

Matthew 14:22-36
7 July 2024 | Sinking Faith
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Main Point Come and Worship Jesus, the Son of God and Walk with Him

Structure

1. Come and Wonder (v22-27)
2. Come and Walk (v28-31)
3. Come and Worship (v32-33)

Introduction

Good morning, Hope City. How is everyone doing?

Have any of you ever had the experience of sinking?

(Slide Raft Building) Maybe you've been on a school trip and had to build a raft.

If you have tried building one of these rafts, you will how desperately they seem to want to fall apart, and as soon as you put too much weight on them the whole raft feels like it's sinking.

I wonder has anyone sunk so much you have felt like you were drowning?

(Slide Scuba Diving) A few years ago I tried scuba diving for the first time and was doing my beginner training course

One of the skills you need to demonstrate in order to pass the course is to be able to remove your goggles while under water.

You then put them back on your face now filled with water, and in the way you empty then of water is breathe in through the mouthpiece connected your oxygen tank and then out through your nose to fill the goggles with air and removing the water, and repeat the process until you can see again.

It sounds simple enough, and we practiced this in the swimming pool a few times, but I just couldn't get the hang of it.

But the time came to do it for real on a dive out at sea

We were 15m under water when my turn came.

I removed my goggles, that was the easy bit, and then put them back on and I panicked...

They were filled with water, I couldn't see anything, I felt like I couldn't breathe and I had an overwhelming desire to bolt to the surface which is a potentially dangerous thing to do while diving due the risks of sudden decompression

So while panicking I did everything I could to clear my mask, I frantically pressed the oxygen burst button on my mouthpiece to try and get more air in, emptying most of my air tank in the process and... eventually, much to the relief of my instructor, I managed to clear my mask and could see again.

As an enjoyable an experience as this was, this was the first and last time I went diving.

(Slide Sinking Ship)

I wonder if any of you can resonate with the feeling that you are sinking in the circumstances of life and are struggling to walk with Jesus as the waves keep crashing in

You may look back on a time in your life where you felt strong in your your faith but right now you feel overwhelmed by everything that life is throwing at you and you feel like you are sinking.

- It might be at school, where deadlines and exams piled up over the academic year.
- It might be at work, where you are under relentless pressure all the time.
- It might be at home, where you are constantly surrounded by screaming children who don't give you a second to yourself and you are exhausted.
- You may have experienced a breakdown in an important relationship.
- You or someone you love may be suffering with the effects of poor health.

And if that's you or someone you know, then come and look with me at this story of Jesus walking on water.

It is a great story and my hope is that there is something in this for all of us who feel like we are sinking.

We are in Matthew 14:22-36, page xxx in the church bibles, and Alex Wheeler is going to come and read for us, thank you Alex

Passage Matthew 14:22-36

(Slide Roadmap) Thank you Alex, here is a roadmap of where we're going this morning if you're taking notes or like a plan. There is also the option of taking notes through the app.

We're not going to look too closely at the final three verses 34-36. These are great verses but serve more as a bridge us to our next section in chapter 15.

Please ask any questions as we go along via the app which we will look at together at the end.

1. Come and Wonder (v22-27)

We're going to zoom in on verses 22-27 for our first point

A lot has happened already in chapter 14, all the events of this chapter happen back to back with no break in the narrative

It began with John the Baptist getting beheaded at the hands of Herod. John was the forerunner to Jesus' ministry and a relative of his so this was very significant news for Jesus.

On hearing this news Jesus attempted to withdraw to a solitary place to spend some time alone but he is followed by a large crowd.

Rather than trying to escape, he has compassion on them, he heals their sick and then provides a miraculous meal from two fish and five loaves in the feeding of the 5000 which we looked at last week with Pat.

Now, really needing some solitary time with his Father, He sends his disciples to go on ahead of him to the other side of the sea of Galilee by boat, and then he bids farewell to the crowd.

He is alone at last and goes up on the side of a mountain to pray to his Father.

When we get these moments of Jesus going to be alone with his Father, they often occur at significant moments in His ministry. The next time Jesus will do this in Matthew is in the Garden of Gethsemane shortly before he goes to the cross.

Later that night while he is on the mountain praying, a storm descends on the Sea of Galilee where the disciples are attempting to cross the water.

(Slide Sea of Galilee) Here is a map of the Sea of Galilee. At 200m below sea level, it is the second lowest lake on earth, behind only the Dead Sea. It is surrounded by hills, particularly on the west side where the mountains reach 600m above the water.

When the cool air from the mountains meets the warm air from the water, this difference in temperature and pressure leads to strong winds coming down from the mountains causing sudden storms on the water

(Slide Storm) The disciples are caught out in one of these storms, they had experienced fishermen in their midst who would have been used to these conditions, but with the strength of the wind and power of their waves they are helpless and are blown out into the middle of the lake a considerable distance from land which we see in verse 24.

And they are caught in this storm for the whole night, they have been rowing for their lives only to get blown out further and further, they would have been totally exhausted and losing hope

(Slide 14:26)

And then just before dawn, something remarkable happens, they see a figure walking towards them on the lake. In the dim stormy pre-dawn light, they are understandably terrified as they mistake the figure for a ghost

But it is not a ghost; it is Jesus, and he is doing completely impossible, He is walking on the water like it is solid ground.

We are out in the middle of the lake nowhere near the shore and the water is very deep, 43m at it's deepest.

He has walked all the way from the shore out to the middle of the lake, a distance of approximately three miles, a detail we learn from John's account of the event

And as he draws near enough to the boat for the disciples to hear him above the sound of the storm, listen to the words Jesus says to the disciples in verse 27

(Slide 14:27) Take courage! It is I. Don't be afraid.

This isn't Jesus saying: 'Stop being silly, everything's fine,' these are a: 'I know you're terrified but it's okay, I am here'.

These are tender fatherly words, the same way a parent comforts a child who has woken up scared after a bad dream, holds them tightly and says it's okay, Mummy's here, Daddy's here.

And when we look closely at Jesus' words, we see there is something even greater going on.

(Slide It is I = I AM) When Jesus says 'It is I', he is using the Hebrew phrase *egō eimi*, translated 'I AM'.

Jesus is using the same words that God used when he appeared to Moses in the burning bush in the book of Exodus.

(Slide Exodus 3:14) God said to Moses, "I AM WHO I AM.

(Slide Job 9:8) There is another verse in the Old Testament in the book of Job where we see that it is God alone who can walk on water: *“He alone stretches out the heavens and treads on the waves of the sea”*

Jesus is identifying himself as God, while doing something that only God can do.

And he comes to the rescue of these exhausted disciples. Imagine the comfort they would have had after fighting for their lives all night, when they heard these words: Take courage! It is I, Don't be afraid.

And like these disciples, if you are exhausted, if you feel like you are sinking, come and hear these words from Jesus

Come and wonder that He is God and can walk on water, that help has arrived. And hear these comforting words, Take courage! It Is I, Don't be afraid.

(Slide Road map)

That was our first point, Come and Wonder

Now our second point, Come and Walk and we're going to zoom in on verses 28-31

Peter, one of the disciples in the boat who has a reputation for being a little audacious and making rash decisions

(Slide 14:28)

He sees Jesus doing something that only God could do. And he thinks you know what, I fancy giving that a go as well.

You can imagine the reaction of the other disciples in the boat when they heard him say this, “Peter what are you saying, are you mad!!”

Why does Peter think he is able to do something that is impossible?

And why does he think he has the right to request that Jesus give him the power to do something that only God can do?

Well I think to be fair to Peter, he is demonstrating quite remarkable faith, as he believes with Jesus this really might be possible.

(Slide 14:29)

And much to the other disciples surprise, Jesus' words to Peter are not, 'No Peter, this is something only I can do', but simply, 'Come.' Come and walk with me on the water.

And so Peter does just that, he gets down out of the boat, and he steps onto the water, and imagine the feeling when rather than sinking, his foot hold firm and he does something impossible and starts walking on water

(Slide 14:30)

But just as he's getting going he sees the wind, he becomes aware once again of the storm around him and he is afraid, his faith begins to fail and he starts to sink.

And here is where we may see ourselves in the story, we maybe once upon a time have had great faith and confidence to do audacious things in the name of Jesus

But the storms of life have arrived, the waves are crashing around us, and we feel like we are sinking

And despite our best efforts to kick back to the surface, we just can't seem to do it, we are exhaust and we feel like we're sinking even further

And that is because we cannot do this impossible walk of faith on our own, we cannot by our own strength keep afloat, it is only through Jesus.

And so let's look at this example of Peter, with the little faith he has remaining he cries out to Jesus "Lord, save me!"

(Slide 14:31)

And there is Jesus, immediately there, and he reaches down and grabs Peter's hand and saves him.

He brings Peter back up onto the surface of the water, and he says to him gently “you of little faith” “why did you doubt”.

Do you ever feel like your are a doubting disciple of little faith?

Let us see that Jesus rescues disciples of little faith and that is not the strength of our faith that saves us, but of Jesus, who reaches and down from above and saves us.

And what does it look like for Jesus to save us? Does this mean he will rescue us from all the storms we face in life?

Will our school deadlines get done for us? Our work calm down, our kids stops crying, our relationships get restored, and our sickness made well?

I think the answer to that is that in some situations yes. We can believe that God is powerful to rescue us from all situations we face and we can pray to Him to help

But we way find ourselves in circumstances that aren't going to change anytime soon. And even when we pray the circumstances seem to stay the same. What are we to do then?

In the midst of the storm, on our walk of faith which we know will involve real hardship and suffering we can hold onto Jesus because we know that at all times he is holding onto us and that it is going to be worth it in the end

One of the key things to hold onto is that the rescue Jesus has ultimately brought, is an eternal rescue.

An eternal rescue from our sin, that is our rejection of God, and the judgement we face because of that.

And this eternal rescue he brings about through his death and resurrection is the real hope that we can cling onto.

That one day, we will be face to face with Jesus, there will be no more storms, there we will be no more pain, no more suffering, when we will be with our Lord forever.

And if you have never put your faith in Jesus, perhaps if you feel like you are overwhelmed by the storms you face in life, come and see that there is someone who has come to rescue you from drowning, come and put your faith in him

Come and Walk with Jesus who has come to rescue us

(Slide Road map)

Come and wonder, come and walk, and our third and final point come and worship.

(Slide Matthew 14:32-33)

Almost there, Verse 32 *And when they climbed into the boat, the wind died down. 33 Then those who were in the boat worshipped him, saying, "Truly you are the Son of God."*

(Slide Matthew References) So far in Matthew, Jesus has done a wide number of miracles:

- He has (slide 4:24) healed every disease and sickness among the people
- He has (slide 8:16) driven out evil spirits with a single word
- He has (slide 8:26) already calmed a storm
- He has (slide 9:24) raised a person from the dead
- As well as these miracles he has delivered a vast array of remarkable teaching

(Slide Matthew 14:32-33)

But this is the moment where the disciples first recognise Jesus for who he is, that he is the Son of God and they worship him

They haven't yet grasped the full extent of what he has come to do which we will see in the coming chapters but this is a very significant moment on their journey

As they see Him doing something impossible as he walks on water, as they hear him say the words *It is I*, as he reveals himself as God. As they watch him enable one of their fellow disciples to walk on water and then him rescue from drowning.

And now as He steps into the boat, the wind dies down and the storm is stilled, they recognise for the first time that he is truly the son of God and they bow down and worship him.

I wonder can you remember the first time in your life where you recognised Jesus for who he is and worshipped him?

And if that's something you've never done, would you consider doing so today?

(Slide summary)

Come and Wonder, Come and Walk, Come and Worship

We're going to do worship God together now and as the band make their way back up would you pray with me:

Almighty God, Our God who walks on water, thank you that you have come to save us, thank you care for us so deeply that you rescue us of such little faith, may we know how tightly you are holding onto us, may we worship you as we look forward to the day where we will be with you forever, Amen.

Main Point Come and Worship Jesus, the Son of God and Walk with Him