

Take courage! It is I. Don't be afraid.

Matthew 14:27

“But Jesus immediately said to them: ‘Take courage! It is I. Don't be afraid.’”

The situation is Jesus walking on the water to catch up with the disciples who are crossing the Sea of Galilee in a bad storm.

This event is preceded by Jesus hearing about John the Baptist's beheading, followed by Him feeding over five thousand people with five loaves and two fish. This was quite a rollercoaster ride of emotions for Him. Jesus, therefore, follows up the feeding by sending the disciples to the other side of the sea and going up on a mountainside to pray. All alone with his Father, Jesus must have spent at least eight hours in prayer.

The Sea of Galilee was surrounded by hills and sat in a bowl-like setting. This meant that sudden, violent storms were common on this sea. The disciples were well qualified to deal with such a storm. Some of them were fishermen who had previously made their living on that same lake. But this storm was more violent than most, and the weary disciples were not making much progress on the way back to the western shore.

They had made it about halfway across (3-4 miles). The time was between 3:00 and 6:00 A.M. The disciples were having a hard time fighting the wind, but there wasn't a sense of danger or fear for their lives.

Jesus, in his all-knowingness, knew their plight. He neither is ignorant of, nor indifferent to, the situation of his disciples or us. Nothing escapes his eyes. The disciples' fright comes when they see someone walking halfway across a rough body of water. It is at that time that He urges them to “not be afraid.” That is a phrase that Jesus uses often in His life on earth. AND, each time He does something to remove the fear. So His assurance can be trusted.

When He says, “It is I.” He is using words by which God had made Himself known to Moses. The disciples knew the OT Scriptures and would remember that comforting identification.

The Lord knows our storms of life as well as He knew the disciples' situation. Sometimes the Lord calms the storm. Sometimes he lets the storm rage and calms his child. Whichever it is the Lord does what is best for our faith journey through our earthly life. His timing is always perfect.

Dear Lord, help us to come in prayer to you in all times. Help us to be comforted by the fact that you are most ready to hear us. Help us to become even more acquainted with your precious life-giving Word and receive relief and direction for our daily life. Amen