

GOSPEL PLAN OF SALVATION

- Hear the gospel (Romans 10:17)
- Believe Jesus is the Christ (John 3:16)
- Repent from sins (Luke 13:3)
- Confess faith in Jesus (Romans 10:9-10)
- Be baptized for remission of sins (Acts 2:38)
- Live worthy of the calling (Ephesians 4:1)

IN NEED OF PRAYERS

List:

Our members: Jeff Howerton, Paul Atkisson

Others: Mamie Dart, Casey Sparrow, Hope Vinogradov, Barabara Matheny, David Morrow, Debbie Parker, Vina Krassow, John Bennett, Robert and Sarah Brundige, Donald Dawson, Gail Stein, Sandy Childress, Susie Burton, Jacob Profit, Valarie and Barry Boyd, Leroy Weatherholt, Wilma Lawson, Janett Brundige’s mother and stepfather, Diane Whitehead, Tony Tyree, Sandy Driver, Autumn Fox, Beth Erickson, Dan Byers, Arlene Young, Lisa Powell’s father

WEEKLY READING		LEADERSHIP		SERVICES
Mon	2 Samuel 6, 1 Chronicles 13, Acts 23, Psalm 60	ELDERS	DEACONS	Sunday
Tue	1 Chronicles 14-16, Acts 24	Garry Banks	Troy Antle	Bible Study: 9:45 AM
		David Collins	Richard Brundige	Worship: 10:45 AM; 6:00 PM
Wed	2 Samuel 7-8, 1 Chronicles 17, Acts 25, Psalm 132	John Thompson	Matt Thompson	Wednesday
Thu	2 Samuel 9-10, 1 Chronicles 18-19, Acts 26, Psalm 89		Adam Litmer	Bible Study: 7:30 PM
		EVANGELIST	Bill Morelan	1st Fri. of Month
		Adam Litmer	Jim Parsons	Singing: 7:30 PM
Fri	2 Samuel 11-12, 1 Chronicles 20, Acts 27, Psalm 51, 32		Pat Seabolt	3rd Fri. of Month
			Adam Daniels	Bible Study: 7:00 PM
			Jamie Powell	(Finished for the time being)

University Heights Messenger

Volume 6--Number 30

July 6, 2014

Get out of the boat!

In 2 Corinthians 5:6-7 Paul says, “So we are always of good courage. We know that while we are at home in the body we are away from the Lord, for we walk by faith, not by sight.” To walk by faith is not always the easiest path to walk. It is a path with more than its fair share of uncertainties and challenges. The only reason any saint can walk that path is because Jesus Christ stands at the end beckoning them onward. Some like to say that Jesus Christ walks that path right next to the saint with his or her hand clasped safely in His own. As comforting as that thought is, it does not remove the challenges of consistently walking by faith and not by sight. Just ask Peter.

“For we walk by faith, not by sight”  
2 Corinthians 5:7

After feeding the five thousand men along with an unknown number of women and children, Jesus directed His disciples to climb into a boat and cross the sea while He went to pray alone. A severe storm arose during their crossing. Matthew 14:25-33 tells us what happened next. “And in the fourth watch of the night he came to them, walking on the sea. But when the disciples saw him walking on the sea, they were terrified, and said, ‘It is a ghost!’ and they cried out in fear. But immediately Jesus spoke to them, saying, ‘Take heart; it is I. Do not be afraid.’ And Peter answered Him, ‘Lord, if it is you, command me to come to you on the water.’ He said, ‘Come.’ So Peter got out of the boat and walked on the water and came to Jesus. But when he saw the wind, he was afraid, and beginning to sink he cried out, ‘Lord, save me.’ Jesus immediately reached out his hand and took hold of him, saying to him, ‘O you of little faith, why did you doubt?’ And when they got into the boat, the wind ceased. And those in the boat worshipped him, saying, ‘Truly you are the Son of God.’”

This was such an extraordinary event and one that must have remained firmly imprinted upon the minds of all those involved, with the exception perhaps of Judas Iscariot. Jesus came walking across the water. Most of the pictures we see portraying this event show our Lord strolling leisurely upon a glassy sea without a wave in sight. Verse 24 tells us the situation was much different than that shown in popular pictures. “But the boat...was a long way from the land, beaten by the waves, for the wind was against them.” The wind was howling, the waves were crashing, and a figure comes

UNIVERSITY HEIGHTS CHURCH OF CHRIST

445 Columbia Ave., Lexington, KY 40508  
(859) 255-6257 – www.uheightschurch.com

striding across the waves of the sea. They cried out, “Ghost!” Let’s not shake our heads at the silliness of their exclamation. What would *we* have thought? It seems to me that “Ghost!” seems to capture the moment rather well!

Jesus, always quick to comfort His disciples, immediately told them that it was He out on the water and not to be afraid. I imagine that eleven of the disciples were looking at one another in uncertainty, still fearful and unsure. One of them, however, stepped forth and called out to Jesus, “*Lord, if it is you, command me to come to you on the water.*” Being told to come, Peter did.

Peter got out of the boat. Let that sink in for a moment. Leaving the safety of the boat, Peter stepped onto the surface of a frothing, rolling sea buffeted by winds so severe that the boat itself was unable to make any significant progress. Of all the ways that Peter could have asked Jesus to prove Himself, he chose the one that placed his own life in imminent peril and required a humongous act of trust. *He got out of the boat!*

In your minds eye see the look of awe on Peter’s face when his feet hit the water and he did not instantly sink. Perhaps that look of awe became a wide grin as he made his way toward the Lord. However, the wind did not stop just because Peter got out of the boat. The wind kept blowing, the waves kept crashing, and Peter looked away from Jesus to stare in fear at the events surrounding him. Had there been a smile on his face it was instantly replaced with a look of abject terror. With faith shaken, Peter began to sink and cried to the Lord for help. Jesus rescued him immediately even as He offered a gentle rebuke. “*O you of little faith, why did you doubt?*”

*Little* faith? It seems that Peter’s willingness to step out of that boat and cross the sea to Jesus was about the greatest act of faith he could have made. And it was. Jesus was not chiding Peter for the entire ordeal, but only the last part. At the very end Peter allowed his attention, his single-minded focus, to be diverted away from the source of his strength. Having looked away from Christ, Peter’s faith was no longer sufficient to meet the challenge.

Peter and his “little faith” is so often made the entire focus of this event. How sad! Are we to let a moment of weakness discredit the extraordinary faith demonstrated by Peter here? Step into his shoes. Would *you* have been willing to step out onto that rough sea? Would *you* have left the safety of that boat to do something you *know* human beings cannot do? Let us not shake our heads at Peter’s moment of weakness without first marveling at his awesome trust! Did Peter fail here? Well, he *did* momentarily look away from Jesus. His faith *did* weaken there toward the end. Does this make him a failure? No. It makes him imperfect just like all of us. Might I suggest that many more questions need to be asked of the eleven men who refused to get out of the boat at all? If we *must* assign failure in this event, perhaps we ought to look at the eleven rather than Peter.

What lessons may we take from all this? First, there comes a time when Christians simply must step out of their boats, individually and congregationally. Our boats represent comfort zones. Comfort zones can be very detrimental to walking by faith. Comfort zones can make us lazy, unwilling to take hard looks at our practices to see if something ought to be changed. Comfort zones can become places where our own traditions and methods are elevated to stand on level with actual Bible teaching, where “this is the way we’ve always done it” wields the same authority as “Thus saith the Lord.” As Christians we must be in a state of constant growth. Comfort zones tend to stunt that growth. Are we in a comfort zone that is preventing us from being what we ought to be, what we *could* be, individually or congregationally? If so, it’s time to step out of the boat.

However, this event also shows us that simply stepping out of our boats does not necessarily make all problems go away. The wind and waves did not cease the moment Peter’s foot touched the water. There is no reason for us to assume that such things will cease for us either. So what do we do when our problems do not cease the instant we step out of our boats? We accept the challenges as the price we pay to grow in our faith (James 1:2-4, 12).

Was Peter’s sinking to be rescued by the Lord a *bad* thing? Yes, in that he had to be rescued because of weakness; No, in that he was made stronger precisely *because* Jesus saved him. Peter’s walking on the water to Jesus was a path fraught with challenges and eventually Peter stumbled under their assault. However, facing those challenges and being rescued from them by Jesus Christ caused Peter to grow tremendously. It will do the same for us.

Finally, let this event show us that stepping out of our boats is a way to connect even more intimately with our Lord and Savior. It is to make comfort the least of our concerns and to press on with only a single goal—learning to better walk by faith. Such a decision cannot do anything but bring one closer to their Lord.

So, are any of us in boats we just need to step out of? There’s no time better than right now. Remember, “*we walk by faith, not by sight.*” Adam Litmer

**“Sermons:** (AM) “But God” (Ephesians 2:1-7)  
(PM) Choosing to forgive

**Reading:** (AM) Psalm 40  
(PM) Psalm 41

**The Blog:** The blog will be updated tomorrow morning.