

BIBLE LIFE MESSAGES

He's So Good, He Walks on Water!

Matthew 14:22-33

1 Sometimes when a person is outstanding at what they do or seem to accomplish the impossible, he is labeled, “He can walk on water”!

The story is told about three preachers who were out fishing in a small boat at a lake. Two of them were fishing buddies who fished there all the time. The third joined them for the first time.

They rowed their boat out into the lake several hundred yards from the shore. As it approached noon the preachers discovered they had left their lunches at the campsite. The first preacher said, “That’s no problem; I’ll go get the lunches”. He climbed out of the boat, walked across the water and retrieved the lunch. The new preacher’s eyes nearly popped out of his head.

As they were opening their lunches the second preacher realized they had forgotten the soft drinks. “No problem”, he said as he climbed out of the boat

and walked to the campsite and returned. The new preacher sat there and nearly fainted.

When they had finished their lunches they noticed that their bait was gone. The third preacher, not wanting to be outdone or considered less spiritual than the other two, quickly shouted, “I’ll get it!”, jumped out of the boat and disappeared under the water!

As they were pulling him back into the boat, coughing and sputtering, the first preacher said to his buddy, “I guess we should have told him where the rocks were”!

Now that’s a walking on water story!

He who actually did walk on water has promised to help you; to show you where the rocks are in life.

That event is found in the Gospel of Matthew, chapter 14, verses 22 through 33. ²

Immediately Jesus made the disciples get into the boat and go on ahead of him to the other side, while he dismissed the crowd. After he had dismissed them, he went up on a mountainside by himself to pray. When evening came, he was there alone, but the boat was already a considerable distance from land, buffeted by the waves because the wind was against it. During the fourth watch of the night Jesus went out to them, walking on the lake. When the disciples saw him walking on the lake, they were terrified. "It's a ghost," they said, and cried out in fear.

But Jesus immediately said to them: "Take courage! It is I. Don't be afraid." ³

"Lord, if it is you," Peter replied, "tell me to come to you on the water." "Come," he said. Then Peter got down out of the boat, walked on the water and came toward Jesus. But when he saw the wind, he was afraid and, beginning to sink, cried out, "Lord, save me!" Immediately Jesus reached out his hand and caught him. "You of little faith," he said, "why did you

doubt?” And when they climbed into the boat, the wind died down. Then those who were in the boat worshipped him, saying, “Truly you are the Son of God.”⁴

There are three things we can learn from this scripture.

I. You Get in Danger When You Don't Keep the Lord Close at Hand – v22-24

You get in danger when you don't keep the Lord close at hand.⁵

In verse 22¹ we find that the Lord was separated from His disciples.⁶ In the Gospel of John, chapter 6, verse 15² the crowd of 5000 wanted to make Jesus a king right on the spot. He had to get the disciples into a

¹ v22 - Immediately Jesus made the disciples get into the boat and go on ahead of him to the other side, while he dismissed the crowd.

² John 6:15 - Jesus, knowing that they intended to come and make him king by force, withdrew again to a mountain by himself.

boat and out of the way quickly. ⁷ Then, in verse 24 ³ the disciples became trapped in the lake by strong winds and high waves. ⁸

When you become too self reliant you can leave the Lord out of the picture in your life. When you leave the Lord behind Satan will try to stop your spiritual progress.

God's word tells you to do two things to keep your spiritual progress going. Colossians, chapter 3, verse 17, says, **And whatever you do, whether in word or deed, do it all in the name of the Lord Jesus, giving thanks to God the Father through him.** ⁹ And First Thessalonians, chapter 5, verse 17, continues with **Pray continually.**

So, in everything you do, saturate it with prayer. Include the Lord in your life! ¹⁰

The second thing we can learn is . . .

³ V23-24 - When evening came, he was there alone, but the boat was already a considerable distance from land, buffeted by the waves because the wind was against it.

II. The Lord is Always Ready to Come to Your Rescue – v25-27

The Lord is always ready to come to your rescue. ¹¹

**First He can rescue you by coming to you. Notice
verse 25, **During the fourth watch of the night Jesus
went out to them, walking on the lake.** ¹²**

**In verse 23 ⁴ Lord Jesus was on a mountaintop
praying. This was between 3:00 and 6:00 a.m. He
could see that His disciples were in danger and
proceeded to come to their rescue. Notice that He
didn't let any obstacles, wind or waves, get in the way.**

¹³

**You know He cares enough to rescue you because He
went to the cross! Therefore, He's willing to help you
with your daily struggles. ¹⁴**

Verse 26 continues, **When the disciples saw him**

⁴ v23 - After he had dismissed them, he went up on a mountainside by himself to pray.

walking on the lake, they were terrified. “It’s a ghost,” they said, and cried out in fear. The disciples didn’t even recognize Him when He came. ¹⁵

The word “ghost” ⁵ in the original language, means “a shadowy apparition”; a ghost. We get our English word “Phantom” from this word. ¹⁶ The word “terrified” ⁶ is the common word for fear. It’s a word picture meaning to agitate like the water in a washing machine. They were shaking and screaming in terror.

17

You have access to the Lord in prayer at any time. How often are you in contact with Him? Try to recognize the Lord’s presence in your life and talk to Him often. ¹⁸

Second, the Lord can rescue you by calming your fears. Notice verse 27, **But Jesus immediately said to them: “Take courage! It is I. Don’t be afraid.”** ¹⁹

⁵ Φάντασμα.

⁶ Φόβος.

The Lord identified who He was. “It is I” ⁷ is emphatic here. “I Am” is literally the divine name!

When Moses was standing before God in the fiery bush on the top of Mount Sinai, he was given the command to return to Egypt to lead Israel out of captivity. Moses asked, Who should I say is sending me? ²⁰ God replied to that question in Exodus, chapter 3, verse 14, **God said to Moses, “I AM WHO I AM. This is what you are to say to the Israelites: ‘I AM has sent me to you’”**. I believe Lord Jesus was telling His disciples that He was God! ²¹

The Lord encouraged them. Notice He didn’t say, “Be of good cheer.” He said, “Be courageous!” When the Lord dwells within you, you can be courageous under any circumstances.

Let’s remember what we have learned so far. Verses 22 through 24 tell us you can get in danger when you don’t keep the Lord close at hand. Then verses 25 through 27 tell us the Lord is always ready to come to

⁷ ἐγώ εἰμι.

your rescue. ²²

The third lesson from this passage is that . . .

III. The Lord Rescues in Response to Faith -

v28-33

The Lord rescues in response to faith. ²³

Peter's faith was expressed in words. In verse 28, "Lord, if it's you," Peter replied, "tell me to come to you on the water."²⁴ Then in verse 29 he followed through with actions, Then Peter got down out of the boat, walked on the water and came toward Jesus. ²⁵

Then Peter's faith was distracted. In verse 30 when Peter took his eyes off the Lord and focused on the opposition, down he went! ⁸ ²⁶ The Lord labeled this faith "little faith" and "doubt". ⁹ You can get so focused on dodging the fiery arrows Satan throws at you that you can forget to use your shield! ²⁷

Then, Peter's faith was redirected. Peter could have

⁸ v30 - But when he saw the wind, he was afraid and, beginning to sink, cried out, "Lord, save me!"

⁹ v31 - "You of little faith," he said, "why did you doubt?"

trusted in his own abilities. The Bible tells us he was a good swimmer. ¹⁰ ₂₈ But when he said, **Lord, save me,** he admitted he was helpless and needed to rely on the Lord. ₂₉

So, what is real faith? ₃₀ In verse 31 ¹¹ the word “doubt” ¹² means to duplicate, to stand twice or stand double. ₃₁ James, chapter 1, verses 6 through 8, defines this idea this way, **But when he asks, he must believe and not doubt, because he who doubts is like a wave of the sea, blown and tossed by the wind. That man should not think he will receive anything from the Lord; he is a double-minded man, unstable in all he does.** ₃₂ It’s like this; if you pray, but really don’t believe your prayers will be answered, you are double minded.

¹⁰ John 21:7-8 - Then the disciple whom Jesus loved said to Peter, “It is the Lord!” As soon as Simon Peter heard him say, “It is the Lord,” he wrapped his outer garment around him (for he had taken it off) and jumped into the water. The other disciples followed in the boat, towing the net full of fish, for they were not far from shore, about a hundred yards.

¹¹ v31 - Immediately Jesus reached out his hand and caught him. “You of little faith,” he said, “why did you doubt?”

¹² Διστάζω.

There was a severe drought one year. The church met for prayer to desperately ask the Lord for rain. But only one woman came to the prayer meeting with an umbrella! ³³

Lord Jesus loves you so much He went to the cross for you! He's willing to come to your rescue when you express your faith in Him. Trust Him when your storms seem overwhelming!

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