

Come Follow Me  
Elo Viz production  
Week 14  
Matt 14, Mark 6, John 5-6

I'm so excited this week that we get to study one of the greatest stories in Jesus's life. One that everyone, Christian or not knows about. I'm talking about Jesus walking on the water.

In Matthew we read that He just feeds the 5 thousand with only a few loaves and fishes. Which is really more like 15 thousand because they only counted men and most scholars believe there were just as many if not more women and children.

After this perplexing miracle he sends all the people home and tells His disciples to get in the boat and go across the lake. And Jesus goes up into the mountain to pray.

They begin rowing across and "the ship was now in the midst of the sea, tossed with waves: for the wind was contrary." (Matt 14:24) Meaning it was against them.

"And **in** the fourth watch of the night Jesus went unto them, walking on the sea.  
**26** And when the disciples saw him walking on the sea, they were troubled, saying, It is a spirit; and they cried out for fear.  
**27** But straightway Jesus spake unto them, saying, Be of good **cheer**; it is I; be not afraid." (Matt 14:25-27)

Now let's pause right there, and let's look at some powerful doctrines contained here.

First off, the disciples were doing what they were supposed to be doing. Jesus told them to get in the boat. They were right where they should be. See, some people think that if they are walking the path of righteousness that everything is going to be peachy all the time, no trouble, no trial, just sunshine and rainbows. Let us not forget that this is a probationary state where we are to learn and grow. And even though we may have moments of peace and joy in our lives we should also know that if you are experiencing joy and peace, buckle up... it's coming. One writer once said: "We are all either in the middle of a storm, coming out of a storm and just about to head right into one."

But, here is the principle: They were on the water fearing for their safety and even their lives and they couldn't see Jesus. He was in the mountain praying. They couldn't see Him, but Jesus could see them. He knew what was going on, how long they had been rowing. He knew their fears and doubts.

And just when they thought they were going to perish, He comes, walking on the water to get to them. In the fourth watch, somewhere between 3 and 4 in the morning. When the night is the most dark, He came to them. Just as He does for us. When things feel the most dark and the

most stressful, that is when He will show up. But until then, He is still there, watching, waiting for our faith to grow as much as possible. Think of Him as a spotter. If you have ever lifted heavy weights, it's important to have a spotter there to help. In order to get the most out of a workout you need to fatigue the muscles. You lift as much as possible as many times as possible then when you push and you just can't move it any more, that is when your spotter steps in and lifts the weight for you. It truly is the best way to grow your strength and muscles. The same is with our spiritual strength. We are to stretch and grow and push and lift and when we are to the point of collapse our spotter (Jesus) who has been there the whole time is able to step in and take the weight from us.

The next principle to understand is that He didn't just show up in the boat, He came to them walking on water. He was showing them who He was. The storm was still raging and the waves were still massive, the wind was still threatening them. But, none of that mattered because He was coming to them. And His call to them is the same thing he says to us when we are in the middle of our storms and we are experiencing fear, confusion, pain. "Be of good cheer, (he says), It is I, be not afraid."

That seems like a hard thing to do when the storms of life threaten us. How do we find the courage and faith to be of good cheer when so many hard things beat upon us everyday? Luckily there was one disciple that understood and showed us an example of how we are to respond when we find ourselves in the middle of a storm.

When Peter saw Jesus he called out to Him and said "Lord, if it be thou, bid me come unto thee on the water." The correct translation in the Greek language is rendered: Lord, since it is you. Since it is you Jesus ask me, or command me to come to you on the water in the midst of the storm.

Jesus's answer to Peter is the same answer He will give us when we plead with Him to allow us to come to him at any point in our lives, storm or not; "Come" He says.

So Peter, full of magnificent faith, steps over the boat and onto the water. He leaves any worldly security and safety that he was clinging to and does something supernatural, he walks on the water towards Jesus.

Many criticize Peter about this next part. But, we must remember that Peter left the boat. The other disciples were still clinging to the boat for their lives, hoping that worldly object would keep them safe. Not Peter, he got out of the boat, and though he may have stumbled. Remember, he still walked on the water. Something you and I have never done.

The account says "But when he saw the wind boisterous, [meaning a strong or loud wind], he was **afraid**; and beginning to sink, [into the sea] he cried [out], saying, Lord, save me." (Matt 14:30)

The way I see this playing out is; I see Peter jumping over the side of the boat and starting to walk to Jesus. I'm sure it was an incredible feeling. Perhaps something he has dreamed about as he spent so much time on the water as a fisherman. It must have been a dream come true. As his eyes fixed on Jesus his steps were secure, his course was set. Then there was some sort of discretion, perhaps a lightning strike or a crashing wave. Something that caused him to remove his gaze from the master and focus on what was happening around him. The storm that had threatened his life moments before that seemed to dissipate as his faith forced him out of the boat and now brought back into his reality and he realizes that he is in the middle of the sea walking on the water amidst the waves and storm. The way I picture it in my mind is a slow and steady sinking as his faith starts to falter. He probably did what any of us would do. He mustered all the strength he had to try and will himself back to the surface of the water. I did it before he probably thought, I can do it again. But, what he forgot was that it wasn't by his own power that allowed him to walk on the water, it wasn't his own strength or still. Just before his last breath right when he is about to be swallowed up into the gaping mouth of the sea he cries out "Lord, save me." An omission that we all need to one day realize, Jesus is our only hope. We can not save ourselves. There is nothing we can do to secure our own salvation for ourselves. We must submit to His will, cry to Him for His help, rely on His strength... it's the only way. There was nothing that Peter could do no matter how good of a swimmer he was. That storm was going to destroy him. He had to call out to and rely on Jesus to save him.

And it's the exact same way in our lives. We may be ultra strong and resilient, we may be independent and talented. But when the storms come, they will reveal just how weak and vulnerable we are. That is why they appear in our lives, to show us who we are and who He is.

I heard a story once of a couple from Chicago that was on a cruise ship. And the captain came over the intercom and informed the guests that a great storm was heading their way and that they should find a safe place to be, and told them it was going to be uncomfortable for the next few hours. Well the woman didn't like that, so she called for one of the staff and asked to send a message to the captain. She said, "why is it that we are going into the storm? Tell the captain to let down the anchor and let the storm pass and then we can progress." The captain sent a message back to the Women and this is what he said "The captain has two things to say to you: The captain wants me to remind you that he is the one in charge and you're not." and then this is the second thing, please hear this with your spiritual ears, he said: Tell that woman that this ship was built with this storm in mind. – This ship was built with this storm in mind.

See, sometimes we think that life is just out to get us. That if anything bad can happen it will. But, let me remind you that life storms are a part of this mortal journey and just because we find ourselves in the middle of one, it doesn't mean we can't enjoy it, and find peace in the midst of it. It doesn't mean we have to stay in the boat. Jesus is calling us to get out of our comfort zone and walk on the water. Let go of that boat, that thing that you're clinging to and trust Him. The storm is there for a reason. It is important to remember that peace is not found in the absence of storms, but in the presence of Jesus. - peace is not found in the absence of storms, but in the presence of Jesus. In this case, Peter needed to learn something about Peter. He needed to learn that he could trust in Jesus completely. Peter was the most vulnerable that he had ever

been, in a place that he knew could destroy him in a second. I mean how would you feel if you were in the middle of the sea in a great storm, standing on the water, with nothing to hold on to. I think that is about as terrifying as anything we could experience. But, this was a turning point for Peter. And we will have our own turning point. The question is: will you keep your eyes on the Savior? Will you exercise your faith that He will save you? It has been said that a wet Peter is better than a dry Thomas. I have also heard it said that, "where Jesus is, fear is not welcome."

As soon as Peter and Jesus made it back to the boat the record says that "Immediately the wind ceased" "and all that were in the ship came and worshiped Him, saying, Of a truth, thou art the Son of God." finally they get it. This was the miracle it took for them to realize who Jesus is. Up until this point, even as we talked about last week when He calmed the storm they didn't understand who He was until now. It took a great storm for them to see Him and to see why He was there.

A realization we must all come to at some point in our lives. As we study this week might we come to understand deep in our souls that:

- Sometimes storms come even when we are doing what we are supposed to be doing.
- That even though we cannot see our Savior. He can still see us and knows what we are going through.
- That it is usually at the darkest moment in our trial that we will see Him coming to us.
- And He will usually ask us to do something that will push us to step out of our comfort zone.
- but if we keep our eyes on Him that our steps will be secure and our safety will be sure.

These five things are what I have come to understand from this mighty miracle in the Savior's life. And I pray that they will come to be a part of your life as you draw closer to Him.

In the name of Jesus Christ, Amen.