

Several years ago, I was on the Sea of Galilee...
Still to this day, it has a reputation for sudden and intense storms ...
So I can understand the apostles being afraid...
Imagine being 1,000 yards off shore
at 3 am
and it's pitch black...
Now, remember, there is no ambient light! no electricity.
They are in an open boat that is relatively small:
26.5 ft. long/7.5 wide/4.5 deep with no shelter...
and a storm comes up...
not only is the rain and wind coming down with a furious intensity,
but out there, in the middle of the lake...
the waves are crashing over the boat,
rocking and thrashing it back and forth....

And then ---here comes Jesus in the midst of all that chaos...
you almost get the feeling like it's a walk in the park for him:
Like walking on water at 3 am in the middle of a large lake in the middle of
an intense storm is no big deal????

The story says that the disciples began to cry out in the fear...
for sure! I would be!!
And what does Peter do??
He wants to do what Jesus is doing: he wants to walk on water.
You need to understand that water, for the ancient peoples,
was both life and death.
Of course, they knew the life giving power of water
they lived in a desert...
But, there were also demons in the deep seas
who also caused destruction, chaos and death

**That night, water was to be feared...
and it was deep fear that they felt that dark and stormy night...**

**This story is not just about
an amazing feat of a man walking on water....
but a powerful story about who has control
over the forces of death, destruction and chaos....**

**When the disciples saw Jesus walking on water in the storm they
they believed that he was more powerful than the demons below...
that he was more powerful than chaos, destruction and death.**

**and Peter wants to do what Jesus does....
Peter wants that kind of POWER.**

**Now, perhaps....
Some might think that Peter was arrogant.
Some might have thought that he wanted to be God....
Some might have thought that his ego was way out of control...**

**Obviously Jesus doesn't think any of these things
because Jesus says,
"Come"
And Peter begins to walk across the water..
Peter is given the power to rise above the chaos
to walk unharmed through the storm....
Until....
until he notices the frightening, churning waters,
the howling, swirling winds....**

until fear overcomes his desire for participating in the power of Jesus....

Does that sound familiar to anyone?

How many of us have had some really great ideas:

Ideas of how to bring a little bit peace and love into the world,
ideas how we might be able to feed the hungry or comfort the lonely

Perhaps we had an idea to protect the earth,
save energy

renew a broken neighborhood and then:

we get “practical”

we become unsure

we get scared about all the “what ifs”

So we shelve our dreams,

put them aside until we are better prepared,

or until someone else makes a move or a start...

until we have more money, more time, more expertise...

Meanwhile: Jesus says to each of us: “Come”.

You too can walk water.

You too can have the Power of God flow through you for the good of the all...

You too can say to the world: Be not afraid.

The winds of fear and the waves of chaos will not harm you

IF you trust me...

Come, feel the power of God in you....

Jesus did not hoard his power,

he didn't try to make himself look powerful or special or unique:

he didn't say to Peter: oh no Peter, you will never be able to do this:

I'm the only one who can walk on water...

he said ok, if you want to...come

Jesus consistently tried to teach anyone and everyone that they too could do what he did:

He sent his disciples off 2 by 2 to cast out demons and cure the sick...

In John 14:12 he tells his followers that he is going away,

but that he will send the spirit so that they can do the things he has done

and greater!

Really?

greater?

Who has ever told you that you could do what Jesus did and even more?

Why have we not been told???

Well...I won't presume to know why we haven't been told,

but I'm telling you now:

we too can allow the power of God to work in us

and through us

and we too will find miracles and blessings in abundance!

Some will say we are 'getting too big for britches'

Some will claim we are arrogant

Some will tell you it is your self centered ego trying to play God....

But Jesus tells you: not at all.

every woman and man here in this lovely little chapel this afternoon is

invited to walk on water with the power of God.

All of us are called to be the hands and feet of Christ in the world:

to heal, to forgive, to include and to love...

There is no earthly power that can prevent us from doing that...

no chain, no confinement, no rule, no law, no death.

The only thing that can prevent us from being the presence of God in the world is fear.

And quite clearly in our story today, Jesus says: do not be afraid.

Fear is our strongest adversary. Fear is our strongest competitor...

I have heard it said that in the Bible, “do not be afraid” or some variant thereof is mentioned 365 times.

Interesting, eh?

When we allow fear to overtake our awareness we will sink into chaos, we will drown in negativity and hopelessness and we never get started...

When we allow fear to be our motivator, our small selves grow way too large and we then we do act in arrogance and in selfishness...

When we allow fear to be the ground of our decisions

we always make decisions that shrink our hearts and close our vision....

It is said that we make decisions either out of love or out of fear....

Jesus was all about Love....radical, intense unboundaried Love....

Each of us are invited to live in this Love, feel this Love,

know this Love and share this Love....

Each of us are given the Power of this Love to share and serve the world...

Each of us are promised the presence of the living Christ

who will hold out a hand to us in the dark, stormy times of our lives

and this Presence will keep our heads above the waters of fear....

Does it mean that nothing bad will ever happen to us...no, obviously not...

but it does mean that nothing eternally, essentially destructive

will have power over us.

For this: we must say: thank you, Amen!