

God of Miracles | Walking On Water | Pastor Steve Wells | 03.20.2022
Replay message at: <http://www.northpointeFL.org/messages>

This morning Pastor Steve spoke about the story of Jesus walking on water in **John 6:16-21 (Matthew 14:22-33, Mark 6:45-52)**. We have heard the phrase "Faith Over Fear" quite often the last few years, this is a real life example of having faith over fear—but also allowing fear to creep back in. Pastor Steve reminded us that just like what happened with Peter- fear will sink us if we let it. It is important that we always strive to keep our eyes fixed on Jesus. Keeping our eyes on Jesus is easier said than done. It is especially difficult during times of fear, when it feels like we are surrounded by wind and waves. Just as we see in the story, it's safer to be out of the boat with Jesus, than in the boat without Him. R.C. Sproul with Ligonier Ministries wrote a devotional about the events of Jesus and Peter walking on water. Read the devotional written by him below.

Walking On Water

After miraculously increasing a few loaves and fish into a quantity that can feed thousands, Jesus sends the crowd away and withdraws to a mountain to pray. Shortly before dismissing the crowd, our Savior orders His disciples to return to the boat in order to give Him time alone with His Father (**Matthew 13:22-23**). Many scholars believe Jesus separates His disciples from the crowd so that they might not get caught up in the crowd's messianic expectations, which were probably not in line with the fact that the Messiah had to suffer.

In any case, we know that Christ spends many hours in prayer. He begins as soon as the evening comes (six o'clock or so, v. 23) and we do not see Him in action again until the fourth watch of the night (anywhere between three and six in the morning, v. 25). Such perseverance in prayer must not be overlooked. If Jesus, who always does His Father's will, needed to pray for such a lengthy period, how much more should extended communion with our Creator be a part of our lives? It is a fact that those believers who have made a great impact on history were men and women who spent a lot of time on their knees.

Jesus is walking upon the water, approaching their ship tossed far from the shore by a powerful storm, the first time the disciples see Him after this prayer vigil (vv. 25-27). This act is a powerful proof of His deity. In Scripture, Yahweh, the one, true Lord of all, is described as walking upon the water (**Psalms 77:16-20; Habakkuk 3:15**). Whether or not Peter has a full-orbed understanding of Christ's divinity at this point in his life is doubtful, but he does understand the extraordinary authority that Jesus must possess if He can make His path on top of the waves. Such faith prompts Peter to ask for permission from Jesus to step off the boat and join Him upon the sea (**Matthew. 14:28-29**).

Peter takes his eyes off of Jesus and sinks, but we would miss a vital lesson of this story if we focus only on Christ's criticism of His disciple's "little faith" (vv. 30-31). Though mixed with doubt and fear, Peter's faith is nonetheless true — he does walk on the water. More importantly, the fisherman is not abandoned when he falters; rather, the Savior extends His hand to save him (vv. 32-33).

As many commentators have said regarding this passage, Peter's faith is much like ours, small and incomplete, a mixture of trust and doubt. Nevertheless, God does not wait for us to have perfect faith before He saves us. The mere presence of authentic trust is required, and periods of doubt say nothing about the legitimacy of our faith. No matter the fervor of your trust this day, know that Jesus is a Savior who rescues those who struggle with doubt.

R.C. Sproul, October 2014, Ligonier Ministries <https://www.ligonier.org/learn/devotionals/walking-water>

There is a consistent pattern in Scripture of what happens in a life that God wants to use and calls us to step beyond our fears and trust by faith.

- **There is always a call.** God asks an ordinary person to engage in an act of extraordinary trust, that of getting out of the boat.
- **There is always fear.** God has an inextinguishable habit of asking people to do things that are scary to them. It may be a fear of inadequacy ("I am slow of speech and slow of tongue," Moses said). It may be a fear of failure ("The land we explored devours those who live in it," cried the spies sent out to the Promised Land). It may even be a fear of God ("For I knew you were a hard man, seeking to reap where you did not sow," claimed the servant in Jesus' parable). But one way or another, there will be fear.
- **There is always reassurance of God's presence** ("The Lord is with you, Mighty Warrior!" an angel assures Gideon who had certainly never been addressed by that title before). God also promises to give whatever gifts are needed to fulfill His assignment ("I will help you to speak, and teach you what to say" He tells a stuttering Moses).
- **There is always a decision to choose Faith over Fear.** Sometimes, as with Moses and Gideon, people say yes to God's call. Sometimes, as with the ten frightened spies or the rich young ruler who spoke with Jesus, they say no. But always people must decide.
- **There is always a changed life.** Those who say yes to God's call don't walk the walk perfectly – not by a long shot. But because they say yes to God, they learn and grow even from their failures. And they become part of His actions to redeem the world.

-John Ortberg

Share with your Small Group or family about a time God called you:

- What was He calling you to do? Or where was He calling you?
- What were your fears?
- How did He reassure you of His presence?
- Did you decide to choose Faith or Fear?
- How did your answer to the call change your life?