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Title: Jesus Said What?!? Jesus Said Walk on Water

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Text: [Matthew 14:22-33](#)

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When we started planning for this new sermon series, "Jesus Said What?" I was particularly interested in the text about Jesus walking on water. Now as I started digging into this passage I started to see that there were many paths I could take. I mentioned some of the many ideas I had to my husband and he said, "This is not good for you.

It gives you too many options!" He knows me all too well. Luckily I was able to find my path and stick with it and as I started preparing for today the movie *The Shack* kept coming to mind. There is a pretty powerful scene in the movie where the main character, Mack, is in a boat in the middle of a lake. While he is sitting there his fear takes over and the boat begins to sink into the black water below. All of a sudden he hears the voice of Jesus telling him to look to him and not listen to his fear. In doing just that, his boat rises safely to the surface.

He looks over and sees Jesus walking towards him on the water. Jesus extends his hand inviting Mack to join him on the water. Mack says, "I can't" and Jesus replies, "Without me, you can't. I promised to be with you always, right? And I'm right here."

What a powerful moment. Mack stands up and takes Jesus' hand and they walk to shore together. In this movie and our story today Jesus is telling us to, "Walk on Water."

Let us go to our passage today from Matthew 14. "Immediately he made the disciples get into the boat and go on ahead to the other side, while he dismissed the crowds. And after he had dismissed the crowds, he went up the mountain by himself to pray. When evening came, he was there alone, but by this time the boat, battered by the waves, was far from the land, for the wind was against them. And early in the morning, he came walking toward them on the sea. But when the disciples saw him walking on the sea, they were terrified, saying, "It is a ghost!" And they cried out in fear. But immediately Jesus spoke to them and said, "Take heart, it is I; do not be afraid." Peter answered him, "Lord, if it is you, command me to come to you on the water." He said, "Come." So Peter got out of the boat, started walking on the water, and came toward Jesus. But when he noticed the

strong wind, he became frightened, and beginning to sink, he cried out, "Lord, save me!" Jesus immediately reached out his hand and caught him, saying to him, "You of little faith, why did you doubt?" When they got into the boat, the wind ceased. And those in the boat worshiped him, saying, "Truly you are the Son of God." (Matthew 14:22-33)

Our scripture today comes from the book of Matthew, however, you can also find this story in Mark and John. But it is this version where we find Peter attempting to walk on the water. Now you might be thinking, there is another story of Jesus calming the sea and you're right. The story in Matthew 8 of Jesus sleeping in a boat when a mighty storm blew in. He then commanded the winds and waves to be still. There are many parallels between these two stories. They both take place on a boat on troubled waters, Jesus is absent from the disciples, the disciples are afraid, their faith is tested and then they are amazed.

Today we are going to look at Peter and how his faith journey might be similar to our faith journey. All of the disciples were still learning how to truly follow Jesus. On this day the disciples are tired and weary; it is the wee hours of the morning. They are far from shore and the waves are crashing against the sides of the boat. Next thing they know they see something or someone walking towards them on the water. They are more afraid of this than the raging sea around them.

Peter is a rather impetuous man often leaping before he has looked. He is very quick to decide without thinking. It is the same in this case. He sees who appears to be his master walking towards him and even though he might have been fearful; he still asks for assurance. Then when Jesus says, "Come" Peter does just that. He steps out of a perfectly good boat onto the water. Jesus is saying, "Walk on water."

A little over 2 years ago my family and our best friends began planning a trip to Glacier National Park in July 2020. It took 2 years to plan, one because these big trips take time to plan, the amount of stuff you need is tremendous especially when you are camping! But mainly because I had to truly wrap my head around driving 30 hours to get out there and camping, in a tent, for 7 days. Tent camping not being my number favorite activity, but my husband and kids love it so I can usually make due. Luckily our friends have been there several times, which was helpful but this was still a very big trip for us. There was a sense of fear. As this pandemic has continued new fears arose. The park was closed and so were many of the roads. The drive takes 30 hours. Could we camp for 7 days? What about bears? Are we going to be able to stay safe when we stop? We had to start talking about backup plans and it almost felt like we were drowning in the possibilities of what could or could not happen.

Fear seems to play a central role in our lives as well as in today's story. There is the fear of the unknown when they see something or someone walking towards them on the water. Fear of their present situation of rough seas without Jesus. But there is also fear as a motivator for Peter. He looks out to the water and calls to his master, "Lord, if it is you command me to come to you on the water." His fear seems to be driving him to seek Christ and yet he still loses sight of Him once he is in the sea. Maybe he was overcome by the wind and the waves or perhaps it was the enormity of the situation itself. He was walking on water! Jesus does rebuke him saying, "You of little faith! Why do you doubt me?" I wonder if Jesus says it in anger or simply mocking him. "Why would you doubt me? You know I am always with you."

Well, we did it. It took 2 years to plan and because of a pandemic it almost didn't happen, but we made the trip. I stepped out of the boat and trusted that it would be alright. It took three days to get there with plenty of awesome sights along the way including the Bad Lands and Mount Rushmore. We spent 7 nights camping in the park and hiked nearly 40 miles. And despite some fears, including precautions when we stopped along the way, bears, not being warm enough, falling, not being able to hike and maybe a few others. We were able to experience this beautiful country, cool crisp mornings, warm afternoons beneath snowcapped mountains, turquoise blue lakes, amazing waterfalls, hiking through the snow in July, and skipping rocks on Lake McDonald.

It is truly a place where you can feel the presence of God. Where you know he is there in all you do and all you see. It was a wonderful experience and I'm glad that I was able to get out of the boat and go.

How many times have you been called to walk on water? Christ is calling us to step out in faith. The call we hear is not always an easy one and there will probably be troubled waters. First, you have to be willing to step out of the boat. By stepping out of the boat, we are saying that we are ready to go out and overcome our fears. We are willing to stretch and grow and live a courageous life trusting that God is with us.

And when you do take that leap of faith and falter do you know who to turn to? Peter did. He knew to call out to Jesus for help and he was right there to lift him from the waves. Peter was on his faith journey and at that moment, he was learning. Learning what it meant to be a follower of Christ. He steps out of the boat in faith and faithfulness even though he has his doubts. For his faith to grow, he has to be in a relationship with Christ. And that is what he is asking of us as well. As we continue to embark on our journey of faith we need to be in a relationship with Christ. This journey isn't short. This is a lifelong journey. And yes there will be setbacks, doubts, and fears. But there will also be forgiveness, mercy, love, and grace.

So I ask you, "Will you walk on water?"

Let us pray...