

Peter's Foolish Step

March 27, 2016 ~ Matthew 14.22-33

Recent Events

- ❖ Weeks before this Jesus had commissioned the 12 (Lk 9.1)
 - ✧ They had then returned from their travels (Lk 9.10)
 - ✧ Jesus learned John the Baptist was beheaded (Jn 14.13)
 - ✧ They went to a desert place near Bethsaida to rest (Mk 6.31-32)
- ❖ But the multitudes followed them there
 - ✧ Jesus taught of the kingdom of God & healed them (Lk 9.11)
 - ✧ Jesus fed 5,000 men that day (*and women & children* – Mt 14.21)
- ❖ The people say “This is truly the Prophet who is to come into the world.” (Jn 6.14)
 - ✧ They plot to make Him their king (Jn 6.15)

Highlights of the Night

- ❖ Jesus “made His disciples” leave in the boat (Mt 14.22)
 - ✧ Jesus sends people away and goes into hills to pray (Mt 14.23)
 - ✧ Winds blow against them & waves toss the boat (Mt 14.24, Jn 6.18)
 - ✧ Jesus “saw them straining at rowing” (Mk 6.48)
- ❖ After 3am “Jesus went to them, walking on the sea.” (Mt 14.25)
 - ✧ Matthew, Mark, and John all record this event (*only Luke does not*)
 - ✧ All 3 highlight the fear of the apostles, “It is a ghost!”
 - ✧ Jesus replied, “Be of good cheer! It is I; do not be afraid.” (Mt 14.27, Mk 6.50)
- ❖ Only Matthew records Peter's walking on the water (Mt 14.28-32)
- ❖ Only John records the boat's miraculous arrival ashore (Jn 6.21)
- ❖ **Read** combined synopsis of “**Jesus Walking on the Sea**”

Aftermath of “Feeding of the 5,000”

- ❖ The people were euphoric ~ 3 reasons
 1. Jesus miraculously healed them of serious sicknesses and demonic influences
 2. He opposed the religious authorities and didn't fear the political rulers
 3. Now He miraculously fed 10,000+ people in the middle of nowhere
- ❖ They wanted to make him their king / They didn't ask His permission
 - ✧ And His 12 chosen disciples were in agreement with the people

Xition: Jesus took immediate action to defuse situation . . .

Jesus Defuses the Situation

1. Made His disciples leave / He insisted upon their leaving
 - ✧ He had wanted them to get rest (Mk 6.31 “they did not even have time to eat”)
 - ✧ Now He didn't want them encouraging the crowd to make Him their king
2. Sent the multitudes away
 - ✧ They didn't want to go but they heeded Him
 - ✧ They wanted Him as their leader after all / So they obey His commands
3. Absents Himself / He went into the hills by Himself to pray

Jesus Sought Solitude to Pray

- ❖ We are often too busy to pray
 - ✧ But Jesus was often too busy not to pray
 - ✧ Though He was the Son of God / He consistently sought solitude with His Father
- ❖ We are always to pray / But we're to especially pray before important events
 1. Jesus fasted and prayed for 40 days before entering into ministry
 2. He prayed all night before choosing the 12 apostles (Lk 6.12)
 3. He prayed for hours in Gethsemane before His crucifixion
- ❖ Jesus' prayers this night preceded 3 significant events
 1. Storm (*high winds*) the apostles were then facing
 2. His imminent walk across the lake to join them
 3. Bread of Heaven sermon He'll give the next day in Capernaum
- ❖ Jesus is about to kill the people's dream of making him their king

Jesus Saw Them and Walks Across the Lake

- ❖ The apostles likely left in the boat about 8 hours earlier
- ❖ The boat was 3 to 4 miles away when Jesus saw it
 - ✧ How did He see the boat – and their peril in it – when it was that far away?
 - ✧ I'm not sure this is physical sight being referred to
 - ✧ He knows their peril and He heads towards them
- ❖ Jesus walked for miles across a wind tossed sea
 - ✧ They spot Him and are afraid / It says they saw a ghost / a phantasm
 - ✧ But He is quick to assure them / to calm their fears
 - ✧ Mainly He appears to let them know He cares for them

Xition: But Peter is not content to merely see Jesus. . .

Peter Wants to be with Jesus

- ❖ Only Matthew records Peter's walking towards Jesus on the water
- ❖ Many messages remark on Peter's doubts
 - ✧ Jesus rebukes Peter's doubts so that's a legitimate message
 - ✧ But I'm much more impressed by Peter's passion and focus
- ❖ Peter replies to Jesus, "Command me to come to You on the water"
 - ✧ "Why would Peter say this?"
 - ◇ I've read that he was showing off, that he was afraid
 - ◇ But I think he just wanted to be with Jesus where Jesus was
 - ◇ Jesus wasn't with them, but he wanted to be with Jesus

Peter Steps from the Boat

- ❖ This boat was likely 25' to 30' long, 8' wide, and 3' high
 - ✧ v29 says Peter "had come down out of the boat"
 - ◇ He'd had to step over the side and down onto the surface of the water
 - ◇ III: "Jesus" movie ~ Somewhat realistic portrayal of this
 - Peter has his eyes on Jesus the entire time
 - He doesn't even realize he's on the water at first
 - But then his eyes are drawn away from Jesus and he sinks
- ❖ Our message title is "Peter's Foolish Step"
 - ✧ That's how the world views any steps of faith towards God
 - ✧ But for a few moments, Peter had eyes only for Jesus
 - ✧ He had no fears, he had no doubts, he had only Jesus in view
- ❖ But then reality intruded / Doubts and fears swept through his mind
 - ✧ Yet he cried out, "Lord, save me!"
 - ✧ And Jesus reaches out and recues him

The People Catch Up

- ❖ **Jn 6.25** ~ Some of the 5,000 find Jesus on east side of Capernaum
 - ✧ But Jesus rebukes them, telling them why they sought Him (**vss 26-27**)
 - ✧ ".. you seek Me .. because you ate of the loaves and were filled. Do not labor for the food which perishes, but for the food which endures to everlasting life.."
- ❖ **v28** ~ The people begin a dialogue with Him, "What shall we do . . .?"

Xition: Jesus preaches that He is the bread of heaven . . .

The Bread of Heaven is Rejected

- ❖ **v31** ~ The people refer to the manna God gave their fathers
 - ✧ **v32** ~ Jesus replies that the Father is giving them true bread from heaven
 - ✧ **v34** ~ They say, “give us this bread always”
- ❖ Jesus then proclaims Himself the “bread of life” (**Read v35-40**)
 - ✧ But the Jews complain and disparage Him (**Read v41-42**)
 - ✧ Read sermon (**v43-51**) and (**v53-58**)
- ❖ **v61a** ~ Many of His disciples complained about this
 - ✧ **v61b - 65** ~ Jesus responds with a truth that deeply offends them
 - ✧ **v66** ~ Many disciples stop following Him
- ❖ **v67** ~ “Then Jesus said to the twelve, ‘Do you also want to go away?’”
 - ✧ **v68 - 69** ~ “But Simon Peter answered for them, ‘Lord, to whom shall we go? You have the words of eternal life. Also we have come to believe and know that You are the Christ, the Son of the Living God.’”

Saving Faith

- ❖ I skipped two thoughts in our main text earlier
 - ✧ Jesus’ command to Peter, “Come”
 - ✧ Apostles’ reaction to Jesus entering boat and wind ceasing
 - ❖ **Read Mt 14.28-33** ~ “And Peter said ‘.. You are the Son of God.’”
 - ❖ The miracle of the feeding of the 5,000 is 1 of only 2 recorded in all 4 gospels
 - ✧ The only other one is the resurrection of Christ
 - ✧ “Why is this day so important to all of the apostles?”
 - ◇ I believe Peter, and perhaps many other apostles, were saved that day . . .
 - ❖ This is the first time the apostles are said to have worshipped Jesus
 - ❖ This is the first time they acknowledged Him to be the Son of God
- Jesus commanded Peter to come to Him on the water, saying simply “Come”
 - Peter stepped off of the boat in faith / but later cried, “Lord, save me!”
 - Peter was saved that day, both physically and spiritually . . .

Now to Him who is able to keep you from stumbling,

And to present you faultless before the presence of His glory with exceeding joy,

To God our Savior, who alone is wise,

Be glory and majesty, dominion and power, both now and forever.

Amen *pause* Go in peace . . .

Synoptic Representation of Jesus Walking on Sea (Matthew 14, Mark 6, John 6)

Therefore when Jesus perceived that they were about to come and take Him by force to make Him king, He *insisted* His disciples get into the boat and go before Him to the other side, to Bethsaida, while He sent the multitudes away. And when He had sent the multitudes away, He went up on the mountain by Himself to pray. Now when evening came, He was alone there. But the boat was now in the middle of the sea, tossed by the waves. Then He saw them straining at rowing, for the wind was against them.

Now in the fourth watch of the night Jesus went to them, walking on the sea. And when the disciples all saw Him walking on the sea, they were troubled, saying, "It is a ghost!" And they cried out for fear.

But immediately Jesus spoke to them, saying, "Be of good cheer! It is I; do not be afraid."

And Peter answered Him and said, "Lord, if it is You, command me to come to You on the water."

So He said, "Come." And when Peter had come down out of the boat, he walked on the water to go to Jesus. But when he saw that the wind *was* boisterous⁴ he was afraid; and beginning to sink he cried out, saying, "Lord, save me!"

And immediately Jesus stretched out *His* hand and caught him, and said to him, "O you of little faith, why did you doubt?" And when they got into the boat, the wind ceased.

And they were greatly amazed in themselves beyond measure, and marveled. For they had not understood about the loaves, because their heart was hardened. Then those who were in the boat came and worshiped Him, saying, "Truly You are the Son of God." Immediately the boat came to the land of Gennesaret and anchored there.

Peter's Foolish Step (Handout)

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1. What are some of the events that immediately preceded Jesus and Peter walking on the water?

2. What is one reason that Jesus insisted the apostles leave on the boat without Him when they did?

3. What did Jesus do after He dismissed the crowd?

4. Name some special events Jesus prayed about. What are some special events you should pray about? Have you?

5. Would you have had the courage to walk towards Jesus on the water? Can you name someone else you know that may have?

6. Why is it that many disciples stop following Jesus?

