

# Jesus Walks on Water Matthew 14:22-36

by David Servant

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*Jesus' story of walking on water teaches us to exercise faith in spite of our circumstances and to trust in God's promises.*

**Scripture:** Matthew 14:29, Matthew 14:36, Mark 6:48, Mark 6:50, John 6:19

**Topics:** "Faith And Doubt", "Trusting God"

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## Description

David Servant preaches about the disciples' lack of faith in the storm, emphasizing the importance of trusting in God's Word even in the face of opposition. He highlights Peter's experience of walking on water as a demonstration of walking by faith and the consequences of doubt. Through this story, he encourages believers to hold onto God's promises despite challenging circumstances, reminding them that Jesus is always ready to help and rescue them when their faith falters.

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## Transcript

Do you remember the story we read a few days ago when Jesus and His disciples were caught in a violent storm in a boat on the Sea of Galilee? After He rebuked the wind and waves, Jesus rebuked His disciples for their lack of faith. They had been filled with fear, even though Jesus was asleep and had clearly said they were going to the other side. He expected them to believe His Word. In the similar story we just read, there was one thing that was different from the start: Jesus was not in the boat with them. This time they were on their own!

Certainly the disciples were in the center of God's will that night, rowing across the Sea of Galilee. They were just following Jesus' orders. And certainly God knew they would encounter threatening winds on their journey. He must have been giving them another opportunity to exercise their faith. From this story, we can learn what we should do when we face opposition that is hindering us from fulfilling God's will.

According to John's record of this same story, Jesus' disciples had rowed about three-and-a-half miles when the wind and waves grew menacing (see John 6:19). Jesus, after spending time praying high on a mountainside, saw that "they were in serious trouble, rowing hard and struggling against the wind and waves" (Mark 6:48). They had been rowing for hours, and now it was the middle of the night. They were sleepy and their muscles were aching. They were probably yelling directions at each other to keep their boat from capsizing. In their own strength, they were trying to make it to shore, but it looked impossible.

There is no indication that any of them even tried to exercise any faith. No one suggested that they pray. No one said, "Let's stop rowing and start praising God that we are going to make it to the other side, because we've been sent by Jesus to do just that." No one attempted to rebuke the wind, imitating Jesus.

Jesus, after waiting until three o'clock in the morning, finally stepped out onto the water and began walking toward the same destination as His disciples. When they saw Him walking by, they were terrified, not recognizing Him in the darkness, thinking He must be a ghost! But Jesus tried to calm their fears by telling them who He was. That is when Peter requested that Jesus command him to walk on the water.

Jesus actually said only one word to Peter: "Come!" Before then, Peter had nothing to stand on but water, and had he stepped out of the boat, he would have immediately sunk. But once Jesus spoke, Peter could stand on the Word of God. By faith, he stepped out of the boat and began walking toward Jesus on the water. He was literally walking by faith. When did Peter begin to sink? It was when he doubted. And why did he doubt? Because he began looking at the high waves around him, becoming fearful.

This is a great illustration of how we can walk by faith. When we have a promise from God to believe, it makes no difference what our circumstances are saying to us. God's Word is always true, and if we'll believe in spite of our circumstances, we'll experience the blessings God promises. If we doubt, however, we may well begin to go down, just like Peter.

Peter almost made it all the way to Jesus. When he began to doubt and sink, he cried out for Jesus to save him, and Jesus mercifully did. Praise God that even when our faith is failing, Jesus still loves us and will help us in our troubles.

Clearly it was Peter's doubts and lack of faith that caused him to sink. Proud people would rather find something else to blame, and amazingly, they often blame God for their failures, claiming that failure must have been God's will. I wonder what Jesus would have said if He had overheard Peter, once he was back in the boat, saying to the other disciples, "The reason I sank, of course, is because it wasn't God's will that I make it all the way to Jesus!"

Q. Jesus apparently wasn't initially planning on rescuing His disciples from their predicament, because Mark's Gospel said, "He started to go past them" (Mark 6:48), walking on the water right by their boat. Why do you suppose Jesus did that?

A. Perhaps because Jesus is so polite. He won't get involved in people's business unless they invite Him. This is a picture of many Christians. In the midst of life's storms, they try to make it in their own strength, and Jesus walks right by, wishing they'd ask for His help. Have you invited Jesus into your boat?

Q. When Jesus and His disciples arrived on the shore of their destination, people soon began bringing all their sick to be healed. The Bible says that all who touched the fringe of Jesus' robe were healed (see Matthew 14:36). What does this teach us about faith?

A. It was obviously God's will for everyone who was healed to be healed, but each sick person had to exercise faith to receive what God wanted him to have. People who have faith will demonstrate their faith by their actions.

Application: Have you begun to sink in some area of your life because you've been doubting God? If so, look again at God's promises regarding your situation, and get back up on the water by faith!

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