**Follow – Gospel of Mark - Wk 15 – Hold on!**

**We are walking w/ Jesus through the Gospel of Mark – Good news!**

**Jesus does not do miracle to show off, miracles show up where God is.**

**How many of you feel your drowning? Feeling overwhelmed?**

**(Jesus had just spent the day feeding nearly 20,000 (5000 men). Everyone had eaten, were satisfied, and 12 baskets were picked up…) Mark 6:45 Immediately Jesus made his disciples get into the boat and go on ahead of him to Bethsaida, while he dismissed the crowd. (I love that he did not avoid people – He loved people – he stayed with hem as long as he could. Pastors who rush off to a green room or office – pastor at conference – famous pastor said never talk to the people – only top tier people) 46 After leaving them, he went up on a mountainside to pray. (after he was spent – he prayed)**

* **After you are spent – pray**

**Again, we see the prayer life of Jesus modeled for us…**

**Feeling overwhelmed – get alone with God – and pray!**

**(The sound of wind) Mark 6:47 Later that night, (it was dark) the boat was in the middle of the lake, (the disciples were headed to Bethsaida on the seas of Galilee) and he was alone on land. 48 He saw the disciples straining at the oars, because the wind was against them.**

**I can almost hear them – Jesus where are you. This is hard.**

* **Jesus will often send you places - that are not easy**

**And will send you places that will be a struggle to get to.**

**Did Jesus know there was going to strong winds – fighting against them? YES! Don’t believe the preachers that tell you God will never let you suffer or struggle.**

**Jesus said - John 16:33 “I have told you these things, so that in me you may have peace. In this world you will have trouble. But take heart! I have overcome the world.”**

**\*\*Expect trials – in the will of God it does storm.**

**They were struggling, rowing all night and barely moved - Jesus sent them there and knew it would be hard… He controls the wind. They are exactly in the middle of God’s will!**

**Mark 6:48b Shortly before dawn he went out to them, (it the 4th watch = 3am) walking on the lake. He was about to pass by them,**

* **Jesus will often let you struggle – on purpose**

**He saw them struggle – there life was not in danger – it was just hard – let them grow through this - he was going to meet them on the shore – he was strolling through it.**

**The wind was blowing (no rain mentioned just heavy wind) them off course – they were struggling to stay on course – struggling to follow Jesus instructions.**

**Followers of Jesus – it may feel like life is working against you – struggling to follow Jesus – the wind is contrary pushing you - BUT you’re right where you are supposed to be.**

**Matthew 24:13 But the one who endures to the end will be saved.**

**The struggle is part of our growth.**

**Feel the pressure – sweat – press thru – get tenacity.**

**Romans 5:3 …we also glory in tribulations, knowing that tribulation produces perseverance; 4 and perseverance, character; and character, hope. 5 Now hope does not disappoint, because the love of God has been poured out in our hearts by the Holy Spirit who was given to us.**

**Too many people want to give up when it is too hard or not fun. School – a marriage – a friendship – a chore – a challenge – a dream. Even the things Jesus calls us to do will be a struggle.**

**James 1:12 Blessed is the man who remains steadfast under trial, for when he has stood the test he will receive the crown of life, which God has promised to those who love him.**

**Jesus was testing the disciples for their understanding - not His Jesus likes to give the test before the lesson**

**Mark 6:49 …but when they saw him walking on the lake, they thought he was a ghost. (phantasma – an apparition) They cried out, 50 because they all saw him and were terrified. Immediately he spoke to them and said, “Take courage! It is I. Don’t be afraid.” (Hey guys, don’t worry it’s me! I am here, the I AM is here/ near)**

* **Jesus is closer than you realize - don’t be afraid**

**I can almost hear them – Jesus, this is hard! Where are you? We can’t see you. Why did you leave us here? Jesus didn’t feel very close.**

**We might feel that way sometimes – “Jesus I don’t see you; did you leave me to drift alone?”**

**Funny sometimes - just like them we don’t recognize Jesus in the middle of a struggle – but he is there! Just because you can’t see him doesn’t mean he’s not watching you.**

**The windstorm hit them fast – they were taking in water.**

**The windstorms hit unexpectedly: fail a class, diagnoses, loved one dies, layoff, thoughts of your past – rush into your head. Your taking on water – you feel like your sinking and Jesus it seems is gone.**

**But - Isaiah 43:2** **When you pass through the waters, I will be with you; and through the rivers, they shall not overwhelm you; when you walk through fire you shall not be burned, and the flame shall not consume you.**

**When you feel the burn and pressure of the wind in your face. When your wonder if you can hang on and growing fearful. Jesus says - “Take courage! I am here I. Don’t be afraid.” (I AM = ever present)**

**Psalm 46:1 - God is our refuge and strength, an ever-present help in trouble.**

**\*\* The Lord may not come at the time we think He should the most, because He knows when we need Him the most.**

**(Mark is believed to be the dictation of Peter – but he leaves this out – same event / same time as Mark 6 – a windstorm Jesus is seen walking on the water) Matthew 14:28 “Lord, if it’s you,” Peter replied, “tell me to come to you on the water.”29 “Come,” he said. Then Peter got down out of the boat, walked on the water and came toward Jesus. (same voice that called him is the same one who gave him the power to do it. It’s a miracle – Peter walks on water!)**

**Jesus if that is you, call me to you! Jesus says… come! That’s it? Any pointers, how, is there a prayer, or formula, or action steps?**

**Sometimes the simplest instructions are the hardest to follow. We need to obey His simple commands if we are ever to walk on water. How did Peter walk? By walking on the word of Jesus.**

**30 But when he saw the wind, he was afraid and, beginning to sink, cried out, “Lord, save me!” 31 Immediately Jesus reached out his hand and caught him. “You of little faith,” he said, “why did you doubt?” (Why did you waver) 32 And when they climbed into the boat, the wind died down. (notice how grace and faith go hand in hand)**

* **When your eyes are on the problem rather than Jesus, you will always be dragged down!**

**Every time. But when we see Jesus as bigger – then and only then – will we be able to walk on those problems & walk strong in the storm!**

**\*\* What you learn to ignore is as important as what you must walk to. What are your eyes on? That bad news, the problems, that relationship, fear – or Jesus? What is your focus on?**

**Peter cried out - “Lord save me!” - Jesus is there! Jesus is your only hope!**

**Jesus responds – no need to have unbelief – I am right here!**

**I am as close as your call! Romans 10:13 “Everyone who calls on the name of the Lord will be saved."! It is good to know that when we are a lousy walker, we have a great catcher!!**

**Mark 6:51 Then he (Jesus) climbed into the boat with them, and the wind died down. They were completely amazed, (whoa!) 52 for they had not understood about the loaves; their hearts were hardened. (referring to when they saw him on the water – and thought he was a ghost…)**

**You know why they could not recognize Jesus – because they were not looking for him. Even after all they saw the miracles - they still struggled with unbelief and allowed fear to control them.**

**Fear and Faith cannot live together – fear blinds our eyes.**

* **Jesus is God – the LORD of all!!**

**The emphasis of this story is usually about the storms of life – but the real story is JESUS IS LORD OF ALL!**

**Normally thousands are not fed with a sack lunch, normally the sick are not healed, normally storms are not silenced with a word, normally demons do not run away, normally the dead don’t come to life, normally people don’t walk on water… except by the power of God. Jesus is truly the God in the flesh!!**

**We see a major turning point here for the disciples - 2 big declarations!**

**Matthew 14:33 Then those who were in the boat worshiped him, saying, “Truly you are the Son of God.” (there are 2 firsts here)**

**When He calmed the storm in - Mark 4:41 They were terrified and asked each other, “Who is this? Even the wind and waves obey him!”**

**But now it’s – “Truly you are the son of God!”**

**They had a long way to go, but we see spiritual growth – it was -**

* **The first declaration of Jesus as God by them.**
* **The first time they worshiped him.**

**This is where true life transformation starts, the person of Jesus and a humility before him.**

**Look what happened when they got to the other side - Mark 6:53 When they had crossed over, they landed at Gennesaret and anchored there. 54 As soon as they got out of the boat, people recognized Jesus. 55 They ran throughout that whole region and carried the sick on mats to wherever they heard he was.**

**The resistance and storm you go through is worth going through - to get to the other side!**

**56 And wherever he went (a passing of time) – into villages, towns or countryside – they placed the sick in the marketplaces. They begged him to let them touch even the edge of his cloak, and all who touched it were healed. (over the net several weeks / months Jesus continued to do miracles – more than were recorded)**

**Mark ends this section of his gospel – with the amazing supernatural power of Jesus.**

**Christmas is not about some baby being born… but - JESUS GOD IN THE FLESH - THE SON OF GOD - IS HERE – PRESENT WITH US!**

**Celebrate! Covid can’t change that – quarantine and social distant can’t stop that. Jesus is here!**

**When the winds come suddenly (and they will come if not already) – Jesus says Do not be afraid - I am here. Take my hand and keep your eyes on me. I am not far away! Jesus is the only one who can save you.**

**Water to wine (power to transform and create – power over molecules)**

**Healing lepers and sick (power over disease)**

**Cast out demons (power over devil)**

**Quiet a storm (power over creation)**

**Raise the dead (power over death)**

**Feeding the multitude (power to multiply – power over any lack)**

**Walk on water (power over matter itself)**