

Last week we launched the Make it Simple Stewardship Series and we talked about Following Jesus. We talked about how in the midst of our worries, we cling to Jesus and his comfort, trusting that he knows what we need and that he will provide all these things for us. We were reminded that our lives cannot be driven by fear but by faith. Today's theme is *Facing the Truth*.

Let us Pray:

Dear Lord, You told us that if we continue in your word, we are truly your disciples and we will know the truth, and the truth will make us free. Open our ears, our hearts and our minds that we can hear the truth of your word today, so that we can be set free to follow and to serve you.

Amen

It was evening, and after a long day of preaching and ministering to the crowds Jesus told his disciples that they need to get to the other side of the lake. And so they got into the boat with Jesus, and the Bible actually says that they took Jesus along. Usually we hear about Jesus taking and leading disciples somewhere, but here they are taking Jesus along. They were fishermen, they knew what they were doing and we can only imagine them coming to Jesus, telling him, Lord, why don't you take a rest, go to sleep. We're all good now, the lake is calm, you had a long day, we can handle this.

Have you had times like this in your life. Heading certain direction, starting a new chapter, a new project, or just a simple day with saying, Lord you can take a break a now. I know what I'm doing; the sea has been calm and I'll be fine on my own. (pause) And then as we start the journey things start to fall apart, a sunny morning turns into a rainy and windy day and the waves become too big for us. And we're starting to face the truth that life is not always smooth sailing. (pause)

What do we do in situation like this? Well we face the truth once again, this time it's a realization that we can't do it on our own and we need help, that even when we think we have things under control we still need Jesus. Disciples faced the truth and they turned to him, "*Teacher do you not care that we are perishing?*" And so Jesus wakes up, rebukes the wind and

says to the sea: Peace! Be still! Then the wind ceased, and there was a dead calm. And then Jesus looks at his disciples and says, *“Why are you afraid? Have you still no faith?”*

Jesus commands the sea to be still and I believe there is a message in those words for all of us. In the midst of worry and storms, in the midst of us running around, Jesus says to all of us, *“Peace! Be still for a moment! Then walk with me.”* In our first reading we got an awesome example of what this walking together with Christ should be like. Pull out your bulletins, it’s Micah 6:8. It reads: *He has told you, o mortal, what is good; and what does the Lord require of you but to do justice, and to love kindness, and to walk humbly with your God.”*

Jesus himself modeled this life, walking humbly with his Father, mercifully loving his followers, and acting justly towards the hurting world around him. Are we willing as stewards of God’s gifts to do what God requires of us? (pause) I can tell you from my own life, that when my day starts with the Lord, when I find that still moment for prayer and devotion, my whole day goes much better. For I’m treating my family better, I’m more patient with my children, I don’t get overwhelmed so easily and I’m treating others better, too. But if my day doesn’t start with the Lord, it looks like this one morning in Pennsylvania when I don’t even know what went wrong, but I was running late, I had an argument with Andrea, and then I needed to get gas, I filled the tank, but the pump wasn’t working properly, so I had to go inside, and I was all irritated and short with the girl working there, finally I was able to pay and as I’m storming out of the gas station the girl says: have a nice day Pastor Drahus. See she was a daughter of one of my members, I didn’t know her but she knew me, and on that particular day, I didn’t show her my humble walk with Jesus, nor any love, mercy or justice.

Walking with Jesus is not always easy, it requires a certain discipline, and of course a lot of mercy and love. But when we decide each morning to walk with Jesus, our lives will look different for Christ is going to be there for us. Which in a way reminds me of Reformation!! ☺ That’s what the reformation was about. Martin Luther realized that without personal relationship with Jesus, we’ll be always missing something; he realized that unless we will be able to walk with Christ we’ll never experience God’s love, forgiveness and his peace. We have a loving and forgiving God who gave us Christ so that we don’t have to freak out when our boats are sinking. And Jesus comes to all of us daily, and he invites us to walk with him. And as we walk with

him, we'll start to realize that things are changing in our lives, in our approach to one another, to ministries we do, to stewardship, and everything else.

My prayer is that Micah 6:8 will reflect the ministries of Shepherd of the Hills. That all of us can grow closer to Jesus, closer to one another, and closer to the world that surrounds us. It might require a personal reformation of our hearts, and lives, it might require a lot of still moments with our Lord. But at the end, when we look back we'll be able to say, we did what the Lord requires of us and it is good.

Amen