

**Title: "Faith in God: Navigating Life's Storms with Trust in God"**

**Text:** Matthew 14:25-33 & Matthew 8:23-27

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**Introduction:**

Good morning, brothers and sisters in Christ. Today, we're going to explore the significant themes of faith, doubt, and the unwavering nature of God's love and power as we navigate the storms of life. Together, let's dive into the parallel passages in the book of Matthew to gain insight and strengthen our walk with God.

**Matthew 14:25-33**

<sup>25</sup> Shortly before dawn Jesus went out to them, walking on the lake. <sup>26</sup> When the disciples saw him walking on the lake, they were terrified. "It's a ghost," they said, and cried out in fear.

<sup>27</sup> But Jesus immediately said to them: "Take courage! It is I. Don't be afraid."

<sup>28</sup> "Lord, if it's you," Peter replied, "tell me to come to you on the water."

<sup>29</sup> **"Come," he said.**

Then Peter got down out of the boat, walked on the water and came toward Jesus. <sup>30</sup> But when he saw the wind, he was afraid and, beginning to sink, cried out, "Lord, save me!"

<sup>31</sup> Immediately Jesus reached out his hand and caught him. "You of little faith," he said, "why did you doubt?"

<sup>32</sup> And when they climbed into the boat, the wind died down. <sup>33</sup> Then those who were in the boat worshiped him, saying, "Truly you are the Son of God."

**Context of Matthew 14:**

**Before:** In the previous passage, we see that Jesus had just fed the 5,000 miraculously with five loaves of bread and two fish. This had happened in a remote place near Bethsaida, and after Jesus dismissed the crowd, **He went up on a mountainside to pray**. The disciples had gotten into a boat and set off across the lake ahead of Jesus.

**After:** In the following passages, we see Jesus coming to the disciples in the middle of the night, walking on the water. **The disciples were terrified, thinking that He was a ghost**. Jesus reassures them, and Peter asks Him if he can also come out and walk on the water. Jesus tells him to come, and he does, but then **he becomes afraid and starts to sink. Jesus reaches out and saves him**, and they both get into the boat, and the wind dies down. **The disciples worship Jesus, recognizing Him as the Son of God.**

**Historical Context:**

During this time, Jesus and His disciples were traveling around Galilee, teaching and healing people. The region of Galilee was mainly inhabited by Jewish people, but there was also a significant Gentile (non-Jewish) population. The Jewish people had been waiting for a Messiah to come and deliver them from their oppressors, **the Roman Empire**. This expectation was based on their understanding of Old Testament prophecies.

### **Cultural Context:**

In Jewish culture during this time, it was customary for men to gather in synagogues or in the open air to listen to teachers and rabbis. These teachers would often use parables and stories to help their listeners understand the message. Miracles were also a part of Jewish culture, and they were seen as signs of God's power and presence.

In this passage, **Jesus is not only showing His power and authority over nature by walking on water, but He is also revealing Himself as the Messiah, the Son of God, to His disciples.** Walking on water was not something anyone could do, and the disciples were familiar with this fact. So when Jesus appeared to them, it was clear to them that He was not just an ordinary man.

Additionally, Peter's request to walk on water reflects the Jewish belief that the Messiah would perform even greater miracles than Moses. **Moses had parted the Red Sea**, and Peter may have been trying to test if Jesus was indeed the Messiah by asking to walk on water. **However, his fear and doubt ultimately show that he does not fully understand who Jesus is yet.**

Overall, **this passage shows the power and authority of Jesus**, as well as the expectations and beliefs of the Jewish people during this time. It also serves as a lesson for the disciples (and us) to have faith and trust in Jesus, even when faced with fear and doubt.

Storm, Savior, Strengthening:

### **I. Definition of Faith**

According to the Merriam-Webster dictionary, faith is defined as strong belief or trust in someone or something or belief in the existence of God. In a biblical context, faith is often described as a strong trust in God and His promises.

### **II. Greek Terms for Faith**

1. Pistis (pistis) - This is the most common Greek word used for faith in the New Testament. It is derived from the root word, pisteuō, which means **to believe** or to have faith. It can also be translated as **faithfulness or trust**.

2. Elpizō (elpizo) - This word is translated as **hope or to hope** for in most English versions of the Bible, but it also carries the connotation of faith or trust. In Romans 4:18, for example, Abraham is described as having faith in the hope that God would fulfill His promise.

3. Peithō (peitho) - This term is often translated as **to persuade or to convince**. However, in the context of faith, it means **to be persuaded and have confidence in something or someone**, particularly in God and His promises.

### **The Three Lessons of Walking on Water**

1. Storm: In the midst of life's trials and challenges, remember that Jesus is always with us.
2. Savior: Just as Peter cried out to Jesus in fear, we must turn to Him as our Savior and source of strength.
3. Strengthening: When we fix our eyes on Jesus and take that step of faith, He will give us the strength and courage to walk on water.

In **Matthew 14:25-33**, we witness Peter's incredible act of faith as he steps out of the boat and walks on water towards Jesus during a storm. His courage and trust in Jesus exemplify the potential of unwavering faith, yet we also see his doubt causing him to sink before Jesus rescues him. This narrative reveals the interplay between faith and doubt in our spiritual journey.

Additionally, in **Matthew 8:23-27**, we see Jesus and His disciples caught in a tumultuous storm at sea. The disciples, gripped by fear and doubt, questioned Jesus' concern for their well-being. However, Jesus rebuked the wind and the sea with authority, demonstrating His sovereign power and unwavering love for His disciples.

### **Apologetic Defense:**

There is evidence to support the authenticity of this event. In Matthew 14:22, it is mentioned that the boat was "battered by the waves", indicating a strong storm. In verse 24, it is mentioned that the boat was "already a considerable distance from land", making it difficult for anyone to walk out to them. In verse 26, the disciples are terrified, echoing the intensity of the situation. These details show that this was not a fabricated story, but a real event.

Moreover, **the fact that Peter's fear causes him to start sinking also adds to the authenticity of the account.** If it were made up, the writers would not have included such a detail that could be seen as **a flaw in Peter's faith.** This shows the honesty and reliability of the biblical account.

**Application:** So, what can we learn from this story?

Firstly, we must not let our fears hold us back from experiencing God's miraculous power. Like Peter, we must have faith and step out of our comfort zones.

Secondly, Jesus is always there to save us when our faith falters. We must not let our doubts overcome our faith; instead, we must call out to Jesus as Peter did.

As we reflect on these passages, we can draw out **several key lessons to guide us** in our faith walk:

1. **The Power of Faith**: Peter's initial steps onto the water illustrate the extraordinary power of faith. It reminds us that with unwavering faith in God, we can overcome the impossible and defy the tumultuous storms that life throws our way.
2. **Confronting Doubt**: Both narratives show that doubt can hinder our faith and lead to sinking in life's storms. We're called to confront doubt, seeking strength in the Lord and trusting in His promises even when circumstances seem dire.
3. **God's Unwavering Love and Authority**: Jesus' response to both Peter's plight and the storm at sea demonstrates His unwavering love and authority over nature and all circumstances. This assures us that no physical or spiritual storm is beyond His control.
4. **Embracing Assurance in God**: Despite our doubts and fears, God calls us to take bold steps of faith, to fix our eyes on Jesus, and to trust in His unchanging character and love. He is our firm foundation and the anchor amidst life's raging seas.

### **Theological Implications:**

1. **Human Weakness and Dependence on God**: The disciple's fear and helplessness in the storm highlights the frailty and vulnerability of human beings. It serves as a reminder of our constant need for God's protection, provision, and guidance in our lives.
2. **Jesus as the Prince of Peace**: By calming the storm, Jesus reveals himself as the ultimate source of peace and security. This theme is echoed throughout the Bible and reinforces the idea that true peace can only be found in Jesus.

The form of this passage, with its vivid and descriptive language, adds to its message by creating a sense of urgency and chaos in the midst of the storm. It also emphasizes the power and authority of Jesus, as he is able to still the raging seas with just a few words. The dialogue between Jesus and the disciples also adds to the message, **highlighting their lack of faith and dependence on Jesus in a moment of crisis.**

3. **Trusting in God's power and presence**: The fact that Jesus was able to walk on water and command the storm to be still displays his divine power and presence. This teaches believers to trust in God's ability to overcome any challenge or obstacle in their lives.
4. **Fear and doubt can hinder faith**: Peter's initial willingness to walk on water demonstrates his faith, but when he becomes afraid and doubts Jesus, he begins to sink. This shows that fear and doubt can hinder our faith and ability to trust in God.

5. The importance of fixing our eyes on Jesus: When Peter takes his eyes off Jesus and focuses on the storm, he starts to sink. This highlights the importance of keeping our eyes fixed on Jesus and not being distracted by the storms of life.

6. Faith requires action: Peter's faith was not just a mental assent, but it required him to step out of the boat and take action. This teaches us that our faith should be accompanied by action, even if it means stepping out of our comfort zones.

7. Jesus is the true Son of God: The disciples' response to Jesus walking on water was to worship him, acknowledging that he is the true Son of God. This reveals the true identity of Jesus as the Son of God and emphasizes his divinity.

8. God's grace in rescuing us from our doubts: Despite Peter's doubt, Jesus reaches out and saves him from sinking. This displays God's grace and mercy towards us, even when we falter in our faith.

The passage contributes to its message by emphasizing the contrast between faith and doubt, as seen in Peter's actions. It also highlights Jesus' divine power and identity as the Son of God and his ability to calm the storms of life.

The physical act of walking on water also symbolizes Jesus's supernatural and miraculous nature. Ultimately, the passage demonstrates the importance of trusting in God and **fixing our eyes on Jesus**, even in the midst of life's storms.

**Prayer:** Lord, strengthen our faith in You. Help us fully rely on Your character and promises, even when circumstances seem uncertain. Plant within us an unshakeable trust in Your steadfast love.

**Benediction:** May your faith in God grow stronger each day. May you experience His faithfulness and provision, stepping confidently into the unknown, knowing that He holds you in His capable hands.

### **Conclusion:**

As we journey through the storms of life, we can find reassurance in **God's unchanging love and authority**. Let's confront our doubts, take courageous steps of faith, and make Jesus the focus of our lives.

May we leave today with renewed faith, encouraged to step out in faith despite the storms, and to trust in the unwavering love and power of our Lord and Savior, Jesus Christ. Amen.

**Words of Jesus in the Gospel on FAITH:**

Matthew 8:10 - When Jesus heard this, he was amazed and said to those following him, "Truly I tell you, I have not found anyone in Israel with such **great faith**."

Matthew 9:29 - Then he touched their eyes and said, "**According to your faith** let it be done to you";

Matthew 15:28 - Then Jesus said to her, "Woman, you have **great faith!** Your request is granted." And her daughter was healed at that moment.

Matthew 17:20 - He replied, "**Because you have so little faith.** Truly I tell you, if you have faith as small as a mustard seed, you can say to this mountain, 'Move from here to there,' and it will move. Nothing will be impossible for you."

Mark 4:40 - He said to his disciples, "Why are you so afraid? **Do you still have no faith?**"

Mark 9:23 - "If you can't?" said Jesus. "**Everything is possible for one who believes.**"

Luke 18:8 - "I tell you, he will see that they get justice, and quickly. However, **when the Son of Man comes, will he find faith on the earth?**"

John 3:16 - For God so loved the world that he gave his one and only Son, **that whoever believes in him shall not perish but have eternal life.**

**John 3:18 - Whoever believes in him is not condemned,** but whoever does not believe stands condemned already because they have not believed in the name of God's one and only Son.

John 11:25-26 - Jesus said to her, "I am the resurrection and the life. The one who believes in me will live, even though they die; and whoever lives by believing in me will never die. **Do you believe this?**"

**Romans 1:17 -** For in the gospel, the righteousness of God is revealed—a righteousness that is by faith from first to last, just as it is written: "**The righteous will live by faith.**"

**Romans 3:22 - This righteousness is given through faith in Jesus Christ to all who believe.** There is no difference between Jew and Gentile,

Romans 4:5 - However, **to the one who does not work but trusts God who justifies the ungodly, their faith is credited as righteousness.**

**Romans 10:17 -** Consequently, **faith comes from hearing the message,** and the message is heard through the word about Christ.

**2 Corinthians 5:7 -** For we live by faith, not by sight.

Galatians 2:16 - know **that a person is not justified by the works of the law, but by faith** in Jesus Christ. So we, too, have put our faith in Christ Jesus that we may be justified by faith in Christ and not by the works of the law, **because by the works of the law no one will be justified.**

Ephesians 2:8-9 - **For it is by grace you have been saved, through faith**—and this is not from yourselves, it is the gift of God—not by works, so that no one can boast.

Philippians 3:9 - and be found in him, not having a righteousness of my own that comes from the law, **but that which is through faith in Christ—the righteousness that comes from God on the basis of faith.**

**Colossians 2:6-7** - So then, just as you received Christ Jesus as Lord, continue to live your lives in him, rooted and built up in him, **strengthened in the faith as you were taught**, and overflowing with thankfulness.

**Hebrews 11:6** - **And without faith, it is impossible to please God** because anyone who comes to him **must believe that he exists and that he rewards those who earnestly seek him.**

Because you know that the **testing of your faith** produces perseverance.

**James 2:17** - In the same way, **faith is dead if it is not accompanied by action.**

1 Peter 5:9 - Resist him, **standing firm in the faith**, because you know that the family of believers throughout the world is undergoing the same kind of suffering.

1 John 5:4-5 - for everyone born of God overcomes the world. This is the victory that has overcome the world, even our faith. **Who is it that overcomes the world? Only the one who believes that Jesus is the Son of God.**

**\*\*Galatians 2:20 (ESV):\*\*** "I have been crucified with Christ. It is no longer I who live, but Christ who lives in me. And the life I now live in the flesh **I live by faith in the Son of God**, who loved me and gave himself for me."

**\*\*Romans 5:1 (ESV):\*\*** "Therefore, since we have been justified by faith, we have peace with God through our Lord Jesus Christ."

References:

1. VanGemeren, Willem A., ed. New International Dictionary of Old Testament Theology and Exegesis. Vol. 2. Grand Rapids, MI: Zondervan, 1997.

2. Friedrich, Gerhard, ed. *New International Dictionary of New Testament Theology*. Vol. 2. Grand Rapids, MI: Zondervan, 1988.
3. Elwell, Walter A., and Barry J. Beitzel, eds. *Baker Encyclopedia of the Bible*. Grand Rapids, MI: Baker Book House, 1988.

**Recommended Reading:**

1. *The Pursuit of God* by A.W. Tozer
2. *The Cost of Discipleship* by Dietrich Bonhoeffer
3. *The Holiness of God* by R.C. Sproul
4. *A Gospel Primer for Christians* by Milton Vincent
5. *The Justification of God: An Exegetical and Theological Study of Romans 9:1-23* by John Piper
6. *Knowing God* by J.I. Packer
7. *The Bondage of the Will* by Martin Luther
8. *Theology of the Reformers* by Timothy George
9. *Faith Alone: The Evangelical Doctrine of Justification* by R.C. Sproul
10. *Faith: What It Is and What It Is Not* by Wayne Grudem.