

Matthew 14: 22 – 33

**'Bereavement and Walking on Water'**

**Introduction ...**

In that passage, the disciples were doing what they often did – and indeed – what Jesus had asked them to do. Crossing the lake in a boat was commonplace – especially for the fishermen amongst them.

**The Storm ...**

And then 'wham!' – the storm hit them. Perhaps some of the disciples had seen the signs brewing up and others hadn't ... but all experienced the effects.

Many of us here, I think, will be able to relate to that ... and it's what brought us here. For some – the diagnosis of terminal disease in a loved one will have 'come out of nowhere' – for others, the disease will have been prolonged – but a stormy ride nevertheless.

And the disciples – though in a group – also feel on their own.

But then ...

**Jesus appears ...**

Peter has been struggling to cope with the boat and the storm. As a fisherman – he probably felt that he – of all people – should be able to navigate the boat to safety – but somehow, this storm was so different that, instead of getting nearer to land, they were still far away.

Bereavement – losing a loved one – can have a similar effect. Daily life around you goes on. Most things look the same – but the loss alters things so deeply that we can feel adrift.

Peter perhaps realises that his old ways, his usual ways of getting through life – including the stormy times – these old ways weren't working, he needed help and he needed a different way.

**Peter ...**

So when Peter sees Jesus '**walking on the water**' he says:

**'Lord, if it is you, command me to come to you on the water'**

What a thing to say!

He must have been desperate!

But Jesus responds '**Come**'

And that is important. Jesus wants us to turn to him for the help that he can give – whatever our situation, whatever our feelings.

Then, remember what happens:

Whilst Peter keeps his eyes on Jesus – he's ok, but when his focus changes, he begins to sink – though Jesus

rescues him.

### **Conclusions ...**

There are clear implications for us. Jesus invites us to find ways of living in bereavement – the immediate phases and in the years ahead. This can feel strange, scary, sad ... but Jesus will help us through. Being conscious of this help will build our friendship with him.

How might we go about this?

A few suggestions:

Begin each day with a prayer asking Jesus to be with you.

If you have a task which is particularly difficult for you ... e.g. clearing a wardrobe out, going for the first time to a favourite place of the person who has died ... invite Jesus, through his Holy Spirit, to accompany you and keep talking to him and listening to him as you go along.

Recall the verses in our first reading:

**God saying:**

**'When you pass through the waters I will be with you, and through the rivers they shall not overwhelm you'**

and, if starting to feel that you're sinking at any point, call out to Jesus, as Peter did, **Lord, save me ...** and be open to his help – as Peter was. And that help will come – for, again from our first reading:

**'you are precious in his sight and he loves you'**

Amen.