

Takeaway Lesson - 8/9/26

Matthew 14:22-33 — Walking on Water: Faith in the Storm

Scripture Focus

After feeding the five thousand, Jesus sends His disciples across the Sea of Galilee while He goes away to pray. When a storm arises, Jesus comes to them walking on the water. Peter steps out of the boat in faith but begins to sink when fear overtakes him. The passage reminds us that faith does not mean the absence of storms or doubt; it means trusting Christ in the midst of them. When our faith falters, Jesus remains faithful.

Read the verse(s) aloud

Memorable quotes/notes:

Historical / Linguistic Context

- The Sea of Galilee was known for sudden, dangerous storms caused by its geography. Several of the disciples were experienced fishermen, so their struggle against the wind shows the seriousness of the conditions.
- Matthew says Jesus came during the "fourth watch of the night," approximately 3:00–6:00 a.m. The disciples had likely been struggling against the wind for hours.
- When the disciples see Jesus, they believe He is a ghost. Jesus responds, "Take heart; it is I. Do not be afraid." The Greek phrase translated "it is I" is *ego eimi*, literally "I am," language that can echo God's divine name and emphasizes Jesus' identity and authority.
- Walking upon the sea carries important Old Testament imagery. Job 9:8 describes God as the One who "trampled the waves of the sea." Jesus' actions reveal more than miraculous power—they point toward His divine identity.
- Peter's request to walk on the water demonstrates genuine faith, but his faith becomes overwhelmed when he focuses on the wind and waves. Significantly, Jesus does not abandon Peter when his faith weakens; He "immediately" reaches out and saves him.
- Peter's cry, "Lord, save me!" is one of Scripture's simplest prayers. It reminds us that prayer does not need to be elaborate to express genuine faith.
- The story ends not with Peter's accomplishment or failure, but with the disciples worshiping Jesus and confessing, "Truly You are the Son of God." Jesus—not Peter—is the true focus of the miracle.

Discussion Questions

1. The disciples encounter the storm after obeying Jesus' command to get into the boat. What does this teach us about the assumption that following God should make life easier?

2. Jesus tells the disciples, "Take heart; it is I. Do not be afraid," before He calms the storm. How might knowing Christ is present change the way we face difficult circumstances, even when those circumstances do not immediately change?
3. Peter begins to sink when his attention shifts from Jesus to the wind. What "winds and waves" most easily pull our attention away from God's promises today?
4. Peter's prayer is simply, "Lord, save me!" What does Jesus' immediate response teach us about approaching God when our faith feels weak?
5. Read **Psalm 46:1-3**. How does the psalm's description of God as "our refuge and strength, a very present help in trouble" connect with what the disciples experience in this passage?
6. The disciples end by worshiping Jesus and saying, "Truly You are the Son of God." How can the storms of life deepen our understanding of who Jesus is rather than simply testing our faith?

CLOSING PRAYER

Lord Jesus, when the winds are against us and we are afraid, help us hear Your words: "Take heart; it is I. Do not be afraid." Forgive us when we focus more on the storms around us than on Your promises. When our faith is weak, teach us to call out with Peter, "Lord, save me!" Thank You that our hope rests not in the strength of our faith, but in the strength of the Savior who reaches out and holds us. Keep our eyes fixed on You and lead us to confess with the disciples, "Truly You are the Son of God." Amen.