

Remnant Life Church
01-24-21
Your Perception vs. God's Reality
Matthew 14:23-33

I am not making a revelatory statement by telling you that perception and reality are two very different things

- We live in a time when reality can be shaped and modeled
- Thanks to technology, you cannot even trust your eyes or your ears
 - CGI (computer-generated imaging) means that much of what you see in the movies is not the actor but something that is created on a computer and then inserted into the scene
 - For instance, in the Star Wars film series, the character of General Tarkin, who commanded the Death Star in the first movie, was played by Peter Cushing – that was in 1977
 - The final film he appeared in was Rouge One: A Star Wars Story in 2016
 - But by the time that movie was released, Peter Cushing had been dead for 22 years
 - He was digitally recreated in a fairly successful way
- Recordings of a person speaking can be digitally manipulated from other recordings that have your saying things you never said
- It getting so that is have become very difficult to tell what is real and what is not

As Christians, we are in a time when it is imperative that we are able to recognize the difference between our perceptions and God's reality.

What is Perception?

- It is an awareness of the various elements of one's environment through the physical senses.
 - You perceive or are aware of something through sight, sound, touch, etc...
- Part of what is a struggle for so many today is that we are not very aware of what is going on around us
 - And a primary reason for that is we are, by in large, in a constant state of rushing from one thing to another, from one place to another
 - Multi-tasking is no longer something to be admired; it is expected of everyone
 - The result of this frenetic pace of living is that little gets done well
 - How often do we focus on just one thing and do it very well?
 - We are distracted, thoughts come in our minds of other things that need to get down, and we end up at the end of the day exhausted but having accomplished very little
- And when our thinking is going in several directions at the same time we are now also less aware of details
 - And when we realize that the details of a situation are missing, we tend to fill in the blanks ourselves
 - It is why perceptions can be so faulty
- But perception is also up to the individual's perspective

- i.e. - What constitutes a tall person?
- That depends on your perspective...
- To many people, I am tall – to me it is someone at least 6’8”

Perception can be but is often not reality

- The problem is that too many think that it is
 - Bumper sticker - “My reality is what I say it is.”
 - Mirages – on a hot highway or in the desert
 - Ghost hunter programs – shadows, perceived movement, etc...
- The Disciples and Peter had many encounters when they were with Jesus that forced their perception up against God’s reality

READ – **Matthew 14:22-33**

- Set the scene –
 - Sea of Galilee (Lake Tiberias/Sea of Kinneret) is the lowest fresh-water lake on earth
 - A storm on the Sea of Galilee can develop very quickly
 - The cooler air masses from the surrounding elevations collide with the warm air trapped in the lake’s basin.
 - Winds often funnel through the valleys in the bordering hill country
 - The most violent storms, however, are caused by the fierce winds which blow off the Golan Heights from the east.
 - Fishermen in biblical times were very superstitious trying to explain the activities of nature such as storms (what made them happen?)
- It had been a very intense day for Jesus
 - He had just been told about His cousin’s death (J the B)
 - He had fed the 5000 and then sent the disciples out in the boat
 - After he had told the disciples to row to the other side of the lake He needed to get away by Himself and pray – He needed to “recharge”
- The disciples had been trying to navigate the short distance from Bethsaida to Gennesaret, only 4 miles across the northern tip of the lake, for approximately 6 hours
 - When they saw Jesus on the water, the disciple’s perception of what they were dealing with was based on their knowledge and experience
 - Their belief that demons stirred up the waters is why they thought he was a ghost

But Peter managed to see it differently – at least for a few moments (**vs 28**)

- Peter’s perception of his environment was briefly brought under the authority of God’s reality.
 - Jesus was not bound by the laws of physics
 - He did not operate in fear – (another account of Jesus asleep in the boat during a storm)

- He knew with certainty who He was
- When Peter became willing to step out of the boat, he gave his perception over to God's reality.
 - That moment of faith changed Peter
 - He stepped out of perception and into reality

Important thing to be aware of: satan cannot affect God's reality, but he can mess with your perceptions

- Look at the most common of satan's lies of perception vs. God's reality of truth
 - You are worthless – God died for you and for me
 - You can't step out and do things for God – I can do anything through God because He gives me the strength
 - You have sinned and should be ashamed – Jesus paid the price for me and he washed me white as snow
 - You will never change – Jesus' presence changes everything around it
 - You are not loved – Jesus living inside of you, is love

The disciple's boat can represent many things to you this morning

- Complacency
- Religion
- Unbelief
- Doubt