

MISSING THE MARK



Sinking

Matthew 14:22–33

²² 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.

Matthew 14:22–33

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.”

Matthew 14:22–33

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.”

The Feeding of the Five Thousand



Is there a tendency to get “over our skis” in the aftermath of a spiritually significant moment or season?



Jesus took time to rest, reflect, and pray before walking on the water.



Seeing Jesus walking on the water,
the disciples were terrified.



“Take courage! It is I.
Don't be afraid.”



“Take courage! It is I.
Don't be afraid.”

How many of our
failures, mistakes, or
misfires happen
because we act out of
fear?



Peter is the only one to speak up with even a “little” faith to think he can follow the lead of Jesus.



"There are many times when Jesus asks us to do what seems impossible. How can we even think of doing without that sin which we're asked to give up? How can we really suppose we might be able to develop a serious habit of prayer when we're so frantic and disorganized?"

What we are called to do—it's so basic and obvious, but so hard to do in practice—is to keep our eyes fixed on Jesus, and our ears open for his encouragement (even if it does contain some rebuke as well). And our wills and hearts must be ready to do what he says, even if it seems crazy at the time."

(N.T. Wright)

Peter "saw the wind." He got distracted.





Peter "saw the wind." He got distracted.

Peter began to "doubt."



James 1:5-8

⁵ If any of you lacks wisdom, you should ask God, who gives generously to all without finding fault, and it will be given to you. ⁶ But when you ask, you must believe and not doubt, because the one who doubts is like a wave of the sea, blown and tossed by the wind. ⁷ That person should not expect to receive anything from the Lord. ⁸ Such a person is double-minded and unstable in all they do.

“The kind of doubt condemned by Scripture has to do not so much with honest questions but with the divided heart that cultivates ambiguity with regard to one’s allegiance to Christ... A divided heart is a roadblock to our delight and trust in God.”

(Joshua McNall)

"This story graphically depicts what it means to be a Christian caught midway between faith and doubt. Peter represents all who dare to believe that Jesus is Savior, take their first steps in confidence that he is able to sustain them, and then forget to keep their gaze fixed on him instead of on the towering waves that threaten to engulf them.

When all seems lost, they remember to call on the Savior, and find his grace sufficient for their needs, whose power is made perfect in weakness. Christian existence is indeed one of faith mixed with doubt. Only by grace can doubt be kept subordinate."

“Lord, save me!”



1 Corinthians 10:13

No temptation has overtaken you except what is common to mankind. And God is faithful; he will not let you be tempted beyond what you can bear. But when you are tempted, he will also provide a way out so that you can endure it.

“Lord, save me!”

Peter may have believed in his own ability (and calling) to follow Jesus, but he believed *more* in the power of Jesus to deliver him if he faltered.



Closing Reflections

When was the last time you felt tormented by the headwinds and waves of life? How did you respond?

Closing Reflections

Have you built into your life cycles or patterns for rest, reflection, and prayer?

Closing Reflections

What kinds of things are most likely to distract you from the presence and provision of Jesus?

Closing Reflections

Are you walking through a season of doubt? Are your doubts driving you closer to Jesus, or leading to a double-minded and split-allegiance instability?

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