

When the Wind is Strong

(A Study of the Gospel of John; Message #18)

John 6:15-24

A. Those Jesus fed on the mountain now want to force Jesus' hand

1. They wanted a Messiah who could defeat the Romans, free them from oppression, and restore Israel to its previous glory
2. Why wait? The timing was perfect. It was Passover

B. The disciples wanted exactly the same thing

"Lord, is now the time you are going to restore the kingdom to Israel?" (Acts 1:6)

C. Not everything in the Christian life fits in a nice neat box

1. Jesus will answer their questions. Jesus will give himself as the answer
2. Where is God when we are hurting? Same place he was when his Son was nailed to a crossbeam

D. Jesus heard their voices. But there was one voice Jesus wanted to hear more than all the others

WATCHING

A. The disciples got in a boat and left without Jesus (6:16)

1. They were not expecting Jesus to come walking on the water to them
2. John adds a chilling phrase: *"Then the sea, driven by a great wind, became very rough"* The disciples are caught up in a major storm

B. Throughout the night Jesus watched them as they battled the storm

1. Question: Why wasn't Jesus there when they needed him in their storm?
2. The answer: Because he loves us...

"Will not God bring about justice for his chosen ones who cry out to him day and night? Will he keep putting them off. I tell you, he will see they get justice, and quickly." (Luke 18:7f)

C. What does Jesus do while we're encountering the storm? He prays for us

1. It's remarkable Jesus doesn't stop praying when he realizes his disciples are struggling
 - a. Either he doesn't care about his disciples or he really believes in prayer
 - b. Jesus promises he will never stop praying for us...

"He [Jesus] is able always to save those who come to God through him because he always lives, asking God to help them." (Hebrews 7:24-25)

2. While Jesus is praying, what are we to do?

- a. We do what the disciples did. We row the boat
- b. Don't give up; don't lay down the oars; when you can't see him, trust him

WAITING

A. The scene is set for a miracle: darkness, strong wind, Jesus is absent...

1. Jesus comes to his disciples in the storm...walking on the sea...
2. So what is the point of the miracle?
 - a. Maybe to teach the Church that Jesus is Lord of all (including creation)?
 - b. Maybe to teach us that in the midst of the storms, Jesus will come?
 - c. Maybe to remind us (again) who Jesus really is...

B. 6:20 - *"But Jesus says to them, I AM, don't be terrified"*

1. You've heard the "I AM" first by the burning bush (Exodus 3:14)
2. Jesus just claimed the "Name of God" for himself. It is a term of majesty!

C. Notice the miracle within a miracle (6:21)

1. The disciples take Jesus aboard and immediately they're at their destination
 - a. Jesus' goal is believing disciples
 - b. We reach this goal when we "take Jesus in;" when he is in our boat
2. In the feeding of the 5000, Jesus cares for our bodies (*"How are we going to feed...all these people?"*) and in his water-walking he cares for our souls (*"I AM, do not be afraid"*)

WILLING

A. John 6:22 depicts a puzzled, searching, and noticing crowd

B. People come to Jesus looking for something; their motives are often mixed, but they're coming! (6:24)

1. Jesus will tell them how to rightly come to him as he has so graciously come to them/us
2. And after they have suffered a little while...they too will make beautiful music