

How Jesus Grows Disciples

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[0 : 0 0] Okay, good morning, Watermark. The scripture reading comes from the book of Matthew, chapter 14. Please follow along on the bulletin or on your own Bible.

Starting in verse 13, we read, Now when Jesus heard this, he withdrew from there in a boat to a desolate place by himself. But when the crowds heard it, they followed him on foot from the towns.

When he went ashore, he saw a great crowd, and he had compassion on them and healed their sick. Now when it was evening, the disciples came to him and said, This is a desolate place, and the day is now over.

Send the crowds away to go into the villages and buy food for themselves. But Jesus said, They need not go away. You give them something to eat.

They said to him, We have only five loaves here and two fish. And he said, Bring them here to me. Then he ordered the crowds to sit down on the grass, and taking the five loaves and the two fish, he looked up to heaven and said a blessing.

[1 : 1 0] Then he broke the loaves and gave them to the disciples. And the disciples gave them to the crowds. And they all ate and were satisfied. And they took up twelve baskets full of the broken pieces left over.

And those who ate were about five thousand men, besides women and children. Immediately he made the disciples get into the boat and go before him to the other side, while he dismissed the crowds.

And after he had dismissed the crowds, he went up on the mountain by himself to pray. When evening came, he was there alone. But a boat by this time was a long way from the land, beaten by the waves.

For the wind was against them. 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.

[2 : 2 3] 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?

But 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 is the Word of God.

Great. Thank you, Iris. Let's pray together and ask God to speak to us from his Word. Heavenly Father, Lord Jesus Christ, Holy Spirit, we gather this morning to declare your praises, to sing and to worship you in song, to listen to the testimonies of brothers and sisters, to see the gospel demonstrated in baptism later, and to hear you speaking to us from your Word.

God, we want to hear your voice, Lord. We don't just come to fill our minds with Christian information. We come to encounter you, the living God, in your living Word. And so come and speak to us this morning, Lord.

[3 : 45] Come and prepare our hearts, God. Come and help us to see the living Christ in these pages of Scripture. And help us to trust you, God, in the storms of life and the challenges that we face.

God, help us to see you for who you are and to trust you and to worship you. Come and have your way, we pray. God, we pray for those of us maybe this morning that are particularly in the storms of life, are particularly in a very difficult place.

God, won't you come to us? Won't you come and walk to us in the storm, God, and come and draw near to us? We really need you, Lord, and we want to walk with you.

You know the challenges we face. You know the waves that buffeted us. Christ, come and have your way in your life, in our lives, we pray. In your wonderful and gracious name, amen.

Amen. Amen. Making mature disciples, or making mature disciple-making disciples of Jesus Christ who impact Hong Kong for the glory of God.

[4 : 53] I hope that if you've been part of Watermark for some time, you'll recognize those words. Those are our mission statement as a church. A one-sentence summary that describes so much of who we are and what we're doing.

Why do we do the things that we do? Why do we not do the things that other people do, other churches do? Why do we do things the way that we do them? What is it that we're on about?

In many ways, those questions are answered in this one-sentence summary. We are a church which is laser-focused in its dedication and mission to make mature disciples who will then disciple others.

And as the gospel gets into our lives, as we gospelize one another, it will overflow into every area of our lives so that we impact this great city of Hong Kong for God's glory and the good of our city.

You should know this. We are not a particularly fancy church, and we're not trying to be a particularly fancy church. We're not trying to be a particularly big church or a well-known church or the talk of the town.

[6 : 00] We don't need our name written in lights. That can be somebody else's responsibility. What we are focused on, our purpose and existence, is to help us, those of us that are part of Watermark, to mature and grow in our faith, and to disciple and gospelize one another so that we bless our city for God's glory.

And if you haven't worked out yet, let me tell you a little secret. The elder pastors, we have an agenda for your life. This is our hope and goal. And the reason why that is the case is because we believe Jesus has an agenda for our lives.

This is Jesus' agenda for us, that we will become mature disciples of Jesus. Remember in Matthew chapter 4, Jesus walking along the Sea of Galilee or the Lake of Galilee, and he called some very ordinary people, fishermen, tax collectors, ordinary people.

He says, come and follow me, which means come and be with me, come and become like me, come and do the things that I do. Be my disciple, my apprentice, my Talmudim. And then later on, at the end of Matthew, Matthew 28, Jesus says to those same disciples three years later, Okay, you're ready, you go out and make disciples.

But unlike other rabbis in the first century, Jesus doesn't say, go and make disciples of yourself. You know, you become your own rabbi and make your own disciples. You go out into all nations and make disciples of me, baptizing them in the name of the Father, the Son, and the Holy Spirit, teaching them to obey all that I have commanded you.

[7 : 30] Jesus sends his disciples out to go and make other disciples. This is what Jesus has called us to do. This is what we're on about. When you join Watermark Church, again, I hope you realize this.

If you didn't, let me tell you. You join a discipleship journey. You join a family, but not just a family, a family that is wanting to shape us and inform us and disciple us to become the people Christ has called us to be.

On Friday night, Claire and Nikki and I were just talking about how it's possible to be a Christian for 20 years and yet still be a baby Christian, still be very immature.

You can have 20 years experience, but only one year of maturity. We were just talking about how Nikki became a Christian last year and yet just how much she has grown and what a joy that has been.

Now, all of this, what does this have to do with Matthew 14 that Iris read to us? Well, great question. In our passage today, we're going to see one way how Jesus makes disciples.

[8 : 33] How Jesus grows us and matures us into the kinds of people that he wants us to be. Remember Matthew 4, Jesus calls his disciples. Matthew 28, he sends them out.

In the middle, Matthew 14, we're going to see one angle of how Jesus grows us and matures us into his disciples. Okay? Now, before we dive in too much, one of the things we should notice in this passage is there are two stories that are very similar.

They have the same outline and the same structure. If you've got your bulletin, you might want to open this up. Look at how they both begin. Both stories, the feeding of the 5,000 or the 10,000, however many thousand there were, there were many, and Jesus walking on the water, they both occur in a desolate place, a God-forsaken place.

One occurs in the wilderness. I think it's verse 13. The other one occurs in the storm-tossed seas. In the biblical language, the wilderness is always a picture of a God-forsaken place.

And when the seas are raging and storming, it's a picture of the world and the chaos and the evil of the world. That's why in Revelation chapter 4, remember the sea before the throne of God is crystal clear.

[9 : 47] It's a sea like glass because God's presence there has conquered the chaos of the world. And so both these stories occur in a God-forsaken place, so to speak. Notice also how both stories begin with Jesus retreating from the busyness of ministry in order to spend time in prayer.

Look at verse 13. When Jesus heard these things, he withdrew from there in a boat to a desolate place by himself. Verse 23. Or 22. Jesus made the disciples get into a boat and go across the other side.

After he had dismissed the crowds, he went up to the mountain by himself to pray. And both stories begin with Jesus retreating, withdrawing, to spend time with his Father, communing with his Father in prayer.

And this is something we see throughout Jesus' ministry. He's constantly withdrawing from the demands of life and the pressures of ministry to spend time with his Father so that when he does minister, he does so out of a healthy soul, out of having been close with God.

And something God's been speaking to us about as a church, that we need to slow down. We need to be more like Mary, not so much like Martha. We need to be those that commune with God. And then, of course, notice both stories.

[10 : 59] Jesus performs this outrageously awesome miracle, right? Jesus feeds 10,000 people from a McDonald's Happy Meal. Okay? Jesus walks on the storm-tossed sea, a couple of hundred meters, maybe a kilometer or so, out in the middle of the lake.

Jesus then walks in the water and he quietens with the word all the wind and the waves. He brings them into submission. This is not just some party trick or something a magician could conjure up, something an illusionist could conjure up to wow the crowds.

This is nothing less than the sovereign God who is in control and charge of all creation. And, of course, that's what we're meant to see, that Jesus is the sovereign creator God.

The one who speaks the bread into being is the one who spoke galaxies and universes and stars into being. The one who commanded the wind and the waves to be quiet is the one who commanded their existence in the first place.

And so here we have these two stories paralleled very similar in structure in which tells us about Jesus, tells us about his prayer life, it tells us that he's the sovereign creator God.

[12 : 07] But in addition to that, it's gonna tell us how does Jesus form and shape disciples after himself? Okay, that's the big idea that I think Matthew wants us to see here.

And so, like any good sermon, we've got three points, okay? And so the first one is this. How does Jesus make mature disciples? Well, the one way he does it is he reveals our need for him.

He reveals our need for him. Jesus Christ would often deliberately include his disciples into situations which were way beyond their control, way outside of their comfort zone, or their ability, so that they had to rely on him, and doing so would learn to trust him and worship him.

You see that? Jesus would often bring his disciples into a situation in which they're way out of their league, and in doing so, they are forced to then realize we don't have what it takes, we need him, and in doing so would rely on him and would trust him and worship him.

Look at verse 15 and 16 in your bulletin. It's evening time, which means it's late afternoon in this context. Jesus had been teaching. The disciples noticed it's pretty late.

[13 : 21] And so they come to Jesus and they say, Jesus, time to wrap things up. Let's send these people away so that they can go and get food. And look what Jesus says, verse 15. They don't need to go away.

You give them something to eat. Where are the disciples going to get enough food to feed 10,000 people? Where are they going to find enough money to buy this?

Clearly Jesus is asking them to do the impossible. And of course Jesus knows exactly what he's doing. He's not reluctant to help them. Jesus doesn't feed them later on because he says, okay, fine, I guess I'll do a miracle.

We kind of left things a little late. Jesus knows the whole time exactly what he's doing. He's drawing his disciples in. He's saying, no, you do it. So that they'll come to the place where they realize they can't do it so that Jesus will show them who he is.

And Jesus does the same things a couple of hours later. He sends his disciples out onto the lake knowing full well a momentous storm is coming their way. Verse 22 says, Jesus made the disciples go out into the boat.

[14 : 25] And the English translation there is not very clear. The Greek says, he compelled them. He forced them. Jesus deliberately forced them to go in the boat onto the storm knowing that a storm is coming.

Jesus draws them in and puts them in a situation way beyond their ability so that they're forced to recognize their need for him. And when Jesus does come to rescue them and Peter says, it's you, the Christ?

If it really has caused me to walk on the water and Jesus says, come, walk to me on the raging seas. Obviously, it's beyond Peter's ability. And notice how in both of these stories, Jesus leaves things really late.

I mean, somebody needs to help Jesus with his timekeeping. Early on, he could have said, listen guys, it's getting late. Why don't you go and get a meal? Right? And then we can continue this tomorrow. But Jesus leaves things till it's too late so that the disciples will be in a place where they have to trust him.

And notice in the second story, Jesus sends his disciples after sunset, he goes up into the mountain and then it tells us that he comes to them in the fourth watch of the night which is between 3 a.m.

[15 : 34] and 6 a.m. in the morning. In other words, Jesus sends them out after sunset and eight to 10 hours later, he comes to rescue them. Jesus knows that a storm's coming.

He could have just said, listen guys, best you stay here tonight. Tomorrow we'll go over the water. But he compels them to go out. Do you see what Jesus is doing? He's orchestrating things so that the disciples are out of their depth so that they'll be forced to rely on him.

Friends, as you read the scriptures, God is constantly doing this. Remember how Moses in Exodus chapter 3 comes face to face with God and God says, I've heard the cries of my people.

I've seen their agony. I know what they're going through. I'm sending you to go and speak to Pharaoh and deliver them. And Moses says, Jesus, God, great idea. I'd love to go. There's only one problem.

I can't really speak. There's a problem here. You're going to have to send somebody else. And God says, no, you're the exact person I want. I will go with you. Moses goes to Pharaoh.

[16 : 41] Pharaoh eventually saves, delivers them or sets them free by the blood of the Lamb. God rescues them way beyond what Israel could do. They're saved. They're coming out of Egypt. They're rejoicing until they come to a roadblock.

There's a sea in front of them. There's mountains on the side of them. Pharaoh's army is chasing them behind. They're cornered all four sides. Where are they going to go? God rescues them.

Remember how God says to Abraham, Abraham, you're going to be the father of many people. All the descendants of the world are going to be blessed through you. You're going to have descendants as great as the stars in the sky, the sea and the sand shore.

I'm going to bless you and your family. There's just one problem. Your wife is barren and you cannot have any children. What's he going to do? Friends, remember how God calls Gideon to lead the battle against the Midianites.

There's 120,000 Midianites camped against them and Gideon says, okay, I'll get my army. Okay, 30,000. That's all I can muster but that'll have to do. 30,000, we'll take on 125,000.

[17 : 44] God says, no, no, no, your army is too big. Just whittle them down. Okay, they get whittled down to 10,000. Okay, God, this is not looking good. 10,000 against 120,000 but I guess if you're with us we can do it.

God says, no, your army is still too big. Whittle them down to 300. Okay, now you're 300. Now you're ready to go. Friends, you see what God is doing? He's constantly bringing his people to the place where they're way out of their depths, where they cannot save themselves so that they must rely on God, the one who saves them.

And when we read the New Testament, we see the same thing. The apostles who accomplish great things for God are constantly being led by God to the place where they do not have control.

Listen to what the apostle Paul says in 2 Corinthians 1. He says, We do not want you to be unaware, brothers, of the affliction we experienced in Asia. We were so utterly burdened beyond our own strength that we despaired of life itself.

Indeed, we felt we had received the sentence of death, but that was to make us rely not on ourselves, but on God who raises the dead. Paul goes on later in the same book in 2 Corinthians and he says, I will boast more gladly of my weakness so that the power of Christ may rest in me.

[19 : 07] For the sake of Christ, I'm pretty happy to be full of weakness, insults, hardships, persecutions, calamities. When I am weak, when I've come to the end of myself, that's when I know I'm strong because that's when Christ's strength is at work within me.

This is the way that God is working. This is how God grows his people. One of the greatest Christian thinkers of the last century, an amazing man by the name of J.I. Packer, he passed away earlier this year in his mid-90s or maybe late last year and he wrote a book based on 2 Corinthians called Weakness is the Way.

It's a very unusual book and it's all unpacking 2 Corinthians but listen to what he says. He says, the way of the true spiritual strength leading to real fruitfulness in the Christian life and service is the humble, self-distrustful way of consciously recognized weakness in spiritual things.

The Apostle Paul demonstrated a sustained recognition that feeling weak in oneself is part of the cause for the Christian life and therefore something one may properly be content with.

In this, Paul models that the discipleship, spiritual maturity and the growth that all believers are called to pursue, for all Christians, the likelihood is that as our discipleship continues, God will make us increasingly weakness conscious and pain aware so that we may learn with Paul that when we are conscious of being weak and able out of our depth, then and only then may we truly become strong in the Lord.

[20 : 44] God is doing and that's what God is doing. That's what Jesus is doing with these disciples. He brings them to a situation where they do not have what it takes, where they cannot do what he's asking them to do so that they'll look to him and he will show them who he is.

He's revealing their weakness. He does this with Paul. He does this with all Christians. Another great example of this is a man by the name of George Mueller.

If you have heard of him, he was a German Christian in the 19th century, the 1800s. He grew up in not a Christian home but his dad wanted him to be a pastor, a clergyman because in Germany in the 19th century, if you worked for the Lutheran church, the state paid your salary and it was a very lucrative career.

These days we become bankers and those days you became pastors and maybe still these days we become pastors, right? If you think of celebrity pastors online, that's a whole other story.

Anyway, George Mueller. His dad wants him to become a clergyman so he sends him off to seminary but he doesn't give rocks for God and the church. In fact, when his mom is dying on her deathbed, he's busy gambling and getting drunk down the road.

[21 : 57] He was addicted to gambling. He's an alcoholic as a teenager, 14 years old. Anyway, he goes off to seminary, doesn't care at all but he thinks he's going to get a good degree, he's got a good career lined up.

At the end of the seminary, a friend drags him into a prayer meeting and he encounters the living God just like Mark in hospital, right? He confesses, I believe in God the Father, I believe in Christ the Son, I believe in the Holy Spirit.

He falls to his knees and his life is turned around and he realized that God has called him to ministry but not to become a rich clergyman, he becomes a missionary and so he goes to England and he decides to work with the poor, the vulnerable, children of society, the orphans and the marginalized and he starts educating the poor people of English society and he starts a school and he starts an orphanage and by the end of his life he has started 120 schools educating 120,000 children.

He pretty much no fee paying schools, educated them himself, paid for it largely his own way. In addition to that he sets up tens of orphanages, has 10,000 orphans come through his care that he feeds, educates and provides for them.

He prints, he decides people need Bibles so he prints 300,000 Bibles, 1.5 million New Testaments he prints and distributes to those that don't have Bibles and he does this refusing any fundraising efforts.

[23 : 29] People came to him and said let's fundraise and he said no, no, no God will provide let's not ask anybody for money so he wouldn't ask for any money. 10,000 orphans 120,000 children in his schools a million Bibles in his ministry he raised the equivalent of 120 million pounds worth of money in today's value without any fundraising no government support.

But listen to what George Mueller writes he says we should not shrink back from opportunities where our faith may be tested. The more I am in a position to be tested in faith the more I have the opportunity of seeing God's help and deliverance.

Every fresh instance in which he helps and delivers me will increase my faith. The believer should not shrink back from situations positions or circumstances in which his faith may be tested but he should cheerfully embrace them as opportunities to see the hand of God stretched out in help and deliverance.

Thus will his faith be strengthened. And we can tell story after story after story. Friends this is what God is doing here. This is what he's doing with the disciples. And if you want to take discipleship of Jesus seriously which if you're part of Watermark we hope you do and we will help you do that God will do the same for you.

He will call you into situations which are way beyond your control outside of your ability way beyond you in order to reveal your need for him to expose your weakness so that you can come to the end of yourself and wholly rely on him.

[25 : 07] How does God grow us? He reveals our need for him. Now God does more than that. In revealing our need for him he doesn't just want to humble us and say be humble suckers realize you're just human I am God rah rah rah he wants to reveal our need for him so that we can see who he is.

And that's the second thing to reveal who he is. In these stories Jesus does two things to reveal who he is. We spoke about the fact that the miracles reveal him to be mighty and sovereign that he's the creator God of all creation the sovereign Lord.

But Jesus wants to show his disciples more than just that he's powerful and mighty he wants to show them that he is the one true God the creator of heaven and earth the sustainer of everyone and everything as the catechism says that he is the one true God of Israel the God of Abraham Isaac and Jacob.

Look at the first story with me in chapter 14. Jesus takes these loaves and fishes and he multiplies them into a feast for many thousands of people. But in verse 19 Matthew doesn't comment on the fish at all he only talks about the loaves.

Look at what he says in verse 19 it says then he ordered the crowd to sit down in the grass taking the loaves and two fish he looked up to heaven then he broke the loaves gave them to the disciples and they gave them to the crowd.

[26 : 35] In other words he deliberately neglects the comment on the fish and I think what Matthew is doing here he wants his congregation to think back to another time in Israel's history where God fed his people in the wilderness with bread.

Matthew wants us to see that Jesus is the God that provided manna in the wilderness for his people. In other words Matthew wants us to see just as God provided manna for Moses and the people in the wilderness so Jesus providing bread for his people here Jesus is Jehovah Jireh the great provider.

But in the second story it's even more obvious. Look at verse 27 with me. The disciples are in the boat the wind and the waves are buffeting them. Jesus comes walking to them on the water and by the way it says here when they were a long way off the Greek says many hundreds of meters possibly a kilometer and a half into the water.

Jesus wasn't just walking on the shore he wasn't just walking in water that deep sometimes we think maybe Jesus walked on the water and was only an inch deep Jesus is about a kilometer in he walks towards them and they are freaked out because they think they see a ghost and look at what Jesus says take heart it is I do not be afraid.

Now again the English translation here doesn't really help us. The Greek says take heart it is I am do not be afraid. Do you see where Jesus is going?

[28 : 04] If you're new to church this might be new to you. In the Old Testament God gives himself a name. He gives himself a very unusual name. the name that God gives himself is I am or I am that I am.

Remember when Moses meets God at the burning bush in Exodus chapter 3 God says Moses go to Pharaoh and tell him God says let my people go. And Moses says well there are lots of gods which god is it?

Who should I say? And God says tell them that Yahweh I am who I am says let my people go. God gives himself a name and the name is this unusual name that he is.

It describes his essence. God simply is. He is the one true supreme God. He's not just the God of the Jews. He's not just the God of Israel.

He's not just the God of America or the God of white people. He is the one true God. He's not just the God of ancient times. He's not a God limited to a time or geography or space.

[29 : 06] He is who he is. He is the supreme being of all time, all nations, all countries, all galaxies, all everything. He is who he is.

He is the absolutely supreme being. And his name is I am Yahweh. In fact so important was his name that if anyone abused it they would be stoned to death.

God's name is sacred. But it's more than that. It's his covenant faithful name. Whenever God in the Old Testament uses his name Yahweh it's meant to remind God's people of his covenant faithfulness that when God has spoken he will deliver.

Friends look at what Jesus says here. Do not be afraid. I am is here. He's saying the God that rescued his people from Egypt, the God who saved them and delivered them from Babylon, the God who for generations has been there for his people is with you in the boat.

Do not be afraid. Friends in contemporary Christianity we think that God rescues us from the storms of life as Mark said earlier so that we can get back on with our lives.

[30 : 26] We come to church, we say a prayer, we sing some songs, we drop some money in the offering, God will forgive us, he'll rescue us from our storms, save us so that we can get back to a comfortable and easy life. But Jesus wants to come to us in the storms of life so that we can see him for who he is.

That he will open our eyes to see that he is God and that we are not. That we will be humbled to worship him. When Jesus comes to us in the storms of life it's not just to help us get along so that life can be more comfortable, it's that he can save us, that he can rescue us so that we can see him for who he is.

And that's what he does here in these stories. He comes to his disciples, they're way out of their league, and he says, let me show you who I am. I am not just a wise man, I'm not just a sage, I'm not just a good moral man, I'm not just a teacher, I am who I am, I am the eternal, uncreated, sovereign, supreme God, I am God.

Friends, are you going through a storm in life at the moment? some challenge that is beyond you? Do you feel overwhelmed, do you feel buffeted by the storms and the wind and the wave?

Jesus wants to reveal himself to you in that place. He wants you to see him for who he is. Friends, maybe you hear this morning and you're not a Christian, and things are not going well in your life, and you think, where is God?

[31 : 52] If only he cared, maybe he would do something. Friends, because he cares, he's doing something. He's bringing you right into the eye of the storm. He's bringing you to a place where you cannot save yourself so that you can see you need him, so that he can save you.

Friends, maybe Jesus brought you here this morning to save and rescue you. He took Mark to a hospital bed. He took the disciples into the eye of the storm. Maybe he's doing the same for you because he wants to save you.

Jesus grows in his disciples by bringing them to the place where they need him, by revealing himself finally and fully. Thirdly, let's look, Jesus calls us to worship him. Now, in Matthew's gospel, it's not very clear because he doesn't say how the crowds responded after they'd been fed this massive feast, but in John's gospel, John tells us.

They cry out, this indeed is the prophet who has come into the world. Jesus feeding the 5,000 leads to worship. But look at the end of the second story. Jesus rescues the disciples there in the boat.

Look at verse 33. He quietens the wind and the waves. He gets into the boat with them. And then Matthew tells us, those in the boat worshipped him, saying, truly you are the son of God.

[33 : 13] Up until this point in Matthew's gospel, the disciples have never said that. In Matthew chapter 4, God says at Jesus' baptism, this is my son with whom I'm well pleased.

In Matthew chapter 8, the demons confess, you are the son of God. But the disciples have never said that. Until now. And the reason is because no first century Jew would ever think of ascribing to another human being divinity.

I mean, that's the height of blasphemy. You get stoned for that. No Jew would ever call another man God. And yet here the disciples, having seen who Jesus is, they worship him.

Truly you are the son of God. Friends, Jesus wants to bring us to the place of seeing how desperately we need him.

Jesus wants to reveal himself to us and then Jesus calls us to worship him. You know, that's the point of Sunday worship, why we gather on Sundays. We don't just gather to fill our minds with Christian information.

[34 : 15] You can do that at home online. You can read a book or read the Bible. We gather because six days a week we are buffeted by the storms of life. We are buffeted by false truths that tell us that life is found in all sorts of other things.

And we gather weekly on a Sunday to be reminded who Jesus is. To be reminded how much we need him and to worship him. To lift him up and to ascribe to him that you are God and that I am not.

You are worthy of my entire life. This is what Jesus calls us to do. But oh friends, can't you also see in the story the gospel? Can't you see how God is revealing to us the gospel here?

Because the gospel tells us that we too cannot rescue ourselves and cannot save ourselves. The whole point of the Bible is to bring us to a place where we see that we are desperately in trouble.

We are not just in the storms of life. The storms that we face are not just a bad day at the office or COVID. We are in the storm of God's judgment because of our sin.

[35 : 21] And we cannot save ourselves. It is utterly beyond us. And so the point of the gospel is to reveal to us that we need a savior. We need one who was with the father, communing, who left the comfort of heaven to come down and to be with us.

To walk into the storm that we were facing, into the very wrath of God and to take it upon himself on the cross so that we could be saved. And as we look upon that man, behold the man upon the cross, we see him for who he is.

We see that Jesus was not just a good man, not just a moral teacher, not just a sage who said wise things. The point of the cross is to reveal to us who he is and how great need for him and then to lead us to worship.

Friends, at the heart of the gospel is the declaration we need him for this life and for life to come. But at the heart of the gospel is that Jesus came to do that for us. Remember Ephesians chapter 2, as for you, you were dead in your trespasses and sins in which you walked in the following the prince of the power of the air, enslaved to the desires of the lusts of flesh and under God's wrath and judgment.

But because of his great love for us, this God, who loves us immensely and his great mercy has made us alive with Christ Jesus. You are saved, you are raised with Christ Jesus and he has made you alive with Christ.

[36 : 46] This is by grace, not through works. This is not of your own doing. It is a gift of God so that no one can boast. This is what Jesus is doing.

He came to his disciples in the storm. He comes to us in the storm so that we can see he is the one true God and worship him. Friends, what about you?

Do you want to grow in grace? Do you want to become the mature disciple that Jesus is calling you to be? Maybe Jesus is leading you into the storms of life. Maybe he is leading you to a place that is utterly beyond your control.

In his kindness, he is bringing you to a place where you see your great need for him. He wants to open your eyes so that you can see him, that you can cry out to him. That you, like the disciples, can say, Jesus, save me.

And then you can worship him. Let's pray together. Lord Jesus Christ, we do come before you this morning and God, we acknowledge that in your kindness, God, you often lead us to places that are not always comfortable.

[37 : 50] But because you want to save us from the delusion of thinking that we can save ourselves. You want us to see you for who you are and to cry out to you and to be saved.

Lord, we know that this is not only the way into the kingdom, this is also the way of the kingdom. This is the Christian life. It's not only the way how that we become Christians, it's how we deliver as Christians, constantly dependent on you, aware of our need for you, no longer trying to save ourselves.

And so God, I pray for us as a church. Lord, no doubt almost all of us here are facing storms of various kinds. For some of us, we've lost a loved one. For some of us, it's our children.

For some of us, it's our parents. For some of us, it's at work. For some of us, it's the longings of our hearts. God, for some of us, it's the words that people have spoken over us. God, for some of us, it's mental health challenges.

For some of us, it's fear about the future. God, every one of us are facing the storms. Lord, help us to not try and save ourselves. Help us to fall onto our knees.

[38 : 56] open our eyes, we pray, and to call out to you, to worship you for who you are. We pray this in your wonderful and your glorious name.

Amen. I want to ask if we can take a few minutes. We should have a slide. I think there's a next slide, the response. We should have two questions. What is it that God is wanting to say to us today?

I hope it's been relatively clear. If not, we can start again. Should we go back to the beginning? But secondly, what does it look like for us to respond? You know, when God speaks to us, he's not just wanting to fill our mind with information.

He speaks so that we will respond to him. It's like when you have a conversation with someone, when someone talks, we don't just say, okay, that's interesting. In order to build relationship, we respond.

What does it look like to respond to God this morning? Let's take a few minutes and reflect on that. And then Cynthia will lead us in a song of worship.