

Walking on the Water

Introduction

Peter, and the disciple are about to learn a set of vital lessons that we get to learn from too.

Peter is like an excited 13-year-old kid who gets overly emotional and excitable.

“I’ll never turn my back on you...” Jesus is thinking: uh-huh.

He couldn’t keep his eyes upon Jesus; Jesus is before him in the storm.

What happens?

Peter “**sees the strong wind.**” (v.30) And he begins to sink.

Peter was so *distractible*.

We are too, everywhere all the time; there is some Peter in all of us.

The “photo of the 21st century,” is Eric Smith in Redondo Beach, CA.



The man never looked up as a “pod”

whales went by.

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Text

Matthew 14:22-36

²² “Immediately Jesus made the disciples get into the boat and go on ahead of him to the other side, while he dismissed the crowd. ²³ After he had dismissed them, he went up on a mountainside by himself to pray. Later that night, he was there alone, ²⁴ and the boat was already a considerable distance from land, buffeted by the waves because the wind was against it.

²⁵ Shortly before dawn Jesus went out to them, walking on the lake. ²⁶ When the disciples saw him walking on the lake, they were terrified. “It’s a ghost,” they said, and cried out in fear.

²⁷ But Jesus immediately said to them: “Take courage! It is I. Don’t be afraid.”

²⁸ “Lord, if it’s you,” Peter replied, “tell me to come to you on the water.”

²⁹ “Come,” he said.

Then Peter got down out of the boat, walked on the water and came toward Jesus. ³⁰ But when he saw the wind, he was afraid and, beginning to sink, cried out, “Lord, save me!”

³¹ Immediately Jesus reached out his hand and caught him. “You of little faith,” he said, “why did you doubt?”

³² And when they climbed into the boat, the wind died down. ³³ Then those who were in the boat worshiped him, saying, “Truly you are the Son of God.”

³⁴ When they had crossed over, they landed at Gennesaret. ³⁵ And when the men of that place recognized Jesus, they sent word to all the surrounding country. People brought all their sick to him ³⁶ and begged him to let the sick just touch the edge of his cloak, and all who touched it were healed”.

There are three *relationships that will make a disciple*: their relationship to:

- ✓ Their fear
- ✓ The crisis
- ✓ The “I AM.”

The disciple and their *fear*

Jesus gives three commands (words) in this story:

- 1) “Go to the other side”
- 2) “Don’t be afraid”
- 3) “Come to me.”

In such a short story, Jesus gives a lot of his word.

They actually did these things they listened and responded

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They actually did these things they listened and responded

They went to the other side, *But why?* They're risking a lot here.

Consider the story that came before this.

They saw thousands of people fed off of a few fish and loaves. (Probably 12k plus with women and children)

If *you saw* that, you'd be quicker to do what Jesus tells you to do in the Bible. Right?

They had *good reason* to follow Jesus' word.

This story is why AJ said he doesn't much like the phrase "blind faith."

For two main reasons:

First, that's most offensive to the actually blind.

Second, none of us make faith decisions based *solely on* the visible things.

There are other factors—inclinations, stories, histories, relationships, and community.

"Blind faith" is as redundant as "blind atheism."

Nobody believes or disbelieves for no reason.

We all walk with a constellation of faculties other than eyes.

They saw a profound miracle—this wasn't "blind faith."

The disciple's problem isn't one of doing the word; it's of *fear*.

While they're doing Jesus' word, they're *operating in fear*.

There's a lesson: "the word of God doesn't cast out all fear."

Having the Bible doesn't cast out your fear.

You can have the Bible memorized and still operate in fear.

What does?

"Perfect love casts out all fear..." (1 Jn. 4:18)

When you know you are loved, you are no longer given to fear.

"Do not be afraid" is the most repeated phrase/command in the bible

So many people do the Word of Jesus out of terror rather than love.

Cranfield writes: "If as a result of obedience to Christ's command the church or individual is in a situation of danger or distress, then there is no need to fear."

When Jesus does come to them, did you notice *he doesn't speak to the storm; he speaks to them*.

He doesn't try to quiet the *storm*; rather, he tries to still *their hearts*. He doesn't say *stop*, he says *trust me*. He wants to calm you *in* the storm as opposed to taking you *out* of the storm. He always comes to us in the storm.

Two questions:

First, what would change in your life if fear weren't your operating system?

Second, what would change in your life if you came to realize that Jesus wasn't in the "storm calming" business, rather, he was in the "heart calming" business?

That changes things.

"He doesn't always change your environment, but he always changes you"

Now, they do Jesus' word, but notice the *result*.

They're thrown into a crisis

Now, they do Jesus' word, but notice the *result*.
They're thrown into a *crisis*.
Obedience to the word doesn't always result in *serenity*.

Some of us have bought into a "prosperity type theology" that the focus is to be well, rich, etc.

Sometimes, it's the first step toward a crisis.
And you, like these disciples, will face crises.
What do you do in them?

Example: Woman who had cancer—why are other people healed but not me? Began to doubt God's love, God why aren't you doing something about this.

Consider these *lessons* from the story:

First, notice how Jesus allows the crisis to go from *bad to worse* before entering in.

There are lots of "immediately's" in this story.
Yet, Jesus did *not* go "immediately" to the disciples in the storm.
He "waited until morning", he let the crisis go a little long.
Jesus seems lets the crisis go a little too long sometimes.

Second, notice that this crisis is just one of many crises.
When someone says they are in a crisis of faith, it sounds biblical.
Consider Abraham, God calls him to leave everything to follow him.
Then, he calls him to give up his son.
Don't you think Abraham would have said: once is enough.
If you are hoping for one crisis, put on your seat belts.

Third, Jesus is oddly selective about miracles.
Consider this: Jesus turned water into wine at a wedding.
But, he would not turn stones into bread with the devil.
Consider this: he just got done feeding thousands but here he won't stop the storm.
And he often doesn't do them according to *your rationality*.
God's miracles don't conform to *your logic*.

Fourth, and finally, Jesus is a model for the crisis.
Jesus goes straight into the storm.
Jesus operated in a totally different schedule.
He was sleeping when he wasn't supposed to and not when he was supposed to.
He was praying while his disciples were boating.
Do you find it interesting that Jesus, on the cross, was still doing ministry?
He was dying and he had the ability to turn to the guy next to him and do ministry.
For a worshipper, a storm doesn't stop ministry.
You can minister, you can love, and you can do in the crisis.
Does the crisis stop your life, or, is your life outside of the crisis?

Does the crisis stop your life, or, is your life outside of the crisis?

The disciples and the “I AM”

Notice what Peter does, Peter “cries out.” (v.30)

Matthew says he krazo’d—he “violently cried out.” (Didn’t whine or whimper)

To make it clear, Matthew uses the same word when Jesus is dying on the cross.

Peter doesn’t whine—he screams out loud like he’s dying.

He thinks he’s finished...he’s done for.

Look how Jesus responds—“*immediately* Jesus reached out his hand and caught him.”

There are two “cry out” moments in this story.

In the *first*, Jesus gives his word;

In the *second*, Jesus gives his hand.

Jesus isn’t like most friends who tell us what to do but don’t lift a finger.

Jesus gives his word and his hand, and he does so “immediately.”

Jesus acts quickly, without hesitation, without question.

A parent is going to grasp Jesus’ heart here.

Your kid cries out all the time.

We all know there are different kinds of cries.

Cry A—whine, fake hurt, go back to bed.

The season when a child calls out at night for your hand.

There’s “Cry A,” and then there is “Cry B”—the frightened, scared cry.

Parenting is discerning the cry.

When you hear the second, you respond immediately. You go right away.

Nothing at all, moves a parent, than their *child who’s afraid*.

We need to understand something about the heart of God from this story.

Nothing moves God more than you.

Lastly, they are all on the boat again.

What do they do? They “proskunew” Jesus.

The word for “*kiss*” and is also the word for “*worship*.”

Certainly this was an instance where they actually did kiss him, he saved their lives.

In the first chapter of Jonah, he is on-board and the sailors throw him overboard.

“**Then they took Jonah and threw him overboard, and the raging sea grew calm. 16 At this the men greatly feared the LORD, and they offered a sacrifice to the LORD and made vows to him.**” (Jonah 1:15-16)

There is nothing that can make a bunch of sailors worship than a calm sea.

It’s funny—Peter would jump into the water again.

Peter is always jumping in the water in the gospels.

In John 21, He jumps in, but this time he doesn’t walk on water, he swims.

But he knows he has learned the lesson.

Sometimes we walk on water to Jesus sometimes we swim.

Peter was so special, whether walking or swimming, Peter was *oriented* toward Jesus Christ.

toward Jesus Christ.

Why had he become so “silly” for Jesus?

Did you hear what Jesus said to his disciples as he came to them?

He says three things:

“take heart”

“don’t be afraid”

“I AM”

He calls himself “ego eimi”, you know what that means?

“I AM.”

Take heart...don’t be afraid...I AM!

Life Group Sermon Application Curriculum Leader's Guide

Week of **02/08/15**

Going Deeper Part 6" (Walking on Water)

"We must cease striving and trust God to provide what He thinks is best and in whatever time He chooses to make it available. But this kind of trusting doesn't come naturally. It's a spiritual crisis of the will in which we must choose to exercise faith."

– *Charles Swindoll*

"Pray, and let God worry."

– *Martin Luther*

"God loves you so much that he is willing to hold something from you for the perfect time!"

– *Rachel Hamilton*

"When you can't see God's hand, trust His heart."

"Have you ever noticed that when people talk about their trials in a public setting, they tend to focus on what happened at the end? They talk about the miracle, the promise, the way it all worked out. It isn't often that people talk about what happened in the middle of the trial."

– *Emily Freeman*

Main Sermon text: (Matthew 14:22-36)

There are some **consistent themes**, and key points, that emerge from these passages:

- Peter was called out onto the water by Jesus, but got distracted. We can also become sidetracked in fact distraction has become the way of our life in our times; we're everywhere except where we are. Discipleship to Jesus demands attention, time, energy, and our life.
- There are three relationships that will make a disciple: the *first* is "their fear". They were obedient to his word, but while they were doing Jesus' word, they were operating in fear. You can have the scripture memorized, but still operate in fear, perfect love cast out all fear. When you know you are loved, you are no longer given to fear.
- The *second* relationship that makes a disciple: "the crisis". The disciples were obedient to the word and found themselves in the middle of a crisis. When Jesus does come to them, he doesn't speak to the storm; he speaks to them. When he comes to them, he doesn't address or stop the storm, he wants to calm them/us in the storm and build faith through the storm.
- The *third* relationship that will make a disciple: "the "I am". Jesus doesn't rush in to save them from the storm, but when he does come into the storm and Peter cries out for his life, Jesus: "*immediately* Jesus reached out his hand and caught him". Jesus self identifies himself as the "I am", there is no mistake, no ambiguity he is the creator, the sovereign God of the universe. When we realize that we are loved and cared for by him, all fear is gone.

Discussion questions/prompts for your group: (These questions are designed to help your group go deeper, understanding and applying the Bible passage(s) and the sermon)

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- 1) Last week Pastor Randy talked to us about things that distract us from hearing God's voice. AJ pointed out this week that in the middle of a storm, a crisis we could become distracted as Peter did. What are those things in the middle of a crisis that sidetrack us and take our attention off of Jesus? AJ also said, "discipleship to Jesus demands attention, time, energy, and our life", which of these area/s do you need God to help you with?
- 2) The disciples were being obedient to the word, but found themselves in a middle of a life and death crisis. Does this challenge your theology, your understanding of how the Lord works? Also they were being obedient to his word, yet still operating in fear. According to 1 John 4:18, "perfect love cast out all fear", in a very practical way how does this work in our lives?
In the middle of our crisis, we must be convinced that he loves us, even though he appears to be delayed or unaware of our circumstances. Ironically it is during the storms that he works these kinds of things in us.
- 3) When Jesus comes to them, he doesn't speak to the storm, he speaks to them. He doesn't immediately calm the storm but calms their hearts. Have you ever been through a difficult time and you began to question if God was there and if he cared? Also have you experienced a time like this and on the other side you realized that you were stronger, you had grown?
Good opportunity for ministry, some in the group may need help understanding their rough journey. (Past or present) Remember, healing may not be instantaneous but it can begin here. For others it may be beneficial to share what God did through this time in their lives.
- 4) Jesus is the great "I am". He is sovereign and doesn't always do things the way and when we think he should. This cuts both ways; we need to trust in his timing, his omniscience when we're in the middle of a crisis. But we also need to trust that he is the almighty God, there is nothing he can't do and he loves us more than we'll ever understand. What does it say to you in your life and circumstance that when Peter cried out for his life the scripture says: "immediately Jesus reached out his hand and caught him".
We have to remind each other and ourselves that during the dark and difficult times he is still God. He is not only the great "I am" but we need to trust in his love for us, because God's perfect love cast out all fear...rest in him. Take heart...don't be afraid...I AM!

For those who might like to use visual aids in their Bible storying, or study preparation, especially for groups with children, here are some helpful links:

<http://ministry-to-children.com/many-silent-years/>

<http://www.raisingourkids.com/coloring-pages/printable/bible/index-02.html>

Log on and check "Right now Media" there are several good resources that will relate to this study for the kids. Some are for pre-school and older, so go surfing and see if you can find something for your group.