



Life Guide

applying God's Word to life

Walking on the Word of Jesus August 23, 2020

Matthew 14:22-33

²² Immediately Jesus made the disciples get into the boat and go on ahead of him to the other side, while he dismissed the crowd. ²³ After he had dismissed them, he went up on a mountainside by himself to pray. Later that night, he was there alone, ²⁴ and the boat was already a considerable distance from land, buffeted by the waves because the wind was against it. ²⁵ Shortly before dawn Jesus went out to them, walking on the lake. ²⁶ When the disciples saw him walking on the lake, they were terrified. "It's a ghost," they said, and cried out in fear. ²⁷ But Jesus immediately said to them: "Take courage! It is I. Don't be afraid." ²⁸ "Lord, if it's you," Peter replied, "tell me to come to you on the water." ²⁹ "Come," he said. Then Peter got down out of the boat, walked on the water and came toward Jesus. ³⁰ But when he saw the wind, he was afraid and, beginning to sink, cried out, "Lord, save me!" ³¹ Immediately Jesus reached out his hand and caught him. "You of little faith," he said, "why did you doubt?" ³² And when they climbed into the boat, the wind died down. ³³ Then those who were in the boat worshiped him, saying, "Truly you are the Son of God."

1. After Jesus sends the disciples off in the boat, they spend hours and hours not getting where they are going? Share your most frustrating "struggle to get there" story.

One summer, I was on the north side of Chicago. My wife's family planned to go to the famous museum of Science and Industry, on the south side of the city. We left at 11 am, and after numerous switches from trains to buses, rebuying transportation tickets that had run out, a few failed transfers between trains or buses, we arrived at the

expensive museum at 4 PM. Closing time was 5 PM. We had 1 hour to see one of the biggest museum in the country. Then the trip back was just as bad! I may never visit Chicago again. The frustration deeply affected my emotions.

2. Look at the first verses. For what reasons did Jesus find it so important in his own life as the Son of God and Man to get away and pray?

Leading up this account, Jesus had learned that John the Baptist had been beheaded. He tried to withdraw to a solitary place, but the crowds followed. So he had compassion and fed the 5000. Now he dismisses the crowd and heads up the mountain to pray. He needed real time to mourn for John, to pray for strength against persecution, and possibly to pray for his disciples in the tests they are about to face.

3. How does this story demonstrate the truth of Psalm 24:15? **"The eyes of the Lord are on the righteous and his ears are attentive to their cries."**

Mark's gospel account (Mark 6:45-52) of this story makes it clear that Jesus was able to see them out in the boat, even though he wasn't with them physically. What a great picture of how Jesus still operates today! Jesus commissioned us to go and promise to be with us. This story of Jesus watching from the mountain side helps us to visualize his watching from the right hand of God where he lives to intercede for us.

4. When the disciples see someone coming on the water, they fear it's a ghost! Why might this have not been so unreasonable? See Matthew 8:28-34, 9:34, 10:1, 12:22.

Each of these verses is another account of Jesus or the disciples interacting with some sort of demonic activity.

This kind of thing seemed to be much more prevalent in Jesus' time. The disciples would have even seen the demon name "Legion" cast out of the man into the herd of 2000 pigs who rushed down the cliff into the sea. Maybe the disciples thought one of the demons was coming back up.

5. When Jesus hears the cries of the disciples in the boat, he reassures them, "Take courage! It is I. Don't be afraid." How do you usually react when someone says, "Don't get be afraid. Don't get mad." Or "Relax!"? How does Jesus saying this make it so much different?

People hate being told to not have the feelings they are feeling. "Relax" or "Don't be upset." usually just infuriates a person all the more. Telling my wife, "Don't be afraid!" at the top of a roller coaster is about the worst thing I can do. But when Jesus says, "It is I," this is a total game changer. It means the almighty, omnipotent, and loving God is there with the disciples on the sea. This is a real reason not to be afraid.

6. Yes or No? If you were in Peter's spot on that boat, you would've asked Jesus if you could walk out on the water to him.
Not, not for me! Though I love swimming, I would've stayed in the boat with the rest of the disciples. I don't think the thought would have ever crossed my mind to ask. But time and time again, Peter showed boldness, which we commend, and then it quickly "peters out".
7. Peter wasn't just walking on water, he was walking on the command, promise, and word of Jesus and on the water. What promises has God given for you to walk on through the restless sea of this world?

Most importantly, the promise made in baptism where Jesus combines his word with water to forgive sins. You are a dear child of God!

"I am with you always!" "Never will I leave you or forsake you."

"In all things God works for the good of those who love him."

"With God all things are possible."

"Everyone who calls on the name of the Lord will be saved."

8. Peter walked on water until he again became afraid because of the strong wind. Can you relate to Peter as you live in the year 2020? What things have caused you to doubt and waver?

Life can be a constant cycle of hearing God's promise and then soon forgetting, doubting, and becoming afraid again. When I neglect hearing his promises and meditating on them, my mood quickly begins to sink, especially with everything we are facing. Constant bad news. Constant stress over making decisions for other people's good. A world in turmoil. Everyone is metaphorically at each other's throats over everything that happens, though we have to keep 6 feet of distance or a computer in between us.

9. "Who can you trust?" That's perhaps the hottest question of the year. To whom does this account point our eyes and why?

This account points our eyes to Jesus, the one whose word we can always trust. It is strong, firm, reliable, and trustworthy. For this we worship, just as the disciples did. We worship our God who walks on the water, who controls the wind and the waves, and most importantly, is ready to save, even when we doubt and falter.