

Tenth Sunday after Pentecost  
09/08/2020  
St Cuthbert's Anglican Church – Tweed Heads

Genesis 37: 1-4, 12-28	Joseph hated and sold as a slave
Psalms 105: 1-6, 16-22	Give thanks to God, Joseph's Story
Romans 10: 4-15	Through belief in Jesus we are saved This must be proclaimed
Matthew 14: 22-36	Jesus walks on Water Peter does too, but falls and is saved

### Introduction

Our Gospel today emphasizes Jesus' divinity and Peter calling out to Jesus, and in the reading from Paul's letter to the Romans we are assured that those who do call out to Jesus will be saved. Let us today look at what this might mean for our lives.

### Romans

Let us first look at the reading from Paul's letter to the Romans. In it Paul says:-

"The word is near you, on your lips and in your heart" (that is, the word of faith that we proclaim); because if you confess with your lips that Jesus is Lord and believe in your heart that God raised him from the dead, you will be saved.

And he then goes on to say:-

"Everyone who calls on the name of the Lord shall be saved."

This is of course, the basis of what it is to be a Christian. Many religions around the world may look to a god, or even many god's, but in Christianity, we believe in a Trinitarian God, who is uniquely made known to us in the Person of Jesus Christ. The first question we Anglicans ask at Baptism, the sacramental rite of Christian initiation is, "Do you turn to Christ?" and those to be baptized are to respond, "I turn to Christ."

It's probably quite easy to get despondent with the state of the world at the moment. As we face the many challenges around us today, do we continue, in all circumstances, to call out to Jesus and put all of our faith, and hope and trust in God?

## Jesus walks on Water

And now to the miracle of walking on water.

There is a lot of symbolism in this miracle, but the main theme here is of Jesus confirming his divinity to the disciples.

In chapter 8 of Matthew's Gospel when Jesus calms the storm the disciples say, "What kind of man is this? Even the winds and the waves obey him!"

Today after he walks on the water they worship him and say, "Truly you are the Son of God."

Let's now go through the story.

When Jesus came to the disciples walking on the water, he told them not to be afraid: But when the disciples saw him walking on the sea, they were terrified, saying "It is a ghost" And they cried out in fear. In their time of great anxiety, the disciples identified a ghost rather than a saviour coming to meet them. When we are surrounded by waves of trouble do we fear the worst, or expect the best? If the disciples had thought about all the things they had seen Jesus do, they could have accepted him walking on water. However they were frightened – they didn't expect Jesus to come, and they weren't prepared for his help. It is part of our faith that we expect God to act in our lives. When we act on this expectation, we can overcome our fears. Jesus notices their concern: But immediately Jesus spoke to them and said, "Take heart, it is I; do not be afraid". In these words we know that Jesus is concerned for our welfare. By listening to him we will not become afraid of the circumstances surrounding our daily lives. Peter is quick to see that he can trust Jesus and can be guided by him. In the presence of Jesus there is no need to be afraid of the storm. Peter answered Jesus, "Lord, if it is you, command me to come to you on the water." Jesus said. "Come." So Peter got out of the boat, started walking on the water, and came towards Jesus. With encouragement from Jesus, Peter manages to walk on the water towards his Lord. He was the only one in the boat to react in faith. His impulsive request led him to experience a rather unusual demonstration of God's power. But Peter stops listening to the voice of Jesus and sees and hears the storm, and the wind and the danger. He becomes afraid and sinks into the water. When Peter noticed the strong wind, he became frightened, and beginning to sink, he cried out. "Lord save me" Peter's faith wavers when he realised what he was doing. Peter cried out to the Lord to be saved. We may not walk on water, but we do walk through

difficult situations. 2020 has been, and continues to be, a very challenging year. If we focus on the waves of difficult circumstances around us without looking to Jesus for help, we may despair and sink. To maintain our faith when situations are difficult, we need to keep our eyes on Jesus and his power rather than on our own inadequacies. Why do we sometimes falter in our faith and doubt? How do we overcome our unwillingness to see? It involves a willingness to be open to the call of God in our lives. Faith involves trust. Again and again, we need to put our trust in God. Living in faith means that despite everything, we have enough courage to believe God's promises will be fulfilled.

### Conclusion

I'd like to conclude by looking at this miracle in a slightly different way.

Some scholars see the boat as a metaphor for the church and the wind and the waves as a metaphor for the hostile world.

I believe that looking after the boat is extremely important. We need nurture and encouragement. Even Jesus needed time out to pray. As Christians we need a place we can feel secure in fellowship and worship. But we also need to be like Peter in following Jesus. We need to step out of the Boat into the hostile world, and share the message of Jesus with others. Paul says in the Romans reading:-

"How can they hear without someone telling them."

There may be times when we think we are sinking, but if we focus on Jesus, if we rely solely on him, just like he did with Peter, he will stretch out his hand and pull us up.

Amen.