

## ARE YOU READY TO WALK WITH HIM? Matthew 14:22-33, Sunday, Aug. 9, 2026

Two hunters came across a bear so big that they dropped their rifles and ran for cover. One man climbed a tree while the other hid in a nearby cave. The bear was in no hurry to eat, so he sat down between the tree and the cave to reflect upon his good fortune. Suddenly, and for no apparent reason, the hunter in the cave came rushing out, almost ran into the waiting bear, hesitated, and then dashed back in again. The same thing happened a second time. When he emerged for the third time, his companion in the tree frantically called out, ***“Woody, are you crazy? Stay in the cave till he leaves!”*** ***“Can’t,”*** ***panted Woody, “there’s another bear in there.”***

**Do you ever feel like the hunter in the cave?** Like every time you turn around there is another problem just waiting for you. Like no matter what you do you just can’t escape from your troubles. Often times in our rushing around trying to deal with our problems we only make them worse.

A photographer for a national magazine was assigned to get photos of a great forest fire. Smoke at the scene hampered him and he asked his home office to hire a plane. Arrangements were made and he was told to go at once to a nearby airport, where the plane would be waiting. When he arrived at the airport, a plane was warming up near the runway. He jumped in with his equipment and yelled, “Let’s go! Let’s go!” The pilot swung the plane into the wind, and they soon were in the air. “Fly over the north side of the fire,” yelled the photographer, “and make three or four low level passes.” “Why?” asked the pilot. “Because I’m going to take pictures,” cried the photographer. “I’m a photographer and photographers take pictures!” After a pause the pilot said, ***“You mean you’re not the instructor?”***

There is an old seafaring tradition that if the ship sinks the captain should go down with the ship. Now I will be the first to admit that I don’t know much about sailing, but that sounds like the stupidest tradition I have ever heard of. I think jumping into a life boat and living to sail another day would be a much better tradition. Many Christians today are in danger of going down with the ship. Many Christians are in danger of having their spiritual lives sunk by the assault of life’s storms. They say things like, ***“There’s no use because I’m just no good. That’s just the way I am and there is nothing I can do about it.”*** The storm’s of discouragement, despair, and disbelief threaten to sink us, but rather than going down with the ship we must find a life boat that will save us from a senseless spiritual death.

**Peter’s example has much to teach us about how to find this LIFEBOAT.** One night Peter and the disciples were sailing across the sea of Galilee while Jesus stayed behind to pray. As they were sailing a fierce storm suddenly arose and threatened to sink their ship, but, as we will see, Peter was unwilling to simply go down with the ship. ***Please follow along as I read Matthew 14:22-33 . . .***

### 1. RESPOND TO THE CALL OF CHRIST.

The storm was raging ferociously around the small fishing vessel and by all appearances twelve men were about to be lost at sea. However, something marvelous and miraculous unexpectedly happened.

**Jesus approached the boat walking on the water.** At first the disciples were frightened by his appearance, but Jesus comforts them by reassuring them that it is him. Peter is unwilling to simply go down with the ship and wishes to go to his Lord but knows that it would be foolish to do anything without first being commanded to do so by the Lord and so he asks Jesus to command him to come to Him on the water. Jesus called Peter to come to him and Peter stepped out in sheer faith and began to go to the Lord walking on the water. **ARE YOU READY TO WALK WITH HIM?**

When we find ourselves caught in the storm’s of life that threaten to sink us Jesus will always come to us. However, He is not content to come to us because He also wants us to come to him. He doesn’t want us to go down with the boat and so He calls us out of the boat. How do we respond to the call of Christ? The key is faith. **Like Peter, He calls us to step out in an act of faith—Like Peter, he calls us to walk with Him.** This act of faith will always be something that we cannot handle on our own and it will seem crazy from the world’s perspective. No secular sailor would advise walking on the water as a solution for getting caught in a fierce storm. The response that Jesus calls for requires both faith and action. Peter had to believe in Jesus, but if he didn’t act on that belief he never would have walked on the water. William Booth said, “Faith and works should travel side by side, step answering to step, like the legs of men walking. First faith and then works; and then faith again, and then works again -- until they can scarcely distinguish which is the one and which is the other.”

Like Peter, we must be willing to step out in faith when Christ calls us. The African impala can jump to a height of over 10 feet and cover a distance of greater than 30 feet. Yet these magnificent creatures can be kept in an enclosure in any zoo with a 3-foot wall. The animals will not jump if they cannot see where their feet will fall. Faith is the ability to trust what we cannot see, and with faith we are freed from the flimsy enclosures of life that only fear allows to entrap us. Sometimes

it is true that we have nothing to fear but fear itself because fear is the absence of faith.

If God calls you to do something, no matter how radical it may seem, do it. If you don't the Bible says that you will be guilty of sinning against the very one who is calling you out of the boat. James says, "Anyone, then, who knows the good he ought to do and doesn't do it, sins" (4:17). If you know that you are supposed to do something then you are held accountable for doing it. God may be calling you to something that seems humanly impossible. Guess what? It is. It wouldn't require faith to do something simple. It doesn't take faith to stay in bed and pull the cover over your head. It does take faith to step out of the boat and into the will of God. And that is exactly how Christians are called to live. For the true Christian every step we take in life is an act of faith, not in ourselves or in our abilities, or in our own goodness, but in our God. The Scriptures say, "The righteous will live by faith" (Romans 1:17). It is a lifestyle -- a lifestyle of faith. Having said all that, this teaching is not an accuse for being foolish or reckless in the name of walking by faith.

In April 1988 there was a news report of a photographer who was a skydiver. He had jumped from a plane along with numerous other skydivers and filmed the group as they fell and opened their parachutes. On the film shown on the news as the final skydiver opened his chute, the picture went berserk. The announcer reported that the cameraman had fallen to his death, having jumped out of the plane without a parachute. It wasn't until he reached for the absent rip cord that he realized he was free falling without a parachute. Until that point, the jump probable seemed exciting and fun. But tragically, he had acted with thoughtless haste and deadly foolishness. Nothing could save him, for his faith was in a parachute never buckled on. When God calls you to take a leap of faith by all means do it, but make sure that you have your parachute on -- make sure that God really called you to do it. Faith isn't an excuse for foolishness.

**Are you caught in the storms of life this morning? Respond to the call of Christ and remain focused on the deliverance of Christ.**

## **2. REMAIN FOCUSED ON THE DELIVERANCE OF CHRIST.**

Peter boldly stepped out of the boat by faith and began to walk on the water to Jesus. But his triumph quickly turned to tragedy when his focus shifted from the Savior to the storm and he began to sink. As long as his faith was focused on Christ, Peter was empowered to do the miraculous. But the crashing waves and the howling wind caused him to lose faith by losing focus on Jesus. As soon as Peter realized what was happening he immediately turned his focus back to the Lord as he cried out, "Lord, save me!" In response to this simple prayer Jesus reached out his hand and caught him and saved him from certain drowning.

It was a fog-shrouded morning, July 4, 1952, when a young woman named Florence Chadwick waded into the water off Catalina Island. She intended to swim the channel from the island to the California coast. Long-distance swimming was not new to her; she had been the first woman to swim the English Channel in both directions. The water was numbing cold that day. The fog was so thick she could hardly see the boats in her party. Several times sharks had to be driven away with rifle fire. She swam more than 15 hours before she asked to be taken out of the water. Her trainer tried to encourage her to swim on since they were so close to land, but when Florence looked, all she saw was fog. So she quit . . . only one mile from her goal.

Later she said, "I'm not excusing myself, but if I could have seen the land I might have made it." It wasn't the cold or fear of exhaustion that caused Florence Chadwick to fail. It was the fog. Many times we too fail, not because of fear or frustration, but because we lose sight of the goal. Two months after her failure, Florence Chadwick walked off the same beach into the same channel and swam the distance, setting a new speed record, because she could see the land.

We cannot afford to allow the storms of life to distract us from the One who is calling us to himself. You can do this by focusing not on the crisis, but on the Christ. What was Peter's method of refocusing? The key is prayer. You cannot pray to God without focusing on God and there is no better way to get your focus back on him than to pray to him. Peter's prayer was nothing fancy, but it was effective. **It was Martin Luther who said, "The fewer the words, the better the prayer."** If Peter had chosen this moment to utter a long, pious sounding prayer he would have perished before he got to his petition. **I believe that the most powerful prayer is both passionate and to the point.** When Christ calls you obey. When storms distract you—PRAY!

## **3. RECEIVE THE PEACE OF CHRIST.**

After Jesus rescued Peter from drowning, they walked on the water back to the boat and got in. The moment that Jesus entered the boat there was peace as the storm lost its power and died. The storms of life are powerless when the presence of Christ fills our lives and produces peace in our lives. The truth is there can be no true peace in our lives apart from the presence of Christ in our lives. Does this mean that everything in life will be rosy? No. In fact it will be quite the opposite. When we come to Christ Satan will try all the harder to whip up storms to distract us and destroy us. But Christ will take

us to the eye of those storms. In the eye of the storm there is peace even though the storm is raging all around us.

There once was a king who offered a prize to the artist who would paint the best picture of peace. Many artists tried. The king looked at all the pictures, but there were only two he really liked and he had to choose between them. One picture was of a calm lake. The lake was a perfect mirror for peaceful towering mountains that were all around it. Overhead was a blue sky with fluffy white clouds. All who saw this picture thought it was a perfect picture of peace. The other picture had mountains too. But these were rugged and bare. Above was an angry sky from which rain fell, and lightning flashed. Down the side of the mountain tumbled a foaming waterfall. This did not look peaceful at all. But when the king looked, he saw behind the waterfall a tiny bush growing in a crack in the rock. In the bush a mother bird had built her nest. There, in the midst of the angry water, sat the mother bird on her nest in perfect peace.

Which do you think won the prize? The king chose the second picture. Do you know why? “Because” explained the king, “peace does not mean to be in a place where there is no noise, trouble, or hard work. ***Peace sometimes means to be in the midst of all those things that can cause trouble in your life and still be calm in your heart.*** That is the real meaning of peace.” True peace is found not in the absence of crisis, but in the presence of Christ. Jesus said, ***“I have told you these things, so that in me you may have peace. In this world you will have trouble. But take heart! I have overcome the world”*** (John 16:33).

**How do we receive this peace? THE KEY IS WORSHIP.** When Jesus entered the boat the disciples did the only thing they could -- they worshiped Him.

We can learn something important about true worship from this passage. The text tells us that the disciples worshiped Jesus not because He calmed the storm, ***but because He was the Son of God. True worship praises God because of who He is, not because of what He has done.*** Truly we are to praise God for what He has done, ***but the Bible calls that thanksgiving not worship.*** Pure worship does not ask, “What have you done for me lately?” or “What’s in it for me?” **Pure worship is the worship of God simply because He is God.**

**When Christ calls US, we obey. When storms distract we pray. When Christ comes to YOU, Let Him stay.**

## CONCLUSION:

There is still an unanswered question. If God really loves us, why does he allow these storms to come into our lives at all? **Two reasons.**

1. First of all, we bring many of our problems on ourselves. Someone has said, ***“If you could kick the person responsible for most of your troubles in the backside, you wouldn’t be able to sit down for two weeks.”***
2. The second reason is best explained by telling a story. There was a group of women that met for Bible study. While studying the book of Malachi, chapter three, they came across verse three which says: ***“He will sit as a refiner and purifier of silver.”***

This verse puzzled the women and they wondered how this statement applied to the character and nature of God. One of the women offered to find out more about the process of refining silver, and to get back to the group at their next Bible study. The following week, the woman called up a silversmith and made an appointment to watch him while at work. She didn’t mention anything about the reason for her interest, beyond her curiosity about the process of refining silver. As she watched the silversmith work, he held a piece of silver over the fire and let it heat up. He explained that in refining silver, one needed to hold the silver in the middle of the fire, where the flames were the hottest as to burn away all the impurities. The woman thought about God holding us in such a hot spot, then she thought again about the verse, that says, “He sits as a refiner and purifier of silver.” She asked the silversmith if it was true that he had to sit there in front of the fire the entire time the silver was being refined. The man answered yes, that not only did he have to sit there holding the silver, but he had to keep his eyes on it the entire time it was in the fire. If the silver was left even a moment too long in the flames, it would be destroyed. The woman was silent for a moment. Then she asked the silversmith, “But how do you know when the silver is fully refined?”

He smiled at her and answered, “Oh, that’s easy -- when I see my image in it.” **May “God’s image” shine off you for others to see. Yes, by refining us, cleansing us of our past troubles, flaws, others are able to see how God works in our lives. Others are able to witness the importance of God in our lives. They are able to see the image of God in us and maybe through us Turn for Him also.**

**So, You may experience a “lifetime” of storms and struggles, however the “Good News” is you will not endure them alone or walk alone if you have FAITH to get out of the Boat and walk with Him—SO, IT IS TIME TO DO AS PETER DID, “WALK WITH JESUS.” Amen.**