

JESUS OF NAZARETH
FAITH OVER FEAR
MATTHEW 14:1-36
7-05-20

All = bold sections – read together

Leader = regular font – leader reads (choose or rotate leaders)

Sung together = italics

NOTE: Please have a white candle ready to light. We will continue to light the candle until we meet again.

Reflect

Henry David Thoreau, “I did not wish to live what was not life...I wanted to live deep and suck out all the marrow of life.”

Welcome

Good Morning! It is July 4th weekend and a time when we pay special attention to the freedom we have in America. Freedom is a significant matter – in America and in the Bible. We often hear that freedom isn't free; that there was some cost to secure it or make it available. In America, that is the lives of hundreds of thousands of people fighting for our freedom. In the Bible, it is the death of the Son of God, Jesus of Nazareth that secures freedom from the guilt and condemnation of sin. His one death is infinitely greater than all the lives given for our physical freedom in America. Galatians 5 says that it is for freedom that we have been set free but not to use our freedom to indulge the sinful nature but to honor and glorify God in the body. That is what we will chose to do today; honor and glorify God with our lives through worship and adoration and repentance. In that light...

May the love and joy of the Farther, the grace and peace of the Son and the courage and comfort of the Holy Spirit by ours in abundance!

Call to Worship: Psalm 3

Starting this week, we are merging the Psalm of Praise with our Call to Worship and adding about 45 more Psalms to the list. These added Psalms bring the harsh reality of life – pain, suffering, sorrow, grief, fear, anxiety, heartache, misery, anguish, mourning, distress, danger and difficulties to the forefront and show us how the Psalmist responds to these real situations. Like this first one:

A PSALM OF DAVID, WHEN HE FLED FROM ABSALOM HIS SON.

O LORD, how many are my foes! Many are rising against me; many are saying of my soul, “There is no salvation for him in God.” But you, O LORD, are a shield about me, my glory, and the lifter of my head.

I cried aloud to the LORD, and he answered me from his holy hill. I lay down and slept; I woke again, for the LORD sustained me. I will not be afraid of many thousands of people who have set themselves against me all around.

Arise, O LORD! Save me, O my God! For you strike all my enemies on the cheek; you break the teeth of the wicked. Salvation belongs to the LORD; your blessing be on your people!

Candle Lighting – Light the candle as a reminder that God is Light (Father, Son, Holy Spirit)!

Psalm 3 is about the reality of life and that it can be very hard with enemies seeking to do us harm. In



this Psalm, it is King David himself crying out to God to save him from his son Absalom who is trying to kill him. That is messed up! Not only that, he is being verbally assaulted too, “There is no salvation for him in God.” Basically, they are saying that he is damned. Yet in the midst of this tragedy and tribulation, what does he do? Where does he turn? Yes! “To the Lord!” The simple rhythm of going to sleep and awaking again gives him courage because he knows it is God who is the one responsible for sustaining him through the night. May Jesus of Nazareth continue to be your light no matter what your circumstance may be and may even the routine things in life be seen to be under the sovereign control of God so that you might have courage and perseverance to face the day with faith and hope and love. May the light of Jesus shine on and in and through you at all times!

Jesus is the Light. We are a light. Shine your light!

We have an advantage that King David did not. We live on the other side of the death and resurrection and ascension of Jesus of Nazareth. We know that sin and death have been defeated and that victory is ours in Jesus Christ. The promises and truths of this reality are myriad and this song captures many of them. Pay attention to the realities that are true for us today because of Jesus.

Song: Death Was Arrested -- <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=uMsMiluCUUI>

*Alone in my sorrow and dead in my sin;
Lost without hope with no place to begin.
Your love made a way to let mercy come in,
When death was arrested and my life began.*

*Ash was redeemed only beauty remains.
My orphan heart was given a name.
My mourning grew quiet my feet rose to dance,
When death was arrested and my life began.*

*Oh, Your grace so free washes over me.
You have made me new, now life begins with You.
It's your endless love pouring down on us.
You have made us new, now life begins with You.*

*Released from my chains I'm a prisoner no more;
My shame was a ransom He faithfully bore.
He cancelled my debt and He called me His friend,
When death was arrested and my life began.*

*Oh, Your grace so free washes over me.
You have made me new, now life begins with You.
It's your endless love pouring down on us.
You have made us new, now life begins with You.*

*Our Savior displayed on a criminal's cross.
Darkness rejoiced as though heaven had lost.
But then Jesus arose with our freedom in hand;
That's when death was arrested and my life began.*

*Oh, Your grace so free washes over me.
You have made me new, now life begins with You.*



*It's your endless love pouring down on us.
You have made us new, now life begins with You.
Oh, we're free, free, forever we're free!
Come join the song of all the redeemed!
Yes, we're free, free, forever amen!
When death was arrested and my life began!*

Prayer

Let's pray the prayer from Ephesians 3:14-19. It is a powerful prayer for be strengthened in faith by the indwelling of Jesus Christ so that we might dive deep into the experience of God's amazing and life-transforming love.

Father, I pray that you would grant me, according to the riches of Your glory, to be strengthened in my inner-man with might by Your Spirit; that You, Jesus, would dwell in my heart by faith, that I, being rooted and grounded in love, would be able to comprehend with all saints what is the breadth, the length, the depth, and the height of Your Love that surpasses all knowledge. That You would fill me with Your fullness, God. Amen

Because of Jesus, it is well with my soul. Because of Jesus, no matter what I may be facing, it is well with my soul. Because of Jesus, no matter how dark things get, there is always light. Because of Jesus, no matter how depressing things get, there is hope. The sins that nailed Jesus to the cross on my behalf are not mine to bear anymore. They are gone, as far as the east is from the west. They no longer accuse, condemn or create guilt and shame. In Christ I am free. In Christ I am forgiven. In Christ, it is well with my soul.

Song: It Is Well With My Soul -- <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=zY5o9mP22V0>

*When peace like a river, attendeth my way,
When sorrows like sea billows roll
Whatever my lot, thou hast taught me to say
It is well, it is well, with my soul*

*It is well, with my soul.
It is well, it is well with my soul.*

*Though Satan should buffet, though trials should come,
Let this blest assurance control,
That Christ has regarded my helpless estate,
And hath shed His own blood for my soul.*

*It is well (it is well), with my soul (with my soul)
It is well, it is well with my soul!*

*My sin, oh, the bliss of this glorious thought
My sin, not in part but the whole,
Is nailed to the cross, and I bear it no more,
Praise the Lord, praise the Lord, o my soul.*

*It is well (it is well), with my soul (with my soul)
It is well, it is well with my soul!*



Offering

We remember that giving is an act of faith, a practice of hope and an expression of love.

(You can give by sending your offering to the church, P.O. Box 217, Oakdale Ca 95361 or consider giving online through your bank. Our deacons can help you with this if necessary.)

Youth Celebration

Heavenly Father, we thank You for all the youth of Community CRC whose presence and participation are greatly treasured. Father, we know that there is a vital need for them to grow in the faith and to become established in the truth of the gospel of grace, to be discipled and taught and trained in the things of God. We pray for all young disciples, that they may develop a spirit of reverence and humility towards You and a desire to walk in spirit and truth as they submit to the Holy Spirit, knowing that the fear of You and reverence towards You is the beginning of wisdom. Please keep those are young disciples pure in heart and spirit, and develop in them a desire to be faithful followers of Jesus Christ and learn to image him through their word and through their actions so that they too may grow in grace and in the joy of living in vital union with our Lord and Savior, Jesus Christ. Amen.

Scripture Reading: Matthew 14:1-36

We will continue our series, Jesus of Nazareth by engaging with chapter 14 in its entirety. While there is a lot going on here, Matthew goes out of his way to link these stories with one another to paint a picture of the developing faith the disciples had for Jesus. In particular, Matthew singles out Peter in his book to exemplify flourishing faith. He does this because Peter is the disciple par excellence who takes faith to its greatest heights and also to its lowest lows. Peter not only walks on water (one of the stories of our message today) but also denies Jesus of Nazareth three times. Peter not only makes the grandest claim regarding Jesus (You are the Christ, the Son of God!) but also is rebuked by Jesus “to get behind him, Satan!”

The first story links us back to the end of last week’s message, the rejection of Jesus of Nazareth by his home town. In verses 1-12, we are told the story of the death of John the Baptist who is “rejected” by Herod and his illegitimate wife. This sets the stage for the next two stories with the fourth story of continued healings and miracles acting like a bookend to the narrative. The second story is about Jesus’ compassion for a very large crowd (up to 10,000 people) and miraculously feeding them with five loaves of bread and two fishes. This then sets up the third and main story of the disciples in a storm on the sea of Galilee and Peter’s walking on water that culminates in the worship of Jesus as the Son of God! The final story pictures Jesus healing the sick when they get to the other side of the sea of Galilee. It serves to buttress the point that Jesus has come to be for us, for his creation by healing and restoring people as tangible and visible evidence. The pictures below are from my trip to Israel and are of the Sea of Galilee where Peter and Jesus walked on water:



Hope



LOVE



Faith



Please read Matthew 14:1-36

Gospel Message: Faith Over Fear

On July 4, 1845 a young man took up a 2 year, 2 month and 2 day experiment on life and spirituality. This experiment involved moving to a small cabin that he built near a small pond in the woods called Walden Pond that was owned by his friend and mentor, Ralph Waldo Emerson. In a book he wrote seven years later called Walden, or Life in the Woods, Henry David Thoreau details his time there and writes of the experiments purpose:

"I went to the woods because I wished to live deliberately, to front only the essential facts of life, and see if I could not learn what it had to teach, and not, when I came to die, discover that I had not lived. I did not wish to live what was not life, living is so dear; nor did I wish to practice resignation, unless it was quite necessary. I wanted to live deep and suck out all the marrow of life, to live so sturdily and Spartan-like as to put to rout all that was not life, to cut a broad swath and shave close, to drive life into a corner, and reduce it to its lowest terms, and, if it proved to be mean, why then to get the whole and genuine meanness of it, and publish its meanness to the world; or if it were sublime, to know it by experience, and be able to give a true account of it in my next excursion. For most men, it appears to me, are in a strange uncertainty about it, whether it is of the devil or of God, and have somewhat hastily concluded that it is the chief end of man here to "glorify God and enjoy him forever."

Regan Cole says of this quote: "Thoreau went into the woods to live a bare, sparse, and essential existence... no modern conveniences to help him make things easier, no creature comforts to lighten his load. He went into the woods to learn what it meant to really live this life as it is, free of all the man-made accouterments that take the life out of life. Put in a more modern way, Thoreau wanted to live without the remote control. His idea was that all the things we have concocted to make life easier for us to live, at the same time take the substance out of living, the marrow out of the bones. If you turn on the water spigot and water comes pouring out, you don't have to pump it yourself. But it is in the very act of pumping the water yourself, that you feel the weight and substance of the water. In your hands, in your arms. If things got tough for him, so be it; experience the toughness. If winter winds chilled him to the bone, so be it; feel the cold... know it from within. Thoreau went alone into the woods to learn how to live the way his maker intended to live. He called this, sucking the marrow out of life."

Paul's version of this is found in Ephesians 5:16 where he calls disciples of Jesus to "make the most of every opportunity" (NIV). Why? Because the "days are evil." In other words, there is much in life that will drain you, reduce you, minimize you, distract you, harm you, so be alert, awake and seek to walk in the love of Jesus and "submit to one another out of reverence for Christ." Jesus calls "sucking the marrow out of life" or "making the most of every opportunity" simply the life of faith. He says, in John 10:10 that he had come to give abundant life to his people and not steal and destroy life like Satan. This abundant life in Christ is the life of faith of the disciple. And Peter, one of the 12 disciples, knew a little something about sucking the marrow out of life and living in the fullness and abundance of life lived out of faith in Jesus Christ. In fact, Peter becomes Matthew's favorite disciple to exemplify what growing faith in Jesus looks like. Our passage this morning centers on Jesus of Nazareth and the disciples growing faith in him, especially Peter. There are four scenes that are deeply connected with



one another. We will look at each scene one at a time as they unfold in God's divine drama and pay particular attention to Peter's active participation in it.

Scene 1: The rejection and death of John the Baptist. At the end of Matthew 13 (and what we ended with last week) Jesus is rejected by his hometown and family. They can't see past the narrow either/or thinking that has Jesus confined to the boy of Joseph and Mary that they grew up with and that wasn't at all impressive (nor therefore could he be). Matthew doesn't move away from rejection quickly but let's us marinate in it longer to foster a deeper experience and impact of the life of faith. Jesus is rejected and now a disciple of his will be to. What precipitates John's death is his confronting Herod and his wife Herodias regarding their "illegitimate" marriage. You see, Herodias was his brother Philip's wife first and Herod himself had been married when they became infatuated with one another. This led to both of them divorcing their spouses and marrying one another. Even though in the eyes of civil authority their marriages were legitimate, in God's eyes they were not. And John let them know that. This get's him imprisoned and leads to his death when Herod promises his niece anything she wanted, even up to half the kingdom because she pleased him so much with her birthday dance. She consorts with her mon who hates John the Baptist for calling them out on their marriage and asks for his head on a platter. Not willing to go back on his word but instead willing to murder a person, Herod fulfills her wish and John dies. Herod exemplifies fear over faith. He cowers to what people might think of him instead of choosing to do the right thing and spare John's life from the murderous wishes of an angry spouse. However, it is faith over fear for John. John the Baptist sucked the marrow out of life and therefore his life was a life not wasted. **Faith over fear does not always turn out the way we think or hope it will.** The news of John's death makes its way to Jesus and he mourns (John is his cousin), seeking out a place of solitude to deal with this tragedy.

Scene 2: The feeding of the five thousand. Jesus takes a boat and pushes out onto the sea of Galilee, alone. It is just him, the boat and the water. He is alone to deal with his thoughts and feelings. Whatever happened in that boat and in those precious moments, Jesus emerges with compassion and undeterred in his mission of love, healing and restoration. He choses faith over fear. His cousin is killed for his faith and Jesus moves further up and further into his kingdom calling. The crowds find out where Jesus is and despite his state of mourning, he goes ashore *to* them, driven by his compassion *for* them. In typical Jesus fashion, he heals their sick. But then the sun begins to set in the West and the disciples want Jesus to send the crowds away to their home towns so they can get dinner as they had no means (so they thought) to feed all 5,000 plus of them. Jesus tells them that the crowds "need not go away; you give them something to eat." Umm, okay. We only have 5 loaves of bread and two fish. This is their lack of faith on display. They don't yet understand that if Jesus says the crowds don't need to go (implying there is enough to eat here), then they need to trust Jesus. So they bring Jesus what they have; he says a prayer of blessing to the Father and begins breaking the bread up for the disciples to give to the people. And there is plenty! So much so that there is more in the end than the beginning! Jesus is about abundance. Jesus is hinting that just like this bread was broken and given for the life nourishment of many, so to will my body be given for the life of many. In me, there is more in the end than in the beginning. With me there is growth and development and flourishing and abundance. Their faith is beginning to grow in Jesus of Nazareth as he gives them more evidence of who he is and what he can do. Their fear of not having enough food to feed the 5,000 plus was replaced with faith in the supernatural abundance of Jesus of Nazareth. Faith was overcoming fear. But how many got the lesson?



Scene 3: Jesus and Peter walk on water. Immediately after gathering up the 12 baskets full of extra food he dismisses the crowds and orders the disciple to go to the other side of the Sea of Galilee by boat. So they do. Jesus, meanwhile, goes up the now empty hills to once again be alone and pray. Remember, he has just received the news that his cousin, John the Baptist was executed in prison and was interrupted in the midst of his first time of solitude by the crowds. He is likely emotionally and physically drained. How many of us need to take some time of solitude to replenish our emotional and physical and spiritual tanks in Christ? Jesus remains on the hillside until the middle of the night as a storm rages around him and on the Sea of Galilee. The disciples have been battling this storm for up to 9 hours at this point and are exhausted. The word “beaten” in the phrase “the boat...beaten by the waves” means tormented and tortured. Its as if the water was attacking them, causing anguish and distress. So there they are, 3 AM, pitch black, wind and waves mercilessly tormenting them and keeping them from getting to where they want to go, tired, frustrated and without Jesus. If they weren’t afraid by then, they were going to be shortly. Jesus decides its time to make his way to the other side as well. However, he takes the shorter route by water except without a boat! He simply walks on the water. Jesus’ divinity is on display. He supernaturally makes the liquid solid enough to hold the weight of a grown person! Note: **it is often the darkest and most unlikely places and circumstances that are the “thin places” where the supernatural touches the natural.** Jesus catches up with the disciples and when they see him, they literally freak out. They are “terrified” (which is maximized fear) and “cry out” (which means to scream)! They think they see a ghost. I probably would have thought the same thing. Jesus sees them and hears them and “immediately” reassures them to “take heart” because they are seeing not a ghost but Jesus of Nazareth. Note that he tells them to “take heart.” A key aspect of fear is losing heart, to lose courage and hope. Fear stripped the disciples of courage and hope; they were losing heart. But one of them took Jesus at his word,” Peter.

I love this phrase, “And Peter...” Amidst the wind and the waves, amidst the terror and fear, Peter hears Jesus AND RESPONDS. He “takes heart.” Fear had the upper hand, now faith is rising up. Let’s slow down here a bit and see what happens next. There are at minimum, four very important actions that take place that exemplifies what faith in Jesus of Nazareth is and how it leads to “sucking the marrow out of life” or “making the most of every opportunity.” First is discernment. Peter is aware of the situation. He has just seen Jesus’s miracle of providing food for 5,000 plus people with leftovers that were more than what they started. Who does that? Maybe the Son of God? Maybe the Messiah? Maybe the one who is sent by God to save his people? Peter is beginning to believe in Jesus of Nazareth. Jesus commands them to get into a boat to cross over; it is Jesus that get’s them into this mess in the first place. There is a lesson here: obeying Jesus does not guarantee removing us from dangerous or risky situations but often times means being put into dangerous and risky situations. John the Baptist was evidence of this. Peter is watching. He is learning. He is becoming aware of Jesus of Nazareth and his ways. So, Peter sees the storm and the waves and the wind and he sees a “ghostlike” figure that says he’s Jesus. He reasons, it is better to be with Jesus out on the water than to be with the 11 disciples in the boat. And, if it is Jesus, he can make this happen. Peter realizes walking on water is not a human achieved effort. He cannot do this. No one can. Except Jesus. Peter is aware that if this is Jesus and he calls him out of the boat and onto the water, then Jesus will make this happen, not him. Peter asks. Faith asks. Faith does not leap over the edge and ask Jesus to bless the landing. **Faith does not manipulate God. Faith responds to God. How often do we go about life asking God to bless our actions?** We decide what we are going to do and ask God to join us, to bless us, to make it work out



the way we want it to work out. Who is playing God in this scenario? We take a job and ask God to bless it. We get into a relationship and then ask God to bless it. We take up this ministry and ask God to bless it. We participate in such or such and ask God to bless it. **We make decisions and then ask God to respond to us.** This is backwards and is not faith. Peter does not make this mistake. He asks, waits, listens, hears and responds when he is called. This is faith. Jesus calls. Peter responds. He gets out of the boat. This is not as easy as it sounds. The boat is comfortable compared to the water. If we value comfort more than we do Jesus, our faith will shrivel. 11 disciples had their faith shrivel. One enlarged and even then, it was called "small." Where are you too comfortable? What boat is Jesus calling you to get out of? Where is Jesus calling you to exercise your faith in him? A ministry? A job? A relationship?

Second, Peter begins walking on the water. Peter has been paying attention. He has seen Jesus' compassion and his miraculous power. In Jesus' word to take heart, Peter hears, "You can trust me. You know my character and competence. You can safely place your destiny in my hands. Take courage. It is I." Peter is ready to respond. He has formed himself in such a way as to be prepared to act when Jesus provides the opportunity. So, he walks...on water! Imagine that. Jesus calls Peter with the simple and clear and unambiguous word, "come." Peter responds in obedience. That is what faith does and is why the Apostle Paul calls us to the "obedience of faith" at the beginning and ending of the book of Romans. Peter takes the first step out onto the water, looking straight at Jesus; not his feet or the waves or the wind and begins to walk where humans cannot walk. His fear has shifted from the storm and the ghostlike appearance to savior and Jesus of Nazareth. In the process, faith emerges. Faith in response to calling enables Peter to do the impossible. Think of times in your life when you were aware, when you listened for and heard Jesus call you to do or be something. What was that like? How did you feel? What did you think? I have gotten out of the boat on two major occasions in my life. One was being called out of the boat of medicine and onto the water of ministry. The second was being called out of the boat of River Rock and onto the water of CCRC. In both cases, there was exhilaration and anticipation for the adventure ahead, much like Peter must have felt as he was taking his first steps. John Ortberg said that Peter getting out of the boat was Peter's gift to Jesus; the experience of walking on water was Jesus' gift to Peter. How true. Faith honors Jesus and honoring Jesus deepens faith. Faith over fear. Peter is walking on water. Faith has overcome fear.

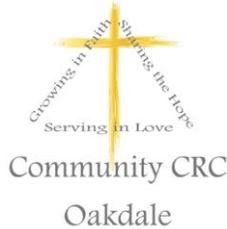
Third, Peter sees the wind. Peter is walking on water to Jesus. He is doing it! He is doing something no one has ever done or will ever do. His faith is soaring. But then something disastrous happens. HE TAKES HIS EYES OFF JESUS. Peter loses focus. Peter redirects his gaze from that which gave him faith to that which gives him fear. And he begins sinking, going under, drowning! Peter sees the wind and the waves and fear begins to rise and replace faith. **Fear over faith sinks you, drowns you.** The world says to Peter, you cannot do this; you shouldn't be doing this; indeed, you aren't doing this – it's impossible. And he thinks you're right, I can't be doing this! And he is right of course. He can't do this. Jesus does this for him. Peter has forgot his calling; he has forgot Jesus, his character and his competence. He forgot he can't be out there on his own initiative, his own power, his own abilities. Peter forgets he can only be out there if Jesus calls him and under his power and his ability. How often do we initially start in faith and focused on Jesus and then take our eyes off him and on to the things of the world, our own abilities and power? Faith is obeying the call of Jesus and keeping our eyes on him. Fear arises when we disobey Jesus by taking our eyes off him. What are the storm(s) in your life that threaten to take your eyes off Jesus and sink your faith? What are the waves in our life that are distracting us from walking on water? Notice that it's not the waves nor the winds fault but the lack of faith. The winds



and the waves will be there. The question is, how will we respond to them? A response of faith is not focusing on the waves and the wind but on Jesus. Focusing on Jesus puts the waves and wind in proper submission to Jesus and keeps fear from rising. However, no of us are perfect. We will take our eyes off Jesus. What's the solution? Yes. Turn your eyes back to Jesus of Nazareth. Reassert your faith in his character and competence. Trust him, not the wind or waves.

Fourth, he cries out and Jesus saves him. Peter is sinking and he quickly comes to his senses and calls out to Jesus. That is, he re-focuses his eyes and attention to Jesus which was lost when he noticed the wind and the waves. Jesus immediately responds. Isn't that reassuring! Peter calls out and Jesus responds. Failure need not define us when we learn from what happened. That is what happens to Peter. After Jesus "saves" Peter he tells him something and then asks him a question. Both are extremely informative. First, he tells Peter he had little faith. What? He just walked on water! Yes. That is true. Jesus is talking about the whole experience. A little bit of fear can undermine a lot of faith and make it "little." Another way to look at this is to say a little bit of faith can get you to walk on water but fear will sink you. The point is, fear undermines faith. Or, faith overcomes fear. Both are true and both are available to choose. So, Jesus tells him he had little faith to show him the power of faith and the power of fear to undermine it. He then points to the root of his fear by asking him a question, "Why did you doubt?" Jesus says that doubt is the root of fear that undermines faith. When we doubt Jesus, we become fearful that he won't keep his end of the deal; that he won't come through on his promises; that he can't do what he said he would do; that his character and competence are not enough and are questionable. When I doubt the pilot can fly the plane, you bet I'll be afraid to fly with them! When I doubt the floor will hold me, you can be sure I'll be afraid to walk over it. My friends, this is the battle of faith. It is a battle because we all struggle with keeping our focus on Jesus of Nazareth; because we take our eyes off him and focus too much on the things of this world. It is a battle because we must fight the urge to take our eyes off Jesus. It is a battle because we have to fight to get our gaze back onto Jesus again. We need our full armor (Ephesians 6): the belt of truth, the helmet of salvation, the breastplate of righteousness, the shoes of peace, the sword of the Spirit which is the Word of God. Truth, salvation, righteousness, peace, Word all point us to Jesus Christ, Jesus of Nazareth. Jesus is our truth, our salvation, our peace, our Word. We battle when we put on Christ. We battle when we chose Christ and faith over the world and doubt and fear. What do you fear? Where do you doubt Jesus most? What are the battles you are being called to fight; to get out of the boat of complacency or comfortableness or status quo and walk on water once again.

When Jesus and Peter get back into the boat, all the other disciples respond now too. The wind stops. They worship. They recognize as Peter did earlier that Jesus is the "Son of God"; that his character and competence is trustworthy and praise worthy. That is what faith does. It worships Jesus of Nazareth. Where there is fear, there is no worship. However, most of us are a mixture of both, of fear and faith, of worship and no worship of Jesus. May we not grow weary of the battle of faith, the obedience of faith so that we might experience the fullness of the life of faith in which God calls us into adventures that only he can sustain and make happen. May we seek God's calling to get out of our boats of security and risk a life of faith that honors Jesus and makes the most of the opportunities we are given. May we seek to suck the marrow out of life in Jesus Christ by living faithful lives that focus on him and not the things of this world that lead to doubt and fear. May we trust the character and competence of Jesus of Nazareth as we live counter to many of the ways of this world by pursuing love, peace, justice, mercy, grace and hope amidst pain, injustice, hate, discord, dysfunction, sorrow and despair. May we



share the light of Jesus so that people may see our good works and glorify our Father in heaven.

Scene 4: Jesus heals all. Matthew makes a quick landing after a magnificent flight of faith with the story of Peter. They make it to the other side and what do the people do? They go into all the surrounding villages to bring people to Jesus. And while it doesn't say this, I believe the disciples not only got out of their boat literally but also figuratively and joined them in going into the surrounding villages to bring people to Jesus of Nazareth! And Jesus does what he does best, he heals all of them and "makes them well." This phrase has as its root the word for "salvation." Jesus literally saves them. While this certainly refers to their physical and emotional ailments, we don't know if it also refers to their spiritual ailment. However, Matthew is again alluding to Jesus' higher calling of saving us not just physically and emotionally (mostly to happen with our resurrection bodies in the age to come) but spiritually; from our being dead in our trespasses. Jesus of Nazareth is our Savior in whom we are to put our full trust, going all in as his disciples and being called to battle doubt and fear in such a way that faith over fear become our distinguishing desire and characteristic.

Let's pray: Heavenly Father, we thank you for saving us in and through your Son, Jesus Christ. We thank you that when we put our trust in Jesus and risk getting out of our comfortable boats, amazing things can happen. Help us to keep our eyes focused on Jesus of Nazareth, our Lord and Savior. Help us to not become distracted by fear and doubt that cause us to sink and drown. Help us through your indwelling Holy Spirit to strengthen us and encourage us to live by faith and walk on water. In Jesus name, Amen.

Communion Meditation

Professing: (Apostles Creed)

**We believe in God, the Father almighty, creator of heaven and earth.
We believe in Jesus Christ, God's only Son, our Lord,
Who was conceived by the Holy Spirit, born of the virgin Mary,
Suffered under Pontius Pilate, was crucified, died, and was buried.
He descended to the dead. On the third day he rose and ascended to heaven
Where he is seated at the right hand of the Father.
He will come to judge the living and the dead.
We believe in the Holy Spirit, the holy catholic Church,
The communion of saints, the forgiveness of sins,
The resurrection of the body, and the life everlasting.**

Proclaiming: 1 Corinthians 11:23b-25 (Paraphrased)

On the night of his betrayal, Jesus took bread, gave thanks and broke it saying, "this is my body given for you. Do this in remembrance of me." After the meal he took the cup of wine and pouring it out said, "this wine is my blood, a new covenant of grace poured out for the forgiveness of sins."

Remember and believe the body and blood of Jesus was given and shed for the forgiveness of sins.

Song: Yet Not I But Through Christ In Me -- <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=zundjUFazfg>

*What gift of grace is Jesus my redeemer.
There is no more for heaven now to give.
He is my joy, my righteousness, and freedom,
My steadfast love, my deep and boundless peace.*



*To this I hold, my hope is only Jesus,
For my life is wholly bound to His.
Oh, how strange and divine, I can sing: all is mine!
Yet not I, but through Christ in me.*

*The night is dark but I am not forsaken.
For by my side, the Savior He will stay.
I labor on in weakness and rejoicing.
For in my need, His power is displayed.*

*To this I hold, my Shepherd will defend me;
Through the deepest valley He will lead.
Oh, the night has been won, and I shall overcome!
Yet not I, but through Christ in me.*

*No fate I dread, I know I am forgiven.
The future sure, the price it has been paid.
For Jesus bled and suffered for my pardon,
And He was raised to overthrow the grave.*

*To this I hold, my sin has been defeated,
Jesus now and ever is my plea.
Oh, the chains are released, I can sing: I am free!
Yet not I, but through Christ in me.*

*With every breath I long to follow Jesus,
For He has said that He will bring me home.
And day by day I know He will renew me,
Until I stand with joy before the throne.*

*To this I hold, my hope is only Jesus,
All the glory evermore to Him.
When the race is complete, still my lips shall repeat,
Yet not I, but through Christ in me!*

*To this I hold, my hope is only Jesus,
All the glory evermore to Him.
When the race is complete, still my lips shall repeat,
Yet not I, but through Christ in me!*

*When the race is complete, still my lips shall repeat
Yet not I, but through Christ in me!*

Sending as Disciples of Jesus: Matthew 28:18-20 (Paraphrased)

All authority in heaven and on earth has been given to Jesus. Therefore, as we are sent into the world by him, let us make disciples of all, baptizing them in the name of the Father and of the Son and of the Holy Spirit, teaching them to observe all that Jesus has commanded us. And let us remember and treasure that Jesus is with us always, even to the end of the age. Amen!