



JESUS WALKS ON THE WATER © Sept 8, 2019

²² Immediately he made the disciples get into the boat and go before him to the other side, while he dismissed the crowds. ²³ And after he had dismissed the crowds, he went up on the mountain **by himself to pray**. When evening came, he was **there alone**, ²⁴ but the boat by this time was a long way from the land, beaten by the waves, **for the wind was against them**. ²⁵ And in **the fourth watch of the night** he came to them, walking on the sea. ²⁶ But **when the disciples saw him walking on the sea, they were terrified**, and said, “It is a ghost!” and **they cried out in fear**. ²⁷ But immediately Jesus spoke to them, saying, “**Take heart; it is I. Do not be afraid.**”

²⁸ And Peter answered him, “Lord, if it is you, **command me to come to you on the water.**” ²⁹ He said, “**Come**”. So Peter got out of the boat and walked on the water and came to Jesus. ³⁰ But **when he saw the wind, he was afraid, and beginning to sink he cried out, “Lord, save me.”**

³¹ Jesus immediately reached out his hand and took hold of him, saying to him, “**O you of little faith, why did you doubt?**” ³² And when they got into the boat, the wind ceased. ³³ And **those in the boat worshiped him, saying, “Truly you are the Son of God.”**

³⁴ When they had crossed over, they came to land at Gennesaret. ³⁵ After the people of that place recognized him, they sent word throughout the region and brought all who were sick to him, ³⁶ and begged him that they might touch even the fringe of his cloak; and all who touched it were healed. (Matthew 14:22-36, NRSV).

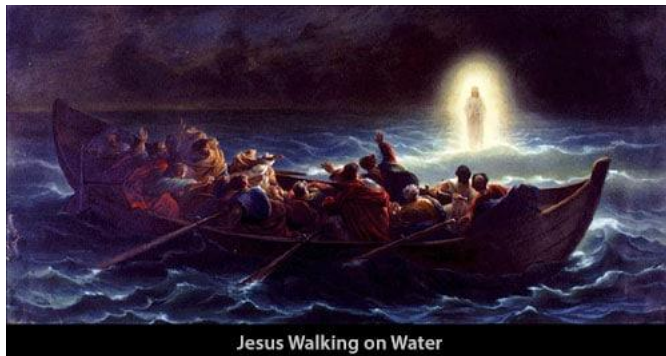
WHEN HE FEELS SO FAR AWAY

The feeding of the 5,000 had happened and the people wanted to make Him a king so Jesus knew He had to get out of there. He went to where He could pray alone, and sent the disciples on before Him. They were in the boat crossing the Sea of Galilee to the other side. There is much spiritual truth in the story. It is a story we've heard so many times, but it is a bit of a strange tale when you think about it. Jesus walked on the water, and then one of His disciples walked on the water. The disciple grows fearful, sinks, almost drowns, and then is rescued by Jesus.

This story depicts our daily lives: darkness, storms, confusion, fear, and doubt often come into our lives. We have Jesus, but He often seems far away. Our minds know we can depend on Him, but in the midst of the storm we grow weary, and wonder where He is. We want to get out of the storm. We usually huddle in the boat, but sometimes we muster up just enough faith to try

to step out of the boat and make our way to Him. We deal with the wind and the waves and the danger, and we feel like we'll capsize at any moment. That is when we feel so alone and cry out, "Lord, how long are You going to leave us on our own?" I think of my own mother who is right now lying in bed dying, and we are both in the midst of the storm. My sisters are also in the midst of the storm of life. It is at these times that we have to exercise absolute faith to know that He is present and with us in the storm.

The wind is just a figure of struggle. I remember saying a Gaelic toast to my son Alex and my daughter in law Hillary at their wedding. I said, "May the wind be at your back." I was wishing and praying for them that the "wind would be at their back" as they journeyed through life together. If you've ever been in an airplane or if you've ever been pulling a trailer you know how powerful the wind can be. When you're pulling a trailer and a big semi goes by the wind sucks you into it. When you're in a plane and the wind is at your back you reach the destination early. It helps. It pushes you along. But if the wind is against you, it is a totally different story. It can almost be impossible to make headway in the face of a strong wind. When hurricane Harvey came through, the water didn't really phase us much up here in the country, but we were highly concerned with the wind. I put boards up on my windows and prayed for the best. Wind is so highly destructive. I think wind is a great picture of the many hardships we go through in our lives.



Jesus Walking on Water

The text tells us this happened in the fourth watch of the night. The Romans split the 12 hours of the night into 4 parts which were three hours each. The fourth watch is that time period between three and six am. I don't know how it is with you, but that is when things prey on my mind. It seems like I'm able to get to sleep and begin to get rested up, and then I wake up at the fourth watch.

I often wake up about 3 am and if I am not careful, the cares of this world immediately begin to sink into my emotions and my psyche, and they make me anxious. The anxiety grows and sleeplessness comes. I remember when I was going through tremendous anxiety as I was losing control of my company. I would wake up at 2-3 am, and it was impossible to get back to sleep. The only way I found any relief was when I began to pray and give the whole situation to the Lord. Most of my close friends tell me that they too have battled the darkness in their souls during the fourth watch.



We have all heard the phrase, "Things are darkest just before the dawn." From a spiritual and emotional standpoint this really seems to be true. You're up and you've been struggling all night long and you wonder how you're going to get through the day, and then the dawn comes. It's weird how things that seemed so troublesome and horrible in the middle of the night, now seem to fade in importance after the dawn's first light. We get up, have our coffee, maybe look at some scripture, and we know that once again things are going to be alright. The darkness seems to fade away, and it is a new day.

Many times I think we go through this time of trial when we sleep and become a bit rested, and then our semi-rested minds turn and focus on our worries and our concerns, trying to figure out where to go from here. This is when we can feel panicked, and our hearts can fill with fear. This is the time of the night when the disciples were seized with terror. The text tells us, ²⁵ *About three o'clock in the morning Jesus came toward them, walking on the water.* ²⁶ *When the disciples saw him walking on the water, they were terrified. In their fear, they cried out, "It's a ghost!"* (Matthew 14:25-26, NLT).

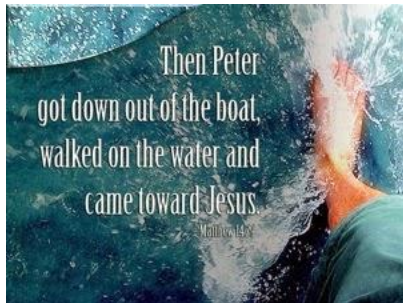
When they saw Jesus out on the water they were terrified. I can't imagine they recognized Him or why would they have been so afraid? I guess they just focused on the wind and the water. As fishermen, they probably had known people who had drowned out on the lake. They knew the dangers and perils of being out in a storm, and they cried out in fear.

In verse 27, Jesus said, "*Take courage. It is I. Don't be afraid.*" When we're in the depths of our worry it is difficult to hear His voice or to get an answer. What is the real meaning of this account? What was His message to them, and what is His message to you and me today?

It also makes us wonder why Jesus did this strange and unusual miracle.....this walking on water. I believe He was making the point that **when life stirs up trouble, He is there.** When the wind blows and the waves of fear overcome us, He is there. When we don't know how we can get up and keep going, He may be just out of our vision, but He is there. This whole business of walking on water was even mentioned by Job!

For God is so wise and so mighty. Who has ever challenged him successfully?⁵ "Without warning, he moves the mountains, overturning them in his anger.⁶ He shakes the earth from its place, and its foundations tremble.⁷ If he commands it, the sun won't rise and the stars won't shine.⁸ He alone has spread out the heavens and [He] marches on the waves of the sea. (Job 9:4-8, NLT).

God is telling us that when life stirs up trouble, He is there. When disaster happens, you will often hear, "Where was God?" He reminds us that the wind and the waves that cause us to fear so much are all under His feet. The things, circumstances, problems, and challenges that we face are ALL under His feet. They are under His control and dominion.



I am not sure why Peter does this, but in verse 28 he blurts out, "If it's you, ask me to come out on to the water." Jesus told him, "Come." We read this and we don't really think about this. In all of history there are only two people who have walked on water: Jesus and Peter. Why do we make such sport of Peter. He is really an amazing person in this story. He speaks to Jesus. He hears from Jesus, and he obeys Jesus. **BUT WHEN HE SAW THE WIND.....he was filled with fear.**

Peter knew what the wind and water could do. So often what we "know" gets in the way of trusting what God can do. When we focus on what we know about our circumstances, we fail to see what God is doing. Haven't we been told to not trust in our own understanding? We are in a day and age when knowledge is instantaneous. We can Google anything and everything. We have all kinds of knowledge, but we can't look up wisdom on Google.



God tells us "Lean not on your own understanding." If we lean on what we know we can get in big trouble. Peter stopped realizing the power of God in the moment that he looked at the waves and leaned on his own understanding!

What is the wind in your life? What are you looking at? Are the things that you fear under your feet? At least Peter knew who to call when he was in trouble. If we know on whom to call we are well on our way to overcoming the troubles and worries that beset us. Peter was sinking and he cried out for Jesus.



Immediately, Jesus took out his hand and saved Peter. He spoke to him about his failure. "You of little faith, why did you doubt?" The answer to the question is in the first part. Jesus was saying, "You feared, Peter, because you were little of faith."

We get into trouble when we're relying on our own knowledge and we get separated from Him. Here is why our faith wavers... Jesus said,

⁵ "Yes, I am the vine; you are the branches. Those who remain in me, and I in them, will produce much fruit. For apart from me you can do nothing. ⁶ Anyone who does not remain in me is thrown away like a useless branch and withers. Such branches are gathered into a pile to be burned. ⁷ But if you remain in me and my words remain in you, you may ask for anything you want, and it will be granted! ⁸ When you produce much fruit, you are my true disciples. This brings great glory to my Father. (John 15:5-8, NLT)

Jesus is showing us that to become victorious in Him, we can "walk on water"... do the humanly impossible, by and in His power. The Christian life is like walking on water. It is humanly impossible. We can only do these things through the power of the Holy Spirit. As long as we

look to everything, everybody, and our circumstances to save us in our storms, we are going to begin to sink. The only way we can live a victorious life is to rely on the Holy Spirit to let us live the supernatural life God intended for us. The answer is in this story. The story tells us what to do. It tells us to **KEEP OUR EYES ON JESUS** no matter what comes our way!!!

Circumstances can become all-consuming and they can demand all of our attention. They pull at us. They grab at us. They begin to drown us. When we feel like we're sinking, we must call out to the one like Peter did. "LORD SAVE US!" "LORD SAVE ME!"

Those are words that Jesus just can't resist. He is right there for you. He is right there for me. This is a promise. He might give you a little rebuke about your lack of faith or something else, and that's okay. Receive the rebuke and walk in faith and in newness of life. There are many truths in this story, but here are a few that I'd like to recap and summarize:

1. **Life is a tumultuous storm.** We are battered and worn in our human journey, but look for Jesus and keep looking to Jesus in the midst of the storm. Don't take your eyes off of Him. You may think He is not there, but He promises to be present. Although the storm surrounded him, Peter stepped out in faith and looked to Jesus. When Peter took his eyes off of the Master of his life, he sunk into the water. Are you looking to Christ in the midst of your current storm?
2. **When Jesus commands you to do something, obey Him.** Jesus told Peter to "come" to Him on the water. Even though it made no sense, Peter did what Jesus said. This is what obedience looks like. It is when you do what Jesus whispers into your heart. Is there any area in your life in which you are not obeying the Lord?
3. **Faith is simply taking the next step.** Peter took one step to get out of the boat and onto the water. Peter was doing just fine when he was focused on the next step. He got into trouble when he lost sight of his next step and began to overthink it all. What next step has Jesus asked you to take? Take it.
4. **Faith unleashes the supernatural.** Peter did not experience the supernatural power of God until he trusted enough to get out of the boat. Is there anything you need to be doing differently in faith? A step of faith can release the almighty power of God in your life.
5. **Fear will sink you.** When Peter had faith, he walked on water. When he had fear, he sank in the water. The same is true for you. Fear will sink you. Is there any fear that is gripping and controlling your decision making?
6. **A little faith is better than no faith.** Jesus taught the principle of having the faith of a mustard seed. The Lord explained that Peter sank due to his "little faith". Peter could have continued to walk on the water by exercising just a bit more faith. The others in the boat apparently had no faith at all. They never got out of the boat.

7. **You can choose to worry or you can choose to worship.** In an instant, the men went from worrying about their circumstances to worshipping their Messiah. How is your worship of the Lord going?

Union Grove is one of the oldest Baptist communities of faith in the State of Texas dating back to 1844. Pastor Faber McMullen may be reached by email at uniongrove362@gmail.com or by snail mail at: 15301 FM 362, Navasota, Texas 77868. Tel: 936-825-1227 (Edited and proofed by Amanda Neese- Webster, Texas.) All financial gifts to this ministry are tax-deductible as a 501 (c) (3) Corporation.