

PRACTICAL LIVING SERIES THREE
EXTREME LIVING
Pastor Jack Schull
Matthew 14:22-33; Mk. 6:47-48

Thesis: God has extreme adventures planned for us, the only thing that holds us back is our fears

Intro superman ppt and theme song

T> growing up, we all dreamt of having super powers – (*tablecloth cape – fly*)
to be able to do something beyond our abilities – live bigger than ourselves

We're going to examine a story w/ superhuman activity...but one that points toward the kind of life that God longs for us to experience...

As we get set to enter a new year – as we interact with God's story this morning, I pray we'll sense His whisper – calling us out of our boat & into His presence.

-pause-

T so turn with me – let's dive into a story of extreme living

Matthew 14:22-33

This story – is a picture of doing w/ God's help, what we could never do on our own

Where God longs to have adventures with you – if you don't miss 'em by being stuck in your boat

Ppt **one of the things we'll see in this story is more about discipleship – then risk-taking**

- Jesus didn't ask pp to be foolish – but be followers
 - To crave to be in/near His presence

That's what I admire about peter – the desire of his heart, that no matter the circumstance if God's presence is there – he wants 2 B right in the middle of it

T> so let's unpack this story a bit this morning...

Q ever wonder why was jesus walking on the water? @ 3 am?

--well he'd had learned of death of john the Baptist

--Jesus headed to a place to be alone and rest

--upon arriving, crowds gathered b/c they heard he was on the move

--he has compassion on them and minister's to them - feeds them – great miracle

--(John 6:26..) they begin to mutter about him becoming King now, overthrowing the government
 →he knows he's there on a rescue mission – not setting up his kingdom yet... and Jesus sends his disciples away to not get their heads filled with any more ideas and he dismisses the crowd
 --he goes up for some rest time and prayer with the Father (as often did)

then we see in Mark's account that this storm arises - he sees his disciples struggling and he goes out walking on the water - is about to **"to pass by"**

Mark 6:47-48

- Greek verb from septuagint translations of Hebrew old testament – referring to those defining moments when God made “striking and temporary appearances for the purpose of communicating a message”
 - EX 33 - God put Moses in cleft of a rock so His glory could pass by
 - 1 KNG 19 - God told Elijah to stand on the mountain “for the Lord was about to pass by”
 - And here he is passing by the disciples...
 - Giving them an incredible demonstration of the power of God...I'm bigger than you realize – I'm bigger than your struggles – take courage

T> So Jesus is about to pass by...look back at matthew

matthew 14:25-26

the disciples were already a little on edge – straining against the wind (mark6) then they see a “ghost” – freak out

- According to Jewish culture at the time – bodies of water were always thought of the dwelling place of evil – realm of darkness
- Their nerves are already on edge -

matthew 14:27

I love that Jesus didn't let them struggle in their fears as he cont'd to walk – he called out to them...didn't hesitate! I wonder how many x's he had/was going to utter those words to them, to calm them, reassure them...

Throughout scripture – you'll see moments where God's power/presence shows up and people react in fear – & He whisper's back “take courage, don't be afraid – it's me” – **to the pp He loves, he's announcing His approachability**

Isn't that just like Jesus

→ what set him apart from all the rabbi's of the time – was he was approachable, welcoming and among the people.

Jesus was the one who:

- Touched the untouchable
- Cared for the unlovable
- Came along side the lonely
- Ate with those who were shunned

→ people were drawn to him they wanted to be with him b/c he brought a sense of comfort...

T and here he is doing that in this story for his friends...here's a truth

pt> » Jesus meets us at the point of our fears
he does so to bring comfort...we don't have to struggle there alone

III @ Disneyland, tay and I are in line at dumbo ride...closer we get the more afraid he becomes....until I kneel down and whisper that I'm going to be right there with him...
 So, he asks me – daddy, can I go with you? (he thought he had to go by himself)
 I said YES – his whole demeanor changes...
 he's no longer alone with his fear, he's got someone BIGGER going thru it with him – the fearful moment is transformed into an adventure b/c of who he's with

Q Isn't that the issue in your life – and mine?

- **That we don't have to be alone in our fears**
- God's heart is such that He meets us at that point, to be with us – when we realize that fact, it can transform our outlook

T> that's what happened with peter – *put yourself in his place for a moment.*

All 12 were freaked – all 12 heard the words of comfort – only 1 chose to allow those words to transform his outlook

Q Why? Why is peter so eager to leave the boat to be with Jesus?

B/c when peter was with jesus – he was a very different man then he was without him...

With Jesus:

- Said miraculous things
 - “you are the Christ, son of the living God --- well done peter jesus says
- did miraculous things

- you wont believe it
- jesus – we healed many – even cast out demons

- **had miraculous courage**

- there in the garden – peter’s the one with the sword drawn
- probably wasn’t aiming for the man’s ear
- swinging for heads against this

things changed: **when he wasn’t with jesus:**

- little girl says – you’re one of the men with jesus – peter denies even knowing him – and the rooster crows and his eyes meets those of Christ – disappointment in himself and shame...

upbeat-

T

you want to be with jesus – around him – b/c you’re different when you’re w/Him

So, Peter asks the question – **“Jesus, can I go with you?”**

14:28,29a

he gets the o.k. – then he has a choice to make...

Q

what would you choose?

The boat is safe, comfortable, it’s a known

The water is rough, there’s a storm...

If you get out of the boat – there’s a chance you might sink
But if you don’t – there’s a guarantee that you’ll never walk on water...

Ortberg writes:

I believe there is something – Someone – inside us who tells us there is more to life than sitting in the boat. You were made for something more than merely avoiding failure. There is something inside you that wants to walk on water – to leave the comfort of routine existence and abandon yourself to the high adventure of following God...

(“you can’t walk on water if you don’t get out of the boat”)

.that’s what xtreme living is all about...

God has extreme adventures as we journey with Him – but we can’t experience them sitting in the boat, trapped by our fears

Q

so let me ask you “what’s your boat?”

Q

In what area of your life are you shrinking back from fully and courageously trusting God -- where you abandon spiritual adventure and instead settle for man-made comfort?

- Fear of failure, fear of rejection
- Doubt yourself – you feel like you don’t measure up

- Fear of intimacy, not being loved
- Fear of being alone
- Doubt God's depth of forgiveness or His interests in you

Maybe it's your spiritual journey – you'd like to trust your life to the leadership of Christ, but you're held back by your fears and doubts...

T **what's your boat?**

We all have 'em!

11 out of 12 were stuck in this boat - chances are most of us are like those 11.

For peter to get out of the boat at this point **wasn't natural** – and it won't feel natural for us either. 11 out of 12 missed adventure b/c they were **paralyzed by fear!**

-pause-

Q **let me ask you** : what would you guess is the most common command in scripture?

It's not for us to be more loving – that's at the core of God's desire for human life – but not his most frequent instruction...

It doesn't have to do w/ avoiding pride, or walking with integrity, sexual purity, or helping others...they're all in there,

but the single command in scripture that occurs more often than any other is-----
summed up in 2 words

FEAR NOT!

(don't be afraid, be strong & courageous, fear not)

Q why does God command us not to fear?

No one ever receives church discipline for being afraid. So why does God tell human beings to stop being afraid more than he tells them anything else?

B/c the #1 thing that-

- Keeps people from getting out of their boat
- Stops you from adventures with Christ
- Keeps you from fulfilling all that God dreams for you

Is FEAR!

PE **fear restricts the adventures of a Godly faith**

Lloyd Ogilvie -there are 366 "fear not" verses in the bible – 1 for everyday including leap year

upbeat--

11 disciples stayed in the boat – feet out of the water ---- **BUT 1 jumped in**

III

A 2 yr old stands on the side near the pool – daddy calls her to “jump” – arms open wide, “don’t be afraid – I’ll catch ya” and her mind is swirling with inner conflict...

1 hand == everything inside her screams to stay put – water’s too deep, it’s dangerous, never done this before, i can’t swim, what if something goes wrong?

Other hand == that’s her daddy in the water, he’s bigger and stronger than she is, he’s been trustworthy so far in life, he seems quite confident in the outcome
The battle is between fear and trust.

Trust says jump!

Fear says, no!

There are consequences either way she chooses...

If she jumps

- Becomes little more confident of her father’s ability to catch her
- Become more likely to take the leap next time he calls
- Water will hold less terror for her
- She’ll begin to see herself as a kind of person not held back by fear

If she decides NOT to jump

- Lose oppt to discover that her father can be trusted
- More inclined toward safety next time
- Begin to perceive herself as a person who shrinks back from challenges
- She’ll work harder to make sure she’s not faced with decisions involving fear in the future...

Q

Isn’t that the drama that’s played out between us and God?

-pause-

I **NEVER** want the NO of fear to trump the **YES** of faith!

T>

that’s what’s inspiring about this story -- This **IS** a story of faith trumping fear – where Jesus meets us at the point of our fears & calls us to exercise our faith

Pt>

a developing faith moves us toward adventure and away from comfort

Matt 14:28-29a

Peter’s faith get ignited – Jesus encourages it and says come on out here, I’ll give you the power to do something superhuman

The Voice is the important factor – I’m sure Jesus is excited to see Peter desire adventure over comfort – so He tells him COME....

Peter waited for the voice – for the green light from Jesus...he didn't launch out in his own power, but he believed he could do this if Jesus invited him too...

--Peter showed belief in the power of Jesus

--Jesus shows belief in Peter

Jesus didn't mull over Peter's request – inner debate on whether he could do it...

As Jesus saw his disciple's willingness to exercise faith – He was excited and eager to have Peter walk with him – says come on out here...

I think God is still calling today...calling out to his kids to choose adventure over comfort...hoping we'll let go of our fears and CRAVE HIS PRESENCE

T> but we often squelch the igniting of our faith – we allow the storms/fears of life to drown out God's call...we settle to be just plain old '*BOAT POTATOES*'

Q what's the best-selling chair in America? (La-Z-Boy –“say it with me”) (doesn't that just ooze comfort...)

We like to immerse ourselves in comfort...

- 5 Star resorts, spa treatments, seats in our cars that cool or heat themselves, old rocking chairs have been replaced by padded glider rockers...

We've developed a whole language – veggie out “make myself as much like vegetation as humanly possible, preferably in front of the TV”

We call that being a “couch potato” – here 11 disciples have turned into “boat potatoes” – satisfied with watching, but not wanting to actually *do* anything

Ortberg writes:

“millions of people in churches these days could be called “pew potatoes” they want some comfort associated with spirituality, but they don't want the risk and challenge that go along with actually following Jesus. Yet Jesus is still looking for people who will get out of the boat.”

-Pause-

Q/T> what if I do get out of the boat – choose adventure w/ Christ over comfort – take some steps toward the things God is calling me to – will I sink?

maybe...you may start too at times – but you won't be alone. In fact, it will be safer out of the boat, b/c of WHO you're with...

Matthew 14:29b-31

I love this part of the story ...'cause I tend to fall often...I let my fears get the best of me – they grab my attention & stumble in the midst of the adventure

But God's always been right there to grab my hand...

T> peter looked past his initial fears – saw jesus and wanted the adventure of being with him

Pt> **overcoming fear leads to extreme living**

You can move past your fears into adventures **WITH** Christ – **WHY?**

b/c the Voice that calls, the God that empowers you – will lead you along at the right pace

Jesus is going to custom design what you need – to draw you into adventure

He called peter out on the water – **notice he didn't make the other 11 come out**
--Peter was ready!

Peter gets distracted, looks around and sees the – starts to sink & calls out

→ and jesus, the greatest rescuer ever – (*still in the business today*)
reaches out his hand and catches him (*he'll catch you too!*)

- Not only did Jesus rescue peter immed.
- He coached his faith – (like a mentor)

Matthew 14:31

- I love WHERE this conversation takes place – out on the water!!!
 - not in harshness – finger waving, angry outburst
 - jesus was like a personal trainer – came along side
 - you allowed your fear to trump your faith, peter

T> we all face fears in life...

III there's an universal fear we all have to deal with around age 16 – in order to get a driver's license --- you remember -- the fear of **parallel parking...**

How many of you were nervous/fearful of that part of the test?

You weren't afraid of the driving, cornering, signaling...but you knew if you messed up the parallel parking – the test was all over – so you practiced

-pic-

You probably practiced with your mom or dad...

Q how many of you had a parent who yelled at you while you learned?

How many of you had a parent that demonstrated, said let's help you learn this together?

- That's what Jesus did for peter – he came along side and coached him...

Q **how did peter get back to the boat?**

→ he walked on water!! Again – jesus didn't carry him – he coached him back

Peter's faith grows in the midst of this shared moment with Christ

- A super human moment

T all b/c peter chose the unknown adventure b/c he knew he was going to be out there with Jesus...

ST a while back – the Persian Army captured a spy and he was sentenced to death by the general. Before executions – the general would go through a rather unusual ritual. He would give the criminal a choice between the firing squad and what was behind the big, black door. This spy was given this customary choice. He deliberated for a long time – then finally decided on the firing squad. Moments after his life ended – the general turned to his aide and said “they always prefer the known way to the unknown. It is a characteristic of people to be afraid of the undefined. Yet, we gave him a choice.” The aide himself did not know what lay behind the big, black door – so he asked his commander. “freedom,” replied the general, “and I've only known a few brave enough to take it.”

T **freedom to experience an adventurous faith awaits those who chose it!**
To do with God - what we could never do on our own

Extreme living is a choice!

And God says: choose adventure!

Q could it be that the kind of life –God is calling us toward...
is lived best - outside the boat with Christ! ...

get out of your boat! - you can do it!

as we embark into a new year...

- What's your boat?
- Where do you see God working around you –calling you out for you to join Him?

→ what adventures is God asking you to join Him in this year?

- What relationships is God calling you to develop?
- Where is God calling you to step out and serve?

T **I want to encourage you - Get out of the boat!**
Step toward the presence of Christ – you won't regret it!

Closing prayer:

Father, I thank you that you call us out past our fears – and you do that at a pace that's best for us...

Father invite us this year – to venture with you

Give us the desire to pursue adventures with you –

Make us people who exercise our faith

God, grow us as a church to desire you do things in us and thru us that we could never do on our own, so we might impact this community for your Kingdom

Father, may your blessings be upon us in this next year – simply b/c you love us!

Closing invitation