

# WALKING ON WATER

August 20, 2023

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The First Lesson; 1 Kings 19:9-18

Psalm of the Day; Psalm 73

The Second Lesson; Romans 9:1-5

Sermon Text; Matthew 14:22-33

The text we will look at for today is taken from Matthew, chapter fourteen, verses twenty-two through thirty-three.

Immediately Jesus urged the disciples to get into the boat and to go ahead of Him to the other side, while He dismissed the crowd. After He had dismissed the crowd, He went up onto the mountain by Himself to pray. When evening came, He was there alone. By then the boat was quite a distance from shore, being pounded by the waves because the wind was against it. In the fourth watch of the night, Jesus came toward them, walking on the sea. When the disciples saw Him walking on the sea, they were terrified and cried out in fear, "It's a ghost!" But Jesus spoke to them at once, saying, "Take heart! It is I! Do not be afraid." Peter answered Him and said, "Lord, if it is You, command me to come to you on the water." Jesus said, "Come!" Peter stepped down from the boat, walked on the water, and went toward Jesus. But when he saw the strong wind, he was afraid. As he began to sink, he cried out, "Lord, save me!" Immediately Jesus stretched out His hand, took hold of him, and said to him, "You of little faith, why did you doubt?" When they got into the boat, the wind stopped. Those who were in the boat worshiped Him, saying, "Truly you are the Son of God!"

These are your words, Heavenly Father. Lead us in the way of truth.  
Your Word is truth.  
Amen.

It has, I am sure, happened to you. You have been at home, watching TV, or listening to TV in the background when all of a sudden you hear, “*Beep, beep, beep.*” Whatever you are watching on TV is interrupted. Something comes on that says, “*This is an announcement from the weather station. There is a sever storm, a sever thunderstorm headed toward Dane County, and it is going to arrive at 'such, and such a time'. This is a threat for northeast Madison, Cottage Grove, and Sun Prairie. There are going to be extreme winds, 60 mile per hour winds, and large hailstones.*” Then it will say something like this. “*Take cover!*”

Maybe Bob Lindmeyer, (or whatever station you watch), Bob Lindmeyer comes on, and explains in more detail. He will say, “*There are going to be these strong winds, and because of that, there could be downed power lines. There could be downed trees. It is going to be very dangerous. Find a place where you can take cover.*”

Storms are dangerous. Storms are things that we do not want to be in, if we can avoid it.

Pause that thought for a second. We do get into 'storms'. We get into all kinds of 'storms' in our lives. I am not necessarily talking about weather storms. The Bible describes what was happening to the disciples this way, as they were out on the sea. It says, “*They were pounded by the waves. The wind was against them.*”

I am sure all of you have been in situations in your life where you felt, “*I am being pounded by the waves. The wind is against me.*” The 'storm' can be in your relationships. It can be financial. It can be with your health. It can be with your work. It can be with your

emotions. It can be spiritual. There are all kinds of things that can cause us to be in these 'storms'.

Now, Bob Lindmeyer warns people, “*Get out of the storm*”.

I want to tell you, when we look at today's Scripture reading, sometimes being in a 'storm' can be very beneficial to us. I want to look at what happened to the disciples in today's Scripture reading. First of all, there is something in the first verse, and it is almost jarring, when you first look at it. Look at the first verse.

**“Immediately Jesus urged the disciples to get into the boat...”**

Technically, technically we are using something called the EHV Translation. This is probably about the only translation that says, “...Jesus urged the disciples to get into the boat.” Pretty much every other translation you read is probably a little more true to the Greek. This is one of the areas, one of the passages where maybe the EHV is not the best in the world. Almost every other translation says something like this.

**“...Jesus made the disciples get into the boat...”**

**“...Jesus compelled the disciples to get into the boat...”**

**“...Jesus constrained the disciples to get into the boat...”**

**“...Jesus obliged the disciples to get into the boat...”**

So, here is Jesus. He had just fed the five thousand. I am sure the disciples wanted to stay with Him, and have the crowds have this adulation. And maybe they wanted to stay with Jesus, because He said, “*I am going to stay back.*” Maybe they said, “*Let's stay with you. Let's stay with you.*”

But, Jesus made them get into the boat. You can just imagine Jesus saying, “*Guys, get in the boat. I want you to go across, so get in the boat. I will meet you on the other side.*”

Now, Jesus did that, knowing full well (*I want you to think about this*), knowing full well, He was sending His disciples, His beloved disciples into the eye of a storm. They did not know they were going into a storm. They were simply following the Will of their

Savior. Sometimes, following the Will of the Savior can mean we may be going right into the eye of a storm. He may be sending us right into one.

I will give you some examples. We have four great examples today. Pastor Van Kampen was just installed here two weeks ago, following the Will of the Savior. It was the Will of the Lord that he take the call here to Holy Cross.

We are going to install a principal. It is the Will of the Lord, Rick, that you accepted this position.

We are installing two teachers, Chris and Haley. It is the Will of the Lord, and you are simply following the Will of the Lord.

And, I will tell you the positions you are in here, they are blessed positions. They will be wonderful for you to be in. But, by the same token, I can guarantee, I can guarantee there are going to be days when you feel like you are being 'pounded by the waves', and like 'the wind is against you'. We understand that sometimes when we follow God's Will, we may be walking right into a 'storm'.

You may be in high school, and stand up for your Christian faith, simply following the Will of the Lord. You understand, "*I may be 'pounded by waves'. The 'wind may be against me'.*"

So understand, Jesus sometimes sends His people into situations, where He fully knows, even though they are following His Will, there are going to be 'storms'.

Now, Jesus would never, ever, ever in a million years, send His people He bought with His own blood, into a situation that would hurt, or harm them spiritually. He always has their best in mind.

Now, look at what happens next. As the disciples head out in the sea, it is evening. The Bible tells us Jesus went up onto the mountain to pray all by Himself. So, while the disciples are going in to this storm, and the storm is getting worse, and worse, what is Jesus doing? The Bible tells us Jesus is on the mountain, and He is praying.

Now, as we go into our 'storms' in life, (that we may get sent into by the Lord), it is so comforting to know Jesus is praying. He is interceding for His people.

You know, we all have some really dear, dear friends, (*at least if you are a member here at Holy Cross*), that are in 'a little boat' right now that is in a big 'storm', out on 'the sea'. I am talking about Bernt and Katie Tweit. Every one of us in this room and all of us who are reading this sermon are praying for them. I know they have told us, (*they have told me, and probably told you*), “*It is such comfort to know you are praying for us.*”

But, for them to know that Jesus, Himself, with His own lips is interceding for them. What a comfort!

Jesus does the same for us, when He sends us out into those 'storms'. Now, the next thing that happens, The Bible tells us, is Jesus saw them. He knows what is going on.

He knows what is going on in your life. He knows the 'storms', the troubles, the trials. The Bible tells us Jesus went out for them, walking on water. Jesus went to be with them in the storm.

Now, let me put it 'on pause' for a second.

I have an uncle named Dwayne, Uncle Dwayne. He is a super nice guy. He told a story once. He said he was at home, and it was late at night, when a terrible thunderstorm came into town. (*You know how you are supposed to count, when lightening strikes. That is when you count, and if you make it all the way to seven, the storm is a mile away. So, seven seconds for every mile away the storm is.*) Anyway, he said the lightening would flash. It was a sudden flash of lightening for a tenth of a second, and it would light up everything. And immediately, “*Boom!*”, there was thunder. So, the storm was right on top of them. He said it was really scary. He was stunned that his wife Jenene was sleeping through all of this.

All of a sudden he thought, “*I wonder if the windows are open?*” So, he was walking around the house, in the dark, shutting the

windows. Occasionally there would be this flash of light for a tenth of a second, and then, “*Boom!*”

He got all of the windows shut, and was working his way back down the hallway to the bedroom, when all of a sudden there was this bright flash, “*Zoom!*”, lighting up everything for a tenth of a second. Six feet in front of his face he saw a face! Then, it went dark. “*Boom!*”

He screamed at the top of his lungs. And, the face in front of him screamed at the top of her lungs!

Uncle Dwayne and Aunt Jenene were in a storm, and they saw something that terrified them.

Now, amp that up by a thousand percent - Jesus' disciples out on the sea. The wind and the waves are blowing. It is dark, because it is nighttime. All of a sudden, one of them in the boat probably said, “*Look! What is that out there?*”

The rest of them looked, and probably said, “*It looks like a human being!*”

It was getting closer, and closer. They were thinking, “*That can't be a human being. Human beings can't walk on water.*”

Of course, they got more, and more terrified. The Bible tells us they screamed out in terror. Twelve grown men screaming in terror, as they see Jesus, who is coming to be with them.

Now, in our 'storms' in life sometimes we can feel as if the Lord is actually not there to help us, and be our friend, but He is there to hurt us, and harm us.

That is what was going on in the hearts of the disciples.

Immediately, Jesus calms their hearts, and says to them, (*now listen to these words*) He says,

**“Take heart!  
Take heart! It is I!  
Don't be afraid.”**

Now what does it mean to have fear, to be afraid? It means, “*I feel*

*like I have no control over what is about to happen. I don't know how this is going to turn out. I can't control it. I can't stop anything. I have no control, and I have fears about how it is going to turn out."*

Jesus said,

**"Take heart! It is I!"**

In Greek, (*this is very important to know*), technically in Greek the words are, **"Ego emi."** Translated straight, what He says is, **"I Am."**

Do you know the significance of that? The name, **"I Am"** is the proper name for **"God Almighty"** in The Old Testament. When Moses asked, "Who should I say sent me?"

God said, **"Tell them I Am sent you."**

That is the proper name for **God Almighty**.

And so, Jesus says to these terrified men in their storm, ***"Don't be afraid. I Am."***

What was He saying? He was saying, *"I am God. I am God. I am here with you. I am the One who made the water. I am the One who said to the seas, 'This far you may come, and no further.' I am the One who parted The Red Sea, when the Children of Israel passed through. I am the One who brought the waters back together. I am the One who caused the storm, during Jonah's day, and caused the storm to calm, when Jonah was in the water. I am the One who speaks to the winds and waves, 'Peace. Be still.'"*

And Jesus said,

**"I Am."**

In other words, the One who has control over everything, including that storm said, ***"I am with you."*** That is why He could walk on water. He is the great I Am. He made the water, and if He wants to walk on water, He can walk on water. The great I Am is with you through whatever 'storm' you are in, during this life. The Bible says, **"I am with you wherever you go. Don't be dismayed. I am with**

**you wherever you go.”**

Now, I want you to see what happens next. Peter said, **“Lord, if it is you, command me to come to you on the water.”**

Jesus simply uttered one word, one word. He just said, **“Come!”**

Now, this is from the voice of the great I Am. God Almighty.

When He said, **“Come!”**, that was a command from the voice of God Almighty.

And, along with that command, had to go a promise. The promise is, *“I command you to come, therefore you will be able to come.”*

Now, when God makes a promise, He never ever breaks a promise.

The Bible tells us **God is faithful**. To be faithful means, when God says something, it will not fail. God has proven to be absolutely

faithful in all of His promises. When you look at every promise in

The Old Testament that God ever made about the coming Christ,

*(hundreds of them, and every one of them absolutely faithfully*

*happened without fail)*, God is faithful, when He makes a promise.

The biggest promise God made is:

**-He would send His Son, who would suffer and die, to wash away the sins of the world.**

**And, God kept that promise!**

Then, the promise:

**-His Son would rise from the dead, in proof that our sins are forgiven.**

**And, God kept that promise!**

Now, that is the same Jesus who told Peter, **“Come!”**

When God makes a promise, it won't be broken, and it can't be broken.

God has made many promises to you, as you go through 'storms' in life, many promises in scripture. Here are a few of them.

-He promises He will never leave you and never forsake you.

-He promises all things, all things will work out for your good.

-He promises to strengthen you, be with you, and give you courage.

These are promises God gives. God does not, will not, and cannot



break a promise.

So, Peter stepped out of the boat. What was he walking on? You know what he was walking on. It was not really the water. He was walking on something way more solid than water. He was walking on the promises of God's Word. He had faith in Christ's word,

**“Come!”**

Those words of God are more solid than a rock, itself. You have those same promises. They cannot fail, as you go through 'storms'. Unfortunately, we see that Peter is just like us. We see that Peter, just like us, was a sinner, had a sinful heart, and had sinful faults. He didn't have perfect faith in God's promises by any means. The Bible tells us Jesus used the word “doubt”.

**“...why did you doubt?”**

Doubt means double minded. In other words you are looking in two directions. On one hand, Peter was looking at the promises of God, and he was walking on those promises. But, then The Bible says he saw the wind. You see, Jesus' promises were there, but the storm was still there, too. The waves were still pounding. The wind was still against Peter. Peter looked at the wind and the waves, his faith falters, and he began to go down.

We have weak faith, too, don't we? We are going through 'storms', and we have God's promises, and yet we look at the circumstances around us, and we begin to think, *“How can God ever work this out? Does He really love me? Does He really care about me?”*

What Peter did was he cried out in absolute despair. Do you see what happens here, if Peter got to the point where he knew, *“I absolutely, absolutely need Jesus' mercy.”* So, he cried out,

**“Lord, save me!”**

You know what? We cry out the same thing. When we are in our deepest trouble, and we realize the weakness of our own faith, thank God we can cry out to Jesus, **“Lord, save me!”** We have a Jesus who, never turns down 'a beggar', ever. Whenever 'a beggar' came to

Jesus, and pleaded for help, Jesus was always there, with a ready heart to help. And when Peter, the sinner, called out, “**Lord, save me!**” in the weakness of his faith, what did Jesus do? He grabbed Peter by the hand, and pulled him up.

When you cry out, “**Lord, save me!**”, and when I cry out, “**Lord, save me from my sin!**”, Jesus in His mercy, (*because he died for us, He has paid for us, and He has washed our sins away*), 'grabs us, and pulls us up'. Our troubles that we go through can lead us to see how deeply, how deeply we need a Savior, and draw us closer to Him, in trusting His grace, and trusting in all of His promises.

Martin Luther once said this. He said, “*The daily exercise of a Christian is to learn not to look at all of the things going on around me, and base my reality on that, but to look at God's promises. Look at God's promises, and trust. They are more sure than anything I see with my eyes.*”

One of the reasons Bob Lindmeyer tells you to “take cover” is because of the aftermath of what can happen in a storm. There can be downed power-lines. There can be downed trees. There can be things that are terribly damaged.

I want you to look at the aftermath of this storm. What was the aftermath? The Bible tells us Jesus got into the boat, and everything went calm. Then, The Bible says the disciples worshiped Him. This storm was beneficial to them, because they realized, “*This is God. He controls all things. He keeps His promises. He is merciful.*” And they worshiped Him.

And, our troubles can do the same for us. The Bible says,

**“We rejoice in our suffering,  
because suffering produces perseverance,  
perseverance produces character,  
character produces hope,  
and hope does not disappoint us.”**

I am going to close with this thought. You are sitting in church

architecture. There are different names for the different parts of the building. You are sitting in something called '*The Nave*'. It comes from the Latin word, '*navis*'. We get the word '*navy*' from it. '*The Nave*' means '*ship*'. You are sitting in '*the ship*'. (*It looks like a ship, kind of, doesn't it?*) You are in the ship. You are in the church, the Holy Christian Church, and Jesus is with you. He is present with us, the Great I Am. And, just like He was present in a miraculous way, as He walked on water, He is present with us today in His Word. He will be present in a special way in The Sacrament. This is God with us, giving us His strength. He is in 'the ship' with us. I am going to read this from the Psalms, one thousand years before Jesus did what He did.

**“Others went to sea in ships. They saw the LORD's work, His wondrous works in the deep. He spoke, God spoke and raised the stormy wind, and stirred up the waves of the sea, rising up to the sky, sinking down to the depths; their courage melting away in anguish. All their skill was useless. Then, they cried out to the LORD in their trouble, and He brought them out of their distress. He stilled the storm to a whisper; the waves of the sea were hushed. They rejoiced, when the waves grew quiet.”**

*(Now listen to this)*

**“Then, He guided them to the harbor they longed for.”**

That is what the Lord is in the process of doing. He is guiding us to the harbor we long for.

It then says,

**“Let them give thanks to the Lord  
for His faithful love.”**

Amen

Now may the peace of God, which passes all understanding, keep our hearts, and our minds in Christ Jesus, our Lord.

Amen.

