

June 27, 2021

“Rescued from Doubt”
Lesson 4 of Unit

Matthew 14:22-33

Intro

Today’s passage is familiar to most of us. It concerns Peter walking on water, and then crying out for help. This story highlights a challenge for believers: the challenge of consistency. We occasionally do something as well as the best in that area, but a master in that field does that thing well almost every time! They are consistently good / masterful. That idea applies here. Jesus is the Master, who does “all things well.” He invites Peter to walk with Him on the water, which Peter does well for a short period of time. We look today at what gives our faith security despite our humanity.

Read Matthew 14:22-33

1. vs. 22: Jesus is alone

First he “made” the disciples get into boats and go to the other side

Next, he dismissed the crowd

He intentionally seeks to be alone, for the reasons shown in the next verse

This verse reminds us of the need to separate ourselves with God, from the world

2. vs. 23: Jesus goes up the mountain to pray alone

Jesus teaches about prayer in the Sermon on the Mount (Matt. 6:5-15)

This is the first time we see Him praying in Matthew

All the gospels show the seriousness of Jesus’ prayer life

Jesus prays seriously and frequently and at length to God the Father

He does this even though He is the Son of God

He has all power and authority from God

He demonstrates his divinity by the miracles He does

His prayer life shows his submission to God’s will

The obvious (and sometimes difficult) conclusion to these facts is---

If Jesus, the almighty Son of God, willingly submitted to God the Father, then we should do the same even more so, since we lack both Jesus’ authority and power

3. vs. 24: A storm comes up while the disciples’ boat is crossing the sea

They are far from the shore, so they can’t get back to it easily

The winds are blowing against them, so they can’t use their sails effectively

There are waves—the implication is that the waves may be coming over the side at times

This storm sounds similar to the one in Matt. 8:23-27

Jesus was with them then; here they are without Him.

This possibly points out that the disciples’ faith is still growing in the area of fears

4. vs. 25: Jesus walks on the water to His disciples on the boat

“Shortly before dawn”

Could be anywhere between 3 AM and 6 AM

Either way, the disciples have been fighting waves for a long time
This action of Jesus walking on the water has never happened in Scripture before

5. vs. 26: The disciples' reaction to seeing Jesus

They are terrified
They think it may be a ghost
The unusualness of this situation makes it hard for them to see it for what it is
Also, they may be very tired, even exhausted
Their tiredness may make them doubt what they are seeing

6. vs. 27: Jesus' response to their fear

He responds "immediately"
He knows they are afraid, and doubt what they are seeing
He lets them know they have seen the truth; Jesus is walking on the water
The two things he says are the same thing, one how *to* respond, one how *not* to respond
"Take courage"—the way *to* respond
"Don't be afraid"—the way *not* to respond

7. vs. 28: Peter's request to join Jesus

"Lord if it's you" isn't a question about who Jesus is
It's more a statement of recognition
It's like our young kids saying to us, "If you're my mom/dad, you'll catch me when I jump"
This statement is a recognition of your position in their life
Peter is not asking to walk on water as a thrill-seeker
He is trying to share in what Jesus is doing
This is a pattern Peter has already been a part of
Sent out to preach Jesus' message
Given authority by Jesus to heal and cast out demons
They desire to reign with him
Peter seems to be following Jesus in what He's doing, which is walking on the water at the moment

8. vs. 29: Jesus grants Peter's request

When Jesus gives the disciples an action to carry out, he also gives them the power
Here, Peter is told to come to Jesus
Peter then begins walking on the water

9. vs. 30: What happened next and why

The winds that made the boat trip difficult haven't stopped
Peter was likely concerned about his safety while on the boat
He is likely as concerned now, or more so, walking on the water
Doubt increased in Peter's thinking about what was possible

Having fear or doubt isn't the same as having *no* faith
Peter calls out to Jesus to save him—that indicates faith in Jesus' ability to save
The disciples did the same in chapter 8 during the storm

Calling out to Jesus for help isn't a lack of faith

It shows that we recognize our own weakness to deal with the situation

Our calling to Jesus is our faith in action, not a sign that our faith is absent or failing

10. vs. 31: Jesus saves Peter

He physically helps him, as He does many other times with others

Matt. 8:3, 8:15, 9:29, 14:36, 17:17, 20:34

He calls Peter's faith "little" as with the disciples in chapter 8

Peter has seen enough of Jesus' miracles to know he can trust Jesus

As with us, Jesus doesn't reject us because we don't show "great" faith

He saves us, rescues us

11. vs. 32: Jesus and Peter get into the boat

Here, the storm appears to "die down"

This suggests it decreased, rather than stopping at once

The storm stops after they get into the boat, not before

Jesus has saved Peter in the midst of the storm

12. vs. 33: The disciple's response to Jesus

They worship Him

They see how He walked on water

They see how He made it possible for Peter to walk on water

They see how Jesus saved Peter

All these things show that Jesus is not like any man they have known

They call him "the Son of God"

For Jews of Jesus' time, the phrase means "God's promised king, the Son of David"

It comes to mean *equivalent with God* for them after the resurrection

Application: Though it would be easy to see Peter as the lead character in this story, he isn't. Jesus is the most important person in the story. Jesus again shows Peter and the disciples that He is divine, here having power over nature, to walk on the water during a storm. He is able to save Peter from drowning.

Peter is like us, though. He had doubts, moment of a crisis of faith, as we do. And Peter shows us how to deal with our doubts—call on Jesus to help us. Doubt is not a sign of lack of faith; it is a lack of fully understanding that calls us to trust Jesus more and ourselves and mankind less than Him. There is nothing about us or our daily lives that God is not aware of. "His eye is on the sparrow, and I know He watches me" say the words of a well-known hymn. He is always with us, and will always come to our aid when we call on Him.

Prayer: Father God, we admit that we sometimes doubt and fear, but we still have faith that you can and will come to our aid. Help us to turn to You quickly whenever the situations in our lives try to cause us doubt and fear. We love you, and want to trust You more daily. In Jesus' name, Amen.