

August 6&7, 2011 "Pew Christians With Smelly Feet" Matthew 14

In 1953 reporters and dignitaries gathered at a Chicago train station to welcome the 1952 Nobel Peace prize winner. As the man stepped from the train, flashbulbs popped, questions were thrown his way, and city officials approached to greet him. Suddenly he politely asked to be excused for a moment. He saw an elderly woman struggling with her suitcases so he went over, picked them up, helped her to her bus, and wished her a safe journey. He returned to the crowd and apologized. This man was Dr. Albert Schweitzer, the missionary doctor who had spent many years helping the poor in Africa. One person from the reception committee said to a reporter, "That's the first time I ever saw a sermon walking." A sermon walking is what the Christian life is all about. Seeing God's Word and Will in action beyond the church building is a sermon walking.

In Matthew 14, Peter shows his friends a sermon walking as he climbs out of the boat, looks at Jesus in faith and walks on the water. This sermon was cut short as Peter took his eyes off his Lord, looked down at the water, and sank. Faith kept his sermon walking afloat, while doubts got him wet.

A story is told of three ministers out fishing. One forgot his sunscreen, so he climbed out of the boat, walked on the water to shore, got the sunscreen, and walked back to the boat. The second minister had forgotten his favorite fishing hat, so he climbed out of the boat, walked on the water to shore, got the hat and walked back to the boat. The third minister figured his faith was as strong as theirs, so he climbed out of the boat and sank to the bottom. He floated back up spitting out water and climbed back into the boat. Frustrated, he climbed out to try it again and again sank to the bottom. He floated back up and was helped back into the boat. At this point minister #1 said to #2, "Before he drowns, should we tell him where the rocks are?"

Before we become sermons walking, not only do we have to know where the rocks are, but we need clean feet too. When Jesus washed the disciples' feet on Maundy Thursday, we read in John 13 that Jesus not only showed them the humility of a walking sermon, but also told them that unless He washed them they have no part with Him. Jesus doesn't want pew Christians with smelly feet, He wants to wash us with His blood on the cross and lead us out of this building to be sermons walking to the world. Jesus died on the cross to wipe away our sins, and gives us Baptism to assure us of that washing.

Because God is Good.. All The Time, He promises us that as we repent of our sins and trust in Jesus as our Lord and Savior, we have been washed and are ready to go out as sermons walking. Sermons walking can show up in the strangest places; at work, at school, in hospitals or nursing homes, and on vacations. Walking sermons can be seen with people running or walking, using walkers or crutches, wheelchairs or canes; walking & rolling if you will. Sermons walking are found wherever God's people share and show the love of Jesus to others. When we go out and share our faith and our love, it shows we know where the rocks are, and the Rock of Ages, Jesus, Who will keep us afloat every step of the way. Amen.. .pastor matthews