

TENTH SUNDAY AFTER PENTECOST

John 6:16-21

Let us begin today with a story about Steve. Steve had a good job, a nice home and a family. But in tough times his company had to let some people go and Steve was one of them. Because he lost his job he couldn't keep up his mortgage payments, and now they are foreclosing on his house. The financial problems were such that it has caused tensions in his marriage and now his wife wants a divorce.

Steve felt like he was about to drown in his troubles then he got a call from his Doctor. Seems he had rushed to the Doctor to get a physical before his insurance coverage ran out. Now the Doctor wants to talk to him about some questionable lab results. Steve is a fictional character. However, he represents the way many people feel today. His story represents many of the fears facing people in our world. The cost of living is up and the economy is down, and all this has placed great the strain on families. Sometimes it seems that we are lost in a sea of troubles.

That's where we find the disciples in our Gospel reading today: literally lost at sea. Things had been going good for the disciples. Jesus was attracting huge crowds. He had just fed over 5,000 of them miraculously. Jesus was so popular that the crowd tries to make Him king. But that wasn't God's plan, so Jesus had to slip away by night.

The disciples began to make their way across the Sea of Galilee.

Jesus wasn't with them and a storm came up on the sea. They fought against the wind and waves and rowed with all their might. This went on for quite some time. Although some of them were seasoned fishermen, they probably felt that they would lose their battle against the elements.

Then they saw Jesus. He was walking on the water and coming toward them. John tells us that they were terrified. It's not every day that we see such a thing. They may not have even realized that it was Jesus. But Jesus identified Himself and told them not to fear. They tried to get Jesus into the boat, but just then they arrived at the land.

What, if anything, can this event teach us as we deal with our sea of troubles? First of all, this event shows us that Jesus has the power to rise above our troubles. The miracle here was that Jesus walked on the waters of a stormy sea. A regular human would just sink and in a storm like that would probably drown.

But Jesus had the power to stand in the midst of the storm and still be above the troubles.

This is the same way Jesus can walk across the stormy sea of our troubles. He can be there with us and not sink. Sometimes it seems like we will drown, but Jesus will not. There are no troubles in our lives that Jesus cannot handle.

This is where most people's faith runs into the wall of their doubts. Sometimes people get into a mess and they say, "There's no way Jesus could ever get me out of this mess"? But Jesus can. It doesn't matter how bad of a mess we get into, Jesus can get us out of it. Now, sometimes He chooses not to get us out of it, but rather to get us through it. But He is able to do that because He has the power to walk across the sea of our trouble like we would walk cross the street.

Jesus walking on the water teaches us that Jesus has the power

to overcome our troubles. It also inspires us not to be afraid. It is important to note here that the only thing Jesus says in this story is “It is I; don’t be afraid”. The disciples were terrified.

They were fighting the storm, then they see this figure on the waves! But God’s word to them was, “Don’t be afraid”.

When we feel like the storms of life are about to swamp our boat, don’t fear. Fear can drive people to do things that are counter productive. Out of fear, people often act without thinking things through. It can also keep people from acting.

They can become frozen in fear.

But shouldn’t we be afraid in the face of the troubles we face?

There is the war in Ukraine. There are still terrorists all over the world. We don’t know what the future holds. What reason do we have to not fear? The same reason Jesus gave the disciple, “It is I”. Jesus is in the storm with us. He promised to be with us until the end of the age. He is here, and He is the creator of wind and waves, and He has authority over any storm that could threaten us. Because Jesus is with us, we have every reason not to fear.

So, we learn from this event that Jesus has power over the storms of life, and that we should not fear. We also learn to invite Jesus into the boat. Notice how things happened in the story. John points out that when they set out to sea, Jesus was not with them. The disciples are tossed about, and just as they try to bring Jesus into the boat, they are at their destination.

The problem is that most people try to navigate the storms of life without Jesus in the boat. A lot of people are almost swamped by troubles. I wonder how many of them are inviting Jesus into their lives?

Jesus has the power to walk across the storms of life. He is available to help us. If only people would invite Him into the

boat. Then they would not need to fear.

Don't drown in a sea of troubles. Jesus can walk across the waves of the storm of life. He has power over the elements of nature and all the powers that threaten us. He promised to be there for us no matter what. He was there in the middle of a lake when the disciples needed Him. So don't surrender to fear.

Simply ask Jesus to be a part of our life. Accept Jesus as our Lord and Savior and don't try to forge through the storms alone. Invite Him into our boat.

Jesus was there for the disciples. He is here for us now in the boat of our life, and He will see us through the storms of life to our destination.

AMEN.