

# Grace Notes



## I See You

1.17.12

***"...Come near to me...."***  
(Genesis 45:4)

Are you discouraged? Lonely? Exhausted? Jesus says, *"You may not see Me. But I see you."*

In Matthew 14, (also recorded in Mark 6, & John 6) Jesus had just finished miraculously feeding 5000 men and their families (the only miracle, by the way, recorded in all four gospels). Jesus then sent His disciples across the Sea of Galilee while He *"went up on a mountainside by Himself to pray."* By the time the disciples reached the middle of the enormous lake a squall had erupted. John records: *"It was now dark, and...the sea became rough because a strong wind was blowing."* Interestingly, Matthew & Mark both add the following description: *"...the wind was against them."* The Greek gives some insight here. John's word *"strong"* (from which we get our word *"mega"*), and Mark & Matthew's word *"against"* (meaning *"opposed as an adversary"*) describe a wind of overwhelming ferocity. Against this tempest, the disciples' rowing efforts were futile.

Tom Nelson, pastor of *Denton Bible Church*, preaching on this story, brought out a truth I'd never seen. He mentioned that Mark records that Jesus *"saw the disciples straining at the oars,..."* It's critical to understand that the Sea of Galilee is miles across. John records not only that the disciples were in the middle of it, but that it was dark as well. But still, from the shore, Jesus *"saw the disciples."* *"You can't see Me. But I see you,"* it was if Jesus was saying to them.

Nelson went onto share about a dark time in his life in the mid 80's. Severely depressed & discouraged, he, with a friend, decided to take a trip to the United Kingdom and tour via bicycles. While there, he read & prayed continuously - but to no avail. Then, God led Tom to the book of Genesis & the story of Joseph. In Genesis 45, through God's providence, Joseph's authority was second only to Pharaoh. When Joseph's brothers (the same ones who 13 years earlier had sold him into slavery) came begging for food due to a nationwide famine - and discovered that Joseph was still alive - the Bible says *"they were terrified in [Joseph's] presence."* But Joseph forgave his brothers, loved them, and told them, *"Come near to me...."* That phrase shook Tom Nelson. He couldn't get it out of his mind. He felt as if God was saying to him, *"Tom, come near to Me....I love you."*

Near the end of his trip, Tom was in Edinburgh, Scotland. Still struggling in that emotionally "dark place" as he describes it, he happened upon a Wednesday night service at a little, sparsely attended Presbyterian church there in Edinburgh. Nelson describes his experience as follows:

The church was cold and almost empty. I took a seat on the back row. All seemed routinely predictable - until that old Scottish preacher took his place behind the pulpit and, in his thick Scottish brogue, asked the people to turn to Genesis 45. He then quoted verse 4: *'Come near...'* Tears immediately filled my eyes. In that little corner of the planet God saw me. God was saying, *"Tom, you can't see Me. But I see you. Quit straining at the oars. Take courage. I am here. Come near....I love you so much."*

Jesus saw the desperate & exhausted disciples that night on the Sea of Galilee. Jesus saw a depressed & lonely Tom Nelson in that little church in Edinburgh, Scotland. And, no matter how dark, how lonely, how exhausting, or how much you may feel the *"winds of life are against you,"* Jesus is saying to you, *"You may not see Me. But I see you....I've got you....I love you...come near."*



***Soli Deo Gloria, Nick***