

## The Sovereignty of God

- Last week Pastor Bill preached on the feeding of the 5,000
  - It's easy to read through that scripture and think well yeah, Jesus is a great provider and he filled their bellies by performing a miracle.
    - But we saw that it was much more than that.
  - Pastor Bill went into greater detail how Jesus is the Prophet promised by Moses.
  - And also Jesus can do a lot with very little.
    - If we are willing to give what we have over to him
    - Whether it be our faith, time, money, our ability

And so today:

- We are looking at a familiar text
  - Even if you didn't grow up attending a church service, most people have heard the story about Jesus walking on water.
  - Our tendency is to check out because we think we get the point of this story. Or yeah, cool story bro. I don't want you doing that this morning.
  - Whether this is the 1st time or 100th time you have read this text, I believe that God can reveal so much to us through just a few verses.
- Why do these miracles matter? throughout the Gospel of John there are **7 miracles** that Jesus performs. And it must lead us to the question why is Jesus doing these? And why did John choose THESE 7?
  - About a month ago David (one of our Elders) addressed this.
  - We have to remember signs from God are meant to point us back to God. And each of them are rooted for his Glory.
  - What I mean by that is- The miracles are not for the people getting their stomachs filled from the feeding of the 5000 that Pastor Bill talked about last week.
  - These miracles were for His glory alone. For people to see who Jesus really is.
- And so what we are going to see in these verses that we will be diving into:
  - Is that the purpose of this specific sign was to demonstrate Jesus' deity by showing his **SOVEREIGNTY** over the laws and **POWER** of nature.
    - Sovereignty is a big word. What does that even mean? Im glad you asked. Wayne Grutam from the book "Systematic Theology" says this

- “*God’s sovereignty is God’s exercise of power over His creation*” **Repeat**
  - So it’s God having supreme power or authority over all things
  - To simplify this even more- God is in control
  - I don’t know about you, but I am comforted by that
  - There is literally nothing that can happen to us that God has not ordained.
  - He’s never shocked. He’s not out of the loop. He isn’t taken off-guard.
- At the same time, there is no other doctrine that our human flesh fights against more than the sovereignty of God. Wouldn’t you agree?
    - I want to have my own agenda. I want to do things my way. I want my kids to behave the way I want them to. I want my health to be perfect. Why didn’t I get the promotion at work? Doesn’t this sound familiar?

RC Sproul sums it up this way- “*Most Christians salute the sovereignty of God (meaning we recognize that’s a good thing), but we live out a belief in the sovereignty of man*”.

- We often fail to realize that the sovereignty of God over our lives is a gift. It’s never meant to be shunned or rejected. But it’s always meant to be for our good.
- Here in this text after Jesus has fed the 5,000 we see that He’s showing his POWER and SOVEREIGNTY over the laws of nature in the Sea of Galilee.

Let’s pick it up in **John 6:16-21** Jesus walks on water.

**16 When evening came, his disciples went down to the sea, 17 got into a boat, and started across the sea to Capernaum. It was now dark, and Jesus had not yet come to them. 18 The sea became rough because a strong wind was blowing. 19 When they had rowed about three or four miles, they saw Jesus walking on the sea and coming near the boat, and they were frightened. 20 But he said to them, “It is I; do not be afraid.” 21 Then they were glad to take him into the boat, and immediately the boat was at the land to which they were going.**

- We see 2 crucial truths in this text: God is sovereign over my situation:
  - I must trust him through it.
  - And there is two key areas in this text that these first 2 verses address that we need to trust him in.
  - The first crucial truth is this- For HIS timing. Let’s read verses 16 & 17

Repeat verses 16&17: **16 When evening came, his disciples went down to the sea, 17 got into a boat, and started across the sea to Capernaum. It was now dark, and Jesus had not yet come to them.**

### SETTING THE STAGE

So these verses are beginning to set the stage for what is about to happen.

- But here is the thing, in order to get the full context we have to refer to the parallel Gospel of Matthew 14 where we see IMMEDIATELY after feeding the 5000 Jesus MADE his disciples get in the boat and go on ahead of him so he can go pray by himself.
- And the indication is that Jesus told his disciples he would be meeting up with them and that he was coming.
- End of verse 17 says “And Jesus had not yet come to them” That is key to remember. He told them he is coming

Now verse 18: **18 The sea became rough because a strong wind was blowing.**

### SEA OF GALILEE

- Ok we have to get some context here to about where we are talking about. You should see a picture of the Sea of Galilee. Its roughly 600ft below sea level and surrounded by mountains and hills around the vast majority of it.
- But here’s the thing, when the wind rips through there it creates a wind tunnel. That literally turns up water into a violent storm within minutes.
  - And what we see the language in the parallel gospels (Matthew & Mark) the disciples boat is being described by being battered by the waves back and forth.
  - Being far out from the land. And that they were straining just to make any progress.
  - Now remember at least 7 of these men in this boat (Jesus disciples) were professional fisherman. They have been on the sea a majority of their life. And what scripture is saying is that they are straining just to make progress.

### RELATING IT TO US

- Let me ask you something, how would you feel at this moment right here if you were one of the disciples:

- Jesus made you get into the boat,
  - Now your in the boat and the waves are getting bigger?
  - And he said he was going to meet with you. Remember Jesus said he was going to be coming. He said he was going to act.
- But here they are in this storm. It's not just some gusty winds
    - But there are big waves, the sky is getting darker, it's the middle of night so they have been awake all day.
    - Can you see the disciples struggling?
    - We can't row anymore, the storm is too great, my experience is not helping me anymore, the darkness is too thick, the waves are growing in size, we are out of control, can you see them crying out in fear?

### Can you see them start to wonder?

- I can only imagine what was going through their minds:
  - Does Jesus even care that we are still out here and still going through this?
  - Shouldn't he of acted by now!? Shouldn't Jesus of come?
  - Can we even trust that he is even going to come!? He is taking too long!
  - **“Does that sound familiar to anyone in this room this morning?”**
- And don't we do the same thing when we're in a storm?
- When we are in the UNCERTAINTY. In the DARKNESS, in the TRIAL,
  - When the fear and the fatigue begin to take a toll on us. We so often tend to think that God is taking too long on the situations we face.
- **We begin to doubt his SOVEREIGNTY**
  - That he is in control and **we begin doubt his abilities** that he is going to come and help us.
  - **And so what is it for you today?** What is it that's causing you to doubt God's sovereign timing in that situation you are facing right now.
  - Where you are just waiting for God to act. Maybe you have been waiting for years, maybe it's in your job, your marriage, your health, your finances, or your kids. Waiting for God to act.
  - **What is it for you?** And yet right in the middle of that GOD tells us

### SCRIPTURE

Psalm 27:14 **Wait for the Lord; be strong, and let your heart take courage; wait for the Lord!**

Just a few chapters later it says:

**Psalm 37:5 Commit your way to the Lord; trust in him, and he will act.**

- Church- that's a promise. He will act, He has never broken a promise in all of eternity.
  - It may not be when we are expecting. Or on our time. But it will be at the right time. HIS perfect time. Not ours. HE will act.
  - God will also act **IN HIS WAY**
    - Not always the way we expect
    - God will not be forced into meeting our earthly agenda
  - GOD in His SOVEREIGNTY is always in control & completely trustworthy. He told the disciples that He is coming.
- Here is such a crucial truth that I want everyone to hear. So please if you hear anything today, hear this- **We have to remember *In our waiting, God is working.* X2**
  - It's hard to believe that, when we are so consumed in our circumstances
  - When we are in the middle of the storm and all we want is the outcome were hoping for.
  - I love how John Piper puts it *"The strength of patience hangs on our capacity to believe that God is up to something good for us in all of our delays and detours."*
- In the storm when its getting darker, the waves are crashing, when the fear is getting deeper, when hopelessness is setting in- this is what we need to remember:
  - Because God is SOVEREIGN over my situation
  - I MUST TRUST HIM THROUGH IT. We must trust in God's **TIMING**

## **HAVE YOU TRULY TRUSTED?**

- So how about you- Have you truly trusted?
- There may be some of you in this room who have been in the Church for years- And you never have truly trusted Jesus with your life.
- You may be sitting there thinking who does that guy think he is saying I haven't truly trusted..
  - Im not in a position to judge but what I will say is-
  - Here's one way you will know for sure that you've trusted. By asking yourself or reflecting -

- When trials came my way- WHAT DID I LOOK TO? HOW DID I RESPOND? What did I resort to? Because ultimately it reveals what's inside our hearts.
- Did I go to God for His direction? His guidance? His peace?
- Or did I go to temporary pleasures that would never fulfill.

I don't want to get too off course but we must ask the question:

- How do we truly put our trust in Jesus- my answer to you is **Surrender**.
- Us realizing that we are weak, that we don't have all of the answers & that we can't fix ourselves.
- A few weeks ago Pastor Bill preached on Surrender and how even Jesus (the Son of God) could do absolutely NOTHING without being connected to the Father. And the same goes for us. Jesus is the vine, and we are the branches. Apart from Him, we can do nothing.

**Let's continue in verse 19: 19 When they had rowed about three or four miles, they saw Jesus walking on the sea and coming near the boat, and they were frightened.**

- Once again we have to refer back to Matthew 14 where it says at this time the boat that the disciples were on were 3-4 miles offshore.
  - Now the Sea of Galilee is not that big. But Matthew is saying the boat is not cruising the shoreline. It's now approaching the center of the Lake.
  - Jesus deliberately is having the disciples go out to the middle of the lake in the deepest water where the storm is the fiercest. Do you see what Jesus is doing?...
  - And we are also told in Matthew 14:25 that it was now the 4th watch of the night. The 4th watch of the night is between 3AM-6AM.
  - Now remember when did they get in the boat? Right after feeding the 5,000. Right after dinner time.
  - It's now between 3AM-6AM in the morning. So they have been on the boat for hours. Exhausted, fatiguing, straining, fighting. But look what happens next.

Back half of verse 19: **they saw Jesus walking on the sea and coming near the boat, and they were frightened.**

- Do we get what just happened there?

- Jesus is walking on the Sea. We read that and just brush over and don't see it as significant.
- Here we see this awesome picture where Jesus is making himself known to his disciples - guess what- ON HIS TERMS.
- But instead of recognizing him for who he was-
- What does it say at the end of verse 19
  - it says that they were frightened and in the other Gospels it describes the disciples thinking that Jesus was a ghost and they were freaking out!

### DON'T MISS WHAT'S HAPPENING HERE

- Put yourself in the disciples shoes right now
  - It's the middle of the night, there's a raging storm
  - You are terrified, you have been in the boat for hours
  - You are almost out of strength, and there is a good chance thinking you are not going to make it.
  - And then you see someone who looks like a ghost coming towards you...
  - I'd be freaking out!

**WHY???** This begs the question: Why wouldn't Jesus just calm down the wind and the waves and make sure that the disciples made it to their destination?

- Why wouldn't Jesus just make it easy for them, why not make it comfortable for his disciples?
- Why did Jesus do it this way?
- What was the purpose?
- Why didn't he just calm things down, instead of terrifying them by sending them through a storm and walking on water towards them?
- Why reveal himself this way?
- Here's is why
  - Because even though **this is not** what they would of liked,
  - Jesus in HIS SOVEREIGNTY knew it was **what they would NEED**
    - Because Jesus wanted something much more for them, then for his disciples to get to the shore.
      - He wanted their faith. He wanted their hearts

- To see and to believe in who he really was as the Son of God who has authority and SOVEREIGNTY over all creation
- In the Disciples way:
  - They just wanted the Shore.
  - But in Jesus' way he wanted their hearts

**The SHORE WAS JUST TOO SMALL a thing.**

- The outcome they wanted **was just too small.**
- And although Jesus had tried to show who he was through His signs and wonders in previous Chapters in the Gospel of John.
  - The hearts of the disciples up till this point were still hard
  - And couldn't recognize Him and His sovereignty in their lives.
- And quite often Jesus will take us to the end of ourselves and OUR WAY of doing things
  - Because it's in those times that we see Jesus for who He is
  - And realize that **He is all we need.**
  - The outcome is just too small a thing.

**KEEP IT COMFORTABLE**

- And so how many of us here are asking God to get us out of this trial or uncertainty we are facing on our terms and in our way:
  - "Keep it comfortable God, Keep it easy God, give me the outcome, don't put me in the deep water."
  - Our flesh fights that.. How many of us are asking God to bring us through that trial were facing-
  - Whether it's our marriages, sickness, addictions, our parenting, our careers.
  - We are asking God to come through in our way and through our terms instead of trusting in his SOVEREIGNTY and submitting ourselves to HIS way and HIS time. "Do it now Lord, Do it now!"
  - We want the outcome- the instant result.

But it's His time, His way. I am comforted of a John Piper quote that I just read earlier this week- "*The path of faithfulness is seldom a straight line*".

- God will not often do things the way you think He should
- And He will not be forced to meeting our earthly agenda
- because His agenda is ALWAYS GREATER. And his glory, sovereignty and power are always the focus of it.
- His agenda is always greater than yours or mine. There is a greater work to be done.

So before we jump into verses 21 & 22 we MUST remember that God is sovereign over your situation. **We must trust HIS TIMING and we must SEE HIM IN IT! x2**

**CLIMAX:** And here is the climax. Everything builds up to this moment right here

**20 But he said to them, “It is I; do not be afraid.” 21 Then they were glad to take him into the boat, and immediately the boat was at the land to which they were going.**

- In verse 20 Jesus is identifying himself to his disciples after he saw that they weren't recognizing Him and were terrified.
  - Some commentators even think that this should or could be translated as “I AM” - a direct claim to deity
- And notice what happens when Jesus speaks these words: It says in verse 21
  - “Then they were glad to take him into the boat”. Now terror becomes gladness. Once they heard his voice and once they knew it was Jesus they were filled with gladness and eagerly invited him into the boat.
  - His words and His presence had brought His peace and gladness right into the middle of the storm.
  - Terror turns to gladness, fear turns to faith, anxiety turns to peace, doubt turns to hope. In a moment when Jesus shows up.

Look at the last part of **verse 21**: “**And immediately the boat was at the land to which they were going.**”

- They were in the middle of the lake, and immediately the boat went from the middle of the lake to the shore.
  - The vast majority of commentators believe that Jesus just performed another miracle.

- But to get the full picture of what was happening here after Jesus got in the boat, we have to go back to Matthew 14. Verse 33 says “And those in the boat worshipped him, saying, “You truly are the Son of God.”
- See what happens in that moment.
- Notice the disciples aren't asking about getting back to shore.
- Their not even talking about the shore because it became to small a thing.

## DISCIPLES WORSHIP JESUS

- Their only response is to see Jesus as the Son of God who is sovereign over all creation, and again in Matthew 14 it says they WORSHIPPED Him.
- At this moment right here, Jesus had their hearts. He had their faith for the 1st time they saw Him for who he really was and all they could do is worship.
- My question to us is this- Are you and I worshipping the Son of God in that situation we are facing right now in that storm?

## EVERYONE'S ATTENTION

If you zoned out the past 20 minutes, please hear this or write this down:

- “The worst possible outcome we could ever get, is to get the outcome we were asking for, but to miss getting Jesus in the process.”
- Getting your health, it's just too small a thing.
- Getting that provision you are asking for:
  - Whether it's for a husband, having kids, planting a church
  - **All good things- Just too small a thing.**
- Let me ask you a question:
  - If God never gave you anything else except for the promise of eternal life with Him, would that be enough for you?
  - Careful how you answer. Is he enough for you? Is He enough for me?

## HE IS ALL WE NEED

- You see God always has a greater work in mind as we go through the situations we face and that greater work is Him.
  - He is the greatest outcome we could ever have. And in his presence, there is lasting peace, rest, stillness, joy, protection & relief.
  - Nothing else, no other outcome can offer that. And when we see Him, we find His strength- our fears are defeated.
  - And his glory is shown in our lives as we worship. Right in the middle of the storm.

## CLOSING

- And so how about you? How about me?
  - What are we looking at as the greatest outcome in our situations?
  - Because I can tell you right now, the solution to your problems is God not giving you the outcome you want-
    - Remember, the disciples just wanted the shore. But Jesus in His Sovereignty gave them what they would NEED. **HIMSELF!!**
  - It's you getting Him. HE'S the treasure.
  - Getting to the shore is too small a thing.
  - Are you getting Him? By putting faith in Him alone.
  - And drawing near to Him in the middle of your storm.

Man, when Jesus says to you "It is I, do not be afraid". Do not harden your heart to that.

## PART OF MY TESTIMONY

- If I could be candid- A friend of mine shared the Gospel with me when I was 21 years old, and I started attending Church 12 years ago, I was lukewarm.
  - One foot in with God, and one foot in the world.
  - This went on for several months.
  - And it's very similar to the Gospel of John where Jesus continues to reveal Himself to his disciples yet they still haven't truly placed their faith in Christ and gave Him their hearts.
  - And the same went for me, Jesus wasn't necessarily doing crazy miracles that we read in John but man he was pursuing me time after time after time.

- And some of you who personally know me in this room- Know it wasn't until I went through one of the biggest storms of my life. It was my marriage. I don't need to go into details- but what I will say is that God brought me through that storm to draw me closer to Himself. Why?! Because God is SOVEREIGN. He is so good.
- So if you are sitting here today- angry at God, angry at your circumstance- God is calling you to Himself! Because he is sovereign.
- How will you respond to Him today?
  - Or to those who have been in Church for years- Is Jesus on your boat?
  - Or is he on the shore where you choose to keep him at a distance?
  - I'm not going to do an alter call,
    - But if you are sitting here today, and you believe that God is calling you to Himself
    - And you are exhausted from fighting your battle alone, will you surrender to Him?

You don't need to do anything to impress me, Pastor Bill, your family or friends:

- This is between you and God.
- He knows your heart.
- After I close in prayer, take this time during this song to WORSHIP God.
- Myself, Pastor Bill, the Elders and worship team will be here to pray with you.

**We must remember that the outcome we want, it's just too small a thing. It's about you getting Jesus! He is the treasure. And he is sovereign. Let's pray**