

PASSAGE - “the boat was already a considerable distance from land, buffeted by the waves because the wind was against it. Shortly before dawn Jesus went out to them, walking on the lake. When the disciples saw him walking on the lake, they were terrified. “It’s a ghost,” they said, and cried out in fear. But Jesus immediately said to them: “Take courage! It is I. Don’t be afraid.”

“Lord, if it’s you,” Peter replied, “tell me to come to you on the water.” “Come,” he said. Then Peter got down out of the boat, walked on the water and came toward Jesus. But when he saw the wind, he was afraid and, beginning to sink, cried out, “Lord, save me!” Immediately Jesus reached out his hand and caught him. “You of little faith,” he said, “why did you doubt?””

-Matthew 14:24–31 NIV11-GK

THEME STATEMENT - We can have faith in God because God is faithful and has always been there for us and always fulfilled His promises.

I. INTRO - John Lennox

A. Dr. Lennox once stated that blind faith is an injustice to Christianity because our faith does not come from just believing and having faith. Instead it comes from Christians seeing and remembering the pastimes that God has kept His word.

II. BACKGROUND - Miracles that Jesus Performed

A. Jesus had just fed 5,000 people with 5 loaves and 2 fish

1. The disciples did not believe it would be enough food and recommended that Jesus send the crowd home so the crowd could buy their own food. (Matt 14:15 NIV)

2. Jesus instead gave thanks and broke the bread. It was enough food to feed the 5,000.

B. Jesus makes the disciples get into the boat and go on ahead of Him. (Matt 14:22)

1. The disciples are considerable distance from land and are being beaten by waves with the wind against them.

2. It is during the fourth watch which is believed to be between 3 and 6 AM that the disciples see Jesus

a) It is the sight of Jesus which terrifies them

b) They believe Jesus is a ghost

C. Jesus speaks to the disciples to confirm it is Him

1. “Take courage! It is I. Don’t be afraid” (Matt 14:27)

D. It is here that Peter responds to Jesus and walks on water

III. PETER’S RESPONSE - Peter initially responds in such way he is able to walk on water

A. “Lord, if it’s you,” Peter replied, “tell me to come to you on the water.” (Matt 14:28)

1. Peter is asking Jesus to allow Peter to come out and be with Him

2. Jesus allows this and responds with “Come”

B. Peter is filled with the courage to get out of the boat in the middle of the sea and walks on water towards Jesus

C. Peter then begins to sink

1. Peter, “saw the wind, he was afraid and, beginning to sink, cried out, “Lord, save me!” (Matt 14:30)

2. Jesus immediately reaches out for Peter and grabs him

3. Jesus did not let Peter flounder around in the water and make him try to tread water or swim back on his own to the boat

a) Jesus was right there to pull Peter backup

D. Jesus’ response to Peter

1. “You of little faith,” He said, “why did you doubt?”

III. THE DOUBT IN PETER - Peter still had faith in Jesus, he just instead doubted about

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III. **THE DOUBT IN PETER** - Peter still had faith in Jesus, he just instead doubted about Jesus' power

A. Concept of doubt

1. Doubt is only found in the NT. In the OT, it speaks only of rejection, not doubt of God's word.

2. In the NT the Greek word, "distazo" was used with meaning "to distinguish," "to make a distinction," or "to judge between". It literally means, "to stand in two ways,"

- a) Therefore the NT concept of doubt is the wavering or halting between different thoughts.

- (1) It does not mean you disagree or reject one over the other

- (2) Peter having doubt does not mean he rejects God

B. Peter's Doubt

1. If Peter wavered between two different concepts what could those be?

- a) It would have been between the concept of the natural world, man cannot walk on water and the spiritual world, Jesus is omnipotent and can control the water

- (1) We see this because Peter started to sink. Peter "saw the wind"

- (2) He was reminded of the natural world and began to doubt/sink

C. How is Doubt different than Faith?

1. Peter saw the wind and struggled with what was actually occurring

2. Peter still had faith in Jesus and that Jesus was the Messiah

- a) Peter had just seen Jesus feed 5,000 people with 5 loaves and 2 fish

3. Faith is knowing that God is who He is and our Lord and Savior

- a) We still might have moments that we doubt between God being in control of ourselves but we still believe in God

V. **PETER'S LITTLE FAITH** - Peter was a disciple of Jesus, yet he still had little faith

A. Peter doubted because as Jesus stated he was of little faith

1. Having a strong faith provides the strength and understanding when we start to doubt to come back and fully trust in God.

2. Strong faith draws us from wavering between two concepts to the strong side, to God's side

B. Where does the strength come from?

1. Knowing God will fulfill His promises and remembering the times He has and not just a blind faith(Dr. Lennox)

- a) Before this encounter Peter had just seen Jesus feed 5,000 people with 5 loaves and 2 fish

- (1) If Jesus can provide for a large crowd, who might not all have believed and understood who Jesus was, would He not provide for us?

- (2) Jesus even tells us later on to remember this miracle for this reason

- (a) In Matt 16:5-12 Jesus is warning the disciples to be on their guard against the teaching of the Pharisees and the Sadducees

- (b) "You of little faith, why are you talking among yourselves about having no bread? Do you still not understand? Don't you remember the five loaves for the five thousand, and how many basketfuls you gathered?" (Matthew 16:8-9)

- (i) By the disciple remembering the miracles, they will understand Jesus is the Messiah and not doubt when confronted with the teachings from the Pharisees and the Sadducees

teachings from the Pharisees and the Sadducees

- b) God also provided during times in the OT
 - (1) God provide the means for the Israelites to escape Egypt with the Passover.
 - (2) God then told the Israelites to celebrate the Passover in remembrance of their escape from Egypt
 - (a) “Observe the month of Aviv and celebrate the Passover of the LORD your God, because in the month of Aviv he brought you out of Egypt by night. Sacrifice as the Passover to the LORD your God an animal from your flock or herd at the place the LORD will choose as a dwelling for his Name. Do not eat it with bread made with yeast, but for seven days eat unleavened bread, the bread of affliction, because you left Egypt in haste— so that all the days of your life you may remember the time of your departure from Egypt.” Deuteronomy 16:1–3
 - (3) God also continued to fulfill His promise to the Israelites by providing victories against their enemies
 - (a) The battle of Jericho
 - (b) The battle of Ai
 - (c) The battle of Jerusalem
- c) God also provides throughout our own lives, personal testimony
 - (1) For me a clear example of this is just being here today.
 - (2) These can be tricky to remember. We might allow time passing to play tricks and start to doubt God actually provided for us
 - (3) To prevent this I suggest you record it by means of journaling or other media means

2. Remembering these past provisions from God allow us to strength and know when we climb out of that boat to walk on the water. We can have the confidence we won't sink

VI. FAITH BEING A TWO WAY STREET - We can not just jump out of a boat only to see and have God save us

A. Peter did not immediately jump out of the boat and expect to be able to walk over to Jesus

1. Peter calls out to Jesus to confirm if it is Jesus and that Jesus wants Peter to get out of the boat

- a) “Lord, if it’s you,” Peter replied, “tell me to come to you on the water.” Matthew 14:28
 - (1) Peter will not attempt the walk without Jesus’ direct instruction,
 - (2) Peter is willing to follow Jesus but he first wants to confirm he is following Jesus’ plan
- b) “Come,” he said. Then Peter got down out of the boat, walked on the water and came toward Jesus.” Matthew 14:29

- (1) It was only after Peter heard Jesus’ command did Peter know he could get out of the boat
- (2) It was also only after Jesus’ command that Peter was able to walk on water
- (3) Some do look at this passage as Peter testing Jesus, but through the Greek (the “inceptive aorist” normally denotes the beginning of a continuing state rather than a failed attempt) illustrates Peter walked on water then he began to sink, not that he intended to walk on water and sank right away. If it was going against God’s commandment of not testing Him then why would God allow Peter to walk on

sink, not that he intended to walk on water and sank right away. If it was going against God's commandment of not testing Him then why would God allow Peter to walk on water?

2. God will provide for us but we have to provide him with obedience back and follow His plan (God is Faithful therefore we are able to be Faithful to Him)

a) The battle of Ai

(1) God did provide a victory for Joshua and the Israelites but the first time He did not

(2) Joshua at first sends 3,000 men to attack Ai, but those men are defeated and flee Ai

(3) Joshua finds out Achan took some of the plunder from Jericho instead of destroying it like God commanded

(a) "the Israelites cannot stand against their enemies; they turn their backs and run because they have been made liable to destruction. I will not be with you anymore unless you destroy whatever among you is devoted to destruction." Joshua 7:12

(4) Once Achan and the plunder were destroyed the Israelites were able to achieve victory of Ai

(a) The Israelites returned to God's ways

VII. APPLYING THE WORD

A. Do you know where God is calling you today?

1. It is one thing to have faith and believe in God but do you know where He wants you

2. Do you know where or how He is trying to use you to minister?

a) Could be how you interact with your co-workers day to day or taking business trips with them

b) Could be you are called act in the mission field

c) Could be you are to help out with Winter Relief or local events at the church

d) Could be sponsoring midshipmen

B. Are you allowing something to hold you back?

1. Are you afraid of financial hardship?

2. Are you afraid of losing out in success at work?

3. Are you afraid of what others might say about you?

C. Are you praying to have God lead you

1. Peter called to Jesus to ask Jesus if he should come to Him

2. Communication is a two way street like faith so without prayer how do you expect to hear God back

D. Are you remembering

1. Are you reading the Bible to remember the stories where God provided

a) The examples I used are only a small fraction that are in the Bible

2. Do you have a particular one you can hold fast to when you do start to doubt?

a) Take joy in this, because God provides for us especially when we need him the most

Prayer -

Benediction - "so that Christ may dwell in your hearts through faith. And I pray that you, being rooted and established in love, may have power, together with all the Lord's holy people, to grasp how wide and long and high and deep is the love of Christ, and to know this love that surpasses knowledge—that you may be filled to the measure of all the fullness of God."

Ephesians 3:17-19

