

FLEA Video #3: "WHO'S IN THE BOAT?"  
4.21.20

You ever had one of those moments at the grocery store where you're looking for something? Maybe it's the end of a long day, you're tired, you just want to get home. You know you're in the right aisle, but you just can't find what you're looking for. Then somebody from the store comes alongside you and points you to the product. How often was it sitting on the shelf right in front of you? Any closer and it might have poked you in the eye. Well, our story today is something like that.

It happened during the ministry of Jesus with His disciples. Jesus was at the end of a busy day of teaching and healing. As Matthew tells it: ***When Jesus came into Peter's house, He saw Peter's mother-in-law lying in bed with a fever. He touched her hand and the fever left her, and she got up and began to wait on Him. When evening came, many who were demon possessed were brought to Him, and He drove out the spirits with a word and healed all the sick - Matthew 8:14-16.***

Finally, Jesus gave orders to His disciples to cross over to the opposite side of the Sea of Galilee from where they were. So, the disciples got into the boat, Jesus followed, and soon they were on their way. And shortly after, exhausted from the activities of His day, Jesus went into the back of the boat and very quickly fell asleep. The disciples meanwhile continued on toward the other side.

Now it's important to keep in mind that the majority of the disciples had made their living on the Sea of Galilee as fishermen. They had spent years here; they knew all the moods of this inland sea - including how quickly a change in weather could create an abrupt and cruel change in the lake they were trying to cross; waves as high as 20 feet have been recorded there. And that is precisely what happened then; as Matthew (who was there in the boat reports): ***Suddenly a furious storm came up on the lake, so that the waves swept over the boat - Matthew 8:24a.*** And for all their experience on the lake, the disciples were terrified.

In the meantime, Jesus is in the back of the boat - still sleeping. It is a wonderful picture of Jesus' humanity. Hasn't a busy day exhausted us? Jesus knows what that feels like because He got exhausted too. And that exhaustion has Him still sleeping, even in the midst of this terrific storm. But right now, the disciples only care about one thing - the storm whose waves are cascading over their little boat.

So, despite their Master's needing to sleep, they need Him awake. So, they went to Him and woke Him from His slumbers, crying out with fear: ***"Lord, save us! We're going to drown!" - Matthew 8:24.***

And Jesus came to. He saw, felt and heard the storm around them. He knew what to do - but first He looked into His disciples' panic-driven eyes and said: ***"You of little faith, why are you so afraid?" - Jesus Christ, Matthew 8:26a.*** And after that brief teaching

moment, and only after that brief teaching moment, as Matthew concludes, Jesus **got up and rebuked the winds and the waves, and it was completely calm - Matthew 8:26b**. And as the wind and the waves suddenly returned to peace and quiet, Matthew tells us: **The men were amazed and asked, "What kind of man is this? Even the winds and the waves obey him!" - Matthew 8:27.**

Now many of us may read this story, think about Jesus' response to the disciples' fears, and say: "Why are you so afraid?' Are you kidding me? Isn't it obvious why they were afraid?" But what Jesus saw was what they were missing in their moment of fear; another way to phrase Jesus' response is: "Why are you afraid? I'm here." Or, in another way: "Why are you afraid? Don't you know who you got in the boat?"

So many times, including these days of pandemics and business closures and isolation and so many other things, we react as if we are all alone, all on our own to deal with all that is happening around us or, even if we say we believe God's Word, we still react like events from the Bible don't really apply to us, that they are somehow less real or not really as serious as what we're dealing with. Why do we do that? Folks, God placed these events in the Bible precisely so we could have something similar to relate to and see how God was faithful to the situation then and how that is the basis for knowing that God is likewise going to be faithful now; as the apostle Paul told the Christians in Rome: **Everything that was written in the past was written to teach us, so that through the endurance taught in the Scriptures and the encouragement they provide we might have hope - Paul, Romans 15:4**. There's no reason to even think about Bible stories unless they ARE real and unless they DO apply. And the fact is, the winds the disciples were experiencing were real. Those waves crashing over their boat were real - just as real as the "waves" of things we are dealing with today. But if our lives belong to Jesus, we're not alone. We're not facing one single moment of one single day on our own. Or, as Jesus would say, "Why are you afraid? Don't you know who you got in the boat?" Folks, Jesus offers to be with us, right beside us, in every moment of every day. We do not need to be on our own; we do not need to be dependent on ourselves.

Jesus offers to trade His infinitely powerful loving life for our little finite powerless lives. What Jesus did on the cross, in dying for our sins, was inviting us to surrender everything about us to Him - including all the winds and the waves in our world that can make life a struggle. And by surrendering to Christ, each one of us receives in return a faithful promise to love us, protect us, guide us, provide for us - every day in every way. That's His offer - available to all who call on the name of the Lord. If we do that, He promises to always be in our boat. And if Jesus is in our boat, the weather will never matter. I love you guys. Have a great day - God bless!