

Rescued From Doubt

(6/27/21; Dr. Baines, Jr.)

Read: Matthew 14:22-33

Summary Highlights: In vss. 22-24, Jesus sent His disciples ahead of Him. They were to cross the lake by boat. Jesus stayed to dismiss the crowd and pray. The disciples ran into a storm.

In vss. 25-31, Jesus was walking on the water. When the disciples saw Him, they were terrified. Peter trusted Jesus enough to walk on the water a little bit, but he got distracted by the wind. Jesus rescued him while commenting on his shortage of faith.

In vss. 32-33, Peter and Jesus got into the boat. The wind stops. The disciples worshipped Jesus as the Son of God.

Introduction: A key idea in today's lesson is that Jesus helped His disciples move from fear to more faith and worship. Prayerfully, we will be challenged to grow in our faith and get rid of more and more of our fears.

Applications:

1. Prayerful planning. Notice in vss. 22-23 that Jesus had a plan that included time for Him to pray alone. First, even though we don't control all of the variables in our lives, we would do well to "plan our work, and work our plans." Our plans should be made with great prayer, and we should always flex to whatever God allows. Second, our plans should include some time to pray alone. Praying with others is good. We should do both – individual and group. *Let's work on prayerful planning.*

2. God and the impossible. Notice in vss. 25, 32 that Jesus walked on the water and the wind died down when He got into the boat. As in the text, God can do what seems to be impossible. Think about what seems to be as impossible as walking on the water or stopping the wind in your life. God can handle all that comes to our minds and more. *Let's live like we believe that God can do what seems to be impossible.* This kind of living should be known for obedience, confidence, and hope.

3. Faith in the storms. Notice in vss. 24, 26-31 that the disciples ended up in a storm that called for them to have more faith than fear. First, as in the text, we can be doing the right things and still end up in stormy weather. Think about how you can be taking care of your personal stewardship (i.e., mindset, health, and wealth), relational (i.e., family, friends, and associates), and contribution (i.e., church and community) duties and still run into stressful and uncomfortable situations. Second, as in the text, we should not be surprised when we are afraid. Storms can be deadly without divine intervention. Third, we should strive to have more faith than fear. This may call for experimenting with God's protection. In our text, Peter experimented. Gideon experimented (see Jg. 6:36-40). Passages like Malachi 3:8-10 urges a type of experimentation. But at some point, we

should grow from experimenting to simply taking God at His word, in good times and in bad. *Let's work on developing a faith that is stronger than our fears and storms.*

4. Courage and fear. Notice in vs. 27 that Jesus called for His disciples to take courage, instead of being ruled by fear. First, as in the text, God is still calling His disciples to have more courage and faith in Him than being afraid of the circumstances of their lives. To say that God is great and yet consistently be controlled by fear is contradictory. Second, the following are great ways to increase our courage and decrease our fears: prayerfully study God's word with a mind to obey it; be in mutually supportive and encouraging relationships with other disciples; and be mindful of how God takes care of us and others in stormy weather. *Let's work on having more courage than fear.*

5. Worshipping God. Notice in vs. 33 that the disciples worshipped Jesus as the Son of God, after the storm stopped. First, we should regularly worship God. We should deliberately and energetically express our acknowledgement of how great God is and our dedication to obeying Him. Corporate worship experiences with our church family are precious. However, we should have some small group and personal worship experiences as well. Second, when we have new experiences with God, we should have new dimensions of worshipping Him. It is one level of worship, when we worship God because of what we heard He could do with storms. It is another level of worship, when we worship God because of our experiencing His stopping storms in our lives. Third, passages like Hebrews 13:15-16 urges us to worship God with our lips and our lives. The more we say on Sunday morning, the more we should live and serve the rest of the week. *Let's work on worshipping God with our lips and lives in proportion to our growing understanding of His greatness.*