

**Walking on Water**  
**Jesus is the King: Book of Matthew series #16**  
**Matthew 14:22-33**  
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You guys originally I was going to skip Matthew 14, because I was hoping to cover the death and resurrection of Jesus during Easter but there's more chapters in the Gospel of Matthew then there are Sundays to Easter. But this week I just felt like there is no way that I can skip this chapter, because the teaching is so spot on with everything that's happening in our church during this season of time, plus it's the new year, and we have college students back with us today, And we have a town hall meeting after church for those who want to come to that... and so I'm thinking you know we really need to cover this last story in chapter 14 because it will frame thing wonderfully!

It is so weird how in 2017 every time I was going through a really hard moment in one way or another I found myself thinking back on the imagery of Matthew 14. And so I would say in so many ways that this story carried me carried me through the hard times, but it's not just a passage that provides comfort, it's a passage that also inspires vision and hope. So let's jump right in.

### **Jesus Walks on the Water**

22 Immediately he made the disciples get into the boat and go before him to the other side, while he dismissed the crowds. 23 And after he had dismissed the crowds, he went up on the mountain by himself to pray. When evening came, he was there alone, 24 but the boat by this time was a long way[b] from the land,[c] beaten by the waves, for the wind was against them. 25 And in the fourth watch of the night[d] he came to them, walking on the sea.

OK I just want to ask some really easy questions and you're gonna tell me some really easy answers, OK? Who was the one who made the disciples get in the boat? The answer is-Jesus. And who told them to row to the other side? And the answer is Jesus.

So the disciples are in the boat because Jesus told them to get in the boat and the rowing to the other side because Jesus told them to row to the other side so they are on this God given mission to get to the other side, and while they are doing this very thing that God has called them to do they meet resistance, their boat is getting beaten by waves, the wind is howling against them, it seems like there are cosmic forces that are standing against them. The text says that Jesus came to them during the fourth watch of the night, which between 3 AM to 6 AM, which means that the disciples were long overdue. They are straining at the oars and not really getting anywhere.

Now just want to stop here and make a point. And here I'm going to borrow from another book that was written by Peter and this is what he said don't be surprised when fiery troubles come your way. I think some of us think that if God is with us and we are generally doing what we are suppose to do then we shouldn't meet resistance and things should go smoothly. But so many times in the lives of God's people, they are doing what God has called them to do and the waves of life keep beating against them. I have a friend who loves to say- "God never promised me a rose garden." The apostle Paul describes his life as fighting the good fight. Guys, for 2018, I think we should probably adjust our expectations. In 2018 is going to be a fight, and we are going to have to fight for joy and fight for faith.

And now for the disciples Jesus comes to join them in this fight.

26 But when the disciples saw him walking on the sea, they were terrified, and said, "It is a ghost!" and they cried out in fear. 27 But immediately Jesus spoke to them, saying, "Take heart; it is I. Do not be afraid."

Now The text says that the disciples saw him and their immediate response was to be terrified, and when we read that I think our first response is kind of like-really? Like come on guys. Ghost? But you know, I can understand where they're coming from. You're straining at orders all night long, you're tired you're exhausted, it's been pitch dark, maybe with a moonlit glow, and the last thing you're expecting to see is someone walking on the water. OK? And so one of them yells, "It's a ghost!" And you know, one person says it, then they all think it's true, and it's the first fake news.

Jesus calls out-"take heart, it is I! It's me.  
Don't be afraid! "

Now, there is so much going on here but I have to say, I love this next part.

What Peter does in this next part really makes him special.

28 And Peter answered him, "Lord, if it is you, command me to come to you on the water."

Now I'll tell you what I love about Peter's response. Peter sort of challenges the way that a lot of us see God's will.

I think a lot of times, we think of God's will in a kind of passive way.

#### **GOD'S WILL IS NOT PASSIVE**

Like we are willing to do something if it is really clear to us that that is what God wants us to do. Like, it's not enough that the Bible reveals that I should do

something, I need the Holy Spirit to prompt me before I do it. I will share about Jesus with a coworker, if the Holy Spirit prompts me to, otherwise I won't. And so the Holy Spirit doesn't seem to do that very often if at all, and so I just don't share. And so our lives sort of default into someone holding back and playing it safe a lot!

And I guess you can live life like, But I guess if you do just choose to play it safe and stay in the boat but if you do that then you're never going to walk on water. You will never experience the miracle of living the life where you can say there is just no way that that would've happened no way except God did something. And that's just way more exciting way to live life.

But Peter doesn't just want to sit there in the boat. He takes initiative. But let me say this, the beauty of what Peter does is not in what he says, it's not in taking the first step out the boat, the beauty of what he does is rooted in his thinking. You see all 12 of them were in the boat, but just one of them had the audacity to think: if Jesus can do that then what does this mean for the possibility of this moment? Then I'm telling you that is a dangerous dangerous way to think. And if you think that way it will get rewarded.

This is Peter's mindset. This is Peter's mindset. I am looking at Jesus walking on the water. This is crazy. This has never been done before in all of human history. This defies physics, no I cannot give a scientific explanation of how Jesus did this...

Now, Peter is going to make some intuitive leaps...And the crazy intuitive leap is this- like lord if it is you, and this is something that you do, then command me to go out on the water too! I think the Leap is this-if Jesus is Doing something amazing, and I'm with him, than I can do whatever amazing thing that he is calls me to do. That's the intuitive Leap. Not everyone thinks like this...

This is crazy. What would your life look like if you thought that way? Now that I have this kind of Jesus in my life, whatever he calls me to do, even if it has never been done before, it can be done.

You guys can I ask you the same question? Now that we have this Jesus, what does that mean for the possibility of this moment? What if he is calling you to do something that seems impossible?

Last year was the first time that we had an entire series on global missions. At least, for as long as I've been at CLC. And we shared a few goals that we had, one of which was that we would send out a long-term missionary onto the field.

At this point in time there are more than one billion people who have never heard the gospel, and to our best knowledge they are headed for an eternity without God. And it is going to be sheer agony.

And so we want to be people who are so passionate about extending God's glory to the nations, that we can't help but start sending out career missionaries. And maybe some people look around and say, Well, I can't see that happening here. But you guys, have you seen with Jesus can do? He seems to time and time again be doing the impossible, so if he calls us to be a sending church, there is nothing that he can't accomplish.

Not that's one dream we have as a church and that's on a corporate level.

But what on a personal level?

I wonder if some of you are so stuck in a sexual sin. You're like it's been decades. And I think Peter would say to you, Have you seen what Jesus can do? If Jesus have this kind of Jesus in your life, then what does that mean for 2018 and your personal holiness?

College students you might be looking at your course load and be thinking like there's just no way you can do all that and serve in ministry and be relationally available. It's just too much. But if the Lord calls you...

I wonder if some of you feel stuck in a certain relationship. And you're not working on it or praying about it because you feel hopeless about it. I wonder if some of you have given up sharing your faith with someone you care about. Maybe you don't even pray about it anymore. You know it's God's will, but you feel stuck.

Imagine Peter saying to you, But have you seen what Jesus can do? Have you thought about what that means for the present moment?

You guys because of who Jesus is, that changes everything about how we approach life. If he's calling you to do something there is nothing you can't do.

OK, guys there is something about this next part that puzzles me.

28 And Peter answered him, "Lord, if it is you, command me to come to you on the water." 29 He said, "Come." So Peter got out of the boat and walked on the water and came to Jesus. 30 But when he saw the wind,[e] he was afraid, and beginning to sink he cried out, "Lord, save me."

The part that puzzles me about this part right here is- why Peter sank? Like yes, I know I get it that he doubted, but I don't understand why? Why would you doubt if Jesus is right next to you and there is no natural explanation to explain why he is standing on the water, so why would you seek a natural explanation that would give you Doubt. That doesn't seem to make much sense.

So I think, if we act this out, I think it's going to be a little bit more clear to us. So I want you to imagine that Jesus is right there Where so-and-so is, and this stage is the boat OK? Right here this rug is the water. Jesus reveals himself. I say Lord if it's you command me to walk out to you. And then you say come. Everyone's looking at me I bring my leg over the boat, I press down and the surface is hard like concrete, and for the very first time in human history an ordinary man is walking on the water. I'm thinking this is incredible! I'm looking at Jesus like wow! I look back at the disciples and I think look at me guys. And then right at this moment I turn back and I feel something, it's the wind, and I hear something it's howling. And then maybe I look to the wall and there is coming at me a ridiculous wave. A formidable wave. I look at this I think think about what this wave is going to do to me. I feel afraid and suddenly I'm starting to sink! OK, stop, where did Peter go wrong?

Peter had his eyes on the wave when he should have had his eyes on Jesus.

You see the wind and the waves were saying one thing, which is I am coming to run you over and bring you down!

And Jesus is saying another thing - look at me you are going to be just fine, there is nothing we can't do if you follow me.

Which one do you believe?  
Which one do you look at?  
Which one do you focus on?

Your faith is as strong as what you choose to focus on!

It's like Jesus is saying to Peter, hey Peter eyes on me. It's like Jesus saying to us as were going through the challenges of the new year, hey eyes on me. Remember who I am. Focus on me. Meditate on me.

If you focus and meditate on all the wind and waves of 2018, then you will move out in fear. You'll be afraid. You'll sink and then swim back to the boat. I'm not saying Don't be aware of them, be aware of them. I'm not saying deny that they are there, you should acknowledge that they are there.

But it's about focus, it's what you believe in, it's what you meditate on.

Max Lucado has a great acronym for facing the winds of anxiety. It spells the word CALM. It totally applies to what we can do whenever we face a wave of fear.

**C - Celebrate God** - Take time each day to celebrate who God is. That's why worship is so important! Jesus you walked on water! Nothing is impossible for you. You think about this all day long.

**A - Ask Him for help!** - Peter does two things right here. He takes a risk and then he asks for help. Maybe Peter should have done this the moment he got out of the boat!

**L - Leave your problem with Jesus.** The problem waves keep coming back, each time you leave every wave at the feet of Jesus. Sometimes we forget and we have to go, Hold it, I'm leaving that problem at the feet of Jesus.

**M - Meditate.** Fill your mind all day long with thoughts about God. Like I am not kidding you, in a given day, I will repeat Isaiah 41:10 in my mind just to get my mind off the waves and back on Jesus. It's a constant fight!

In C.S. Lewis' "Prince Caspian", one of the children comes upon Aslan, who is the Christ figure in the Narnia stories, after not seeing him for a long time.

She goes, "Aslan, you're bigger!"

That is because you're older, little one, he answered.

Not because you are?

I am not. But every year you grow, you will find me bigger.

Isn't this true with us too? It's not like meditating on God actually makes Him bigger, but the more we fix our eyes on who He is the more we see ultimate reality.

I bet you there are a lot of people here and you feel like your faith in Jesus is pretty small, and your faith in the wave is pretty big. Maybe you feel like there is no hope for you.

And wonderful thing happens here. Peter cries out to Jesus, he says, "Lord save me!" And the text says Jesus immediately reached out his hand and took hold of him. Immediately. Jesus stands always by your side always ready to save.

And I think the implication here is that you don't have to be a person of big faith to do incredible things. If God has called you to do something, then the moment you step out of the boat you can keep your eyes on Jesus and you can say Jesus save me. You can say Jesus without you I'm going to be sinking every step of the way, save me. And the moment you ask for help he is right there immediately ready to help you.

**31 Jesus immediately reached out his hand and took hold of him, saying to him, “O you of little faith, why did you doubt?” 32 And when they got into the boat, the wind ceased. 33 And those in the boat worshiped him, saying, “Truly you are the Son of God.”**

**Now I think 33 might be the best part. People look at Jesus and then they look at your interaction with him in your life and they look and they see the way that he saves you and for some reason all of it, his Majesty, the way that he interacts with his people, the way that he reaches out and saves us; it is all on display and the people around you, they look at what God is doing and they fall down and worship the God who walks on water and the God who reaches out and saves you. This is amazing.**