for great is your reward in heaven, for so they persecuted the prophets who were before you."" **(Matthew 5:3-12)**

The reason for mentioning the events prior to our passage of Scripture in Matthew 14 is that Jesus had already shown who He is, that is the Christ, the Savior of the world, calling the poor in spirit, those that mourn, the meek, those that hunger and thirst for righteousness, the merciful, the pure in heart, and the peacemakers. Jesus had already proven that He can and will provide for us what we need. Whether it is deliverance from evil, whether it is to be healed, physically, emotionally, mentally, or spiritually, Jesus can and wants to set us free! Jesus wants for us to be longing for His Righteousness, to be pure in heart, to be meek, to be His peacemakers, and to be His witnesses, as Matthew the tax collector was, to be transformed from being the despised of the world to being a child a God, a gift of God, that we can be His blessing to others for His kingdom, glory, honor, and praise! And then, through the passage of Scripture we're looking at today, God speaks to us about being fearless in Jesus! If God is for us, who can be against us **(Romans 8:31)**, nothing can then separate us from the love of God which is in Christ Jesus our Lord **(Romans 8:39)**, and we are more than conquerors through Jesus Christ who loves us **(Romans 8:37)**. He is our

Rock, our Fortress, our Help in time of need, our Deliverer, our Eternal Hope, our Shepherd, our Comforter, our Savior, and our Lord and God. Jesus got us this far and He says He will never leave us nor forsake us, He will carry out to completion the work that He has begun in us, that "we are His workmanship, created in Christ Jesus for good works, which God prepared beforehand that we should walk in them." (**Ephesians 2:10**) God IS in control.

The beginning of the chapter of Matthew 14 tells of the beheading of John the Baptist. Some of the disciples of Jesus were initially disciples of John the Baptist. No doubt that the word that came to them about John the Baptist's death was very saddening and even discouraging. It would certainly give reason or a legitimate excuse for Jesus and His disciples to say, 'I'm going to have to just get a way for a few days, to grieve and to try and get over this'. Jesus in fact was said to get away and go to a deserted place but it didn't take long for the crowds to find Him again. "And when Jesus went out He saw a great multitude; and He was moved with compassion for them, and healed their sick." As it was getting to be evening Jesus' disciples suggested to Jesus to tell the crowd to disperse so that they could go have their supper. Jesus had another idea. Even in grief, even in what seemed to be an overwhelming crowd of people, Jesus was basically saying that their work wasn't done that they were going to feed the crowd of over 5000 people (the story says there were 5000 men as well as women and children). Yet all they had were 5 loaves of bread and two fish. After all of the crowd was fed (which was a wonderful miracle), Jesus told them to go home, and then Jesus sent His disciples ahead of Him, and told them to take a boat across the sea. Then Jesus went up to the mountain to pray. By then I'm sure the disciples were exhausted, physically, emotionally, mentally, and spiritually. Yet their adventures weren't over. The winds picked up and the waves got rough and if that wasn't enough to cause the disciples concern, they then saw what appeared to be a ghost out in the sea, coming toward them. Do you ever have those days where it seems like the whole world is pressing in on you to where it seems like it is trying to crush you, squash you like a grape? Yes, we have all had trying times like that in our lives. Jesus, where are you, they must have thought? But when the disciples cried out in fear, Jesus said, "Be of good cheer! It is I; do not be afraid." (**14:27**) While Jesus went to get away and pray after hearing of the execution of John the Baptist, He was sought after by the crowd and He had compassion on them and healed them. When Jesus knew that the crowd was hungry toward the end of the long day, Jesus fed them. When the waters got rough for the disciples, Jesus went to comfort them. Then in a moment where it seemed as though Jesus was far away (in the midst of their fears) Jesus says, "Be of good cheer! It is I; do not be afraid."

The story then says that Peter said, "Lord, if it is You, command me to come to You on the water." Jesus responded, saying, "come". "And when Peter had come down out of the boat, he walked on the water to go to Jesus. But when he saw that the wind was boisterous, he was afraid; and beginning to sink he cried out, saying, "Lord, save me!" And immediately Jesus stretched out His hand and caught him, and said to him, "O you of little faith, why did you doubt?" And when they got into the boat, the wind ceased. Then those who were in the boat came and worshiped Him, saying, "Truly You are the Son of God." Even with Jesus right there, Peter began to fear, to have doubts about his perilous situation. Even after Jesus had said, "Be of good cheer! It is I; do not be afraid." Even after Jesus had healed the sick earlier in the previous day, fed over 5000 people with 5 loaves of bread and two fish, the disciples were still given to fear. Even after all that and knowing it was Jesus walking on the water, Peter gave in to fear when he saw the violent waves. Jesus knows everything about us and has determined our place in His eternal kingdom before we were even born. He knows the plans He has for us, He says He will never leave nor forsake us, He says that we are His, His beloved, His children. He knows even the hairs on our heads, the inner thoughts of our hearts, He knows exactly how many days are determined for each of us, even to the very last second. Which is then the reason that Jesus did not make a big fuss about the death of John the Baptist. It was appointed for John the Baptist to be martyred for the glory of God. Are we willing to surrender our lives to Jesus. After all, does He not know each and every step that we are to make. "Man makes his plans, but the Lord determines his steps."

Earlier in the book of Matthew, Jesus said, "do not worry, saying, 'What shall we eat?' or 'What shall we drink?' or 'What shall we wear?' For after all these things the Gentiles seek. For your heavenly Father knows that you need all these things. But seek first the kingdom of God and His righteousness, and all these things shall be added to you. Therefore do not worry about tomorrow, for tomorrow will worry about its own things. Sufficient for the day is its own trouble." (**Matthew 6:31-34**) God's Righteousness has been revealed to us through Jesus Christ our Lord! The Apostle Paul wrote in **Romans 1:16-17** "For I am not ashamed of the gospel of Christ, for it is the power of God to salvation for everyone who believes, for the Jew first and also for the Greek. For in it the righteousness of God is revealed from faith to faith; as it is written, "The just shall live by faith." That faith is believing in Jesus to have died on a cross for our sins, and He raised from the dead on the third day, conquering death, so that all who will believe in Him will have eternal life in Jesus Christ. "For God so loved the world that He gave His only begotten Son, that whoever believes in Him should not perish but have everlasting life. For God did not send His Son into the world to condemn the world, but that the world through Him might be saved." (**John 3:16-17**) But once we are saved, Jesus doesn't leave

us as orphans. He gives us His Holy Spirit to guide us into His truth, to comfort us, to fill us with the fruit of the Spirit in "love, joy, peace, patience, kindness, goodness, and self control." He also leads us as our Great Shepherd, He protects us from evil, delivers us from evil, helps us to overcome in this world. There is not one moment that Jesus leaves us. We must continue to look to Jesus the author and finisher of our faith. Saying, "help me Lord Jesus", when we need His help. "Cast your cares upon Him for He cares for you." He's brought us this far and He'll take us to the finish line, guaranteed. We just have to not give up the faith in our Lord Jesus Christ. When other brothers or sisters fall, believe on Jesus. When the chaos of this world seems insurmountable, believe on Jesus. When turmoil comes against us to take us under, believe on Jesus. And when it seems as though you're going under, call unto Jesus and cry, "save me Lord Jesus!" "As many as call on the name of the Lord will be saved!"

Matthew the tax collector, became a gift of God and wrote the gospel of Matthew. When Jesus told him to come and follow him, he did, just as did all the rest of the disciples. Yet even when they had Jesus right there before them, they had times of fear and doubt. Yet we have a great promise from God. In **Ephesians 2:4-7** it says, "But God, who is rich in mercy, because of His great love with which He loved us, even when we were dead in trespasses, made us alive together with Christ (by grace you have been saved), and raised us up together, and made us sit together in the heavenly places in Christ Jesus, that in the ages to come He might show the exceeding riches of His grace in His kindness toward us in Christ Jesus." God has our eternal salvation in Christ already planned out. We just need to "live by faith" and trust Him in His sovereign plan. **Proverbs 3:5-6** says, "Trust in the Lord with all your heart, and lean not on your own understanding; In all your ways acknowledge Him, and He shall direct your paths." It is when we waver in faith as Peter did when he saw the giant waves trying to swallow him up, we have to just call on Jesus and He will lift us up. He is already there waiting. "Be of good cheer! It is I; do not be afraid" says Jesus. And as an eternal promise He then says, "lo, I am with you always, even to the end of the age." We can be fearless in Jesus when we just believe on Him and trust Him. Nothing surprises God or escapes His notice. Once again Jesus wants us to know and believe, "Be of good cheer! It is I; do not be afraid", and that we will then worship Him, and say, "Truly You are the Son of God!" Amen.