

Look to the One who walks on the Water – Mt. 14

You remember what happened last time.

- Jesus took five loaves and two fish — a boy's lunch, affectionally called a launchable by Pastor JP — and fed more than five thousand people. Twelve baskets of leftovers. The crowd was buzzing. They wanted to make Him king on the spot.
- And then Jesus did something strange. He made His disciples get into the boat and go on ahead of Him to the other side. He dismissed the crowd. And He went up on the mountain by Himself to pray (Matthew 14:22–23).

Think about that.

- They weren't being punished. They weren't being sent away because they'd done something wrong. Jesus *told* them to get in that boat. It was His plan. His direction. His express command.

And that's when the storm hit.

- Somewhere out on that lake, the wind turned against them. The waves started slamming into the boat. These were experienced fishermen — they'd weathered storms before. But this one had them fighting for their lives, and they were making no progress.
- They were exactly where Jesus told them to be... and they were in the fight of their lives.

Charles Spurgeon said it this way: "*Their sailing was not merely under his sanction, but by his express command. They were in the right place and yet they met with a terrible storm.*"

Jesus purposefully sent them into trouble.

- Now, here's the thing — that doesn't fit our expectations. We think obedience should keep us safe. We think if we're following Jesus, life should go smoothly. But the disciples were doing exactly what Jesus told them to do, and the storm still came.
- If you're here this morning and you've ever thought, "*I'm doing everything right — so why is everything falling apart?*" — this story is for you. Because Jesus may send us into difficulty, but He always sends us with a purpose. His plans are not always easy, and they're not always what we want. But they are always best.

So here's what we're going to see this morning —

The Big Idea: ***In the storm, Jesus reveals that He is the Son of God—and even faltering disciples can call to Him and worship Him.***

Three truths about the God who guides us through the storm:

- 1. We are guided by His plans.**
- 2. We are encouraged by His prayer.**
- 3. We are blessed by His presence.**

Let's open to Matthew 14:22.

Matthew 14:22-31 - Immediately Jesus made His disciples get into the boat and go before Him to the other side, while He sent the multitudes away. ²³ And when He had sent the multitudes away, He went up on the mountain by Himself to pray. Now when evening came, He was alone

there.²⁴ But the boat was now in the middle of the sea, tossed by the waves, for the wind was contrary.

Matthew 14:25-28 - ²⁵ Now in the fourth watch of the night Jesus went to them, walking on the sea. ²⁶ And when the disciples saw Him walking on the sea, they were troubled, saying, "It is a ghost!" And they cried out for fear. ²⁷ But immediately Jesus spoke to them, saying, "Be of good cheer! It is I; do not be afraid." ²⁸ And Peter answered Him and said, "Lord, if it is You, command me to come to You on the water."

Matthew 14:29-30 - ²⁹ So He said, "Come." And when Peter had come down out of the boat, he walked on the water to go to Jesus. ³⁰ But when he saw that the wind was boisterous, he was afraid; and beginning to sink he cried out, saying, "Lord, save me!"

Matthew 14:31-33 - ³¹ And immediately Jesus stretched out *His* hand and caught him, and said to him, "O you of little faith, why did you doubt?" ³² And when they got into the boat, the wind ceased. ³³ Then those who were in the boat came and worshiped Him, saying, "Truly You are the Son of God."

We are Guided by His Plans

Matthew 14:22 - Immediately Jesus made His disciples get into the boat and go before Him to the other side, while He sent the multitudes away.

Matthew says Jesus made the disciples get into the boat.

- The Greek word translated "**made**" means to **compel, insist, or strongly urge**.
- Jesus did not **casually** suggest they go.
 - He decisively directed them into the boat and sent them ahead of Him (Matthew 14:22).
 - Mark's parallel account also says Jesus "made" them get into the boat (Mark 6:45).
- That matters because when the wind and waves rose, the disciples weren't there because they had ignored Jesus. They were there because they had obeyed Him. This reminds us of the storm we saw earlier in Mark 4: sometimes storms follow disobedience, as they did for Jonah; and sometimes storms meet us while we're obeying the Lord (Jonah 1:1–4; Mark 4:35–37).

So we shouldn't assume every hardship means we've disobeyed God.

- We should examine our hearts, repent where we need to, and also remember that difficulty by itself doesn't prove we're outside Jesus' direction.
- The disciples were in a hard place—but they were there under His command.

We talked about this a couple of weeks ago – **Storms are a result of disobedience & obedience.**

Some storms come after we've gone our own way – **Our Disobedience**

- Jonah is an example: God told him to go to Nineveh, but Jonah went the opposite direction, and a storm followed (Jonah 1:1–4).
- Our sin can bring painful consequences, and God may use discipline to turn His children back to Him (Hebrews 12:5–6).

But not every storm is the result of disobedience – You may remember a couple of weeks ago... Jesus was asleep in the boat – he had said, “Let us go across to the other side” (Mark 4:35, ESV).

- And here in Matthew, Jesus sends them ahead in the boat (Matthew 14:22).
- ***Jesus directed them onto the lake. The storm met them there. Their hardship was not evidence that they had disobeyed Him.***

That difference matters.

- When hardship comes, it’s ***wise to examine our hearts*** and ask whether we need to repent or make something right.
- ***Psalm 139:23-24*** - Search me, O God, and know my heart; Try me, and know my anxieties;
²⁴ And see if *there is any* wicked way in me, And lead me in the way everlasting.
- But we shouldn’t automatically assume that trouble means we have disobeyed God. Sometimes the storm comes while we’re following Jesus.
- The disciples were where Jesus had sent them. The wind was against them, but they were not outside His direction. We may not always understand the path He leads us on, but we can trust Him rather than lean on our own understanding (Proverbs 3:5–6).

And while the disciples struggled against the wind, Jesus was on the mountain praying. The story moves from the path He sent them on to the care He was giving them. (Matthew 14:23)

Commenting on this passage of Scripture, Danny Akin writes,

- “Jesus purposefully sent them into trouble! Jesus may indeed send us into trouble and difficulty but with a redemptive purpose. There our understanding of His providence and power is increased. There our faith and dependence on Him and Him alone grow. His plans are not always easy or what we want, but they are always best. Believe! Don’t doubt. (Akin, *Exalting Jesus: Mark*, p. 143)
- ***Even when we cannot see why a hard season has come, this passage reminds us that hardship does not mean Jesus has lost control or abandoned His people.***

Proverbs 3:5-6 - Trust in the Lord with all your heart, And lean not on your own understanding; ⁶ In all your ways acknowledge Him, And He shall direct your paths.

John 16:12-13 - “I still have many things to say to you, but you cannot bear *them* now. ¹³ However, when He, the Spirit of truth, has come, He will guide you into all truth; for He will not speak on His own *authority*, but whatever He hears He will speak; and He will tell you things to come.

Psalm 119:105 - Your word is a lamp to my feet And a light to my path.

Jesus had directed the disciples into the boat, and now Matthew tells us He went up the mountain by Himself to pray (Matthew 14:22–23). The disciples were straining against the wind, but Jesus had not lost sight of them—or lost control of the situation.

Matthew doesn’t tell us the exact words Jesus prayed there. But the scene reminds us that prayer was central to His life and ministry. And the same Jesus who regularly went to the Father in prayer now lives forever to intercede for those who come to God through Him (Hebrews 7:25).

So we move from **the path Jesus directed** to **the prayerful care of Jesus: we are encouraged by His prayer.**

We are Guided by His Plans

We are Encouraged by His Prayer

Matthew 14:22-31 - Immediately Jesus made His disciples get into the boat and go before Him to the other side, while He sent the multitudes away. ²³ And when He had sent the multitudes away, He went up on the mountain by Himself to pray. Now when evening came, He was alone there. ²⁴ But the boat was now in the middle of the sea, tossed by the waves, for the wind was contrary.

This is not the first time we read about Jesus' prayer life.

- **Mark 1:35** - Now in the morning, having risen a long while before daylight, He went out and departed to a solitary place; and there He prayed.
- **Luke 5:16** - So He Himself often withdrew into the wilderness and prayed.
- **Luke 6:12** – (Before Jesus chose the 12 he ... look at what the Bible says) Now it came to pass in those days that He went out to the mountain to pray, and continued all night in prayer to God.
 - Could it be that our lack of prayer contributes to the lack clarity
 - When's the last time you spent a night, a day, or even a minute asking God to show you His will?

Now we don't know exactly what He prayed for – Matthew, Mark, John does not tell us

No doubt He prayed for Himself, the crowd for whom He had compassion.

He prayed for his disciples – John 17 – The High Priestly Prayer

- For their Sanctification by the Word – Protection from the enemy
- Prays for those who would believe "...in my through their word." Jesus prayed for us!

Jesus prayed for Peter

Luke 22:31-32 - And the Lord said, "Simon, Simon! Indeed, Satan has asked for you, that he may sift *you* as wheat. ³² But I have prayed for you, that your faith should not fail; and when you have returned to *Me*, strengthen your brethren."

- Peter, Satan wanted to sift you... but I prayed for you
- If Satan was defeated at the Cross, why do we continually fight against Him
- Jonothan Pokluda said the enemy is running a scorched earth strategy to steal, kill and destroy – [Podcast link Here](#)
- Ephesians 4:27- nor give place to the devil.
 - If you sin, you let them in – Don't give the devil a foothold, He will build a stronghold
 - Great illustration - if you've ever killed a snake, you know the things dead but because of the reflexes it can still bite you

- That's like our enemy he's been morally wounded, but he still has the ability to bite

In the middle of the storm, the disciples could not see Jesus praying...

Hebrews 7:24-25 - But He, because He continues forever, has an unchangeable priesthood. ²⁵ Therefore He is also able to save to the uttermost those who come to God through Him, since He always lives to make intercession for them.

Romans 8:26-27 - Likewise the Spirit also helps in our weaknesses. For we do not know what we should pray for as we ought, but the Spirit Himself makes intercession for us with groanings which cannot be uttered. ²⁷ Now He who searches the hearts knows what the mind of the Spirit is, ***because He makes intercession for the saints according to the will of God.***

The disciples' struggle on the lake was real—but the next thing they saw was Jesus coming toward them. The One who prays is also the One who draws near (Matthew 14:24–27).

We are Guided by His Plans

We are Encouraged by His Prayer

We are Blessed by His Presence

Matthew 14:25 – *They are in the boat, struggling against the waves – Then they saw a figure out on the water. They were afraid!*

Matthew 14:27-28 - ²⁷ But immediately Jesus spoke to them, saying, "Be of good cheer! It is I; do not be afraid."

Literally, His words are, "Take heart; I am."

- The Greek phrase can simply mean "It's me," so we shouldn't claim that the wording alone proves Jesus is invoking the divine name. But here, as Jesus comes to them walking on the sea, His words carry a striking force: the One who has authority over the waters is with them. The disciples are not facing the storm alone. Jesus has come near—and they respond by worshipping Him as the Son of God (Matthew 14:27, 32–33).

You have two things going on here –

- Jesus demonstrated His identity by His Words – I Am
- And His Works – walking on water – This action would have made the disciples think back to OT
 - Job 9:8 - He alone spreads out the heavens, And treads on the waves of the sea;
 - Psalm 77:19 - Your way *was* in the sea, Your path in the great waters, And Your footsteps were not known.

Mark 6:48 - Then He saw them straining at rowing, for the wind was against them. Now about the fourth watch of the night He came to them, walking on the sea, **and would have passed them by.**

- Mark adds that as Jesus came toward the disciples on the sea, He “meant to pass by them” (Mark 6:48, ESV). That can sound as if He planned to walk right past them. But in the Old Testament, when the Lord “passed by” Moses and Elijah, He was revealing His glory to them (Exodus 33:18–23; 1 Kings 19:11–13).
- That connection helps us see this as more than Jesus approaching a boat in trouble. The Lord who revealed His glory to Moses and Elijah is now making Himself known to His disciples. Scripture describes God as the One who “treads on the waves of the sea” (Job 9:8, ESV); now Jesus walks on the sea, speaks to the terrified disciples, and comes into the boat (Mark 6:48–51).
- Matthew records the disciples’ response: they worship Jesus and confess, “Truly you are the Son of God” (Matthew 14:33, ESV). The point is not simply that Jesus can help us through a storm. **He is the Son of God, whose presence and authority the storm cannot overcome.**
- This does not promise that every storm will end when we want it to. It does mean that hardship is not the whole story: Jesus is greater than the storm, and those who trust Him are never beyond His reach.

Matthew 14:28 - ²⁸ And Peter answered Him and said, “Lord, if it is You, command me to come to You on the water.”

Matthew 14:29-30 - ²⁹ So He said, “Come.” And when Peter had come down out of the boat, he walked on the water to go to Jesus. ³⁰ But when he saw that the wind *was* boisterous, he was afraid; and beginning to sink he cried out, saying, “Lord, save me!”

Matthew 14:31-33 - ³¹ And immediately Jesus stretched out *His* hand and caught him, and said to him, “O you of little faith, why did you doubt?” ³² And when they got into the boat, the wind ceased. ³³ Then those who were in the boat came and worshiped Him, saying, **“Truly You are the Son of God.”**

Peter asks Jesus to command him to come, and when Jesus says, “Come,”

- Peter steps out of the boat. For a moment, he walks on the water toward Jesus. But then he sees the wind, becomes afraid, and begins to sink. His faith is not steady—but he knows where to turn: “Lord, save me.” And immediately Jesus reaches out and takes hold of him.
- Peter’s story is not about how strong Peter’s faith was. It is about how ready Jesus was to save him. The disciples’ safety is not finally in Peter’s courage or in calm water. It is in the presence and power of Jesus. And when Jesus and Peter enter the boat, the disciples worship Him: “Truly you are the Son of God” (Matthew 14:32–33, ESV).

Use the Jesus reaching to Peter -

- What tone of voice do you hear when you see this picture? Anger, frustration, disappointment
- Do you hear the voice of a loving shepherd – O, ye of little faith, why did you doubt



The disciples don't end this story praising Peter for his courage or congratulating themselves for surviving the storm. They worship Jesus: "Truly you are the Son of God."

- The storm has revealed their weakness, but Jesus' presence has revealed His identity. He is not merely a teacher who can help when life gets hard. He is God's Son—the King with authority over the sea, worthy of their worship and our trust.

Conclusion: When Your Faith Falters, Look to Jesus

The disciples began the night in a storm because Jesus had sent them across the lake. Peter stepped out at Jesus' command, began to sink, and cried, "Lord, save me." **Jesus immediately reached out and took hold of him** (Matthew 14:22, 28–31).

Their faith was imperfect, but Jesus was mighty to save. (Matthew 14:24–33)

That is not a promise that every storm will end when we want it to. It is a picture of where faltering faith can turn. Peter's hope was not that he could keep himself above the waves. His hope was Jesus. So when your faith falters:

1. **Be honest about what is frightening you.** Peter saw the wind and was afraid. Don't pretend the storm isn't real—but don't let the storm become bigger to you than Jesus (Matthew 14:30).
2. **Call to Jesus, even if all you can say is, "Lord, save me."** You don't need polished words or perfect confidence to come to Him (Matthew 14:30; Hebrews 4:16).
3. **Remember what Jesus has said and done.** He came to the disciples and said, "Take heart; it is I. Do not be afraid" (Matthew 14:27, ESV). Return to His Word, and let trusted believers help you hold on when you feel weak (Psalm 119:105; Hebrews 10:24–25).
4. **Keep following and worshipping Him.** The disciples' response at the end of the story was worship: "Truly you are the Son of God" (Matthew 14:33, ESV). Their confidence rested not in the weather, but in who Jesus is.

And if you're here and you don't yet trust Jesus, He is more than a helper for life's storms.

- He is the Son of God who gave His life for sinners and rose again. Turn to Him, trust Him, and follow Him (Romans 10:9–13).
- The wind may still be against you. Your faith may feel small. But when you begin to sink, cry out to Jesus. He is the Son of God, and He is worthy of your trust.

When your faith falters, call to Jesus. He is the Son of God, and He is worthy of your trust and worship.

