

## Saturday, November 8

Matthew 14:22-36 *But Jesus immediately said to them: "Take courage! It is I. Don't be afraid."* (v.27)

We have all been in Peter's shoes: I believe, Lord, help me in my unbelief!

In this story Jesus subdues nature and walks on the water. Once the disciples know it is Jesus, Peter tells Jesus to command him to walk on the water. Jesus tells him (and us) to get out of the boat. Initially, Peter is able to walk, but before long he sinks and must be rescued.

Why does Peter go under? Because, like most of us, he steps out in faith and then begins to look around and realizes that he is in over his head.

The message of this story is at least two-fold. First, Jesus is telling us that, in him, all things are possible if only we trust him and have faith. We can "walk on the water." Second, we find that we cannot do it ourselves and truly are in need of a Savior, Jesus. Notice that when Peter calls out for help, Jesus is there immediately with a saving hand. Remember that when we feel we are in over our heads, and need help, all we have to do is call on the Savior and he will be there to stretch out his hand.

Ezra 9:1-15; Psalms 75, 76; Revelation 17:1-14

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## Good News Daily

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### Sunday, November 2

Luke 12:22-31 *"Therefore I tell you, do not worry about your life..."* (v.22 NIV)

How often have we heard Jesus' teaching on worry and then disregarded it as we continue to fret about our lives? In this passage Jesus tells us to concentrate on the things above, the kingdom of God. If we do, we are told, all the things of this life that we are so concerned with will be given to us.

Does that mean the condo in the Rockies and the Mercedes I have always wanted? Probably not. Jesus is saying that our needs will be met when we put our trust in God. We may not always have what we want but we will always have what we need.

Quite often we get our needs and our wants confused, and that leads to our feeling deprived, or abandoned, or unappreciated, or unloved. We move through life with a level of constant anxiety that is unbiblical. Let us begin to trust God. He has made us a promise, and He always keeps His word.

Nehemiah 5:1-19; Psalms 24, 29; Acts 20:7-12

### Monday, November 3

Matthew 13:36-43 *Then he left the crowd and went into the house. His disciples came to him and said, "Explain to us the parable of the weeds in the field."* (v.36)

Jesus spoke in parables to describe the kingdom of God. Today he explains the parable of the weeds to the disciples. From this story we understand that the kingdom of God and the kingdom of darkness coexist side by side, at least for the present.

We could take this to mean that the enemy is not only the obvious one who blatantly thwarts the will of God but is also living within the Church. We also understand that it is not for us to decide who is in the kingdom of God and who is not. This is God's responsibility, and we should not presume to know anyone's heart.

This parable also emphasizes the present and future aspects of the kingdom. The seed now growing in preparation for the harvest illustrates the present aspect of the kingdom. The harvest pictures the future aspect of the kingdom. At that time the true character of all people will be revealed and judged. Meanwhile, God's Church represents God's kingdom here on earth, not as a separate isolated group, but as God's people living in the midst of a fallen world. Take heart, we are not alone.

Nehemiah 6:1-19; Psalms 56, 57, 58; Revelation 10:1-11

## **Tuesday, November 4**

Matthew 13:44-52 *“When a man found it, he hid it again, and then in his joy went and sold all he had and bought that field.”* (v.44b)

Here we have two parables, the treasure and the pearl. It is important to remember that the point is the joy of the gospel. When the man finds the treasure and the merchant finds the pearl they are overjoyed and then go and sell everything in order to buy the new reality.

Note that the selling for them was not a sacrifice, but rather a joy. Joy is the core of change and the essence of sacrifice. We need to understand that it is not by telling people to make sacrifices that they make sacrifices. It is by telling people of God’s great treasure that they are willing to sell all they have and follow Him.

We also see that joy enables selling, but only selling gets the treasure. Selling is a condition not for finding, but for having the treasure. The two great lessons of these parables then are, that the gospel has both great joy and also makes great demands on those who hear. Together they give us a complete picture of God’s plan for our lives.

Nehemiah 12:27-31a, 42b-47; Psalms 61, 62; Revelation 11:1-19

## **Wednesday, November 5**

Matthew 13:53-58 *And they took offense at him. But Jesus said to them, “A prophet is not without honor except in his own town and in his own home.”* (v.57)

When Jesus returns to his hometown, the people are excited to see him. The excitement turns to disdain, however, when they realize that Jesus is the same kid who grew up in their town. Since they know his beginnings, they cannot bring themselves to acknowledge his divinity.

We sometimes do the same thing with the Scriptures. Because they were written by human authors, we can easily deny their inspired divinity from the Holy Spirit.

Because the people did not believe in Jesus, Matthew tells us that Jesus was limited in what he could accomplish. Faith is the way to Jesus’ help. When faith is not present, not much happens.

The simple truth is that where churches believe Jesus is alive, Jesus is alive. The corollary is that where unbelief reigns, a limit is set to the powerful deeds of Jesus. I believe that this is the reason that believing churches grow. The Spirit and miracles are at work in congregations where people have faith. Not faith in themselves, but in the message and person of Jesus Christ. Jesus really is alive, and this is good news for us all.

Nehemiah 13:4-22; Psalm 72; Revelation 12:1-12

## **Thursday, November 6**

Matthew 14:1-12 *John’s disciples came and took his body and buried it. Then they went and told Jesus.* (v.12)

Today we read about the demise of John the Baptist. John got himself into trouble because he confronted a king’s immorality. Not only was he an evangelist, but he was also a prophet who spoke the will of God with great power and conviction.

John was a man of integrity and a person who knew what he believed and then acted on those beliefs. In the end he died defending the sanctity of marriage. How often we Christians change our minds because the latest opinion polls show how many people differ with the moral and social positions outlined for us in Scripture.

In today’s culture there is a great deal of pressure to conform to the way society views things. As Christians we are called to shape our views and ideas based on Scripture, tradition, and reason. Scripture always is the deciding factor in case of a tie. So, when you come across a new way of looking at things, or a change in the way you have always understood something to be, check with the Book before changing your mind. God will not lead you astray.

Ezra 7:1-26; Psalms 70, 71; Revelation 14:1-13

## **Friday, November 7**

Matthew 14:13-21 *The number of those who ate was about five thousand men, besides women and children.* (v.21)

One of the wonderful things about this parable is that it points out that Jesus is Lord of even the most common needs. It shows us that Jesus not only cares about hungry people, but he also does something about it. He does not organize another committee, he feeds them.

Please note that this is another example of the miraculous in the Gospels. Some have spiritualized this story to mean that Jesus inspired the masses to share their lunches with one another and that was the real miracle. This is certainly not the plain meaning of the text; and, if we deny the miraculous in Scripture, we strip the power from revelation of God. God did intervene in the lives of His people, God does intervene in the lives of His people, and God will continue to intervene in the lives of His people.

One final note on today’s reading. It is the earliest sign of the Lord’s Supper in the Gospels. In verse 19 Jesus performs the four-fold action of every communion. He takes, blesses, breaks, and gives the bread. In giving us food to eat, he gives us himself.

Ezra 7:27-28, 8:21-36; Psalm 69; Revelation 15:1-8