

# Walking in Faith: A Sermon on Trusting Jesus

Bible Verses Referenced: Matthew 14:22-33, Romans 10:6-13, Exodus 3:14, Joel 2:32

Let us pray. Heavenly Father, we thank You for the gift of Your Word, and especially the Gospel of Your Son, Jesus Christ. We ask that You would fill our hearts and minds with the knowledge and love of Him. May the ministry and preaching of Your Word be Your Word for the sake and glory of Your Son Jesus in His name we pray. Amen. Please.

"You of little faith, why did you doubt?" It's the question that's ringing in the gospel passage today. "You of little faith, why did you doubt?" You know, the Lord sometimes sends us through very challenging situations and difficulties, and it's an interesting line in the gospel passage that Jesus made them get into the boat.

We know that, you know, just knowing Jesus, that he knew exactly what he was doing and sending them out there into that storm. And there they were, contending, it says, against a prevailing wind, battered, and beaten. You of little faith, why do you doubt? Well, you know, in a very simple way of answering that is a word that is used throughout the gospel passage.

It's the word phobia, fear, and it's the antithesis of faith. And that is certainly what is happening with the disciples as they're in the boat. They are filled with fear. But it's interesting not what is it specifically that they are fearing? I was at the beach maybe, I guess it was 2020 during the pandemic.

I was hanging out on the shore with one of my friends, a fellow named John, who was a Seminole County Fire Department chief. And we're sitting there in our chairs, and we look out in the water, and there is a floaty thing. It's kind of offshore, and my eyesight, like I can't really make out all the faces in the back there, so, you know, a little blurry.

But I could have sworn I saw a head in this floaty thing, and the wind was blowing it offshore, and I said, "I think there's a person that's in trouble out there." And so John and I grabbed two paddle boards and we started paddling to try to reach this float. And the wind was blowing the float faster than we were able to paddle. And we just kept paddling and paddling and paddling, and finally caught up with it.

While we were doing that, John was behind me, and he said, "I saw a spinner shark fly out up in the air between us. Did you see that?" And I'm like, "No, I'm kind of glad I didn't." So we reached the floaty thing, and of course there's nobody in there, and I'm like, "Well, if they were in there, not anymore." But then we turn around and we were miles offshore.

I mean, the little condos looked like little small things, and we both said to one another, "We are in such trouble." 'Cause now the wind was against us, and we are, took us about an hour to get back to shore, and for some of it, I thought, "I'm not going to make it." You know, the disciples were out there, it says, "All night long fighting against the wind, and we're far from the shore, to the point where it was now the fourth watch of the night, which is 3:00 a.m.." No, it's interesting.

That's not what they are afraid of. As challenging as that was, as painful as that was, to go through that, and we can be allegorical about these kinds of stories. You know, we all have times in our life where we are facing prevailing headwinds, where it can seem like it's taking forever to make it back to shore.

And we question, am I going to make it through this? Seems really tough, it's really hard. And yet, in that moment, for some reason, God making them go through that had an incredible lesson for them. And it's one about trust and having faith in Him. And so He comes to them, is what it says. He will read the text.

The boat was a long way away from the land, beaten by the waves, the wind was against Him, and in the fourth watch of the night, He came to them. He's talking about Jesus, walking on the sea. When the disciples saw Him walking on the sea, they were terrified. There's our word, phobia, and said, "It's a ghost." And they cried out in fear.

There are two places in this passage where you see just a little bit of faith, you know, view of little faith. The first one has to do with just recognizing the presence of God in this moment. And more specifically, not just even recognizing that God's in control and He's got this but recognizing the person of Jesus as God in the flesh.

Jesus says immediately, it says immediately, Jesus spoke to them saying, "Take heart, it is I. Do not be afraid." It's one of those places where it would be helpful if we brought out a little Greek here, where it says, "Take heart, it is I." That actually is just a very simple phrase, "ego and me" in Greek.

And if you were to literally translate it, what he's saying is, "Take heart, I am. Do not be afraid." Now, if you had Jewish ears listening to that, a go a me, I am, what comes to mind? Jewish here would remember Moses in the burning bush.

When Moses was called to go and call the Israelites out of bondage to Pharaoh and go tell Pharaoh, "Let my people go." And Moses being insecure in the moment, he says, "Yeah, but they're not gonna listen to me." And he says, "Tell them, Yahweh sent ya." And he reveals his name, the name of God, as I am that I am.

It's a theme throughout the New Testament, actually, that Jesus is the great I Am in the flesh. And this is one of the places where we see that, where Jesus is-- I mean, who else can walk on water other than God in the flesh, right? I mean, the closest I've ever come, God bless Peter but is a paddle board. That's as close as I've come to it. And I've tried a few times, and I've always sunk.

But a go a me, I am. This is the point that Matthew is making actually through the bookends of his gospel, when Joseph was confronted by the angel Gabriel, and he said, "Your wife is pregnant." And Joseph is like, "That's news to me." And he says, "I want you to name him." This is a Son that is begotten by the Holy Spirit of the living God.

And you are going to give him a special name. His name will be Jesus, which in Hebrew again is Yashua, which means I am saves. Isn't that interesting? It's the point of the Gospel of Matthew, actually. It's the same point that John is making in his gospel when seven times Jesus says, "I am the bread of life.

I am the light of the world. I am." You know them all. The resurrection in the life, the way, the truth, and the life. No one comes to the Father except through me. Every one of those is a bold statement on the part of the Messiah that I am God in the flesh. The heart of what we need to be about, and you know I think this is a great passage to get us started here in this new relationship as a rector and a congregation.

And you know I'll show my hand and tell you where I'm coming from right with that, so you don't have to guess. It's about faith in Jesus Christ. And we're human, oh you of little faith. You know I like what Peter, you know Peter here, he says, Lord, if it's you, there's the little faith.

Of course it's him. But Lord, if it's you, I need a little proof. Just tell me to get out of the boat and I'll walk on water and come to you. Wow. That's big faith. But that's what we need as a congregation. That's what I need. More than anything else is to trust in the Lord and Savior of this world.

Paul in our passage from Romans is saying essentially the exact same thing. He says, "You know, it's really not rocket science. You don't have to go up into the heavens to find it or down into the depths of the sea. Know what does the Scripture say? The Word is near you. It's in your mouth and in your heart. That if anyone who believes in their heart that Jesus Christ was raised from the dead and confesses with their mouth that Jesus Christ is Lord, they will be saved.

And he quotes this famous passage from the prophet Joel that is literally, "Everyone who calls on the name of I am the Lord will be saved." But the powerful thing that Paul is doing is he's talking about Jesus. Everyone who calls on the name of Jesus will be saved.

That's what we're about. But then there's this next place where we have just a little faith, oh ye of little faith, and that is, if you want to walk on water, you have to do what? You have to get out of the boat, right? You know, the boat is that safe place where we're all secure and we all kind of live in our boats. But once you come to faith in Jesus Christ as your Lord and Savior, you kind of have to start to live like Peter did.

And it's time to start walking in faith. And if you want to walk on water, there was a great book about that by John Ortberg called, that was a great title. If you want to walk on water, you gotta get out of the boat. And so that's the second thing that I think as we start together that I really want us to be about. And I want me to be about this. I want all of us to be about this. And I will work to invest this spirit in us. We need to be water walkers.

People that are so excited about our faith in Jesus Christ and so love Him that we will do anything for Him. And if He calls us to get out of the boat and start walking across the water, we'll say, "Yes, sir, we're going to do it." We'll get out of that boat and we're going to be like Peter, just cruising on the waves, walking in faith.

But even that, if you have a little faith, people of little faith can become challenging at times. And we're not going to do that perfectly. Peter didn't do it perfectly. You keep your eyes fixed on Jesus as the author and perfecter of your faith. You don't go wrong. But as soon as you take your eyes off of him and you start to worry about other things, and that's what happened to Peter.

You know, he took his eyes off of Jesus for just a moment. He says he starts looking at the wind. He sees the waves, and all of a sudden fear floods back in and counteracts his faith, and he starts to sink. I mean, how often do we do this? You know, we start to look at the circumstances of our lives, or the diagnosis that we hear from the doctor, or the budget numbers, or the whatever, fill in the blank.

And all of these things that can captivate our attention and our focus and our mindset and cause us to get anxious and to fear. And Peter, in that moment, he says, "Jesus, save me." Notice he wasn't facing the Lord at that moment. You know, because when you're walking in faith, the most secure place to be is back in faith when you start to falter.

And Jesus immediately reaches out his hand and pulls him back on his feet, took hold of him and said, "O you of little faith, why did you doubt?" Got into the boat, the wind ceased. Those in the boat worshiped him, saying, "Truly you are the Son of God." You know, you know personally, we've been through a lot over this last year.

Turbulent waves and wind. I know some of y'all have been through some turbulent times too. And yet, for some reason, we don't always know the answers to why the Lord makes us do these things, but we trust in the sovereignty of God and in the Lordship of Jesus Christ, and in His command to be those who walk with Him in faith.

And so, as we start our time together, for me, that's the heart of the matter, that we keep our eyes fixed on Jesus, the author and perfecter of our faith, and we walk in faith, and yeah, we're going to falter, we're going to mess up, we're going to not do that perfectly. I won't. You won't. We won't. But we're going to all keep coming back to that.