

# The Greatest Miracle

by Sandeep Poonen

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*This sermon from Matthew chapter 14 focuses on the story of Peter walking on water, highlighting the lessons of immediate response to God's blessings, being sent into storms by Jesus, not being surprised by trials, and the importance of faith and obedience even in rebukes. It emphasizes the need to walk on water like Jesus in the midst of life's storms, seeking spiritual authority and the power to worship God.*

**Scripture:** Matthew 14:22, James 1:2, Matthew 8:23, Matthew 16:16, Romans 8:15, Hebrews 12:6, James 4:7, Psalm 29:10, Ephesians 5:1

**Topics:** "Faith in Trials", "Obedience in Storms"

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## Description

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## Transcript

I wanted to share from Matthew chapter 14. If you turn with me in your Bibles to Matthew chapter 14, I want to talk about what I think, and I'm sure I will probably contradict myself at some point in the future too, but I'm okay with it. But I want to talk about what I think is the greatest miracle that Jesus ever did.

And I don't know what you would think would be the greatest miracle that Jesus did. But I want to tell you what I think as I read about this. And I'll tell you why it's the greatest miracle as we go through it.

Matthew chapter 14 is the story of when Peter walks on water. Matthew chapter 14 verse 22, it starts there, and immediately he made the disciples get into the boat and go ahead of the disciple of Jesus to the other side while he sent the multitudes away. And after he sent the multitudes away, he went up to the mountain by himself to pray.

And when it was evening, he was there alone, but the boat was already many stadia away from the land, battered by the waves for the wind was contrary. He had a little bit of a windy night last night. We've all probably experienced a little bit of wind.

It was probably worse than that. And they were not on the road. They were not in the bed.

They were not in a firm house. They were on a boat that was rocking back and forth, up and down. And it is in this context that I want to just explain the first parts of it, which is immediately Jesus made them.

The word that is there in the Bible is he compelled them. He forced them to go into a boat. But first that word immediately, I just want to kind of underline that word immediately.

Immediately after what? We'll have to read the previous verses to find out what happened right before that. And what happened before that was the greatest miracle so far before then, which was definitely the biggest miracle I think Jesus ever did, which was Jesus fed 5,000 men. And there were also women or children.

That's what it says in verse 21. Jesus has just fed 5,000. So it may not be the greatest, but definitely the biggest, the biggest miracle, 5,000 people fed men, sorry, 5,000 men.

So there were women and children. You know how many there were? There were there probably around 15,000, 20,000 people were fed that day. How many disciples did Jesus have? 12.

How's that compared to 15 to 20,000 people fed in one time? That's the biggest miracle that I can think of that Jesus ever did. 20, 15, 20,000, two children for every family that was there. Immediately after that, Jesus says, you have to go.

You know what I would do after the greatest miracle like that? 20,000. I got 12 people, but then I expect 20,000. You know what I'd do? We'd have a great debrief session, right? We'll all think about guys, can we just bask in what happened to us now? Can you imagine? And Peter's like, you know what? I pulled the bread out and there's still bread there.

And I kept pulling bread and the bread was still there. And then Andrew goes, and then James goes, and one by one, they all think, and Jesus is just sitting there, just watching all of them and could have maybe wanted to take a little bit glory to himself. And so immediately he said, before we get into this debrief session, where we all bask in the biggest miracle ever done, that probably blew their mind away, Jesus says, get in the boat right now and go, because I got to go to the mountain and give it all over to God.

That's what, that's what immediately means. Immediately he gets into the boat. The moment God blesses him in some way, he immediately, he says, I got to go.

I got to go get out of the, get out into the boat. I need to be alone. I need to be with my father.

No, I'm not saying he was praying the whole time, but he went there to pray. It was the evening. So I don't need to read too much into the text.

He went to pray. He may have been praying for 15 minutes and then he was done. And then it's quite, I'm quite comfortable believing that he slept.

No problem with that. So he wasn't praying the whole night. It doesn't say he was praying the whole night.

He just went there to pray and 15, 30 minutes. It may have resolved, but he was happy to sleep in his father's arms. It was a rock, but he was happy to go to sleep or to pray just to be with the father.

But that's the immediately, immediately after God blesses us. That's the lesson I learned from this immediately after God blesses us, the greater the blessing, the more immediate must be our response.

Like, stop, get out.

We got to get on our knees in the spring. Thank God. That's a good attitude, a good muscle for us to develop.

But the other thing I wanted to say was God, Jesus compelled the people into a horrible storm. Jesus was, Jesus was not a fisherman. Jesus was a carpenter.

He didn't know how to read the weather quite like the disciples did who were the fishermen, but Jesus was compelling the disciples to go into the boat because the fishermen must've said, Hey, hold on, Jesus, you, you see, right? You see what's happening, right? The clouds are getting darker. You see the storm is brewing. We're fishermen.

We know this is not the time to get into the storm. Jesus says, you've got to go. You got to go into the storm.

And I was applying that to my life and you know, I actually just to go further on. So it was the evening. It says in verse 23, it was the evening when Jesus went.

And then verse 25, it says on the fourth watch. And in my margin, the fourth watch means from like three to six in the morning. So evening, let's say it's nine o'clock at night.

That's late evening from nine o'clock at night, all the way to three in the morning, the disciples are all by themselves being battered by the storm who took them to the storm. This was not the disciples mistake. This is Jesus forcing them, get into the storm.

I'm going to take you. I'm going to send you into the storm. That's what Jesus did.

Sent by Jesus into a horrible storm, which they probably said, why am I going into this? Jesus sent them there. Jesus may send us into storms. Jesus says, Lord, the Lord, we say, Lord, you know, I don't want to be with a boss like that.

Jesus says, I'm sending you to that kind of boss. Lord Jesus, I'm just trying to mind my own business. And then God sends us difficult relatives or difficult neighbors or difficult coworkers.

He sends us right into something like, Lord, I'm just trying to do my little thing with this little light of mine. I want to be in my little corner. And Jesus compels us to go into the storm.

We don't need to blame anybody else. We don't have to say it is our mistake. No, no, no.

Jesus compelled me into the storm. What's the lesson from that? Don't be surprised if you're in the storm. Don't second guess it.

Well, did God want me to go into the storm? Many times he sends us into the storms. Consider it all joy. Peter says, do not be surprised, my dear family, when you encounter fiery trials.

Don't be surprised. Don't be shocked when Jesus sends you into the lion's den, sends you into a trial where you're being shaken and you have to stand up for your faith or hold fast to your faith. Don't be surprised.

You can be like the Israelites and complain, or we can be like Jesus. Don't be surprised. God's the one sending us into the storm.

You know that storm that happened? He's not punishing us. He has sent us in because he's trying to perform the greatest miracle. So we keep reading.

In the verse after that, he says, in the fourth watch, he comes coming, as I said, for six hours. Can you imagine that almost all night? The disciples are just fighting a storm they did not want to be in. They did not want to be in it.

But Jesus says, it is my will that you be in the storm and fighting it. I'm not going to give up. Lord, I don't see you.

Remember, Jesus wasn't with them. And many times in our trials, we don't feel Jesus. We don't feel his strength and grace present to us.

We feel, feel like we're all alone, even though we're not. But in this case, this is a parable that even though we don't see Jesus clearly, we've been sent by Jesus. We're nowhere in our will.

And we've got to keep fighting. Don't let go. This is what I like about the disciples.

Even though I don't see Jesus, I'm not giving up. I'm not giving up. The disciples could have just said, forget this.

We're just going to let ourselves drown. They didn't. They kept fighting.

Then they see Jesus coming to them. And I love what Peter says. Peter said, Jesus said in verse 27, take courage as I be not afraid.

And then Peter says, Lord, if it is you, command me to come to you on the water. God is more interested, is not just interested in protecting us from fear. Remember, Jesus said, don't be afraid.

I'm here. So after six hours of not seeing Jesus being rocked around and just not knowing which way is up, which way is down. Now we see Jesus.

That's the next step. We see Jesus and Jesus comes and says a word. And I like that word, which he says there.

Look at this immediately in verse 27. That's the second immediately in the passage. First, it's immediately get out.

I need to be with God. The second immediately is in verse 27. Immediately, Jesus says, don't be afraid.

That's the first immediate word that Jesus tries to tell us. Don't be afraid. Don't be afraid of what man will do to you.

Don't be afraid of what people think about you. Don't be afraid of what happens in your life. They can only touch your body.

They can't hurt your soul. They can only say words to you. They can only do things to you, but they can't touch your eternal destiny.

Nothing that you take into your body can defile you, but only what comes out of heart defiles you. What they said to you, what they took away your bonus, they fired you. What did they do to us? Don't be afraid of what they can do to your body, but fear the one what comes out of our heart, a spirit of complaining, a spirit of a foul word, a spirit of a negative thought.

Be afraid of what comes out of my heart. God's not just interested in saying don't be afraid, because that's what Peter said was, Lord, if it is you, I'm not settling for just not to be afraid, even though a lot of us will take that. Well, I just want to live in fear.

God's miracle is that we may do more than just be afraid, not be afraid. He wants us to walk on the water too. And that's what Peter had, that all the other 11 disciples didn't say that.

What do you think would have happened if all the 12 disciples said, Lord, I want to walk on the water too? What do you think Jesus would have said? All of you, come on out. No problem. It's not reserved for only one, but Peter was the only one out of the 12 who was willing to say, Lord, I want more than just not to be afraid.

I want to walk on water like you, because the goal is not that I just not be afraid. The goal is that I might have the same rest and authority that Jesus had. That's the point I get from this Lord.

When Peter said, I want to walk on water too. He wasn't trying to boast that one day I would be able to say, I walked on water. No, he wanted the same spiritual authority.

This miracle is a parable that talks to our spiritual lives. And Peter wanted to walk on water. For me, Lord Jesus, I don't want just to be saved from fear.

Many of us who've been Christians long enough, maybe are being loosened from being afraid of what other people think about us. We've stood up against a family or friends. God wants us to have the same authority that Jesus had over all the storms, in the middle of all the storms.

And Peter, that's the cry of Peter. Lord, if you can do it, I can do it. You said, as you were in the world, now I am in the world.

You are the light of the world. I am in the light of the world. Those who say they walk and belong to Jesus and Biden, Jesus must walk as he walked.

Lord, you're walking on water right now. You're walking on top of all of these things that were going on in your life. I want to be like you.

Come on me and I can walk. And Jesus' command is, come on out. No hesitation.

Jesus says, come on on. Peter gets out of the boat, verse 29 and walks on water and comes towards Jesus. But seeing the wind, he became afraid and began to sink.

He cried out, Lord, save me. Verse 31, and immediately, here's the third immediately, and immediately Jesus stretched out his hand and took him by the hand and said to him, oh, you of little faith, why did you doubt? That's the third immediately. Dear brothers and sisters, we got three immediately that I want to repeat.

Number one, I want to be immediate in my giving the glory to God at the scent of a blessing. The moment a blessing comes, I want to have that muscle of God, I want to be alone and truly give you all the glory. Not say it in front of everybody else, not say it in my email.

You know, all the glory goes to God, becomes meaningless. In the quiet of our heart, when nobody's watching, we fall on our face and say, God, you get all the glory for this. I want to guard that.

That's the first immediately. The second immediately is God says, immediately, don't be afraid. Don't be afraid.

Never, never fear. Whenever Jesus came and saw his disciples after he rose from the dead, he always said, don't be afraid. Don't fear.

I heard it that there's 365 do not fears in the Bible. Well, that's for every day in the year, right? Don't be afraid. It's an immediate.

Don't be afraid. That should be a playlist on repeat. Don't be afraid.

Lord, you get all the glory. And the third immediately is when I'm sinking, God says, I'll grab you. I'll grab you.

If you ever think your eternal future is in jeopardy, I'll grab you. Just say, Lord, save me. There's a second shortest prayer in the Bible.

You know, the shortest prayer in the Bible is Romans 8, 15. Daddy, we don't even need to say anything else. It's daddy.

Shortest prayer in the Bible. Daddy, he knows what we need before we even ask. Here's the second shortest prayer.

If you've got the time to go past daddy, you can say, daddy, save me. But the spirit has been given to us. Just say daddy.

And that's not all formal heavenly father. Even that daddy, that's the shortest prayer in the Bible. And it comes from a heart that has seen Jesus as dad.

Here's the second shortest prayer in the Bible. Lord save me. Lord save me.

That's it. And immediately Jesus saves us. Why did you doubt? But here's what I, here's the lesson that God really spoke powerfully to me.

And I want us all to hear this, especially those of us who are taking our Christian life seriously. God reserves his harshest rebukes for the bold, obedient ones. Let me repeat that.

God reserves his harshest rebukes for the bold, obedient ones. Who's the bold, obedient one in this case, Peter, none of the other 11 disciples, but see what Jesus told Peter. He rebuked Peter after he immediately grabs a hold of his hand and saves him from sinking.

He rebukes Peter and say, you of little faith. Who is the one with little faith, Peter? What about the other 11 disciples? What faith did they have? He didn't ever say to the 11 disciples, you have little faith. He says to Peter, the one who gets up out of the boat and says, go and walk on water.

But when he started to sing, he says, you have little faith. Why did you doubt me? It was a very harsh rebuke. I can imagine Peter saying, excuse me, Jesus, I'm the only one who had the guts to walk on water with you.

I'm the one who was willing to go past forgiveness into victory over sin, to seeking your glory and everything, to seeking to live just like Jesus every day. And here I am getting tossed around by the waves and I start to sink and you rebuke me stronger than you rebuke the rest. This is a lesson we learned from this.

Jesus saves his harshest rebukes for the ones that he loves the most and the ones that are going further on. So we don't need to be surprised when we get harshly rebuked by the Lord. Jesus saved Peter from sinking and then rebukes him more than he rebukes the other 11 disciples.

Salvation from sinking is followed by a harsh rebuke. God not only loves us from rescuing us from darkness, but he also loves us by rebuking us. The first one comes first and the second things come second.

But has he rescued you from darkness? Has he rescued you from the clutches of the enemy who is out to steal, kill and destroy? Good, he loves you. What comes next after that? He's loving you by rebuking you. And that's what the Lord was telling me.

I save my harshest rebukes for those who I love the most. So the bold, obedient ones. Peter is the one who gets rebuked the most.

He's the one who said, Jesus, you're the Son of God, the Messiah. And then he gets rebuked harsher than everybody else. Get behind me, Satan.

So don't be surprised, dear brothers and sisters, when you're in the middle of storm. Let us not be surprised when we get harsh rebukes from the Lord in secret. There's no evidence of Jesus rebuking the other 11 disciples who were too afraid to get out of the boat.

Jesus, Peter, was not afraid. He obeyed God and said, God, I want the holy life. I want the consecrated life.

And so we can see all these nominal Christians seeming to be blessed and happily going along life, following the patterns of the world. And here we are trying to honestly live like Jesus. And we're the ones getting more harshly rebuked.

Don't be surprised. That's what the Lord is telling you. Don't be surprised.

It's a sign of my love. I'm trying to make you like Jesus. Do you think it's going to come easy from salvation, from sinking to living with authority on top of the storm? This is the miracle.

This is the greatest miracle. This is why I call it the miracle. Because after he rebukes it, he rebukes Peter.

Here's what happens. Verse 32. And when they got into the boat, the wind stopped.

I've tried to put something in between that verse. When they got into the boat, where were they? They were not in the boat. How did they get into the boat is my question.

Did Jesus carry Peter? There's only one step, footsteps in the sand. Because Jesus is not mine. I don't believe that.

This is the miracle. Jesus and Peter walking on the water without sinking till they get into the boat. Peter walking on water towards Jesus, him sinking, getting harshly rebuked after being saved from sinking.

And then here's the miracle. Jesus and Peter walking. Peter walking just like Jesus all the way till he gets into the boat.

And then the storm stopped. And then the storm stopped after Peter learned to walk like Jesus on top of the storms. And it's a sad tragedy in my life when the storms stopped and I didn't learn to walk like Jesus in the storm.

It's a tragedy. I'm speaking from the bottom of my heart. There have been storms that God stopped and I didn't learn to walk like Jesus and with Jesus on top of the storm.

And I can't get that storm back because God doesn't allow storms every day. And so dear brothers and sisters, when we have storms in our life, have you sunk? Have you been sinking? Lord save me, help me. Don't be afraid immediately.

He'll save you from sinking. But then the point is to learn to walk on water like Jesus. Then those who were in the boat, all 12 of them worshiped God and said, you are the son of God.

This is the first time we see all 12 disciples saying, you're the son of God. This is before Matthew 16, where Peter says, you're the Messiah, the son of God. When Jesus said, who are you? Who are you? The other people say you're Elijah, Jeremiah, one of the prophets.

Jesus said, who you say that I am? Peter said, you're the Messiah, the son of God. Well, before that, Matthew 14, first time I can see all 12 disciples saying it, you're the son of God. What do you think made them say, Jesus, you're the son of God? Is it because Jesus still the storm? Well, that had happened already in Matthew 8. They marveled in Matthew 8. Wow, who is this person who can control the seas and storms? This is different.

You are all 12 disciples, all the 11 and 12 disciples now worshiping God. It's more than just Jesus's power. It's Jesus's authority over us, over a broken Peter.

We're like, Jesus, we know he's different. We know all kinds of things. He fed 15, 20,000 people.

We know him. He's different. But Peter walking on water all the way to the boat without tripping and falling.

I want that kind of power that can be reflected in my life too. And we all worship God. And what's the message for us? Dear brothers and sisters, you know, the burden of all of your hearts, probably who have children is that your children will worship God and say that you are the son of God.

You want them to do that. What's the secret to doing that? God encouraged me from this story. He wants to show you parents to be like the Peter, walking on top of your bad moods when the storm is raging, when the hot water is not working, when the children don't clean up their rooms.

That's when God wants us to see what God wants to show us to be like Peter's walking on top of the waters. When things don't go our way, when the storm is raging, we have sunk many times. Dear brothers

and sisters, it's not a word of condemnation.

When we are sinking, we just have to say, Lord, save us. But then we've got to do two things. We've got to receive the rebuke, the strong rebuke of the Lord saying, you of little faith.

Jesus always said, you have little faith. If I'm not mistaken to the disciples, not to the unconverted people. And so he says it to the ones he loves, you have little faith, you have all people, you have little faith.

And then he says, though now, but that's not the end of the story. It doesn't end with the rebuke. The end of the story is a triumph.

We were walking along the storms of life. And brothers and sisters, parents, that's the message for us. May we walk on top of the water.

That's the end of the story till we get into the boat. Then the storm is over and all the children look at around and say, wait a minute. I saw how daddy and mommy used to be with the water.

They used to just flounder around and swim. Now we're seeing daddy and mommy walking. Must be some power to that life.

Different from what I've seen in the past. Dear brothers and sisters, that's the life you're called to live. What a tremendous gospel.

We have a great desire that the children will see Jesus as to be the son of God. I know that to be true among all of us parents. Let us pursue this life, walking on top of the water like Peter did.

It is possible. God commands us and come, come, come. Walk on water like he did.

The storm is raging, Lord. Maybe we should wait for it to calm down. No, no, no, no, no.

Don't wait for the storm to calm down. Right now, in the middle of your trial, walk on water. May God help us.

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