

22 Immediately after this, Jesus insisted that his disciples get back into the boat and cross to the other side of the lake, while he sent the people home. 23 After sending them home, he went up into the hills by himself to pray. Night fell while he was there alone.

24 Meanwhile, the disciples were in trouble far away from land, for a strong wind had risen, and they were fighting heavy waves. 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!"

27 But Jesus spoke to them at once. "Don't be afraid," he said. "Take courage. I am here!"

28 Then Peter called to him, "Lord, if it's really you, tell me to come to you, walking on the water."

29 "Yes, come," Jesus said.

So Peter went over the side of the boat and walked on the water toward Jesus. 30 But when he saw the strong wind and the waves, he was terrified and began to sink. "Save me, Lord!" he shouted.

31 Jesus immediately reached out and grabbed him. "You have so little faith," Jesus said. "Why did you doubt me?"

32 When they climbed back into the boat, the wind stopped. 33 Then the disciples worshiped him. "You really are the Son of God!" they exclaimed.

Leader: The Word of God for the People of God.

**People: Thanks be to God.**

Lord, Save Me!

8.13.17

Opening story

Scripture summary

Peter and the other disciples got into the boat to cross the Sea of Galilee.
Jesus wanted to be alone, so they went without Him.
Peter didn't mind, though, after all, he was an experienced fishermen. He loved being on a boat.
But suddenly, while they were in the middle of the lake, a storm blew in. not a small one. No, this was one "tormented" the boat. It was all the disciples could do to keep the boat upright.
Oh, how they wished the sides of that boat were higher and the wood a little thicker. They fought and fought against the wind and waves.
By 3:00am in the morning, they weren't thinking of making it to the other side - no, they just wanted to stay alive.
Meanwhile, Jesus had been praying in silence and solitude on the mountainside. His soul was deep in grief.

*Some of us, like Jesus, long to be with our Heavenly Father...communing together in song, silence, solitude, prayer. A time to be renewed and refreshed. Maybe this is a daily discipline, or perhaps weekly. But it is a time purposefully set aside.*

While Jesus could've stayed on the mountain all day and all night, He had not forgotten about the Disciples. He knew they were in the middle of a storm. So He went to them.

The Disciples had been tossed to and fro, hanging on for dear life, just hoping to stay afloat. When out of the darkness, one of them notices a glow, a shadow. A haunting figure coming toward them.

***"IT'S a GHOST!"***

And all of them screamed in fear and terror!

(John Ortberg, *If You Want to Walk on Water, You've Got to Get Out of the Boat*, © 2001, John Ortberg, Zondervan; ch. 1, "On Water-Walking" pp. 11-30)

*Sometimes, our fears get the best of us.*  
Unfortunately, they couldn't RUN or HIDE!

Now, we might wonder, "why did they NOT know it was Jesus?" after all, Who else could be walking on the water like that? Who, but Jesus, of course!?

But the Gospel writer seems to be saying that "sometimes it takes eyes of faith to recognize when Jesus is around."

Isn't it true, that sometimes, when we are tossed and tormented by wind and waves in the midst of the storms of life, that we have trouble recognizing the presence of God as well?

***"Sometimes it takes eyes of faith to recognize when Jesus is around."***

Do we see Jesus in the midst of our most fearful moments? Our greatest crises? Times of deepest need? Can we see Jesus?

Sometimes, Jesus comes to us when least expected. Like 3:00am in the morning. In the middle of a storm.

Sometimes, Jesus asks us to do extraordinary things.

And, the truth is, if we are not **expecting** Him, we just might **miss** Him.

When Jesus saw the struggling Disciples, He called out to them.

***"Be of Good cheer! Be Encouraged. It is I! Be not afraid!"***

According to the Gospel of Mark, Jesus came toward the boat, intending to pass them by. (Mark 6. 45-52) For His presence alone offered encouragement. Matthew, however, records the account of Peter walking on the water. (Communicator's Commentary, Matthew, © 1982 Word, Inc; Myron Augsburger, NT Vol 1; ch. 6 "The Compassion of the King" pp. 184 - 199)

During this horrible storm, the boat rocking wildly on the sea, the Twelve Disciples feared for their lives. Each of them in their own way, cried out to God.

***"Help me! Deliver me, O Lord"*** as the Psalmists of old proclaimed, over and over. ***"Save me."***  
***"Protect me."*** ***"Lead me."*** ***"Listen to me!"*** ***"Answer me!"*** ***"Teach me"*** (Psalm 143)

Each of them must have wondered if they would survive this storm... if they would live to see their loved ones again.

*Some of us, like the Disciples, are fearful and anxious about many things, and we react before we know all the facts.*

But one of them must have recognized the Voice of the One calling out to them in that dark night. Amidst the sound of loud crashing waves, a familiar Voice called out.

*“Hey Guys! It’s Me! Don’t Be afraid! Have courage.”*

So Peter had an idea, and decided to do something religious. Something crazy.

“LORD, if that is REALLY YOU, call me to You!”

The others must’ve thought Peter was crazy!

Or some may have wondered, *why ask if it is Jesus? Why not just jump in head first?*

Ortberg suggests that “this is not just a story about *risk-taking*; it is primarily a story about *obedience*. That means (we) will have to discern between an **authentic call from God** and what might simply be a **foolish impulse** on (our) part. Courage alone is not enough; it must be accompanied by wisdom and discernment.”

“This is not a story about extreme sports. It’s about *extreme discipleship*.”

Before we jump out of the boat, we must “make sure Jesus thinks it’s a good idea.”

(John Ortberg, *If You Want to Walk on Water, You’ve Got to Get Out of the Boat*, © 2001, John Ortberg, Zondervan; ch. 1, “On Water-Walking” pp. 11-30)

And so, Jesus invited Peter.

*“Hey Peter! Come on in. The water’s fine!”*

And so Peter got out of that rocking vessel, and stepped into the water and began walking toward Jesus.

Now, I don’t know about you, but I can imagine Peter confidently gliding along the water.

Like a toddler learning how to walk, I can just see Peter looking around him. Looking back at the stunned Disciples in the boat... then at Jesus, with that silly grin... then at the wind and the waves. Suddenly, his glee turns to fear. And he becomes frightened.

When he saw the wind and felt the waves, He began to sink.

*“Lord, help! I’m sinking! Save me, Lord!”*

His bold faith got him out of the boat, but he lost focus momentarily.

Jesus quickly reaches out to him and lifts him up.

*“O you of little faith. Why did you doubt Me?”*

Was Jesus scolding Peter for being a failure?

No, he began to sink. He may have failed at finishing his walk on the water, but he was not a failure.

**Ortberg:** *“The worst failure is not sinking in the waves. The worst failure is to never get out of the boat.”*

*Failure is simply an opportunity to grow.* (John Ortberg, *If You Want to Walk on Water, You've Got to Get Out of the Boat*, © 2001, John Ortberg, Zondervan; ch. 1, “On Water-Walking” pp. 11-30)

Then, Jesus and Peter get into the boat. The storm ceased and the sea grew calm. And all the Disciples worshiped Jesus.

After another miracle by Jesus, the Disciples finally are recognizing Jesus as Who He really is - the Son of God. (Communicator's Commentary, Matthew, © 1982 Word, Inc; Myron Augsburger, NT Vol 1; ch. 6 “The Compassion of the King” pp. 184 - 199)

#### Summary

As we face an uncertain future, we can be assured that God hears our cries. God will give us what we need. Therefore, let us trust in God completely.