

Word Notes Sunday 23/02/14

Roy Wheeler: Storms

Summary (read this bit out to remind cell members what was said on Sunday)

Key Text: Matt 14:22-33, Mark 6:45-51

Our lives, even the life of a church, can be viewed like a boat on the lake, much of the time it's plain sailing and highlights, but not always so. The reality is that there are storms so here are some observations to help us live through some storms of life.

1, A storm can hit anyone of us and when it does it does not necessarily mean that you are out of God's will. NB that Jesus sent them out – in His will. Matt 14:28. Bad things do happen to good people in our fallen world.

2, A storm – a serious challenge or crisis can hit your life suddenly and quite unexpected. Scripture talks about us establishing ourselves in the word of God – the time to do that is in the good times when it's plain sailing, our natural tendency is to settle back in the easy times, but that is the time to put in some groundwork.

3, In a serious storm one wave hits you after another, one thing after another comes against you but what happens on the inside is what is all-important, not what is going on all around you. When the outside begins to affect our inside – lose our peace, lose assurance God is with us then its like the water starts to get inside the boat.

4, The boat was being blown around by the wind. The storm can take over, your preoccupation can be with the storm and you can be blown off course. After a time of trouble or setback seek to get back close to God as soon as you can.

5, Beware storms can wear you out. Mark in his account says that Mk 6:48 they were straining at the oars. The Christian life does require effort but don't grow weary of well doing especially in the midst of life's storms. NB – there wasn't just one person in the boat – to help each other out and work together.

6, Beware that in a storm you can lose perspective – even begin to doubt that God really cares. On another occasion Jesus was with them in the boat in a storm but he was asleep – how could he be asleep, didn't he care if they drowned? He knew Father was in control but how many times do we lie awake worrying, doubting that God can get us through (Luke 8:22 etc). They thought they were going under rather than over.

7, In Mark's account (Mk 6:48) it tells us that Jesus could see the difficulties they were in - the Lord DOES know what we are going through. In his elevated position he can see and knows what we're going through. He is the high priest that ever lives to make intercession.

8, Matt 14 v 25 – he did not go to their aid immediately. Our natural inclination would be to go immediately, not Jesus. His ways are not ours and at such times he wants our trust in him to grow.

9, When Jesus did come (Matt 14:26) they thought it was a ghost – beware in the challenging times it can be difficult to recognise the Lord if he comes in an unexpected way.

10, Although Jesus went walking on the water he was actually going to pass them by (Mk 6:48) but they cried out and got his attention – although the Lord sees and knows our struggles we do have to ask for his help and cry out in prayer.

11, Jesus words to the disciples: "Be of good cheer", "Don't be afraid" and "It is I". The most important question when stepping out in a difficult thing or new direction is "it is you Lord?"

12, Seeing Jesus, Peter was able to take fresh steps of faith even though the storm was not over yet. While he kept his focus on the Lord he was able to take those fresh steps of faith. When he became self-

conscious he began to sink. But if you begin to sink remember that the Lords hand is immediately stretched out to help.

Finally, when the storm subsided they worshipped Jesus in the boat saying “He is the Son of God”. Remember the Son of God is both with you and for you despite how it looks. Defeat comes from looking back, distraction comes from looking around, discouragement comes from looking down but deliverance comes from looking up.

Application (this is the bit where cell members get to participate. Lead discussions around these points)

- 1, Have you ever been in a life-threatening storm – what did you do, how was the situation resolved?
- 2, When difficulties, opposition or setbacks come what is your initial thought – to abandon or to knuckle down?
- 3, Nehemiah encourages the people that “the joy of the Lord is your strength” (Neh 8:10).
 - In what context does this word come to them?
 - How is it encouraging?
 - What do you understand the “Joy of the Lord” to be?
- 4, Which of Roy’s points spoke most to you in your current situation or on reflection of something in your past? What steps will you take as a result?

Witness (this is the bit where the cell talks and prays about how to share the Good News)

How can we apply the lessons from Roy’s talk to encourage and support non-Christians in times of trouble? Do we jump right in with the gospel, give needed help and support first or a mixture of both?