

**St Nicholas Church**  
**Sunday 26<sup>th</sup> October 2014:**  
**The Christian Faith – Vow 2**

**Readings: Mark 4: 35-41 & 1 Corinthians 15:  
1-11**

**Readings: Mark 4: 35-41 Jesus Calms a Storm**

<sup>35</sup> On the evening of that same day Jesus said to his disciples, “Let us go across to the other side of the lake.”

<sup>36</sup> So they left the crowd; the disciples got into the boat in which Jesus was already sitting, and they took him with them. Other boats were there too. <sup>37</sup> Suddenly a strong wind blew up, and the waves began to spill over into the boat, so that it was about to fill with water. <sup>38</sup> Jesus was in the back of the boat, sleeping with his head on a pillow. The disciples woke him up and said, “Teacher, don't you care that we are about to die?”

<sup>39</sup> Jesus stood up and commanded the wind, “Be quiet!” and he said to the waves, “Be still!” The wind died down, and there was a great calm. <sup>40</sup> Then Jesus said to his disciples, “Why are you frightened? Do you still have no faith?”

<sup>41</sup> But they were terribly afraid and began to say to one another, “Who is this man? Even the wind and the waves obey him!”

**1 Corinthians 15: 1-11 The Resurrection of Christ**

<sup>15</sup> And now I want to remind you, my friends, of the Good News which I preached to you, which you received, and on which your faith stands firm. <sup>2</sup> That is the gospel, the message that I preached to you. You are saved by the gospel if you hold firmly to it—unless it was for nothing that you believed.

<sup>3</sup> I passed on to you what I received, which is of the greatest importance: that Christ died for our sins, as written in the Scriptures; <sup>4</sup> that he was buried and that he was raised to life three days later, as written in the Scriptures; <sup>5</sup> that he appeared to Peter and then to all twelve apostles. <sup>6</sup> Then he appeared to more than five hundred of his followers at once, most of whom are still alive, although some have died. <sup>7</sup> Then he appeared to James, and afterward to all the apostles.

<sup>8</sup> Last of all he appeared also to me—even though I am like someone whose birth was abnormal. <sup>9</sup> For I am the least of all the apostles—I do not even deserve to be called an apostle, because I persecuted God's church. <sup>10</sup> But by God's grace I am what I am, and the grace that he gave me was not without effect. On the contrary, I have worked harder than any of the other apostles, although it was not really my own doing, but God's grace working with me.

<sup>11</sup> So then, whether it came from me or from them, this is what we all preach, and this is what you believe.

**Message:**

Our first reading is a nature miracle where Jesus calms the storm.....the story carries clear signs of eye witness accounts.

**There is the stark language: Teacher don't you care if we drown? Followed by Jesus' reply – Do you still have no faith?**

Added to all this there is the reference to other boats being there....unnecessary point of details since they play no further part in the story.....but of course the implications is that there are other eye witnesses who saw Jesus calm the storm.....

**The problem we have with this nature miracle is we start from the premise that no human can do such miracles so Jesus could not have done so.**

There are 9 nature miracles (Jesus calming the storm is in 3 gospels). The most well known miracle is the feeding of the 5000, which is the only miracle that appears in all 4 gospels.

And there are 23 healing miracles (of which 8 are detailed in 3 of the Gospels)

And there are 3 miracles of bringing the dead back to life (Jairus daughter, Widow's son at Nain, Lazarus)

And hence Jesus demonstrated remarkable power.....and remember, Scripture tells us in several places that all that Jesus did could not be recorded at the time because no one could write it all down.....

**We are left with the evidence that Jesus had remarkable powers.....**

**Fact 1: He performed miracles.**

**So what other attributes did Jesus have that made him different?**

**Secondly, he made amazing claims.....the following are examples from the Gospel of John.**

### **1. Bread**

"I am the bread of life," Jesus told them. "Those who come to me will never be hungry; those who believe in me will never be thirsty." *John 6:35*

### **2. Light**

<sup>12</sup> Jesus spoke to the Pharisees again. "I am the light of the world," he said. "Whoever follows me will have the light of life." *John 8:12*

### **3. Gate**

"I am the gate. Those who come in by me will be saved; they will come in and go out and find pasture." *John 10:9*

### **4. Good Shepherd**

"I am the good shepherd; the good shepherd lays down His life for His sheep." *John 10:11*

### **Resurrection and Life**

Jesus said to her, "I am the resurrection and the life. Those who believe in me will live, even though they die." *John 11:25*

### **6. Way, Truth, Life**

Jesus answered him, "I am the way, the truth, and the life; no-one goes to the Father except by me." *John 14:6*

### **7. True vine**

<sup>15</sup> "I am the real vine, and my Father is the gardener." *John 15:1*

The divinity of Jesus Christ is further illustrated in *John 8:58*. Jesus said,

**“Truly, truly, I say to you, before Abraham was born, I am”, which means that Jesus existed before His human life on earth.**

C S Lewis responded to these claims and miracles by saying.....

And so we are left with a mad man who has got carried away with his own ego who should be locked up for his own safety or he is magician – hence he can do these remarkable miracles.....or he is who he said he was, the Son of God.....

“Paraphrased from *Mere Christianity* by C S Lewis”

C S Lewis also wrote: But let us not come up with patronising nonsense about Jesus being a great teacher. He has not left that explanation open to us. He did not intend to.

**And hence our Second Fact: Jesus made amazing claims.....**

And there are more Facts about Jesus,

**Fact 3 is he lived with perfect purity..... or did he?**

Let’s challenge that claim for a moment?

When did Jesus do something wrong...when did he commit sin?

Difficult, isn’t it.....in the words of today’s media, he would have been accused of being a trouble maker.....but was he?.....All he did was to offer unconditional love and

forgiveness to all who listened...and a true interpretation of scripture.

**And Jesus offered new life and eternal life.....not anything anyone else could offer.....**he did not lose his temper.....yes he overturned the tables in the temple because the money changers had turned the temple into a den of thieves.....but he did not preach violence to over turn the Roman occupation or anything like that.....

**Hebrews 4: 15 Our High Priest is not one who cannot feel sympathy for our weaknesses. On the contrary, we have a High Priest who was tempted in every way that we are, but did not sin.**

And so our 3<sup>rd</sup> Fact about Jesus is he lived with perfect purity.....

**The authority of Jesus authority is our 4<sup>th</sup> Fact.**

When Jesus taught – people were impressed by the sheer authority with which he spoke.....there was something quite unique about.....Jesus.

**Matthew 7:28-29 when Jesus finished saying these things, the crowd was amazed at the way he taught. 29 He wasn't like the teachers of the Law; instead, he taught with authority.**

John 7 32 -46 – The chief priest sent his guards to arrest Jesus but the guards came back frightened of arresting Jesus because there would have been a riot and they said:

**46 The guards answered, “Nobody has ever talked the way this man does!”**

#### **Fact 4: Jesus spoke with unique authority**

And so to our last fact: Fact 5:

Jesus died and rose again and was seen by many people.

As our second reading said,

Paul gave us a list of people who saw the risen Christ

#### **1 Corinthians 15: 1 to 11, they are:**

- 1. Peter (also mentioned in Luke)**
- 2. The Twelve (which must have included Matthias who replaced Judas)**
- 3. 500 of the brothers at the same time**
- 4. James (who theologians believe was the Lord's brother and not James the Apostle)**
- 5. The Apostles, who as far as Paul was concerned, included more than the 12.**
- 6. And last of all, he appeared to Saul, who was later called Paul, on the road to Damascus**

#### **Here are 6 more appearances of the risen Jesus:**

1. Mary Magdalene at the open tomb
2. Cleopas and his companion on the walk to Emmaus on Easter Day

3. The disciples and followers in the house in Jerusalem that evening when Thomas was absent.

4. Thomas and the disciples one week later

5. The 7 fishermen in the boat at Galilee (John 21)

6. The ascension into heaven

#### **And the question we are left with is how many of these 12 appearances does it take for us to believe that Jesus was in fact resurrected on Easter Day?**

And we also know that the evidence of history supports the fact that Jesus rose from the dead.

The transformation of the disciples of Jesus is perhaps the greatest evidence of all for the resurrection.

**The men who figure in the pages of the gospels are new and different men in the Acts. They are no longer disciples, they are Apostles!**

The death of their Master left them despondent, disillusioned, and in despair.

But in the Acts they emerged as men who risk their lives for the name of the Lord Jesus Christ and who turned the world upside down.

And there were also a number of women who turned to Christ and were empowered by the Holy Spirit.

On Easter Sunday morning Jesus demonstrated victory over death and offered us new life in this world and in the world to come.

From the right hand of God, Jesus speaks to every one of us today and invites us to everlasting life:

**“I am the resurrection and the life; he who believes in me, though he die, yet shall he live, and whoever lives and believes in me shall never die. Do you believe this?” (John 11:25–26)**

**And our verse for today is: Jesus answered him, “I am the way, the truth, and the life; no one goes to the Father except by me.” (John 14: 6)**

And hence we need to worship God, sense his love and presence, enjoy fellowship with one another and accept God’s forgiveness and love. **But to do that we need to go to church.....or worship with our fellow Christians regularly in other ways.....**

And so to our second vow, which you are invited to say aloud or silently as you wish.

**Christian faith Vow 2: We promise to join regularly with our fellow Christians in worship on the Lord’s Day. Amen**

References: Rev Jeremy Middleton’s Coming Alive, the Alpha Course, Christianity Explored and John Stott’s Bible Speaks Today Bible Commentaries.