

# The Hand of the Lord Who Creates and Saves

March 12, 2025

**Matthew 14:22-33** <sup>22</sup> Immediately Jesus made His disciples get into the boat and go before Him to the other side, while He sent the multitudes away. <sup>23</sup> And when He had sent the multitudes away, He went up on the mountain by Himself to pray. Now when evening came, He was alone there. <sup>24</sup> But the boat was now in the middle of the sea, tossed by the waves, for the wind was contrary. <sup>25</sup> Now in the fourth watch of the night Jesus went to them, walking on the sea. <sup>26</sup> And when the disciples saw Him walking on the sea, they were troubled, saying, "It is a ghost!" And they cried out for fear. <sup>27</sup> But immediately Jesus spoke to them, saying, "Be of good cheer! It is I; do not be afraid." <sup>28</sup> And Peter answered Him and said, "Lord, if it is You, command me to come to You on the water." <sup>29</sup> So He said, "Come." And when Peter had come down out of the boat, he walked on the water to go to Jesus. <sup>30</sup> But when he saw that the wind was boisterous, he was afraid; and beginning to sink he cried out, saying, "Lord, save me!" <sup>31</sup> And immediately Jesus stretched out *His* hand and caught him, and said to him, "O you of little faith, why did you doubt?" <sup>32</sup> And when they got into the boat, the wind ceased. <sup>33</sup> Then those who were in the boat came and worshiped Him, saying, "Truly You are the Son of God."

There was an article online this week about a fight between a daughter and her stepmother. Apparently, the stepmother was trying to get rid of a bunch of stuff that belonged to the daughters' deceased mother. Those things were valuable to the daughter, she reached out to save them when the stepmom wanted to destroy them. It's not surprising that the stepmother didn't care about that stuff. She didn't make it and had no connection with the first mother. We value most that which we have made with our own hands or labored for ourselves or in this case that which someone very close to us has made.

The bible reminds us that God values us because, "in the image of God he made man." The same hand that crafted and made us reaches down from heaven also to save us from destruction. The same hand that created us continues to work in order to save us.

**John 5:17** "My Father has been working until now, and I have been working."

God created the world and everything in it. He crafted man out of the ground and breathed into him the breath of life. On the seventh day he rested from all his labor and said, "it is good." He sat back to enjoy and value what he had made. But then Adam and Eve sinned. That very day the hands of the Lord went to work again to save that which he had created from our own sin.

The whole Old Testament is the account of God's hand at work to bring about the salvation of his people. In the New Testament as well we see Jesus' hands constantly at work. He heals the sick and raises the dead. He hands out bread and fish to the hungry and prays for the people to God the Father. He lifts his hands in blessings, and with his hands he even reaches out to touch the lepers.

The people of Nazareth say of Jesus "is this not the carpenter's son?" They mean it to be a term of derision, but Jesus is indeed a carpenter who came that with his hands he might build the church of God. The same hand that created us was stretched out to die for us on the cross.

### **Matthew 14:22 Jesus made His disciples get into the boat**

In our text the disciples are stuck in the middle of the sea. The wind and the waves surround them, and they can't make any headway against the wind. It was Jesus who sent them there. He put them in the boat, and he sent them across the sea. He was in control. The disciples could have taken great comfort from the fact that Jesus had put them there.

We have some members who have been in literally the same situation, that is in a boat surrounded by wind and waves, scared for their lives. Perhaps more of you have experienced that. Even if you haven't literally been in this situation, you probably have experienced it metaphorically. Times in your life when you seem stuck or in trouble, when the forces or powers of this world threaten to overpower you, or when you can't seem to make any headway against the adverse conditions that threaten you.

In such situations it is important to stop and consider. Why am I here? Is it a result of my sinfulness? If so, confess your sin and trust that the hand of the Lord which was stretched out to die for you will save you and has been lifted up to forgive you. If it is not a result of your sin, then be assured that the hand of the Lord which controls the winds, and the waves is with you to keep you.

**Matthew 14:25 Now in the fourth watch of the night Jesus went to them, walking on the sea.**

The disciples were afraid. They were not afraid of the wind and the waves but because they thought Jesus was a ghost. We are often afraid of that which we do not understand and that which we cannot control, especially if that thing has shown itself to be strong and full of power.

Because of the hills and trees in Wisconsin we do not see the fullness of a storm that way you can out in the plains. We were driving through Nebraska a couple summers ago when a storm came. You could see for miles the rain, and the lighting, and the clouds. It was an incredible sight but also a scary one.

We do not understand, and certainly cannot control the wind and the waves, but Jesus walks among them. He walks among them as the one who created them, understands them, and is in perfect control of them.

**Matthew 14:31 immediately Jesus stretched out His hand and caught him**

The same hand that created the wind and the waves and which sent the disciples in the boat, reaches down to save Peter from the water.

Pictures of this account often portray Peter as reaching his hand out towards Jesus. It might have happened that way, but the text doesn't talk about Peter's hand. The text is all about Jesus' hand. The text emphasizes that it was Jesus who reached out to save Peter.

How many of you would have gotten out of the boat? Peter's faith, we have to admit is far greater than our own, but as great as Peter's faith is it is not enough. Peter quickly starts to sink. Despite Peter's failings Jesus immediately reaches out his hand and catches Peter when he is drowning. The Lord knew that Peter's faith could not withstand the sight of those winds and waves, just as he knew on Maundy Thursday that Peter's faith would not withstand the wind and waves of Good Friday. Yet in both cases Jesus' hand was there ready to pull Peter back from death. In our text tonight he pulls him back from the waves. After Good Friday he assures Peter of his forgiveness and pulls his soul back from death.

**Psalms 50:15 Call upon Me in the day of trouble; I will deliver you, and you shall glorify Me.**

Neither Peter's faith nor ours is strong enough to withstand the wind and the waves, but it's not about the strength of our faith. It's all about the strength of Jesus' hand as he pulls us out of the depths.

The hand that created Peter was there to save Peter. The same hand that created you and was stretched out on the cross to die for you, is always present to pull you out of the waves. His hand created you and his hand is reached out to save you.