

Talk for All Age Worship 11th June

Readings

1John 4: 7-21

Matt 14; 22-32

Theme

Challenge yourself- Walk on Water

We've all just taken part in acting out our gospel reading today and had an opportunity to reflect on how we felt. Today as Phil mentioned earlier we are beginning a new sermon series in which we are considering what it means to be a disciple.

So what does our gospel reading have to say to us 2000 years after the event happened? Peter and the other disciples had been sent ahead of Jesus in a boat, it was very hard work because it was very windy. Suddenly they see a figure walking towards them on the water. Their immediate response was to be afraid, they don't seem to recognise Jesus. He calls out to them "it is I don't be afraid" Peter then says if it's you Lord tell me to come to you on the water. Jesus's response was come. So Peter steps out of the boat and begins to walk on the water towards Jesus. He then seems to realise what he is doing and is distracted by the weather conditions and he begins to sink. His first response was to call out to Jesus to save him, which Jesus does. Jesus leads them both into the boat and the wind calms down.

Why did Peter even start to walk to Jesus? Some context to this reading is that disciples used to choose a rabbi to follow and then they would go wherever that rabbi went and do what that rabbi did. So in walking on water Peter was copying his rabbi, Jesus. Peter seems to have been doing alright until he takes his eyes off Jesus and is distracted by the wind. Jesus is still calling his disciples today to follow him and to go where he goes and do what he does. This may mean taking risks not just individually but also corporately.

So I return to the question how does this story relate to our life here at St John's in 2017. Like Peter Jesus wants us to step out of our comfort zone. For me part of my walking on water is doing the Talk part of our services. I don't have a problem standing up front, but somehow standing up and trying to help people understand how what we have heard read to us and how it relates to our lives feels more scary. This is good because then I have to trust Jesus, in both my preparations and in providing me with what I need on the day. Both of which he will do.

Here at St John's we have been stepping out of the boat. We are about half-way through our Partnership in Missional Church journey and more recently we have begun to consider working in partnership with a group from Greyfriars church. At the moment we may not know where these journeys are going to lead us but we can be confident that Jesus will always be with us. When we feel afraid, like Peter we can call out to Jesus and he will rescue us.

In our first reading we are reminded of God's love and challenged to love others as he loves us. We have an incredible reminder of how much he loves us in the Rood cross behind me, which depicts Jesus's crucifixion. He loves us so

much that he was prepared to sacrifice his own son. God wants to build a relationship with each one of us. He wants us to let him love us and through the security that gives us to be able to love others, particularly those people we find most difficult to love. We are also reminded that perfect love drives out fear. This is important to remember when we are thinking about taking risks. The more we realise that God loves us for who we are, not what we do the more secure we will feel and we will become more fearless, more willing to take risks.

Last week we celebrated Pentecost when we remembered God's gift of the Holy Spirit and that through the Holy Spirit God equips us to serve others with him and for him. We all have a part to play. The Holy Spirit gives us the courage to take risks because we know we are not alone

So I would encourage you to spend some time with God to find out where he is asking you to step out of the boat and what this looks like for you. What aspect of his life might Jesus be asking you to copy as you deepen your relationship with him?