

May 17, 2020
Stepping Out in Faith with Christ

Scripture reading: Matthew 14:22-33

Text: *“Very truly I tell you, whoever believes in me will do the works I have been doing, and they will do even greater things than these” (John 14:12).*

Have you ever felt that something occurred in your life and you were afraid and alone in the midst of difficulties, trials, and temptation? You felt that even God seemed to have abandoned you and you had no one to rely on. You were so confused, the storms of life tossed you back and forth, and there was no way out. We may think, in such situations, that we are trapped and got into a deep hole. There is no deliverance and reason to hope.

In our story today we encounter something similar to this. The Lord Jesus gave orders to His disciples to cross to the other side of the lake at night. Meanwhile Christ went up on the mountainside by himself to pray. While the disciples were crossing the lake a fierce storm struck the lake. The waves began to toss the boat and were breaking into the boat. The disciples were thinking that this was going to be the end. There was darkness around them and the abyss underneath them. They were afraid and alone.

When the storm broke out and the waves tossed them, the disciples immediately forgot about the person of Jesus. It also can happen to us. When we are in difficulties and trials then what are we focusing on? We may also forget about Christ and we focus on the circumstances. We concentrate on the difficulties around us and how we could get out of the deep hole. Many times we don't really deal with the Lord Jesus first and we don't rely on Him right away, but we try to do things to survive and find our own solutions to the problems.

Where is Jesus in the midst of all this? He is up on the mountain and prays. He lifts up His words to the Father and prays for those below who are fighting with the storm and waves.

Jesus, however, does not remain on the mountaintop. The moment comes when He goes down to His disciples. He comes and does things in an awesome and unbelievable way. He approaches His scared disciples to meet them by walking on the water.

In the midst of the crashing waves of life, when we think that there is no way out, a voice is heard, *“Take courage! It is I. Don't be afraid” (v.27)*. This is what the scared disciples heard when they saw Jesus walking on the water as if on dry land. Christ came toward them to meet them in the darkness, in the great danger. How relieving it was to hear Jesus' voice. Moreover Peter took heart and cried out, *“Lord, if it's you..., tell me to come to you on the water” (v.28)*.

The astonishing thing is that something similar may happen in our lives, too. When things become almost unbearable the voice of our Savior Jesus Christ sounds to

us, *“It is I. Do not be afraid. Know that the “sea of life” is subject to me, just believe and hold on to me. Hold the course of the boat of your life toward me. It is I, do not fear.”*

At that moment, when Peter saw the Lord, he wanted to go to Him. He wanted to imitate Christ, to walk on water. The Lord Jesus said, *“Come”*. You know, Peter risked his life when he stepped out on the raging sea. But he knew one thing: **the Lord was up ahead of him.**

2011 was one of the most difficult years in my life. I thought that everything would collapse around me. There was a huge raging “storm” in my life circumstances that I could not control through my human effort. I was broken in my heart and spirit because of the negative events and happenings. In the summer of 2011 I began to read a book. The title of that book was: *If You Want To Walk On Water You’ve Got to Get Out of the Boat*. The author of this book is John Ortberg pastor of the Menlo Park Presbyterian Church in California. I love and deeply respect this man of God. I have received many blessings through his teachings and books.

God used this book on a great way in my life. The Lord inspired and encouraged me to take faith steps through the teaching of the book of Pastor Ortberg that I did not understand at that time, however, just later on realized what a great blessing it was for me. In his book Pastor Ortberg emphasizes to taking faith steps. It was really hard for me to do, at that time. Additionally, the very difficult situations were like drawing back forces. However, I did not have another choice than to rely on the Lord and waiting. After a while God brought deliverance for me. However, in order to experience deliverance I had to take big risks in faith. I did not know the outcome at that time, but I had to take faith steps. After taking those risky steps, flows of blessings started that had a wonderful effect on my life, and brought joy and freedom for me and my family that we experience even today. By these faith steps, 2012 was the year of God’s miracles for us.

Maybe Christ also encourages you to take risks in things He shows you otherwise your life will never be directed toward Him. You will never be able to grow in faith and live a fruitful life. Only moving forward, toward Jesus shows that you are His follower. Look what Peter did. He stepped out of the boat, and as long as he fixed his eyes on Christ, and not on the waves and circumstances, he was able to walk on water. It was a miracle!

Today Jesus is saying: *“Come! Take courage! It is I. Don’t be afraid! Be strong! I am here! I can reach my hand out to you to help you!”* Christ is able to do it in your life and in my life. Amen.

Yours in Christ,
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