

## “I Can Calm Your Fears”

John 6:16-21

What does a “normal” faith-life look like? In today’s story we see a “typical” day in the life of the disciples. We can expect to experience this same kind of “normal” in our daily lives.

### **A. Waiting is a normal part of faith.**

John 6:16, That evening Jesus’ disciples went down to the shore to wait for him.

Psalms 27:14, Wait patiently for the LORD. Be brave and courageous. Yes, wait patiently for the LORD.

We often think of “waiting” as “wasted time.” In fact, waiting patiently for the LORD is labeled here as an act of bravery and courage!

### **B. Darkness is a normal part of faith.**

John 6:17, But as darkness fell and Jesus still hadn’t come back, they got into the boat and headed across the lake toward Capernaum.

Psalms 139:12, ... To you the night shines as bright as day. Darkness and light are the same to you.

### **C. Storms are a normal part of faith.**

John 6:18, Soon a gale swept down upon them, and the sea grew very rough.

Matthew 7:24-25, Jesus said, “Therefore everyone who hears these words of mine and puts them into practice is like a wise man who built his house on the rock. <sup>25</sup> The rain came down, the streams rose, and the winds blew and beat against that house; yet it did not fall, because it had its foundation on the rock.”

The “rock” here, the foundation, is hearing AND obeying the words of Jesus. Storms come and go, the word of the LORD endures forever (Isaiah 40:8, 1 Peter 1:25)!

#### **D. Trying really hard is a normal part of faith.**

John 6:19, They had rowed three or four miles when suddenly they saw Jesus walking on the water toward the boat ...

Trying hard to make progress in the face of a storm is normal. We lean against the win and row harder, push harder, try harder.

Compare their effort with Jesus’ effort. This is a great picture to remind us of the untapped power that Jesus has for us. They are a maximum effort, rowing like crazy ... Jesus is out for an evening walk.

Do what you can do in the face of trouble, of course. But, (Proverbs 3:5-6) “Trust in the LORD with all your heart and lean not on your own understanding; <sup>6</sup> in all your ways acknowledge him, and he will make your paths straight.”

#### **E. Fear is *not* a normal part of faith.**

John 6:20, ... They were terrified, <sup>20</sup> but he called out to them, “Don’t be afraid. I am here!”

What was the nature of their fear? What were they afraid of?

-- The storm? Nope, they were managing. Seasoned fisherman were in that boat. There is another story in Mark 4 where Jesus is already with them in the boat and they are afraid “of the waves.” Not here.

-- We experience natural fear as a part of daily life, and that’s normal. Fear is God’s way of keeping us alert, safe, and ready to defend ourselves.

-- They are afraid of Jesus. Is he a ghost? A sea-monster? What’s going on here? Let’s look at another comment by John that will shed some light on this experience ... 1 John 4:18-19, Such love has no fear, because perfect love expels all fear. If we are afraid, it is for fear of punishment, and this shows that we have not fully experienced his perfect love.

-- Maybe they are afraid of punishment? The storm, the darkness, they're emotionally charged ... and they come to the conclusion, "God is punishing us!" We do that to when life's storms beat down on us. We think "God hates me" or "God is getting back at me for something." Nothing could be farther from the truth!

-- Jesus says, "I'm here, it's okay."

-- The claim of Christ: You don't have to be afraid of me!

## **F. Arriving is a normal part of faith.**

John 6:21, Then they were eager to let him in the boat, and immediately they arrived at their destination!

I want to encourage you that the storm will pass and you'll get "there" wherever "there" is for your life's purpose. Some people think that success is for "the other guy" and that their life is doomed ... no, Jesus says "we'll get there together."

**MAIN POINT:** Let Jesus in the boat!

A closing prayer ... "Dear God, each of us is as normal as all of us are. We're in the same boat in regards to life's struggles and storms. We welcome You, Jesus, with us in the boat. Guard us from the wrong kind of fear, rooted in guilt or shame. Help us experience the fullness of your joy and hope. Help us arrive on time and in the center of Your will. In Jesus' name, amen."