

DAY FOUR

MAINTAINING FAITH

DAY 4 - JESUS ON MOUNTAIN-MOVING FAITH AND PRAYER

THURSDAY JUNE 9: MATTHEW 14:22-33 – MAINTAINING FAITH

MATT 14:22 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.”

This is a story I find difficult to comprehend. I’ve seen God do some pretty incredible things and I have no trouble imagining Jesus stopping a storm. But walking over the surface of a turbulent lake? That is downright weird and impossible. It just shows how powerful Jesus was, even while in human flesh. He was completely dominant over the forces of nature. Imagine him waltzing over the top of the raging water to help out his friends stuck in a boat in the storm. Jesus blows my mind. I take heart in the fact that the disciples who had just seen Jesus feed 5000 plus people from 5 bread rolls and two sardines, felt the same way. They were terrified. They had no idea what was going on.

Then there was bold, brash, brave, believing Peter. Never one to shrink back, he wanted part of the action. With sky-high faith, Peter courageously asked to walk across the water to Jesus rather than wait for him to reach the boat. I have no idea what he thought would happen once he got to Jesus. I guess he didn’t even consider that. Jesus was out there in the waves and Peter really wanted to be with him.





DAY FOUR

MAINTAINING FAITH

So when Jesus said, “Come,” Peter jumped straight in. And for a while it was incredible. We’re not told how far he walked, but it was enough for Matthew to comment that he really was walking on the water. But it didn’t last. Maybe Peter could have made it to Jesus on a clear, still night, but once he took his eyes off Jesus and felt the power of the hurricane and saw the size of the waves, he was gone. Down he went like a lead sinker.

Peter did not lack faith like the villagers in Nazareth (last devotion), he just couldn’t maintain faith. His initial faith in Jesus was huge. I don’t know of any other human being who has walked on water. That’s incredible. But his faith dissipated quickly in challenging circumstances. Jesus calls this “little faith.” It comes and goes. It believes and then doubts. It trusts and then worries. It motivates but can’t sustain. Little faith is better than no faith, but it wavers far too much to be called big faith.

Peter’s experience is familiar to many of us. We have moments of great faith when we believe with our whole heart and pray fervently for God’s intervention. We hear Jesus’ call and jump out of the boat. But reality hits, nothing changes, problems emerge, things may even appear worse. Suddenly, it all seems so impossible, and our faith sinks just like Peter. It’s so hard to hold on to big faith in such a broken, tumultuous world.

The solution to “little faith” is obvious in the passage. Our faith explodes when we keep our eyes on Jesus and his power and his promises and his sovereignty and his call to trust. Our faith implodes when we focus on the waves and the impossibilities of our visions and requests. Keeping our eyes on Jesus sounds straightforward, but as Peter found, it is hugely challenging when the big waves are swamping us. But as you keep your eyes on Jesus and his grace and power, you’ll be surprised how quickly little faith becomes big faith.

FAITH-FILLED PRAYER FOR REVIVAL

Personal Revival: That I will have a greater boldness to speak of Jesus and to experience his power.

Church Revival: That we might have a deeper concern for our community and those in need.

National Revival: That God’s people will be filled with new love and boldness and power.

