

August 13, 2017  
Sermon for the Tenth Sunday after Pentecost  
St Peter Lutheran Church  
Bowie, TX  
Larry Knobloch, Pastor  
Matthew 14:22-33

*J.J.- Jesu Juva—Help me, Jesus*

Matthew 14:22–33 (ESV)

### **Jesus Walks on the Water**

<sup>22</sup> Immediately he made the disciples get into the boat and go before him to the other side, while he dismissed the crowds. <sup>23</sup> And after he had dismissed the crowds, he went up on the mountain by himself to pray. When evening came, he was there alone, <sup>24</sup> but the boat by this time was a long way from the land, beaten by the waves, for the wind was against them. <sup>25</sup> And in the fourth watch of the night he came to them, walking on the sea. <sup>26</sup> But when the disciples saw him walking on the sea, they were terrified, and said, “It is a ghost!” and they cried out in fear. <sup>27</sup> But immediately Jesus spoke to them, saying, “**Take heart; it is I. Do not be afraid.**”

<sup>28</sup> And Peter answered him, “Lord, if it is you, command me to come to you on the water.” <sup>29</sup> He said, “**Come.**” So Peter got out of the boat and walked on the water and came to Jesus. <sup>30</sup> But when he saw the wind, he was afraid, and beginning to sink he cried out, “Lord, save me.” <sup>31</sup> Jesus immediately reached out his hand and took hold of him, saying to him, “**O you of little faith, why did you doubt?**” <sup>32</sup> And when they got into the boat, the wind ceased. <sup>33</sup> And those in the boat worshiped him, saying, “Truly you are the Son of God.”

Grace, Mercy, and Peace be to you from God our Father and from our Lord and Savior, Jesus Christ!

Amen.

What do you think about good ole' Peter out there walking on the water? Most of us, at one time or another, have probably admired Peter's courage. I've written several sermons on this Text and I sometimes identify with Peter and not being able to keep his mouth shut.

But Just stepping out of that boat, in the middle of a storm,

I'm not sure I would have been able to do that. It must have took a lot of courage, or faith, or maybe just he was just reckless and didn't really think what he was doing. Either way, today, I want to take a look at Peter's little walk on the wild side from a different angle.

First, let's talk about how those disciples got in that boat. Jesus had just fed well over 5,000 people with just a couple of fish and a few lunch size loaves of bread. You know, when we were little, when Grandma baked bread, she would always make us some small loaves, just about snack size, so I always picture those little homemade loaves.

Anyway, when the feeding was finished, something happened that Jesus found disturbing. Matthew doesn't tell us this part of the story but the apostle John does. Under the inspiration of the Holy Spirit, John writes: *John 6:14–15* (ESV)

*"When the people saw the sign that he had done, they said, "This is indeed the Prophet who is to come into the world!"<sup>15</sup> Perceiving then that they*

*were about to come and take him by force to make him king, Jesus withdrew again to the mountain by himself.” John 6:14–15 (ESV)*

As He withdrew, Jesus put His disciples in that boat to protect them. A situation had arisen that could have done great harm to the twelve.

Here’s the problem. The people were considering taking Jesus and making Him their king, even if that meant using force.

They enjoyed the free meal and they wanted more! They wanted to make Him their bread king so that they could feast all the time!

They wanted to force Jesus into being their earthly king and savior. A savior from hunger rather than their savior from sin and death.

But it wasn’t the mob mentality or the violence of a revolution that Jesus was protecting His disciples from.

The protection Jesus was giving His disciples was protection from sinful pride. These men were Jesus’ closest friends. If Jesus became an earthly king, His disciples, undoubtedly, would have been His chief lieutenants. That would have been a very flattering thought. It might have been a bigger temptation than the disciples could have withstood. Look at Judas, easily tempted by silver coins. Peter himself, who said he would never deny Jesus, easily denied Him when his own hide was in danger.

They were still very immature in their faith, the gift of the Holy Spirit had not been given. They could have easily been sucked into the crowd’s way of thinking. So, Jesus rushed His disciples into a boat and sheltered them from the foolish fantasies of the crowd. Jesus protected His disciples from their own pride.

But, wait a minute. Those men escaped the danger of the crowd only to sail into the heart of a storm! And the sea of Galilee was known for its violent storms!

Did Jesus knowingly send His closest companions into a dangerous situation? Yes. Read the Text, that's exactly what He did. And the disciples, because they obeyed Jesus, found them rowing for their lives. They knew the Sea of Galilee, some were experienced fishermen and probably knew the lake very well. They could probably tell by just the smell that a storm was brewing.

Still they went, trusting in Jesus.

Maybe you've been where these men found themselves. I have. I've been tempted by worldly glory, and given in to temptation more times that I could count. If you're honest, you'll know what I'm talking about.

You've done your best to follow the Lord only to find yourself alone at sea in the middle of a storm. If you haven't been there, you may very well be there someday. There is something you should know about the storms of this life.

There are two kinds.

First, there are storms of correction. These are the storms God allows, doesn't cause, but allows in our lives to turn us from willful disobedience.

The Israelites endured one monster of a storm by wandering in the desert for forty years. Jonah had his storm in the belly of a great fish. Samson had his storm in captivity and blindness. Storms of correction can be hard to live through but they come from the hand of our loving Father. He never abandons us nor does He stop loving or providing for us. However He sometimes uses these storms to guide and show us our sin and the way that we should be going.

There are also storms of perfection. These are the storms God allows, again not causes, but allows in our lives to help us grow. These storms shape and mold us into better, more positive children of God.

Paul describes these storms in his letter to the Romans. Paul writes:

*<sup>3</sup>Not only that, but we rejoice in our sufferings, knowing that suffering produces endurance, <sup>4</sup>and endurance produces character, and character produces hope,”*  
(Romans 5:3–4 (ESV))

Storms of perfection also come from the hand of our loving Father but we are still under His loving care in which He will not let the storms overcome us.

Let's return to the disciples. They're in the boat, where Jesus put them, and they're in a storm, where Jesus knew they would be. But keep in mind, they didn't know that. All they knew was that they were in a small boat in a raging storm. Many of these men were fishermen. Chances are they also knew other fishermen, who hadn't survived one of these storms.

The disciples were human, they were scared, and they were rowing for their lives.

Have you ever been in one of those storms? Maybe not in a boat fighting high winds and dangerous waves.

Maybe in a doctor's office waiting for test results. Maybe on the job waiting to see who's going to be laid off.

Maybe at a grave – just waiting.

Whatever your storm, however bad things look, God shows us that there's something here to give you hope and joy.

In the Gospel of Mark, we read another thing not recorded by Matthew.

The Gospel of Mark tells us: “*And he saw that they were making headway painfully, for the wind was against them.*” (Mk 6:48 ESV).

Did you catch that?

The disciples were in the middle of a fierce storm but they weren't out of Jesus' sight. Jesus knew where they were. He not only knew where they were, He was keeping an eye on them. There is no storm of life so severe that Jesus loses sight of you. His eye is on the sparrow and you can be sure He's watching you.

Another note of comfort is that Jesus went to His disciples. He didn't just watch what the disciples were going through like some rubber-necker on the highway. Jesus saw the need of His people and He went to them.

Jesus didn't abandon them to their storm and He won't abandon you to your storm. That's good to know.

We have now come to the point where we can take a look at what Peter did. And what did Peter do?

He jumped ship. I've read all the different accounts of this scene in the Bible and no where have I found Jesus giving His disciples instructions to get out of the boat in the middle of the sea. Jesus told them to get into the boat and cross to the other side. It was Peter's idea to jump ship early. It seemed like Peter didn't like where Jesus had put Him so he changed things on his own. That brings up the question, “Why did Jesus allow Peter to do something he hadn't commanded?” I think the answer is obvious. Jesus allowed Peter to have his own way in order to teach Peter, and us, some valuable lessons. When Peter stepped out of the boat, he should have dropped right to the bottom of the lake.

Why didn't he? Peter didn't sink because, even though he acted outside what Jesus commanded, Jesus kept Peter safe.

We have all, like Peter, stepped outside God's will. But God is faithful even when we are not. We are His children whether we are obeying or disobeying. God's love for us never fails.

God doesn't abandon us the second our sinful humanness leads us astray. We can also see that God might let us create our own storms to learn from.

You've probably heard the saying, "you made your bed, now sleep in it"? While Peter was in the boat, the waves were a problem, but he was in a place where the waves could be navigated. When Peter chose to leave the boat, when he chose to leave the safe place that Jesus left him in, the waves became a much larger problem.

If we decide to do life our own way instead of God's way, we like Peter, might learn that things can become unnecessarily complicated.

Peter also learned the importance of faith. Even though he was doing things his own way, Peter stayed above the water as long as his faith in Jesus held solid. When Peter's faith failed, he failed.

Think about this. If Peter's faith had held firm, do you think Peter would have sunk? Of course not. Faith in Jesus never disappoints. If Peter's fear hadn't become larger than his faith, he would have walked all the way to Jesus.

But Peter's faith did fail and Peter did begin sink. What happened next is another lesson in God's love and faithfulness. When Peter came to his senses and cried out for his Lord, Jesus was right there to save him.

Just because we suffer from a momentary stupidity doesn't mean we are lost forever. God promises that He is there despite our folly to love us, forgive us, and receive us back when we turn back to Him.

Jesus forgave Peter and Jesus saved Peter from his own failed scheme. What did Jesus do then? Jesus took Peter back to the boat. Jesus returned Peter to the very spot where He had put Peter to begin with.

Do you think Jesus was telling Peter He wanted him in that boat? Now, let's look at our lives in light of this account about Peter and his boat. Jesus has put all of us in boats, and we all have seas to cross in these boats. Sometimes the seas will be calm. Sometimes we may encounter unbelievable storms. We are in boats of human relationships, boats of careers, boats of marriage, boats of parenthood, boats of church membership.

All of these boat rides can, and probably will, be subject to periodic storms. The important thing is not to jump ship. We are in these boats because Jesus wants us in these boats. If we jump ship, we might just find out how much more dangerous the storm is outside of the boat.

When you're in a storm remember the following things. Jesus is watching you. He hasn't forgotten you. Jesus loves you and knows what's going on. And, when the time is right, Jesus will come to you. He will supply you with everything you need to carry on. Just remember that Jesus acts in His time not ours.

Lastly, Jesus doesn't expect you to walk on water. He just wants you to remain faithful to Him in the situation He has placed you.

In closing, God places us in situations and God removes us from situations.

Because we know this, Christians often make one of two mistakes. We either leave too soon or we stay too long.

If we don't like where God has put us, we're in a hurry to make our exit. If we are too comfortable where God has put us, we are in no hurry to leave when He says, "Go!"

The problem then becomes how do we know what God wants us to do? We remain open to God and His direction for our lives. We learn to pray the ultimate prayer of faith, "Thy will be done." And we continue to pray this every day.

Dear brothers and sisters in Christ, I pray that the Holy Spirit will keep you open to God's direction for your life so you might stay when God wants you to stay, go when God wants you to go, and most importantly, never jump ship.

Amen.

The Peace of God, which passes all understanding, keep your hearts and minds through Christ Jesus.

Amen.

*S.D.G.—Soli Deo Gloria*

**Sermon Outline**

***Don't Jump Ship***

*Matthew 14:22-33*

- I. The boat offered protection.
- II. Storms of correction & perfection.
- III. Jesus always watches & never fails to protect..