

**Series: Walking by Faith # 5**  
**The Courage of Peter**  
Matthew 14:28-32

As we continue our study of walking by faith, I couldn't imagine a series dealing with this subject without looking at the account we have read today. Mark and John also record the account of Jesus walking on the water, but only Matthew reveals Peter's walk unto the Lord. This was a walk of faith in more ways than one. Peter literally placed his life in the hands of the Lord as he stepped out of the boat to go unto Him. He is the only man recorded in history who walked on water expect the Lord Himself. Peter's act of faith required great courage.

Often we find ourselves dealing with situations that require great faith. Many times these situations require courage along with our faith. Faith believes and rests in the unseen, trusting the Lord to make a way when it appears there is no way. Faith believes the impossible and responds contrary to human reasoning or desire. Walking by faith rests in the ability of the Lord alone.

As we continue in our series, I want to discuss the [phases](#) of this walk of faith as we examine: [The Courage of Peter](#).

**I. The Discernment of Peter** (28-29) – These verses reveal the discernment Peter had as they struggled in the midst of the Sea of Galilee. Had we read the preceding verses we would have discovered that they were being tossed in the midst of a contrary wind. John reveals they were twenty five to thirty furlongs from shore, roughly three to four miles. Clearly they were in a desperate situation that required more than they were able to give. As we consider Peter's discernment, we discover:

**A. His Recognition** (28) – [And Peter answered him and said, Lord, if it be thou, bid me come unto thee on the water.](#) Jesus was well aware of their dire situation and He came unto them, walking on the sea. As He drew near, Jesus spoke words of comfort to the disciples. Peter recognized the Lord had arrived in the midst of their difficulty. Some of the others may have recognized Jesus as well, but we only have an account of Peter actually speaking to Jesus.

- Some would argue there is a bit of doubt and reservation in Peter's words, but he was acting on faith. If we are to overcome and receive the help we so desperately need, we must recognize the Lord. We must be willing to admit our lack and recognize His ability to meet our need. Until we get to the end of ourselves, we will never actually walk by faith.

**B. His Request** (28) – *And Peter answered him and said, Lord, if it be thou, bid me come unto thee on the water.* As we consider Peter's request, our humanity sees this as ridiculous and even insane. Peter is in the relative safety of the boat, and yet he asked the Lord to bid him to walk on the water unto Him. The Scripture doesn't reveal any response from Peter's companions in the boat, but can you imagine their surprise? They likely thought Peter had lost his mind. Is he crazy enough to step out of the boat in the midst of this storm, this far from shore? Peter was often quick to speak, and his request may have come out before he had even considered the enormity of it. Regardless of the circumstances, Peter had requested to walk on the water to Jesus.

- This challenged me as I considered our walk of faith. We speak of faith, but live very little in genuine faith. How long has it been since our faith motivated us to request something that required the supernatural power of the Lord to come to pass? **We need the faith of Peter, faith that believes the impossible and seeks the Lord to meet our impossibility!**

**C. His Response** (29) – *And he said, Come. And when Peter was come down out of the ship, he walked on the water, to go to Jesus.* Likely this happened so quickly that Peter had little time to contemplate what was actually happening. Jesus granted his request, and before Peter knew it, he was standing in the midst of a raging sea. I tried to imagine how this must have felt as Peter initially stepped out of the boat. Surely he felt the wind blowing against his face. As the waves billowed, likely his clothes became wet from the churning sea. I don't what it felt like to walk on water, but it had to be unlike anything Peter had experienced before. He had responded solely in faith. Human reasoning would have prevented such an action, but Peter had responded to the Lord's call in faith. I am convinced he felt safer standing on the water going to Jesus, than sitting in the boat without Him.

- I would never encourage careless behavior that endangers life, but we too need to be willing to respond in faith to the Lord. This will require that we abandon human reasoning and what we know in order to respond in faith. When the Lord calls, we must be willing to respond, even if it seems contrary to our immediate reasoning. (You will likely have no one other than the Lord to walk with. This world will assume you've lost your mind. They will not understand, and likely be unwilling to follow. Peter was the only one who got out of the boat.)

**II. The Distraction of Peter** (30) – *But when he saw the wind boisterous, he was afraid; and beginning to sink, he cried, saying, Lord, save me.* Initially things went well for Peter as he walked on the water, but his situation quickly changed. Notice:

**A. His Focus** (30) – As Peter made his way toward Jesus, he was doing fine as long as he kept his eyes on Jesus, but when he noticed the winds and waves, he lost his focus. He began to pay more attention to the storm than he did Jesus. His focus was diverted from the one who could calm the storm unto the storm itself. This set in motion a chain of devastating events.

- This simple truth has been shared many, many times and yet we need to be reminded. In the midst of trials, it is often easy to lose our focus. We start out well, trusting the Lord by faith and walking toward Him, but as the storm intensifies, we tend to take our eyes off Jesus and focus on the storm. We must keep our eyes on Jesus. He has the ability to walk above our storm and enable us to do the same.

**B. His Fear** (30) – As Peter lost focus, he soon found himself fearful in the storm. Peter went from walking on the water to a state of sheer panic and terror in a moment's time. He had stepped out of the boat with confidence and faith, but as he focused on the storm, he was filled with fear.

- Many are critical of Peter, and I am not advocating we lose our focus, but I am aware that walking by faith can be frightening. We are walking in a way that is beyond our control. Walking in genuine faith requires that we surrender our will and any control we think we have to the Lord. That is frightening. Keeping our focus on the Lord is the only way to overcome fear as we walk by faith. As long as we are unaware of the dangers, we don't realize our perilous situation. As you walk in faith, stay focused to avoid panic and fear.

**C. His Failure** (30) – *But when he saw the wind boisterous, he was afraid; and beginning to sink, he cried, saying, Lord, save me.* Peter started out well, with more courage and faith than the others, but he failed this test of faith. When he lost focus and became afraid, he began to sink. He was no longer walking on the water by faith, he was sinking in fear and unbelief.

- I am sure this is not what Peter envisioned as he stepped out of the boat, but a lack of faith resulted in failure. We must understand that there will be seasons in life when faith is essential. In fact, you will eventually face a situation where faith is all you have. I pray that we will have the ability to maintain our focus and come through triumphant. Peter failed this test, but thankfully his failure wasn't final. We too will fail from time to time, but even when our faith is weak, the Lord is faithful. We can rest in Him, even when we are weak.

**III. The Deliverance of Peter** (31-32) – The Lord did not leave Peter to perish because of his lack of faith. Although he failed the test, Peter was delivered. Consider:

**A. The Rescue** (31a) – *And immediately Jesus stretched forth his hand, and caught him.* As Peter began to sink, he cried out for the Lord to save him, and Jesus immediately responded, rescuing him from the raging sea. Although his faith was weak, he realized his great need for the Lord and cried out for deliverance. Jesus loved Peter and wasn't about to allow him to perish in the midst of the sea. It may have appeared that hope was gone, but the Lord caught Peter and delivered him.

- There is so much we could discuss here, but I hope you realize the Lord is able to meet your need regardless of the circumstance. If we will seek Him by faith, He will respond to our need. I remember the day I was drowning in a sea of sin. I called out to the Lord to save me by His grace and He immediately lifted me out of the depths of despair. There have been many occasions throughout my Christian journey when the Lord has reached out in my moment of despair, lifting me above the turmoil that surrounded me. He is always faithful to His own.

**B. The Rebuke** (31b) – *And immediately Jesus stretched forth his hand, and caught him, and said unto him, O thou of little faith, wherefore didst thou doubt?* Peter cried out in faith and the Lord responded, but his lack of initial faith brought a loving rebuke from the Lord. There was never any reason for fear or doubt. Peter was never in peril, even though it appeared that way. Jesus wanted Peter to trust Him in every situation, regardless of how hopeless it appeared. Peter would need more lessons in faith, but he would eventually possess great faith, enough to die for the Lord.

- The Lord will use our moments of weakness and failure to teach us valuable lessons in faith. Have we not all been guilty of doubt and fear? I know I have experienced the Lord's loving rebuke for my lack of faith, teaching me I have nothing to fear in Him. He has never failed me in the past and I know He never will. Sadly, like Peter, I am often a slow learner. He is still working on me and increasing my faith in Him.

**C. The Relief** (32) – *And when they were come into the ship, the wind ceased.* As the Lord pulled Peter from the raging sea, He brought him to the safety of the boat, and the wind ceased to blow. The Lord brought complete calm and deliverance to Peter. He allowed him to rest in His grace.

- I am thankful for those havens of rest the Lord provides for us. He has the ability to calm our storm and allow us a place of rest in Him. We can't begin to comprehend the help and hope available to us in Christ. The storm you face may be intense at the moment, but when the Lord has achieved His divine purpose in your life through this trial, He will bring calm to you.

**Conclusion:** Are you in the midst of a raging storm today? Do you desire to walk by faith, but are doubtful and afraid? If some come to Jesus. He can calm the storm that rages or provide the

peace you need to endure. If you are unsaved, you are in a desperate situation. You are helpless in yourself, but the Lord is able to deliver. Respond to His call for deliverance and believe on Him for salvation!