

# Matthew 14 Commentary

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MATTHEW CONTAINS 15 PARABLES 20 MIRACLES

KEY VERSES: 1:1 "The book of the generation of Jesus Christ, the son of David, the son of Abraham."

2:2 "Where is he that is born King of the Jews? for we have seen his star in the east, and are come to worship him."

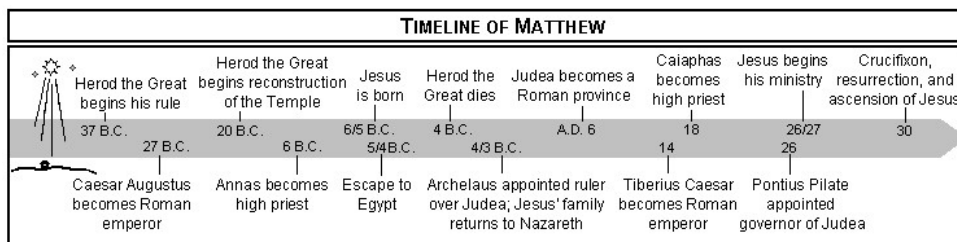


Click chart to enlarge  
 Charts from Jensen's Survey of the NT - used by permission  
 Another Chart from Swindoll

## THE LIFE OF JESUS AS COVERED BY MATTHEW (shaded area)



Click chart to enlarge



Source: Ryrie Study Bible

Matthew 14:1 At that time Herod the tetrarch heard the news about Jesus,

- Herod the tetrarch. Mk 6:14-16 8:15 Lu 9:7-9 13:31,32 23:8-12,15 Ac 4:27 Lu 3:1

## OUTLINE OF MATTHEW 14

- Herod and Death of John the Baptist (Mt 14:1–12),
- feeding of five thousand (Mt 14:13–21),
- Walking on the water (Mt 14:22–27),
- Attempt of Peter to walk on water (Mt 14:28–32),
- Lord's visit to region of Gennesaret, and miracles performed (Mt 14:33–36).

The Herodian Tetrarchy  
(click to see Color Code Key)

### Related Passages:

Mark 6:14-16+ And King Herod heard of it, for His name had become well known; and people were saying, "John the Baptist has risen from the dead, and that is why these miraculous powers are at work in Him." 15 But others were saying, "He is Elijah." And others were saying, "He is a prophet, like one of the prophets of old." 16 But when Herod heard of it, he kept saying, "John, whom I beheaded, has risen!"

Luke 9:7-9+ Now Herod the tetrarch heard of all that was happening; and he was greatly perplexed, because it was said by some that John had risen from the dead, 8 and by some that Elijah had appeared, and by others that one of the prophets of old had risen again. 9 Herod said, "I myself had John beheaded; but who is this man about whom I hear such things?" And he kept trying to see Him.

**Warren Wiersbe** has referred to Matthew 14-20 as "the Retirement of the King," for during this time Jesus largely withdrew from the crowds and spent time alone with His disciples (see Mt 14:13, 15:21, 29, 16:13, 17:1-8). Wiersbe says the reasons for the withdrawal include a growing hostility, a need for rest and the need to prepare the 12 disciples for ministry after His crucifixion. Of course Jesus still ministered to the crowds who continued to follow Him.

**C. I. Scofield** referred to Matthew 14–23 as "The Ministry of the Rejected King."

**Brian Bell** - Jesus now withdraws from the multitudes & spends time alone w/His disciples, preparing them for the coming crisis in Jerusalem (the cross). 2. Remember even the disciples thought in terms of an earthly kingdom. 3. It was necessary that He prepare them for this faith-testing experience. The 2 events in this 1/2 a chapter illustrate the characteristics of our present age, when the King is rejected: a) Christ's servants will suffer and die for Him. Persecution b) Christ's servants will minister the bread of life to man. Provision. ([Sermon](#))

**At that time** - Time is [kairos](#) which means a season "when Jesus was facing increasing hostility and rejection. He had been ministering for about a year, teaching, preaching, and performing many signs and wonders—healing every kind of disease, raising the dead, and casting out demons. The exact chronology is difficult to determine, but that time likely covered the year and a half to two years directly after Jesus' baptism." (MacArthur-MNTC-Mt) Lenski agrees writing that "The **"season"** referred to is the one marked by the growing hostility indicated in the two preceding chapters."

HERODIAN LINE  
Source: Glenn Gilpin, [pastorglenn.wordpress.com](#)  
Published May 8, 2012

**Wiersbe** has a good summary of the Herodian family - The Herod family looms large in the four Gospels and the Book of Acts, and it is easy to confuse the various rulers.

- **Herod the Great** founded the dynasty and ruled from 37 b.c. to 4 b.c. He was not a true Jew by birth, but was an Edomite, a descendant of Esau. "He was ... a heathen in practice, and a monster in character" (Unger's Bible Dictionary). He had nine wives (some say ten), and he thought nothing of slaying his own sons or wives if they got in the way of his plans. It was he who had the infants slain in Bethlehem (Matt. 2:13–18).
- **Herod Antipas**, the Herod of this chapter, was a son of Herod the Great. His title was "tetrarch," which means "ruler over the fourth part of the kingdom." He ruled from 4 b.c. to a.d. 39, and his rule was deceptive and selfish. He loved luxury and was very ambitious to become a great ruler.
- **Herod Agrippa** is the Herod who imprisoned Peter and killed James (Acts 12). He was a grandson of Herod the Great.
- **Herod Agrippa II** was the Herod who tried Paul (Acts 25:13ff). He was a son of Agrippa I.
- All of the Herods had Edomite blood in them, and, like their ancestor Esau, they were hostile to the Jews (Gen. 25:19ff). They practiced the Jewish religion when it helped fulfill their plans for gaining more power and wealth.

**Herod the tetrarch heard the news about Jesus - Herod the tetrarch** (see Lk 3:1<sup>±</sup>) was over Galilee and Perea which were

geographically separated by Decapolis (See map above). A **tetrarch** was a governor of one of four divisions of a province in the ancient Roman Empire. Notice Mark 6:14 refers to Herod as a king. **Herod** was not really a king but was [Herod Antipas](#), son of [Herod the Great](#), and he ruled over Galilee from 4 BC to AD 39, overlapping with Jesus' entire ministry. When his father Herod died in 4 b.c., the kingdom was divided among three of the sons, Archelaus, [Antipas](#), and Philip, and a man named Lysanias. (See more discussion below).

**Tetrarch** - Properly governor of the fourth part of a larger province and kingdom, i.e. a tetrarchy A political position in the early Roman Empire. It designated the size of the territory ruled (literally the "fourth part") and the amount of dependence on Roman authority. Lk 3:1<sup>±</sup> names one of the tetrarchs ([Herod Antipas](#)) who served in the year of Jesus' birth. As Archelaus was "ethnarch" over half of Herod the Great's whole kingdom, so Philip and Antipas had divided between them the remaining half, and were each "tetrarch" over the fourth; Herod over Galilee; Philip over Iturea and Trachonitis; Lysanias over Abilene.

**Guzik** - A tetrarch was lower than a king. Herod Antipas wanted to be recognized as a king, and later asked the Emperor Caligula for this title, but Caligula refused. This humiliation was part of what later sent Herod to exile in Gaul

**Herod Antipas** was guilty of gross sin: He had eloped with Herodias, the wife of his half-brother Philip I, divorcing his own wife and sending her back to her father, the king of Petra (Lev. 18:16; 20:21). Herod listened to the voice of temptation and plunged himself into terrible sin.

#### Related Resources:

- 1911 Encyclopedia Britannica [Tetrarch](#)
- International Standard Bible Encyclopedia [Tetrarch](#)
- Kitto Biblical Cyclopedia [Tetrarch](#)
- McClintock and Strong's Bible Encyclopedia [Tetrarch](#)
- The Jewish Encyclopedia [Tetrarch](#)

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#### Question: [Who was Herod Antipas?](#)

**Answer:** The name Herod comes up again and again in the New Testament from Matthew 1 to Acts 26. Herod is simply the family name of a ruling dynasty in Israel. There are four different rulers referred to as Herod in the New Testament as well as Herod Philip II, who is referred to as Philip the tetrarch. There were a number of other Herods who are not mentioned in the New Testament.

[Herod Antipater](#) (nicknamed Antipas) became tetrarch of Galilee and [Perea](#) upon the death of his father Herod the Great (Herod I). A tetrarch is a "ruler of one quarter," as he receives one fourth of his father's kingdom. Herod Antipas ruled as a Roman client and was responsible for building projects including the capital city of Tiberias on the Sea of Galilee. Herod Antipas is the Herod mentioned most often in the New Testament, and, with the exception of Herod the Great mentioned in [Luke 1](#) and [2](#), every mention of Herod in the gospels refers to Herod Antipas.

Herod Antipas divorced his first wife to marry [Herodias](#), who had been the wife of his half-brother Philip the tetrarch. According to Josephus the two fell in love and made plans to get married while Antipas was visiting with his brother Philip. [John the Baptist](#) began his ministry during the reigns of Philip and Antipas ([Luke 3:1](#)). In the course of his fiery preaching and denunciation of sin, he "rebuked Herod the tetrarch because of his marriage to Herodias, his brother's wife, and all the other evil things he had done, [and] Herod added this to them all: He locked John up in prison" (Luke 3:19–20).

Matthew 14:3–5 gives more detail of the wickedness of Herod Antipas: "Now Herod had arrested John and bound him and put him in prison because of Herodias, his brother Philip's wife, for John had been saying to him: 'It is not lawful for you to have her.' Herod wanted to kill John, but he was afraid of the people, because they considered John a prophet." Herodias also hated John and wanted to have him killed, but Herod Antipas was afraid to follow through, because the general populace was on John's side. "So Herodias nursed a grudge against John and wanted to kill him. But she was not able to, because Herod feared John and protected him, knowing him to be a righteous and holy man. When Herod heard John, he was greatly puzzled; yet he liked to listen to him" (Mark 6:19–20). Herodias hatched a scheme with her daughter whereby she forced her husband's hand. "On Herod's birthday the daughter of Herodias danced for the guests and pleased Herod so much that he promised with an oath to give her whatever she asked. Prompted by her mother, she said, 'Give me here on a platter the head of John the Baptist.' The king was distressed, but because of his oaths and his dinner guests, he ordered that her request be granted and had John beheaded in the prison. His head was brought in on a platter and given to the girl, who carried it to her mother" (Matthew 14:6–11).

As Jesus' ministry became more well-known, Herod Antipas began to fear that John the Baptist had risen from the dead (Matthew 14:1–2). Apparently, he wanted to kill Jesus as well, and this was reported to Jesus by some Jewish leaders in Galilee who hoped to entice Him into moving on to a different area. Jesus, unafraid, replied, "Go tell that fox, 'I will keep on driving out demons and healing

people today and tomorrow, and on the third day I will reach my goal.' In any case, I must press on today and tomorrow and the next day—for surely no prophet can die outside Jerusalem!" (Luke 13:32–33). Jesus' reply is not only dismissive of Herod but also critical of the Jewish authorities who had a long history of killing prophets. Throughout Jesus' ministry, some of the rulers of the Jews plotted with the [Herodians](#) (supporters of Herod) against Jesus (Mark 3:6; 8:25; 12:13).

Jesus was finally arrested and brought before [Pilate](#), the governor or prefect of Judea. Pilate tried to escape responsibility for dealing with Jesus, and he thought he had found his way out when he heard that Jesus was from Galilee: he could shift the responsibility to Herod Antipas, he reasoned. So Pilate sent Jesus to Herod, who happened to be in Jerusalem for the Passover at the time (Luke 23:6–7).

Herod Antipas was excited to see Jesus in person and tried to get Jesus to perform some miracles for him and asked Him many questions. Jesus refused to answer, probably because He knew Herod Antipas was not sincerely seeking truth. Of course, Jesus also refused to perform any miracles. Herod allowed his soldiers to ridicule and beat Jesus and then sent Him back to Pilate (Luke 23:8–11). That day, Herod and Pilate became friends, whereas before they had been at odds (Luke 23:12). Although Herod Antipas is mentioned in Acts as being partially responsible for the crucifixion, we gain no new information about him.

Herod Antipas eventually fell out of favor with Rome and was exiled to Gaul. The King Herod mentioned later in Acts as a persecutor of the church in Jerusalem is his nephew, Herod Agrippa I, who replaced the Roman governor over Judea as King of the Jews, ruling in Jerusalem from AD 41 to 44. (Source: [GotQuestions.org](#))

**Matthew 14:2 and said to his servants, "This is John the Baptist; he has risen from the dead, and that is why miraculous powers are at work in him."**

■ **This:** Mt 11:11 16:14 Mk 8:28 Joh 10:41

## **HEROD WAS A MAN WITH A TROUBLED CONSCIENCE**

### **Related Passage:**

Mark 6:15-16+ But others were saying, "He is [Elijah](#)." And others were saying, "He is a prophet, like one of the prophets of old. "But when Herod heard of it, he kept saying, "John, whom I beheaded, has risen!"

Luke 9:9+ Herod said, "I myself had John beheaded; but who is this man about whom I hear such things?" And he kept trying to see Him.

Notice that Mark tell us what the Jews were saying about Jesus was that He was [Elijah](#) or one of the prophets from the Old Testament. Herod quickly corrects them. Notice how none of them are saying "This must be the Messiah!" Their spiritual blindness was almost incomprehensible!

**And said to his servants, "This is John the Baptist; he has risen from the dead-** Herod's conscience was pricked with a grave concern about John risen from the dead! Notice Mark adds he **kept saying** which is in the [imperfect tense](#) as if each time someone would suggest a person such as "[Elijah](#)" or one of the names of the OT prophets, Herod's response would be **'He whom I did behead-John-this is he!!!'** (See discussion of Was John the Baptist really Elijah reincarnated?)

Do you have any ghosts in your past?

Any skeletons in your closet?

-- Brian Bell

**Broadus** on **servants** - The word is **pais**, literally boy and thence 'servant,' and often applied to the officers of an Oriental court (Gen. 40:20; 1 Sam. 16:17; 1 Macc. 1:6, 8), just as the term *doulos* is in 18:23, and elsewhere.

**Lenski** - Superstition and an evil conscience are combined in making this cowardly criminal jump to the conclusion that Jesus, who is now for the first time brought to his attention, is John the Baptist returned from the dead

**MacArthur** comments "Because of haunting guilt for having murdered John, Herod was afraid he had come back from the dead to seek revenge."

**John Trapp** - "He imagined still that he saw and heard that holy head shouting and crying out against him, staring him also in the face at every turn ... God hath laid upon evil-doers the cross of their own consciences, that thereon they may suffer afore they

suffer; and their greatest enemies need not wish them a greater mischief."

**James Morison** writes that "the guilty monarch's conscience was haunted by ghastly reminiscences and weird forebodings." ([Commentary](#))

To tamper with conscience is like killing the watchdog while the burglar is breaking in.

-- F B Meyer

**And that is why miraculous powers are at work**([energeo](#) in the present tense - "energized") **in him** - These were "Works of power." Herod clearly associates the supernatural acts of this person (he thinks is John) with the fact that he has returned from the supernatural. He knows that John did not manifest miraculous powers during his life, so his distorted theology determines this has to be a result of his resurrection so that now he possesses powers he did not possess in his natural state.

**Miraculous powers** (Miracles) ([1411](#))([dunamis](#) from [dunamai](#) = to be able, to have power) power especially achieving power. It refers to intrinsic power or inherent ability, the power or ability to carry out some function, the potential for functioning in some way (power, might, strength, ability, capability), the power residing in a thing by virtue of its nature.

**Robertson** points out that "John wrought no miracles, but one redivivus might be under the control of the unseen powers. So Herod argued. A guilty conscience quickened his fears. Possibly he could see again the head of John on a charger. "The King has the Baptist on the brain" (Bruce). Cf. Josephus (scroll down [War. I. Chapter 30, number 7](#)) for the story that the ghosts of Alexander and Aristobulus haunted the palace of Herod the Great. There were many conjectures about Jesus as a result of this tour of Galilee and Herod Antipas feared this one."

God sent many voices to warn Herod.

Especially the voice of Conscience and the voice of a Prophet.

-- [Brian Bell](#)

**Brian Bell** - The voice of Conscience can be a powerful voice. It can also be silenced. Herod decided instead to listen to the voice of cowardice & plunged himself into terrible sin.

**J D Jones** gives us an animated description which is probably very close to what happened in Herod's house -- "The report about Jesus fell upon him like a clap of doom. It terrified him. It flung him into a perfect panic of fear. When he heard about Jesus and His wonderful works, his knees shook and his face blanched. He saw ghosts, and he gasped out, "John, whom I beheaded—he is risen from the dead!" Thereupon the Evangelist proceeds to tell us why it was that Jesus suggested John, and why it was that the thought of John filled this King Herod's heart with mortal terror."

**J C Ryle** writes about "**the amazing power of truth over the conscience**. Herod "fears" John the Baptist while he lives, and is troubled about him after he dies. A friendless, solitary preacher, with no other weapon than God's truth, disturbs and terrifies a king. Everybody has a **conscience**. Here lies the secret of a faithful minister's power. This is the reason why Felix "trembled," and Agrippa was "almost persuaded," when Paul the prisoner spoke before them. God has not left Himself without witness in the hearts of unconverted people. Fallen and corrupt as man is, there are thoughts within him accusing or excusing, according as he lives,—thoughts that will not be shut out,—thoughts that can make even kings, like Herod, restless and afraid. None ought to remember this so much as ministers and teachers. If they preach and teach Christ's truth, they may rest assured that their work is not in vain. Children may seem inattentive in schools. Hearers may seem careless in congregations. But in both cases there is often far more going on in the conscience than our eyes see. Seeds often spring up and bear fruit, when the sower, like John the Baptist, is dead or gone.

#### **Related Resources:**

- [Who was Elijah in the Bible?](#)
- [Why must Elijah return before the end times \(Malachi 4:5-6\)?](#)

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#### **The Terrible Resurrection - Ian Paisley**

"Herod said, This is John the Baptist risen from the dead." Matthew 14:2

"Murder will out" the proverb says, but God says "Be sure your sin will find you out". That is an even more terrible judgment. It is far more terrible when awakened conscience finds us out in the bitterness of our resurrected past iniquities.

"Sin," as Mr Spurgeon once said, "is its own detective and when conscience reawakens its arresting hand becomes an inescapable vice."



John the Baptist's murder arose to torture the demented Herod. His body was eventually eaten of worms but a great destructive worm had already begun unceasingly to gnaw at his damned soul.

There is only one safe shelter from this terrible resurrection and that is at the Cross of Christ.

"Ye captured souls, in fetters bound,  
Who feel your misery,  
The way of liberty is found—  
The Son shall make you free  
Why should you doubt His love or power?  
To Him for refuge flee;  
This is the Lord's appointing hour,  
He waits to make you free."

**Matthew 14:3 For when Herod had John arrested, he bound him and put him in prison because of Herodias, the wife of his brother Philip.**

NET Matthew 14:3 For Herod had arrested John, bound him, and put him in prison on account of Herodias, his brother Philip's wife,

NLT Matthew 14:3 For Herod had arrested and imprisoned John as a favor to his wife Herodias (the former wife of Herod's brother Philip).

ESV Matthew 14:3 For Herod had seized John and bound him and put him in prison for the sake of Herodias, his brother Philip's wife,

NIV Matthew 14:3 Now Herod had arrested John and bound him and put him in prison because of Herodias, his brother Philip's wife,

- **Herod:** Mt 4:12 Mk 6:17 Lk 3:19,20 Jn 3:23,24

## FLASHBACK REGARDING JOHN THE BAPTIST

### Related Passage:

Mark 6:17+ For Herod himself had sent and had John arrested and bound in prison on account of Herodias, the wife of his brother Philip, because he had married her.

Matthew 4:12+ Now when Jesus heard that John had been taken into custody, He withdrew into Galilee;

**For** - Term of explanation. What is Matthew explaining? See context Mt 14:2. He is now going to give us a flashback at to what happened to John the Baptist.

**When Herod had John arrested** - Matthew 14:4 explains why Herod had him arrested. Lenski adds "The aorists report only the facts, and we know no more. John was snatched out of his ministry by Herod's order to some of his minions who carried John away bound as a criminal and lodged him in prison in the fortress Machærus ([Josephus, Ant. 18, Chapter 5, 2](#)), on the southern border of Perea, on the height near the Dead Sea."

Herod laid hold on John, because John's word laid hold on Herod.

-- Brian Bell

**he bound him and put him in prison because of Herodias, the wife of his brother Philip** - Mark 6:17 says Herod did this as a favor to Herodias. John was imprisoned in the grim fortress of [Machaerus](#), situated on the barren heights of Moab above the Dead Sea. John's disciples had access to him while he was confined there, for Luke 7:18+ records "The disciples of John reported to him about all these things (e.g., Lk 7:11-17)." Notice although Herodias was now the wife of Herod, Matthew still identifies her as the lawful **wife of his brother Philip**.

**John Trapp** on the phrase **on account of** (for the sake of) **Herodias** - "She ruled him at her pleasure, as Jezebel did Ahab ... But it never goes well when the hen crows."

**MacArthur on Machaerus** - The palace was located on a mountain higher even than the city of Jerusalem and offered a beautiful and dramatic view. But the dungeon was dug deep into the earth beneath, and archaeologists have discovered the many places where prisoners were chained to the walls. There was no natural light and only dank, foul air to breathe. Here John the Baptist was incarcerated for about a year until his execution.

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**Question:** [Who was Herodias in the Bible?](#)

**Answer:** Herodias in the Bible is notorious for being the woman who desired John the Baptist's head on a platter. She was the unlawful wife of the tetrarch Herod Antipas and had formerly been the wife of Herod's brother, Philip. As the granddaughter of [Herod the Great](#), Herodias was herself a niece to both of her husbands, Philip and Antipas.

*Herodias* is the feminine form of *Herod*, which functions somewhat as a title for members of the [Herodian dynasty](#). Historians indicate that Herod Antipas and Herodias had an affair of sorts while her husband Philip was visiting Rome. Herodias then agreed to leave her husband in order to become Herod Antipas's wife. Whether it was motivated by lust or was simply a power play, the new marriage was not honorable, and [John the Baptist](#) publicly denounced their adultery (Matthew 14:4). Herodias held a grudge against John and wanted him to be executed (Mark 6:19). Herod put John in prison for Herodias's sake (Matthew 14:3) but did not put him to death in part because he was afraid of the people, who believed John was a prophet (Matthew 14:5). Herod also seemed to believe that John was a righteous man and, though "greatly puzzled" by the things John said, "liked to listen to him" (Mark 6:20).

(ADDED NOTE FROM JOHN MACARTHUR - The tetrarch had taken Herodias as his own wife after seducing her away from his half brother Philip while on a visit to Rome. In order to marry her, he had to divorce his present wife, the daughter of king Aretas, with whom the marriage of his daughter had sealed a political and military alliance. Aretas ruled Nabatean Arabia, whose capital was the famed fortress city of Petra, located about fifty miles southeast of the Dead Sea. Aretas was so angered by the treatment of his daughter that he destroyed most of Herod's army and would have slain the tetrarch as well, had not the Roman army intervened.)

"Finally the opportune time came" (Mark 6:21) for Herodias to exact her revenge on John. During Herod's birthday celebration, Herodias's daughter danced for the king and his guests, pleasing Herod so much that he promised the girl whatever she asked (Matthew 14:6–7). After consulting with her mother, the girl asked for John the Baptist's head on a platter (Matthew 14:8). Herod was sorry and distressed over being put in this quandary, but, because of his vow and the guests, Herod had John beheaded in prison (verse 10). The prophet's head was brought to the daughter of Herodias, who gave it to her mother (verse 11).

The Bible does not tell us much about Herodias, but her actions recorded in the Gospels show her to be an immoral, bitter, and manipulative woman. John the Baptist was right to warn the tetrarch and his wife of their wicked ways, and Herodias had plenty of opportunity to repent. Rather than choose the path of life, Herodias hardened her heart and plotted John's execution—as if silencing the truth-teller could remove her guilt. In this way, Herodias became like Jezebel, who stridently opposed Elijah, in whose power and spirit John had come (see Luke 1:17; 1 Kings 19:2). (Source: [GotQuestions.org](#))

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**Related Resources:**

- [Herodias - all the women of the Bible](#)
- [Who was Herodias in the Bible? | GotQuestions.org](#)
- [Why was John the Baptist beheaded? | GotQuestions.org](#)
- [Who was Herod Antipas? | GotQuestions.org](#)
- [Who was Salome in the Bible? | GotQuestions.org](#)
- [Are there beheadings recorded in the Bible? | GotQuestions.org](#)
- [Matthew 14:1-13 Fear That Forfeits Christ](#) - MacArthur

**Matthew 14:4** For John had been saying to him, "It is not lawful for you to have her."

- Lev 18:16 20:21 De 25:5,6 2Sa 12:7 1Ki 21:19 2Ch 26:18,19 Pr 28:1 Isa 8:20 Mk 6:18 Ac 24:24,25

**Related Passages:**

Mark 6:18 For John had been saying to Herod, "It is not lawful for you to have your brother's wife."



Leviticus 18:16 'You shall not uncover the nakedness of your brother's wife; it is your brother's nakedness.

Leviticus 20:21 'If there is a man who takes his brother's wife, it is abhorrent; he has uncovered his brother's nakedness. They will be childless.

**For John had been saying to him - Had been saying** is in the [imperfect tense](#), again and again. John's rebuke was not "one and done!" The [imperfect tense](#) indicates John rebuked the king and his wife on more than one occasion! France calls it John's "continuing campaign." He had no fear of death, for surely he knew this confrontation could easily be his death warrant! But John was filled with the Spirit and the result was a "holy boldness."

**John Broadus** - John stood before him, apparently several times, "in the spirit and power of Elijah" before Ahab (compare on Matthew 3:4). Indeed, Herod and Herodias strikingly resemble Ahab and Jezebel (See [What is the story of Ahab and Jezebel? | GotQuestions.org](#)) In his early preaching John had been equally bold, rebuking the Pharisees and Sadducees, (Matthew 3:7) as fearlessly as the masses. And now he reproves Herod, not merely for the marriage, but for all his other acts of wrong-doing. (Luke 3:19) Every great reformer sometimes finds it necessary to be very bold and outspoken. So Luther at the Diet of Worms, and Knox before Mary Stuart; and he who was "meek and lowly" to the toiling and burdened, was stern and severe towards the hypocritical Scribes and Pharisees even when he knew they were plotting to kill him, and would eventually succeed. ([Commentary](#))

**It is not lawful for you to have her."** - In short this was an entangled incestuous web! Literally "it is not permissible; thou art not at liberty." The law required the marriage of a deceased and childless brother's wife, but here the brother was still living and had a daughter.

**Robertson** adds this was unlawful "While the brother was alive (Lev. 18:16; Lev 20:21). After a brother's death it was often a duty to marry his widow." "Both Herod and Herodias were already married, their marriage to each other was doubly **not lawful**." (MacArthur)

**Broadus** - The ground of condemnation stated, (compare Mark 6:18) is not that she was his niece, though that too was forbidden by the law (as implied in Leviticus 18:12 f.), but his brother's wife. Nominally, she had divorced her former husband; but while the Jewish usages of that time allowed a man to divorce his wife for almost any cause (see on "Matthew 19:3"), for a woman to divorce her husband (mentioned only in Mark 10:12) was a Roman custom, which they held in great abhorrence. Josephus says ("Ant." 18. 5, 4) that "being minded to confound her country's institutions," she made this marriage. ([Commentary](#))

**Hiebert** - John's denunciation was based on the fact that it was not lawful, was contrary to the Mosaic law to which Antipas, a professed convert to Judaism, was subject (Lev. 18:16; 20:21). His marriage to Herodias was a crime against his brother as well as against his own wife. This bold denunciation of sin wherever he found it was characteristic of John (cf. Matt. 3:7-10).

**Matthew 14:5 Although Herod wanted to put him to death, he feared the crowd, because they regarded John as a prophet.**

- **Although Herod wanted:** Mk 6:19,20 14:1,2 Ac 4:21 5:26
- **because:** Mt 21:26,32 Mk 11:30-32 Lu 20:6

#### **Related Passage:**

Mark 6:19; 20 Herodias had a grudge against him and wanted to put him to death and could not do so; (6:20) for Herod was afraid of John, knowing that he was a righteous and holy man, and he kept him safe. And when he heard him, he was very perplexed; but he used to enjoy listening to him. (Note: **perplexed** and **listening** are here in the [imperfect tense](#), describing the fact that these actions continued or repeated from time to time.)

**Broadus** on "kept him safe" and "wanted to put him to death" -- "The apparent conflict between this statement and that of Matthew may be explained in various ways. We may suppose that Herod was angry at first, when John condemned his marriage, and censured all his wickedness and wanted to kill him, but fearing the masses, imprisoned him instead; afterwards, talking with John, and his wrath having cooled, he came to feel as Mark describes, and so continued during his imprisonment. Or it may be that while generally favourable to John, and disposed to "keep him safe" from the wrath of Herodias, he sometimes felt inclined to yield to her solicitations, but was then restrained by fear of the crowd. It seems plain that Herodias was watching for a chance to compass John's destruction, from the expression of Mark, (Mark 5:21) "and when a convenient day was come." ([Commentary](#))

**Although Herod wanted to put him to death** - From Mark's passage above, it is clear both Herod and Herodias wanted John dead. But **Herod was afraid of John** and also afraid of the people. So Herod actually kept John safe (Mk 6:20). He was both fearful and fascinated by John. How bizarre that he also "used to enjoy listening to" the very man he also wanted to kill! One can be

assured that John's words included repent and believe in the Messiah. Herod must have had many chances to become a believer (cf 2 Cor 6:2).

**Broadus** notes **regarded** "is in the [imperfect tense](#), giving their habitual way of regarding him. Observe that it was the 'crowd,' what we call "the masses," that held this opinion; the Jewish religious rulers were quite too jealous to tolerate such an idea. (Matthew 21:25-27, Matthew 21:32) ([Commentary](#))

**he feared the crowd, because they regarded John as a prophet**(compare Matthew 21:26, Matthew 21:46)- Herod feared the people and this suppressed his desire to follow through and kill John.

The fear of man brings a snare,  
But he who trusts in the LORD will be exalted.  
-- Proverbs 29:25

**Matthew 14:6 But when Herod's birthday came, the daughter of Herodias danced before them and pleased Herod,**

- **birthday:** Ge 40:20 Es 1:2-9 2:18 Da 5:1-4 Ho 1:5,6 Mk 6:21-23
- **the daughter:** Mt 22:24
- **danced:** Es 1:10-12

#### **Related Passage:**

Mark 6:21+ A strategic day came when Herod on his birthday gave a banquet for his lords and military commanders and the leading men of Galilee; 22 and when the daughter of Herodias herself came in and danced, she pleased Herod and his dinner guests; and the king said to the girl, "Ask me for whatever you want and I will give it to you."

**But when Herod's birthday came** - Mark 6:21 calls it a **strategic day**. This was the "day of opportunity" for Herodias, the favorable occasion to allow her to act against John the Baptist. She was not about to miss her "opportunity!" In Texas we have seasons for deer hunting and dove hunting and all other times are illegal. In this case it was "in season" for "John the Baptist hunting" (so to speak)!

**Birthday** ([1077](#)) (**genesia** from genesis = origin, lineage) was originally a day observed on the birthday of a deceased person; in the NT birthday feast or celebration. **Robertson** adds that the "earlier Greeks used the word **genesia** for funeral commemorations (birthdays of the dead), genethlia being the word for birthday celebrations of living persons. But that distinction has disappeared in the papyri. The word **genesia** in the papyri is always a birthday feast." The only other use is Mt 14:6 in the same story of Herod and John.

**Lenski** - The Jews abhorred the keeping of birthdays as being a pagan custom, but the Herods even outdid the Romans in these celebrations, so that "Herod's birthday" (Herodias dies) came to be a proverbial expression for excessive festival display. Mark 6:21 remarks regarding the grand feast.

**the daughter of Herodias danced before them and pleased** ([aresko](#)) **Herod** - This is Herod's stepdaughter. Notice it does not say necessarily that Herod invited her. He may have, but alternatively Herodias may have realized this was her chance to set a trap for Herod by having her daughter perform what was in effect a "striptease!" Mark says **before them** refers to "lords and military commanders and the leading men of Galilee." Remember that this is a banquet and wine was undoubtedly flowing freely which always clouds one's judgment. In this case Herod yielded to his fleshly instincts by being pleased by his own stepdaughter's dance! This man was morally sick! **MacArthur** suggests that **pleased** is "a euphemism for "sexually aroused." That is possible and when combined with an inebriated state explains his rash, foolish statement that follows.

**Guzik** - This **daughter Herodias** is described as a **girl** (Matthew 14:11). This means that she was not a cute little girl; "Girl is a term which can be used of those of marriageable age; she was at least a teenager." (France)

**F F Bruce** - "The dancing of a mere girl would have been no entertainment to the sensual revelers. The treat lay in the indecency."

**Robertson** on **danced** - This was Salome, daughter of Herodias by her first marriage. The root of the verb means some kind of rapid motion. "Leaped in the middle," Wycliff puts it. It was a shameful exhibition of lewd dancing prearranged by Herodias to compass her purpose for John's death. Salome had stooped to the level of an almeah, or common dancer.

**Spurgeon** - "In these days mothers too often encourage their daughters in dress which is scarcely decent and introduce them to

dances which are not commendable for purity. No good can come of this; it may please the Herods, but it displeases God."

**Lenski** says before them is literally "in the midst," before the company of guests. The exhibition was thoroughly pagan and had been learned while the girl and her mother lived at Rome with Philip. Herod's delight in the performance carried him completely away. Heated with wine and excited by the company, the man lost his reason. We must add his desire to make a grandiose display in the most magnificent royal style. Mark records the words of the oath.

**Gould** writes "'Such dancing was an almost unprecedented thing for women of rank, or even respectability. It was mimetic and licentious, and performed by professionals"

**BDAG** on **pleased** ([aresko](#)) says "[Salome](#), daughter of Herodias, pleases Herod and his company, and in keeping w. Mediterranean reciprocity system receives her award, in this instance a grisly one."

**Hiebert** has a fascinating comment on the daughter's dance - The climax of the entertainment was a solo dance by the daughter of Herodias herself. The expression indicates the unusual fact. Such solo dances were grossly suggestive pantomimic representations, comparable to a striptease act in a modern nightclub. They were regularly performed by professional entertainers of low moral character, and it was an almost unprecedented thing for Salome to perform such a dance before Herod's guests. Some have indeed questioned the accuracy of the biblical account, but Rawlinson replies that the occurrence is "not wholly incredible, however outrageous, to those who know anything of the morals of Oriental courts, or of Herod's family in particular." (Mark Commentary)

**Broadus** - We cannot readily determine just how far this act was indecorous on her part. In all Eastern countries, women being kept in great seclusion, it has always been considered extremely improper for a female to dance in public. It is very common to hire dancing women to exhibit at entertainments (e. g., the Hindoo nautch-girls), but the business is highly disreputable, and it is commonly taken for granted that they are women of bad character. True, Jewish women lived in less seclusion than in other Eastern nations, and there are instances of their taking part by songs and dancing in public rejoicings (e. g., 1 Samuel 18:6); but this was considered a religious act, (compare Exodus 15:20, 2 Samuel 6:21) and quite a different thing from taking the place of dancing-girls at a feast. The Romans, too, had their dancing-girls at entertainments, but regarded it as a disreputable calling. A Latin inscription says, "It was disgraceful both to dance, and for a virgin to come into the banqueting-hall to men who had drunk freely." Cornelius Nepos: "We know that according to our manners, dancing' is even put among vices." Cicero : "Hardly any man dances when sober (unless perchance he is crazy), whether it be in solitude or at a moderate and decorous feast". and he mentions a Greek father who was amazed at the proposition of a drunken guest that he should send for his daughter to come in. On the whole, one must reach the conclusion that if a respectable Jewish maiden came in to dance at a feast, it would be very surprising to the guests, and could hardly fail to be regarded as very unbecoming. It was therefore a bold step which Herodias took, in sending her daughter to dance before Herod and his grantees. Would they be shocked by the immodest exposure of a princess, or would they be fascinated by the novel spectacle of a high-born and charming girl going through the voluptuous movements of an Oriental dance? The experiment succeeded. She pleased Herod, and all the company. (Mark 6:22) No doubt rapturous expressions of admiration burst from the lips of the half drunken revellers. It is common for dancing girls to receive presents, proportioned to the admiration their performance has excited; and Salome might naturally expect to receive some present on the Tetrarch's birthday. Accordingly, Herod, anxious to express his gratification, and also to play the magnificent before this grand assembly, **promised with an oath to give her whatsoever she would ask**. He even affected, petty ruler as he was, and not properly a king at all, to imitate the grandiloquence of the great Persian monarchs, (Esther 5:3, Esther 5:6, Esther 7:2) and, with drunken dignity, swore to give her what she asked,"unto the half of my kingdom." (Mark 6:23) ([Commentary](#))

#### Related Resource:

- [Who was Salome in the Bible?](#)

**Matthew 14:7 so much that he promised with an oath to give her whatever she asked.**

- Es 5:3,6 7:2

## HEROD'S FOOLISH OATH

#### Related Passages:

Mark 6:22 and when the daughter of Herodias herself came in and danced, she pleased Herod and his dinner guests; and the king said to the girl, "**Ask** me for whatever you want and I will give it to you." 23 And he swore

to her, "Whatever you ask of me, I will give it to you; up to half of my kingdom."

Esther 5:3+ Then the king said to her, "What is troubling you, Queen Esther? And what is your request? Even to half of the kingdom it shall be given to you."

Esther 7:2+ And the king said to Esther on the second day also as they drank their wine at the banquet, "What is your petition, Queen Esther? It shall be granted you. And what is your request? Even to half of the kingdom it shall be done."

**so much that he promised with an oath to give her whatever she asked**- Literally, "confessed with an oath." Mark says Herod's promise and oath was Whatever you ask of me, I will give it to you; up to half of my kingdom." This was sheer braggadocio (probably because of his august crowd) for (1) he was not truly a king and (2) had not kingdom to give!

**Lenski** - First he made the promise and then acknowledged or sealed it with an oath, thus making it absolutely irrevocable. A blank promise as such, no matter how it is to be fulfilled, is sinful and silly at the same time. An oath added to such a promise is directly forbidden in Lev. 5:4, etc. No promise or oath of this kind is binding; when it is made, it must be confessed as sin (v. 5) and retracted, and pardon must be sought.

**Matthew 14:8 Having been prompted by her mother, she said, 'Give me here on a platter the head of John the Baptist.'**

NET Matthew 14:8 Instructed by her mother, she said, "Give me the head of John the Baptist here on a platter."

NLT Matthew 14:8 At her mother's urging, the girl said, "I want the head of John the Baptist on a tray!"

ESV Matthew 14:8 Prompted by her mother, she said, "Give me the head of John the Baptist here on a platter."

NIV Matthew 14:8 Prompted by her mother, she said, "Give me here on a platter the head of John the Baptist."

KJV Matthew 14:8 And she, being before instructed of her mother, said, Give me here John Baptist's head in a charger.

- **being:** 2Ch 22:2,3 Mk 6:24
- **Give:** 1Ki 18:4,13 19:2 2Ki 11:1 Pr 1:16 29:10
- **platter:** Nu 7:13,19,84,85 Ezr 1:9

#### Related Passage:

Mark 6:24 And she went out and said to her mother, "What shall I ask for?" And she said, "The head of John the Baptist." Mark 6:25 Immediately she came in a hurry to the king and asked, saying, "I want you to give me at once the head of John the Baptist on a platter."

**Having been prompted by her mother - KJV** = " And she, being before instructed of her mother." This suggests premeditation by Herodias. **Lenski** has she was "instigated by her mother." **Prompted** is the verb [probibazo](#) (only here in NT) meaning to put forward, push forward and figuratively as here to prompt, urge or incite. **BDAG** adds that in the only other 2 uses in Scripture in the [Septuagint \(Lxx\)](#) **probibazo** means to "instruct, teach, inculcate": as in Ex 35:34+; Dt 6:7... 'Coached' may best express the meaning." Bruce comments "It should require a good deal of 'educating' to bring a young girl to make such a grim request"

**MacArthur** comments that "It is obvious that the provocative dance was planned by Herodias for the purpose of evoking just such a promise from her drunken, leering, lecherous husband. And lest Herod change his mind after sobering up, Herodias told her daughter to ask for John's head here on a platter " right away " ( Mark 6:25 ). In his gluttonous, lustful stupor the king had been easily taken in by his scheming wife and her seductive daughter. He had lost all dignity, all sensibility, and what little desire for the right that he may have had. Wanting to appear the magnanimous benefactor before his guests, he had boxed himself in and was now completely vulnerable to his conniving wife." (MNTC-Mt)

**Lenski** Matthew "describes tersely what Mark 6:24 spreads out in detail: the girl running to her mother, getting the instigation from her, and then coming quickly to make her request. She never hesitated because of the crime involved and because of the gruesomeness of such a gory gift."

**She said, "Give me here on a platter the head of John the Baptist"** - Mark 6:25 adds **'Immediately ([euthus](#)) she came in a**

**hurry.**" and issued a command to the pseudo-king = **Give me**, where this verb in the [aorist imperative](#) a command calling for an immediate response from Herod! This shocking request would have undoubtedly caught Herod by surprise.

**Lenski** on "**here**" (cf Mk 6:25 "at once") - The force of hode, "right here," is significant; here where all the company may see in the delivery of the gift that Herod kept his promise and oath. The same viciousness is manifested in the request for "the head." Herodias wants the head, the absolute evidence of John's death, and no mere promise of John's death at some future day.

**Guzik** - She was shrewd enough to demand that it be done immediately, while the guests were still at the party. "That was an essential part of the request. No time must be left for repentance. If not done at once under the influence of wine and the momentary gratification given by the voluptuous dance, it might never be done at all." (Bruce)

**Matthew 14:9 Although he was grieved, the king commanded it to be given because of his oaths, and because of his dinner guests.**

NET Matthew 14:9 Although it grieved the king, because of his oath and the dinner guests he commanded it to be given.

NLT Matthew 14:9 Then the king regretted what he had said; but because of the vow he had made in front of his guests, he issued the necessary orders.

ESV Matthew 14:9 And the king was sorry, but because of his oaths and his guests he commanded it to be given.

NIV Matthew 14:9 The king was distressed, but because of his oaths and his dinner guests, he ordered that her request be granted

GNT Matthew 14:9 κα λυπηθε ς βασιλε ς δι το ς ρκους κα το ς συνανακειμ νους κ λευσεν δοθ ναι,

KJV Matthew 14:9 And the king was sorry: nevertheless for the oath's sake, and them which sat with him at meat, he commanded it to be given her.

ASV Matthew 14:9 And the king was grieved; but for the sake of his oaths, and of them that sat at meat with him, he commanded it to be given;

CSB Matthew 14:9 Although the king regretted it, he commanded that it be granted because of his oaths and his guests.

NKJ Matthew 14:9 And the king was sorry; nevertheless, because of the oaths and because of those who sat with him, he commanded it to be given to her.

- **the king:** Mt 14:1 Mk 6:14
- **was grieved:** Mt 14:5 27:17-26 Da 6:14-16 Mk 6:20,26 Lu 13:32 Joh 19:12-16 Ac 24:23-27 25:3-9
- **the oaths:** Nu 30:5-8 Jud 11:30,31,39 21:1,7-23 1Sa 14:24,28,39-45 25:22 1Sa 25:32-34 28:10 2Ki 6:31-33 Ec 5:2

## **A FATAL "NEVERTHELESS!"**

### **Related Passage:**

Mark 6:26 And although the king was very sorry, yet because of his oaths and because of his dinner guests, he was unwilling to refuse ([atheteo](#)) her.

**Brian Bell** on "And the king was sorry; nevertheless **NEVERTHELESS**" (NKJV) - How easily influenced -- Influenced by his: cunning concubine, his dancing daughter, his careless covenant, and his beer-drinking buddies. Afraid of the jeers, Herod are you too religious to put away a Prophet? The fear of being thought weak, proved that he was weak indeed. **THOUGHT** - Who influences you? Actually, every friend influences you for the good or the bad. How do each of your friends influence you? Wicked Oaths ought to be repented of, not acted out. In the sight of heaven it was Herod who perished not John.

**Although he was grieved** - Notice how Herod goes from "pleased" (v 6) to "grieved!" Mark says Herod was **very sorry**." ([perilupos](#)). He was heavy hearted but not enough to change his mind. His remorse fell short of godly regret and thus was not sufficient to counter his pride and vanity at having given his oath before his esteemed guests. Even in this reaction notice that it is all about Herod, and there is no expression of pity, compassion or sorrow for John! Herod is like the little boy who was caught with his

hand in the cookie jar! All Herod was sorry about was that he had been trapped by Herodias' cunning into carrying out this dastardly deed! He may have had a touch of remorse, but not an ounce of repentance! Paul's words were "prophetic" for Herod when he wrote "the sorrow that is according to the will of God produces a repentance without regret, leading to salvation, but the sorrow of the world produces death!" (2 Cor 7:10) Indeed, there would be 2 deaths. The temporal death of John, but the far worse eternal death of Herod!

**Grieved** (distressed, sorrowed) (3076)([lupeo](#) from **lupe** = sorrow) signifies pain, of body or mind and means to cause one to experience severe mental or emotional distress or physical pain which may be accompanied by sadness, sorrow or grief. The ides is **heaviness** like our colloquial sayings like -- "*It weighs heavy on my soul*" or "*My soul is weighed down with affliction.*" or "*My soul is so burdened.*" It was heavy on Herod's heart!

**Robertson on grieved** - Not to hurt, for in verse 5 we read that he wanted (θελων [thelōn]) to put him to death (ποκτείνειν [apokteinai]). Herod, however, shrank from so dastardly a deed as this public display of brutality and bloodthirstiness. Men who do wrong always have some flimsy excuses for their sins. A man here orders a judicial murder of the most revolting type "for the sake of his oath" (δια τουςρκους [dia tous horkous]). "More like profane swearing than deliberate utterance once for all of a solemn oath" (Bruce). He was probably maudlin with wine and befuddled by the presence of the guests.

**Broadus on grieved** - The thing would be wrong, and also unpopular. (Matthew 14:5) But his wife ruled him, as on many other occasions. ([Commentary](#))

**The king commanded it to be given** - "With the regret a wolf has because he must eat the lamb, he gave orders for the murder of John." (Spurgeon)

**Because** (A TRAGIC TERM OF EXPLANATION) **of his oaths, and because of his dinner guests** - This was Matthew's first mention of the dinner guest, but Mark's account gave us the details of who these guests were and why he would not back down his oath. And so the cruel command was issued because of crass oath and fear of losing face. What a weak man was Herod!

**Broadus on oaths** - Mark also (Mk 6:26) has here the plural. We may conclude that Herod had several times repeated his tipsy promise to the girl, with various oaths. He was superstitious about his oaths, as many very wicked men are, and was ashamed not to keep the promise he had so frequently made, and so solemnly confirmed before the assembled dignitaries. But a grossly wicked promise is better broken than kept, especially when no one will really lose thereby. As to the general subject of oaths, see commentary on Matthew 5:33-37. ([Commentary](#))

**Lenski** - Since he was called "**king**" only by courtesy, Matthew's use of the title here has a touch of irony: a king made the tool of a woman....The plural "**his oaths**" indicates only that the king had emphasized his promise by repeating his oath. Instead of letting the outcome of his rashness open his eyes to the enormity of his folly, thus inducing him to declare that a gift involving a horrible crime was beyond his granting, this morally helpless fool imagined that his oaths really bound him. Coupled with this moral impotence was his pride. His sworn promise was intended to impress his guests, in fact, had been made for their sake not for that of the girl. To deny her request appeared like a disgrace in the eyes of those reclining with him at the feast. Thus Herod perpetrated his greatest crime, filling the cup of his iniquities.

**MacArthur** - It was not that the word of the king was respected and that to break his oaths would tarnish his reputation, because he was noted for his dishonor and duplicity. But in the ancient Near East a promise made with an oath was considered sacred and inviolable ( cf. Matt. 5:33 ), especially when made by a ruler. And although Herod had no concern for principle, he had great concern for appearance. By breaking his word so soon after giving it, he would have been embarrassed in front of his dinner guests.

**Guzik** - "Rash promises, and even oaths, are no excuse for doing wrong. The promise was in itself null and void, because no man has a right to promise to do wrong." (Spurgeon) "Like most weak men, Herod feared to be thought weak." (Plumptre, cited in Carson)

**Hiebert** - Moral cowardice made him afraid to break his word in the presence of those reclining with him. But Herod would certainly have stood taller, even in the eyes of his fellow revelers when they regained their full sobriety, had he refused to go through with his promise. "Timidity, which takes the form of false pride, is accountable for the moral failure of thousands."

**Matthew 14:10 He sent and had John beheaded in the prison.**

■ **beheaded:** Mt 17:12 21:35,36 22:3-6 23:34-36 2Ch 36:16 Jer 2:30 Mk 6:27-29 Mk 9:13 Lu 9:9 Rev 11:7

**Related Passage:**



Mark 6:27 Immediately the king sent an executioner and commanded him to bring back his head. And he went and had him beheaded in the prison,

**He sent and had John beheaded in the prison** - Herod had gone to far now. The dirty deed had to be carried out posthaste. Although Herod was not a true king he did have authority to carry out the death penalty.

Notice the phrase **He...had John beheaded** - Mark says he sent an **executioner** (spekoulator) used only in Mk 6:27 and representing a Latin loan word that originally literally meant a spy or scout and when attached to a ruling official meant member of a bodyguard or executioner. The executioner was merely an instrument in the hands of Herod. Herod was the guilty party at his birthday party! David and Herod were both guilty even though they did not personally carry out the execution.

**Constable** - The Romans practiced decapitation. That form of execution was not Jewish. Likewise the Romans executed certain prisoners without a trial whereas Jewish law required one. The gore of this scene testifies to the hardhearted condition of the Roman royal family and their courtiers. As the last of the Old Testament prophets, John suffered a martyr's death, as did many of his predecessors. ([Commentary](#))

**Donald A. Hagner** - "Death, the temporary end of physical life, is not the worst enemy of humanity. Alienation from God is. And thus those who murdered John are far more pitiable than is John himself." [ Matthew 14:28 , p413.]

**Broadus** - Some argue that this term, with **here** in Matthew 14:8, and 'straightway' in Mark 6:25, cannot be taken literally, because the spectacle would have spoiled all festive enjoyment; but they have forgotten how Herodias' ancestor, Alexander Jannaeus, while holding a feast with his concubines, commanded eight hundred rebels to be crucified in full view, and their wives and children to be slain before their eyes. (Josephus "Ant.," 13, 14, 2.) A great feast usually began about the close of the day, and so it was probably late at night when the executioner came and awoke John and hurriedly beheaded him. After his weary imprisonment of more than a year, the Baptizer was now suddenly cut off. But his work was ended; he had come as the herald of the Messianic reign, and that reign was now being established; the answer of Jesus to his message (Matthew 11:2ff.) had doubtless cleared his perplexities and removed lingering doubts; there was nothing more to live for, and to die was gain. Nor is it anything very dreadful to die suddenly, if one has lived the life of faith. This murder of the greatest among the prophets in his dungeon was in itself hardly so shocking a sight, as the scene yonder in the banqueting hall. There stood the maiden, her cheek still flushed with her recent exertion, while the guests sought to drown their painful emotions in wine, and the executioner hastened on his cruel errand. When the dish was brought, with the bleeding head upon it, no doubt she took it daintily in her hands, lest a drop of blood should stain her gala dress, and tripped away to her mother, as if bearing her some choice dish of food from the king's table. It was not uncommon to bring the head of one who had been slain to the person who ordered it, as a sure proof that the command had been obeyed. When the head of Cicero was brought to Fulvia, the wife of Antony, she spat upon it, and drawing out the tongue that had so eloquently opposed and condemned Antony, she pierced it with her hair-pin, with bitter gibes. Jerome refers to this incident, and says that Herodias did likewise with the head of John. We know not his authority for the assertion, but the darling desire of the Herod family seems to have been to ape the worst follies and cruelties of the Roman nobility. ([Commentary](#))

Josephus informs us that John the Baptist was imprisoned and beheaded by Herod in the strong castle of Machaerus, which he describes as situated about 60 stadia east of Jordan, not far from where the river discharges itself into the Dead Sea.

**MacArthur** comments that as "Gruesome and ghoulish as that act was, such things were not uncommon in those days. Potentates had life and death power over their subjects and prisoners, and that power was frequently exercised and seldom questioned. Herodias had an ancestor named Alexander Junius, who held a feast at which he had eight hundred rebels crucified before the assembled guests. While the men were hanging on their crosses, their wives and children were slain in front of their eyes." (ED: How could anyone refute the doctrine of [total depravity](#)!)

**Matthew 14:11 And his head was brought on a platter and given to the girl, and she brought it to her mother.**

■ **given:** Ge 49:7 Pr 27:4 29:10 Jer 22:17 Eze 16:3,4 19:2,3 35:6 Rev 16:6 Rev 17:6

Feast of Herod, Lucas Cranach the Elder, 1531

## JOHN'S HEAD ON A PLATTER

**And his head was brought on a platter and given to the girl, and she brought it to her mother-** Morison quips this was "A fit presentation for cannibals, or other savages, whether living in a palace or" not.

**Adam Clarke** - The head was in the possession of Herodias, who, 'tis probable, took a diabolic pleasure in viewing that speechless mouth which had often been the cause of planting thorns in her criminal bed; and in offering indignities to that tongue from which she could no longer dread a reproof."

**Robertson** - A gruesome picture as Herodias with fiendish delight witnesses the triumph of her implacable hatred of John for daring to reprove her for her marriage with Herod Antipas. A woman scorned is a veritable demon, a literal she-devil when she wills to be.

**Hiebert** - According to the ancient Roman historian Cassius Dio, when the head of Cicero (d. 43 B.C.) was brought to Mark Antony's wife, Fulvia, she pulled out his tongue and repeatedly stabbed it with her hairpin. Her violent assault on his tongue was intended as a poetic act of final vengeance against Cicero, because he had delivered powerful speeches that attacked Mark Antony. The fifth-century church father Jerome (d. 420) suggested that Herodias similarly mutilated the severed head of John the Baptist. Though such cannot be verified, it would certainly fit with the spiteful rage that characterized the vulgar queen.

**Guzik** - Herod had a terrible end. In order to take his brother's wife Herodias, he put away his first wife, a princess from a neighboring kingdom to the east. Her father was offended and came against Herod with an army, defeating him in battle. Then his brother Agrippa accused him of treason against Rome, and he was banished into the distant Roman province of Gaul. In Gaul, Herod and Herodias committed suicide.

**Brian Bell** - At the end of most true story TV shows and movies, it tells what happened w/the key people: Herod: lost his prestige and power. His armies were defeated by the Arabs. His appeals to be made a real king (urged by his wife) were refused by Emperor Caligula. Herod was banished to Gaul (France) and then to Spain, where he died

**MacArthur** - After Herod had John beheaded, he inquired about Jesus and "kept trying to see Him" (Luke 9:9+). But Jesus made no effort to see Herod and would not allow Herod to see Him until it was His Father's time. Jesus once sent a message to the king when it was reported that Herod wanted to kill Him, saying, "Go and tell that fox, 'Behold, I cast out demons and perform cures today and tomorrow, and the third day I reach My goal'" (Luke 13:32). Jesus went about His mission and left the king to his unresolved fear, to his unrelenting sin, and to his doom of damnation. After His appearance before the Sanhedrin and Pilate, Jesus was sent to Herod and they saw each other for the first time. (Read Lk 23:8,9,11+)

Herod rejected Christ, and Christ rejected Herod.

For fear of a woman, for fear of his reputation,

for fear of his peers, for fear of his throne—

and for lack of fear for God—

he damned his soul forever.

-- John MacArthur

**Matthew 14:12 His disciples came and took away the body and buried it; and they went and reported to Jesus.**

NET Matthew 14:12 Then John's disciples came and took the body and buried it and went and told Jesus.

NLT Matthew 14:12 Later, John's disciples came for his body and buried it. Then they went and told Jesus what had happened.

ESV Matthew 14:12 And his disciples came and took the body and buried it, and they went and told Jesus.

NIV Matthew 14:12 John's disciples came and took his body and buried it. Then they went and told Jesus.

GNT Matthew 14:12 κα προσελθ ντες ο μαθητα α το ραν τ πτ μα κα θαψαν α τ [ν] κα λθ ντες π γγειλαν τ ησο .

KJV Matthew 14:12 And his disciples came, and took up the body, and buried it, and went and told Jesus.

YLT Matthew 14:12 And his disciples having come, took up the body, and buried it, and having come, they told Jesus,

ASV Matthew 14:12 And his disciples came, and took up the corpse, and buried him; and they went and told Jesus.

CSB Matthew 14:12 Then his disciples came, removed the corpse, buried it, and went and reported to Jesus.

NKJ Matthew 14:12 Then his disciples came and took away the body and buried it, and went and told Jesus.

NRS Matthew 14:12 His disciples came and took the body and buried it; then they went and told Jesus.

- **took:** Mt 27:58-61 Ac 8:2

#### Related Passage:

Mark 6:29+ When his disciples heard about this, they came and took away his body and laid it in a tomb.

**His disciples ([mathetes](#)) came and took away the body and buried it** - This refers to John's **disciples**, so they clearly were not with him when he was beheaded although we know they had access to him from Mt 11:2. Just imagine their agony and grief that this man who had taught them was lying headless on a prison floor. **Took away** is the verb [airo](#) which means to lift up or pick up and carry away. Picture John's headless body lying on the floor of his prison cell with blood everywhere -- a gruesome scene for sure! But don't miss the glorious word "it"! Why? Because they buried "IT" not HIM.

**Spurgeon** adds "It is not said by the Evangelist that they buried John, but 'they took up his body, and buried IT,' not him. The real John no man could bury, and Herod soon found that, being dead, he yet spoke."

**Body** ([4430](#))(**ptoma** from **pipto** - to fall) what has fallen; of people and other animated creatures corpse, a dead body: animal or human, (dead) body, corpse, esp. of one killed by violence. **LS** - metaph. a fall, calamity, **Thayer** - 1. in Greek writings from Aeschylus down, a fall, downfall; metaphorically, a failure, defeat, calamity; an error lapse, sin. 2. that which is fallen; hence, with the genitive of a person or with nekrou/ added, the (fallen) body of one dead or slain, a corpse, carcase;

**And they went and reported to Jesus - Reported** ([apaggello](#)) means they carried back word after John's beheading and burial happening and gave the account to Jesus.

**Robertson** - The fate of John was a prophecy of what was before Jesus. According to Matt. 14:13 the news of the fate of John led to the withdrawal of Jesus to the desert privately, an additional motive besides the need for rest after the strain of the recent tour.

**Scofield** says...There are many events in our Lord's ministry which took place between Jn 5:47-6:1, i.e. the period between Mt 4:12-12.

**John MacArthur** analyzes Herod - In his interactions with both John the Baptist and Jesus, Herod Antipas stands like Judas as a monumentally tragic figure in history. He had the greatest man who had ever lived, the most honored prophet of God in his hands, and he locked him in a dungeon until he had him executed. More importantly, he had an audience with the King of kings, and he mocked Him and turned Him away. Such wasted opportunity was the result of his insidious love for sin, his arrogant unwillingness to believe, and his cowardly fear of the truth. Herod claimed to rule over others, but in reality he was a man controlled by the fear of man. His fear of the people initially kept him from killing John. His fear of his friends finally compelled him to authorize John's execution. His fear of John made him anxious when he heard about Jesus. But his fear turned to scorn when he finally had an audience with the Son of God. Herod feared everyone except the Lord, and he lost his soul as a result. (MNTC-Mk)

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#### Knox Chamblin compares John with Jesus...JOHN AND JESUS.

##### Their Common Rejection.

Herod's rejection of John's preaching corresponds to the Nazarenes' rejection of Jesus' teaching (Mt 13:54-58); apud Gundry, 284.

##### Their Common Enemy.

As "King Herod" attacked and sought to destroy the infant Jesus (Mt 2:1-18), so "Herod the tetrarch" arrests, imprisons and eventually kills John. (The choice of the latter title in Mt 14:1 serves to distinguish this Herod from his father, Mt 2:1.) Moreover, that Herod Antipas poses a threat to Jesus is shown by Jesus' withdrawal into a solitary place once he learns about John's death (Mt 14:12-13). (Likewise Jesus had withdrawn into Galilee upon hearing of John's imprisonment, Mt 4:12.) Given Herod's identification of Jesus as John redivivus, would he not surely want Jesus dead as well?

##### Their Common Fate.

At Herodias' prompting, Herod has John beheaded. "Execution by beheading went against Jewish law, but agreed with Greek and Roman custom" (Gundry 289). While Jesus escapes the enemy for the moment (the hour appointed by the Father has not yet arrived), already we are being prepared for the climax of the Gospel, when Jesus himself will suffer death at the hands of the enemies of the kingdom (cf. comments on Mt 11:12b; Mt 16:21; Mt 17:12).

**Matthew 14:13** Now when Jesus heard about John, He withdrew from there in a boat to a secluded place by Himself; and when the people heard of this, they followed Him on foot from the cities.

NET Matthew 14:13 Now when Jesus heard this he went away from there privately in a boat to an isolated place. But when the crowd heard about it, they followed him on foot from the towns.

NLT Matthew 14:13 As soon as Jesus heard the news, he left in a boat to a remote area to be alone. But the crowds heard where he was headed and followed on foot from many towns.

ESV Matthew 14:13 Now when Jesus heard this, he withdrew from there in a boat to a desolate place by himself. But when the crowds heard it, they followed him on foot from the towns.

NIV Matthew 14:13 When Jesus heard what had happened, he withdrew by boat privately to a solitary place. Hearing of this, the crowds followed him on foot from the towns.

GNT Matthew 14:13 κο σας ὁ ἰσο ς νεχ ρησεν κεθεν ν πλο ε ς ρημον τ πον κατ ὁ αν· κα κο σαντες ο χλοι κολο θησαν α τ πεζ π τ ν π λεων.

KJV Matthew 14:13 When Jesus heard of it, he departed thence by ship into a desert place apart: and when the people had heard thereof, they followed him on foot out of the cities.

YLT Matthew 14:13 and Jesus having heard, withdrew thence in a boat to a desolate place by himself, and the multitudes having heard did follow him on land from the cities.

ASV Matthew 14:13 Now when Jesus heard it, he withdrew from thence in a boat, to a desert place apart: and when the multitudes heard thereof, they followed him on foot from the cities.

CSB Matthew 14:13 When Jesus heard about it, He withdrew from there by boat to a remote place to be alone. When the crowds heard this, they followed Him on foot from the towns.

NKJ Matthew 14:13 When Jesus heard it, He departed from there by boat to a deserted place by Himself. But when the multitudes heard it, they followed Him on foot from the cities.

NRS Matthew 14:13 Now when Jesus heard this, he withdrew from there in a boat to a deserted place by himself. But when the crowds heard it, they followed him on foot from the towns.

- Mt 14:1,2 10:23 12:15 Mk 6:30-33 Lu 9:10-17 Joh 6:1-15

#### Related Passages:

Mark 6:30-32+ (**VERSE 30 IS NOT IN MATTHEW'S ACCOUNT**) The apostles gathered together with Jesus; and they reported to Him all that they had done and taught. 31 And He said to them, "Come away by yourselves to a secluded place and rest a while." (For there were many people coming and going, and they did not even have time to eat.) They went away in the boat to a secluded place by themselves.

Luke 9:10+ (**VERSE 10 IS NOT IN MATTHEW'S ACCOUNT**) When the apostles returned, they gave an account to Him of all that they had done. Taking them with Him, He withdrew by Himself to a city called Bethsaida.

John 6:1+ After these things Jesus went away to the other side of the Sea of Galilee (or Tiberias)....3 Then Jesus went up on the mountain, and there He sat down with His disciples. 4 Now the Passover, the feast of the Jews, was near

Bethsaida  
(Article)

## JESUS BY SEA THE PEOPLE BY LAND

**Now when Jesus heard about John** - Matthew records a similar reaction by Joseph in Mt 2:22 "But when he heard that Archelaus was reigning over Judea in place of his father Herod, he was afraid to go there. Then after being warned by God in a dream, he left for the regions of Galilee." What did Jesus hear? He could have heard of the death of John (Mt 14:12) or the fact that Herod considered him to be John risen from the dead. (Mt 14:1-2)

**Broadus** explains that "the cruel murder of John showed what Herod was capable of, and made it obviously prudent for Jesus to withdraw from his dominions, especially now, when the mission of the Twelve had spread throughout Galilee the expectation that the reign of Messiah was about to commence, which the people generally would understand to mean an earthly kingdom, established by a great conqueror who would trample down the Herodian dynasty, the Romans and all...By crossing to the northeast of the lake, Jesus would reach a very retired and thinly settled region, belonging to the tetrarchy of Philip, who was a comparatively good ruler (see Mt 2:20), and to whose dominions he retired several times afterwards. (Mt 15:29; 16:13.) On a former occasion (12:15) we have seen Jesus withdrawing from the persecution of the Pharisees, as he will again do in Mt 15:21."

**He withdrew from there in a boat to a secluded place by Himself-** John 6:1 says **the other side of the Sea** and Luke 9:10+ says this is **Bethsaida**, which is on the East (really northeast) side of the Sea of Galilee. Their private time with Jesus in the boat on the sea would prove to be the only time of rest the weary band would experience. Although Matthew says **by Himself**, comparison with Luke 9:10+ (Taking them with Him, He withdrew by Himself) and Mark 6:30-31+ indicates the disciples were also with Him, having returned from their tour of evangelization (Mt 10:5) and **they reported to Him all that they had done and taught**.

In Mark Jesus called His disciples to "Come away by yourselves to a secluded place and **rest** ([anapauo](#)) a while." (For there were many people coming and going, and they did not even have time to eat." (Mk 6:31+)

**Brian Bell** - Every weary Christian worker needs to hear those words by Christ. It is important that we get alone from time to time to hear God's voice and refresh ourselves physically and mentally. We need times when we smooth out the wrinkles of our soul, get alone w/ God, refresh our bodies, & then get ready to serve the Lord again.

If we don't come apart and rest - we'll come apart.

-- Vance Havner

**and when the people heard of this, they followed Him on foot from the cities-** Jesus and the disciples went by sea while the crowd went by land. The verb followed is frequently associated with those who became His genuine disciples (Mt 4:20, 22+, Mk 1:18+, Mk 2:14+, Lk 5:11, 27, 28+) While [akoloutho](#) is frequently used to describe "disciples," as we see in John 6:66+, these Jews who **followed Him on foot from the cities** were for the most part not genuine believers, but false disciples or what I refer to as "fair weather disciples." "The crowds swelled as they passed from town to town along the populous west shore." (Lenski)

**Followed** (190) ([akoloutho](#) from **a** = expresses union with, likeness + **keleuthos** = a road, way) means to walk the same road (Ponder that simple definition dear believer - Am I willing to walk the same road as Jesus?) Literally to follow (like the crowds followed Jesus) and in a figurative sense to follow Jesus as a disciple. **Akoloutho** in Matthew's Gospel = Matt. 4:20; Matt. 4:22; Matt. 4:25; Matt. 8:1; Matt. 8:10; Matt. 8:19; Matt. 8:22; Matt. 8:23; Matt. 9:9; Matt. 9:19; Matt. 9:27; Matt. 10:38; Matt. 12:15; Matt. 14:13; Matt. 16:24; Matt. 19:2; Matt. 19:21; Matt. 19:27; Matt. 19:28; Matt. 20:29; Matt. 20:34; Matt. 21:9; Matt. 26:58; Matt. 27:55

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#### Vance Havner - "Give Ye Them to Eat" Matthew 14:13-21

THREE Gospels (Matt. 14:1-12; Mark 6:14-29; Luke 9:7-9) chronicle the death of John the Baptist. The rugged old prophet had condemned Herod's marriage to his brother's wife. The king admired the sturdy prophet, "knowing that he was a just man and a holy," but he kept him in prison. A big banquet, a hilarious time and a dancing girl brought on plenty of trouble. Herod lost his head and John literally lost his, and many have lost their heads before and since that time because of a dancing girl. Having made a foolish vow, Herod must be a "good sport" and keep it. The world's code of principles is all awry; he had better broken the oath than add one sin to another. So the head of John the Baptist lies on the charger.

The sturdy old forerunner lived a hard life that few could have endured. Without family, having his home the wilderness, he denounced in blazing terms the evils of his day. Kings and princes did not intimidate him, and he paid for his devotion to truth with his life. What a rebuke to those who fancy the spiritual life to be a soft, white-collared pursuit!

The feeding of the five thousand is the only miracle recorded in all four of the Gospels (Matt. 14:13-21; Mark 6:30-46; Luke 9:10-17; John 6:1-15). There is no explaining it away, as some would do by making Christ's example an appeal to the generosity of the people who brought their food together and distributed it. Here our Lord is again Master of nature, and this time He meets the age-old problem "What shall we eat?" The lad gave such as he had—the best he had, all he had—and little became much, as is always the case when the Lord takes it over. He can do wonders with the smallest gifts fully surrendered.

John gives a different slant. Jesus asked Philip, "Whence shall we buy bread, that these may eat?"—did it in order to test him, for "He Himself knew what He would do." Sometimes the Lord brings us to a crisis and seems to ask us, "Well, what are you going to do now?" and the situation looks hopeless. But remember that however impossible the case looks to you, He always knows what to do.

If you will yield to His will, He will work the wonder. Philip saw only the natural circumstances, "Two hundred pennyworth of bread is not sufficient." When God would use us to feed others, let us not look at bare facts. Andrew mentioned the boy's loaves and fishes, but added, "What are they among so many?" In the presence of the world's need, your gifts, talents, abilities may appear pitiful, but if you surrender them to Him, He can feed the multitudes.

Notice that there was a surplus of twelve baskets full. God does nothing niggardly, parsimoniously. There is always overflowing abundance of blessing. So tremendous was the impression of this miracle that the crowd was about to make Jesus king by force. Ah, it was because they thought He could furnish them bread and not for the Bread of Life that they would crown Him! Men ever desire a kingdom of outward prosperity, but His kingdom is not of this world. (Reflections on the Gospels)

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## OH, TO BE ALONE!

WHEN JESUS HEARD WHAT HAD HAPPENED, HE WITHDREW BY BOAT PRIVATELY TO A SOLITARY PLACE. HEARING OF THIS, THE CROWDS FOLLOWED HIM ON FOOT FROM THE TOWNS. —Matthew 14:13

Being alone is a treasure. It is therapy from the busyness and fast-paced confusion of life. Being alone helps us get in touch with our values, our priorities, and ourselves. Every mother knows the treasure of hours—or is it minutes?—when she is alone. While I am an unrepentant people person, I too long for times of being alone. And when we can get alone we shouldn't feel guilty about it.

Christ often went away to find spiritual renewal, solace in times of grief, and rest from the crush and demanding pace of a people-intensive ministry. One of the most touching moments of Christ's humanity was when He withdrew to a place of solitude after He heard of the beheading of John the Baptist. John was Christ's cousin. But more significant, he had given his life on the altar of announcing the coming of Christ. Matthew tells us that when Jesus heard of this savage, cruel tragedy, He was struck by a sense of personal loss and "withdrew by boat privately to a solitary place" (Matthew 14:13).

Interrupted in His solitude by people who followed Him, He took His boat ashore and ministered, healing and feeding the five thousand. The text then says that He sent His disciples to the other side of the sea and sent the multitudes away. Then He "went up on a mountainside by himself to pray. When evening came, he was there alone" (v. 23). It was in these times of being alone that He dealt with His grief and refreshed His reserves to effectively live and serve for another season.

Surviving life and succeeding spiritually demands downtimes when we are alone with God and ourselves. When are you alone? Do you meet God there in the quietness? Life cannot run on empty. God waits to fill our hearts afresh in quiet places.

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Each day make it a habit to find a quiet spot in which to speak with God and to hear from Him through His Word. - Joseph Stowell

**Warren Wiersbe** - He departed from there by boat to a deserted place by Himself. But when the multitudes heard it, they followed Him on foot from the cities. MATTHEW 14:13

From the beginning of our Lord's public ministry, great crowds of people followed him, and there were times when he had to get away from the crowd. I have identified at least eight occasions on which Jesus left the crowds and went off alone or with his disciples: After his baptism (Matt. 3:13–4:11), After a busy day of ministry (Mark 1:32–35), After healing a leper (Mark 1:40–45), After the death of John the Baptist (Matt. 14:1–13), After feeding the five thousand (John 6:1–15), Before calling the twelve apostles (Luke 6:12–16), After the apostles' report on their ministry (Mark 6:30–32), Before his suffering and death (Matt. 26:36–45).

Our Lord's baptism was the signal that his ministry had begun. The Father spoke words of approval and encouragement and the Spirit endowed him with power. But then the Spirit drove Jesus into the wilderness where he fasted for forty days and encountered and defeated the devil. Our high and holy hours of spiritual enrichment must be balanced with dark days of sacrifice and conflict. After a busy evening of healing in Capernaum, Jesus had a short night of sleep and then arose very early to pray and prepare for another busy day. We must begin each day spending time alone with God (Isa. 40:31; 50:4–7).

Jesus healed a leper and told him not to tell others, but the man told everybody about Jesus. (Jesus instructs us to tell everybody and we say nothing!) Jesus had to go to a deserted place, but the crowds found him anyway. Jesus was a servant, not a celebrity; he knew the motives in the hearts of the people mobbing him. When we feel successful, it's time to get alone with God.

The death of John the Baptist must have moved Jesus deeply, and he went away alone to mourn. After all, his own death was also on the schedule. God's people are human and need to work their way through sorrow and pain. Jesus prayed alone all night before choosing his twelve apostles (Luke 6:12–16), and at crisis experiences in our lives we need to spend extra time seeking the Father's will. When the apostles returned to report on their itinerant ministry, Jesus took them to a deserted place so they could rest and be spiritually refreshed. Vance Havner used to remind us, "If we don't come apart and rest, we will just come apart." There are times when taking a day off or a vacation, or even a brief nap, might be the most spiritual thing we can do.



Our Lord's experience in Gethsemane before his arrest prepared him for the agonies of the trials—the mockery, the whippings, and then the crucifixion. We can never fully experience the suffering he endured, but we can follow the example of his surrender in the garden. Jesus took the cup of sacrifice and drank it, saying, "Not my will but your will be done." Every dedicated child of God has Gethsemane experiences and can find victory in prayer and submission.

In the difficult challenges of the Christian life, we must not try to escape, as did David (Ps. 55:6) and Jeremiah (Jer. 9:2). We leave the crowd that we may return to the crowd with new strength for ministry. The most important part of the Christian life is the part that only God sees: our times alone with him.

But those who wait on the LORD  
Shall renew their strength;  
They shall mount up with wings like eagles,  
They shall run and not be weary,  
They shall walk and not faint.  
Isaiah 40:31

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### **Streams in the Desert - "Into a desert place apart." (Matt. 14:13.)**

THERE is no music in a rest, but there is the making of music in it." In our whole life-melody the music is broken off here and there by "rests," and we foolishly think we have come to the end of the tune. God sends a time of forced leisure, sickness, disappointed plans, frustrated efforts, and makes a sudden pause in the choral hymn of our lives; and we lament that our voices must be silent, and our part missing in the music which ever goes up to the ear of the Creator. How does the musician read the "rest"? See him beat the time with unvarying count, and catch up the next note true and steady, as if no breaking place had come between.

Not without design does God write the music of our lives. Be it ours to learn the tune, and not be dismayed at the "rests." They are not to be slurred over, not to be omitted, not to destroy the melody, not to change the keynote. If we look up, God Himself will beat the time for us. With the eye on Him, we shall strike the next note full and clear. If we sadly say to ourselves, "There is no music in a 'rest,' " let us not forget "there is the making of music in it." The making of music is often a slow and painful process in this life. How patiently God works to teach us! How long He waits for us to learn the lesson! —Ruskin.

"Called aside—

From the glad working of thy busy life,  
From the world's ceaseless stir of care and strife,  
Into the shade and stillness by thy Heavenly Guide  
For a brief space thou hast been called aside.

"Called aside—

Perhaps into a desert garden dim;  
And yet not alone, when thou hast been with Him,  
And heard His voice in sweetest accents say:  
'Child, wilt thou not with Me this still hour stay?'

"Called aside—

In hidden paths with Christ thy Lord to tread,  
Deeper to drink at the sweet Fountainhead,  
Closer in fellowship with Him to roam,  
Nearer, perchance, to feel thy Heavenly Home.

"Called aside—

Oh, knowledge deeper grows with Him alone;  
In secret oft His deeper love is shown,  
And learnt in many an hour of dark distress  
Some rare, sweet lesson of His tenderness.

"Called aside—

We thank thee for the stillness and the shade;  
We thank Thee for the hidden paths Thy love hath made,  
And, so that we have wept and watched with Thee,

We thank Thee for our dark Gethsemane.

“Called aside—  
Oh, restful thought—He doeth all things well;  
Oh, blessed sense, with Christ alone to dwell;  
So in the shadow of Thy cross to hide,  
We thank Thee, Lord, to have been called aside”

**Matthew 14:14 When He went ashore, He saw a large crowd, and felt compassion for them and healed their sick.**

- NET Matthew 14:14 As he got out he saw the large crowd, and he had compassion on them and healed their sick.
- NLT Matthew 14:14 Jesus saw the huge crowd as he stepped from the boat, and he had compassion on them and healed their sick.
- ESV Matthew 14:14 When he went ashore he saw a great crowd, and he had compassion on them and healed their sick.
- NIV Matthew 14:14 When Jesus landed and saw a large crowd, he had compassion on them and healed their sick.
- GNT Matthew 14:14 καὶ ἔλθὼν εὗρεν πολλὴν ὄχλον καὶ σπλαγχνισθεὶς πᾶσι καὶ ἔθερπεν τοὺς ῥηστούς αὐτοῦ.
- KJV Matthew 14:14 And Jesus went forth, and saw a great multitude, and was moved with compassion toward them, and he healed their sick.
- YLT Matthew 14:14 And Jesus having come forth, saw a great multitude, and was moved with compassion upon them, and did heal their infirm;
- ASV Matthew 14:14 And he came forth, and saw a great multitude, and he had compassion on them, and healed their sick.
- CSB Matthew 14:14 As He stepped ashore, He saw a huge crowd, felt compassion for them, and healed their sick.
- NKJ Matthew 14:14 And when Jesus went out He saw a great multitude; and He was moved with compassion for them, and healed their sick.
- NRS Matthew 14:14 When he went ashore, he saw a great crowd; and he had compassion for them and cured their sick.

- Mt 9:36 Mt 15:32-39 Mk 6:34 8:1,2 Mk 9:22 Lu 7:13 Lk 19:41 Joh 11:33-35 Heb 2:17 4:15 5:2

**Related Passage:**

Matthew 9:36+ Seeing the people, He felt compassion for them, because they were distressed and dispirited like sheep without a shepherd.

**JESUS' HEART  
OF COMPASSION**

John's account suggests that Jesus and His disciples were able to go to the mountain where He was able to spend some time with the Twelve -

Jn 6:3-5+ **Then Jesus went up on the mountain, and there He sat down with His disciples. 4 Now the Passover, the feast of the Jews, was near. 5** Therefore Jesus, **lifting up His eyes** and seeing that a large crowd was coming to Him, said to Philip, "Where are we to buy bread, so that these may eat?"

**Lenski** explains that "It was from this retired spot that he came forth and saw the multitude that had gradually assembled near the shore."

**When He went ashore, He saw a large crowd** - Considering the fact that Jesus had sought a secluded place so the team could **rest a while** for they had not even had time to eat (Mk 6:31+), it would have been tempting to ignore the crowd or tell them to disperse. The disciples undoubtedly needed rest after their evangelistic campaign (Mk 6:7-13+ cf Mk 6:30+, Lk 9:1-6+ cf Lk 9:10+). But Jesus knowing His time on earth was short, always sought to redeem the time (and so should we - see [Redeem the Time](#)) and demonstrates to all His disciples (then and now) that our disappointments (no rest in this case) are often God's appointments (the one miracle found in all 4 gospels other than the resurrection). Jesus saw the crowd with God's eyes and as shown below with God's heart of compassion.

**THOUGHT** - Jesus' response to the crowds should teach all of us as His disciples that [flexibility](#) is an important attribute if we are to walk in His footsteps. Are you able to cope with sudden changes in circumstances? Are you able (willing) to be "bent" or "flexed?" Are you "[pliable](#)?" How do you respond when unforeseen circumstances force a change in your ministry plans? How do you react when your plans are unexpectedly interrupted?

**Saw** (beheld, observed) (2334) ([theoreo](#) from [theaomai](#) = to look at closely or attentively or contemplatively - even with a sense of wonder; cp **theoros** = a spectator; English = theater) usually refers to physical sight but can also refer to perception and understanding. The idea is to gaze or look with interest and purpose, carefully examining with emphasis on attention to details and thus to behold intensely or attentively.

**And felt compassion for them** - Mark 6:34+ alone explains why Jesus felt compassion stating it was "**because** (term of explanation) **they were like sheep without a shepherd.**" So as Lenski says "in spite of all the unbelief that Jesus encountered and in spite of his intention to withdraw from his great public activity, his heart should thus be moved at the sight of this crowd that had followed him."

**Sheep without a shepherd** are sheep in great danger, and here the danger was not physical but spiritual. They were in danger of falling off the cliff into a Christ-less eternity. And so He **felt compassion**. Shepherd-less sheep are people trying to navigate the perils and vagaries of life on their own (and sheep are not very smart!). Spiritually speaking the crowds had no one to lead them on the path of true life, eternal life. Note the term of explanation **because** (Mark 6:34+) which explains Jesus' compassion for the oncoming crowd. And so we see the heart of Jesus, because instead of resenting the interruption by the crowds, He was deeply moved and overcome with compassion. Jesus was coming for rest, but quickly adjusted His mindset. His response recalls an earlier description of Jesus' reaction upon "Seeing the people, He **felt compassion** ([splanchnizomai](#)) for them, because they were distressed and dispirited like sheep without a shepherd." (Mt 9:36+) And earlier in Mark when a leper asked Jesus if He were willing to heal him, Mark records **Moved with compassion**, Jesus stretched out His hand and touched him, and \*said to him, "I am willing; be cleansed." (Mk 1:41+) **Barclay** adds a note on **sheep without a shepherd** - (1) A sheep without the shepherd cannot find the way. Left to ourselves, we get lost in life....(2) A sheep without the shepherd cannot find its pasture and its food....(3) A sheep without the shepherd has no defence against the dangers which threaten it. It can defend itself neither from robbers nor from wild animals.

**MacArthur** - He must have felt much as He did when He approached Lazarus's grave and wept (John 11:35) and when He looked out over Jerusalem through tears and said, "If you had known in this day, even you, the things which make for peace! But now they have been hidden from your eyes" (Luke 19:42+). He represented the compassionate heart of God even more fully than had Jeremiah, who declared to rebellious Judah, "But if you will not listen to [God's warning], my soul will sob in secret for such pride; and my eyes will bitterly weep and flow down with tears" (Jer. 13:17). (MNTC-Mt)

**Spurgeon** describes "the strange character of His guests. We do not know what sort of people they were, but this we do know, He did not exempt one because of any flaw in his character! They were a nondescript multitude. Little good could be said of them except that they had an ear to hear Jesus preach and were especially glad if the sermon was the first course, with loaves and fishes for the second. They were a carnal people and had nothing about them that deserved our Lord's consideration. But when did Jesus Christ wait until men deserved it before He blessed them?" ([The Miracle of the Loaves](#))

**Guzik** - His compassion was great: "The original word is very expressive; his whole being was stirred to its lowest depth, and therefore he proceeded at once to work miracles of mercy among them." (Spurgeon)

**Felt compassion** (4697) ([splanchnizomai](#) from [splanchnon](#) = bowel, viscera) means to experience a deep visceral feeling for someone, to feel compassion for, to feel [sympathy](#), to take [pity](#) on someone. [Compassion](#) is the sympathetic consciousness of others' distress together with a desire to alleviate it. This verb expresses an outward flow of one's life in contrast to our natural tendency toward self centeredness. It is notable that 8/12

NT uses describe this deep seated emotion in Jesus. It follows that if we desire to imitate Jesus, we need to be men and women of deep compassion! **Zodhiates** note on **spagchnon** - In Class. Gr. writers, it is chiefly spoken of the upper viscera of animals, as the heart, lungs, and liver which were eaten during or after the sacrifice... Figuratively, the inward parts indicating the breast or heart as the seat of emotions and passions. In the NT, of the gentler emotions as compassion, tender affection indicating the mind, soul, the inner man (2Co 6:12, Philemon 1:7, 20; 1Jn 3:17; Sept.: Pr 12:10 (cf. Ge 43:30; 1Kgs. 3:26) [The Complete Word Study Dictionary: New Testament. AMG](#))

**And healed (therapeuo) their sick** - Mark says that "He **began to teach** ([didasko](#) in [present tense](#)) them many things." (Mk 6:34b+) Luke adds that "**Welcoming (apodechomai) them, He began speaking (imperfect tense) to them about the kingdom of God** (For more discussion on the kingdom of God see comments on Lk 17:20-21) **and curing those who had need of healing.**" (Lk 9:11+) Notice the order in Luke - first teaching, then healing, because only the former would heal their spiritual illness. The healing would validate the truths He was teaching them about the Kingdom of God, explaining how they could gain entry to the Kingdom as summarized in Mark 1:15+ where Jesus declared they must "**Repent** and **believe** in the gospel." (Both **verbs** are in [present imperative](#)). (cf Nicodemus in Jn 3:3+)

The adjective **sick** (arrostos) in this context speaks of physical sickness, but it is interesting that in classic uses this adjective sometimes had a moral sense. Also keep in mind that even in their desperate state of being without strength, these people somehow were able to follow Jesus by land along the northern border of the Sea of Galilee. It is sad that the **sick** were so determined for physical healing, but had little to no interest (for the most part) in spiritual healing.

**MacArthur** points out that "Jesus postponed His rest, His privacy, His time alone with the disciples, and even His time with His Father in order to meet the needs of those helpless people who suffered."

**Craig Evans** writes that Matthew "misses no opportunity to portray Jesus as healer. See Matt. 4:23–24; 9:35; 12:15; 15:30; 19:2; 21:14." (BKBC-Mt)

**Healed** (cured) ([2323](#)) ([therapeuo](#) from **therapon** = a servant) means primarily to care for, to wait upon, minister to. The most common use of this verb is describing medical aspects such as to take care of the sick, to heal, to cure. Here are the 16 uses in Matthew:

Matthew 4:23 Jesus was going throughout all Galilee, teaching in their synagogues and proclaiming the gospel of the kingdom, and **healing** every kind of disease and every kind of sickness among the people.

Matthew 4:24 The news about Him spread throughout all Syria; and they brought to Him all who were ill, those suffering with various diseases and pains, demoniacs, epileptics, paralytics; and He **healed** them.

Matthew 8:7 Jesus \*said to him, "I will come and heal him."

Matthew 8:16 When evening came, they brought to Him many who were demon-possessed; and He cast out the spirits with a word, and **healed** all who were ill.

Matthew 9:35 Jesus was going through all the cities and villages, teaching in their synagogues and proclaiming the gospel of the kingdom, and **healing** every kind of disease and every kind of sickness.

Matthew 10:1 Jesus summoned His twelve disciples and gave them authority over unclean spirits, to cast them out, and to **heal** every kind of disease and every kind of sickness.

Matthew 10:8 "**Heal** the sick, raise the dead, cleanse the lepers, cast out demons. Freely you received, freely give.

Matthew 12:10 And a man was there whose hand was withered. And they questioned Jesus, asking, "Is it lawful to **heal** on the Sabbath?"—so that they might accuse Him.

Matthew 12:15 But Jesus, aware of this, withdrew from there. Many followed Him, and He **healed** them all,

Matthew 12:22 Then a demon-possessed man who was blind and mute was brought to Jesus, and He **healed** him, so that the mute man spoke and saw.

Matthew 14:14 When He went ashore, He saw a large crowd, and felt compassion for them and **healed** their sick.

Matthew 15:30 And large crowds came to Him, bringing with them those who were lame, crippled, blind, mute, and many others, and they laid them down at His feet; and He **healed** them.

Matthew 17:16 "I brought him to Your disciples, and they could not **cure** him."

Matthew 17:18 And Jesus rebuked him, and the demon came out of him, and the boy was **cured** at once.

Matthew 19:2 and large crowds followed Him, and He **healed** them there.

Matthew 21:14 And the blind and the lame came to Him in the temple, and He **healed** them.

**Sick** (732) (**arrostos** from **a** = without + **rhónnumi** = to strengthen, make firm) means strictly without strength; hence sickly, infirm, disabled; invalid. BDAG says literally "powerless." Liddell-Scott adds "weak, sickly:-Adv., to be ill, Aeschin. 2. in moral sense, weak, feeble (of soul - Xen)." This word in context would indicate that these "strengthless ones" could only with great difficulty have been transported to this distant, uninhabited place. **Arrostos** - 5x -sick(3), sick people(2). Matt. 14:14; Mk. 6:5; Mk. 6:13; Mk. 16:18; 1 Co. 11:30

#### Related Resource:

- [Jehovah Rapha: \(Jehovah Rophe\) The LORD our Healer](#)

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(Jesus) was moved with compassion for them, and healed their sick. MATTHEW 14:14

Many years ago, a back-country woman in Florida received news that her son had been killed in the war. Shortly thereafter, she was seen hoeing in her garden. "It just isn't fitting," chided a neighbor who thought it was inappropriate to be gardening instead of grieving. "Friend," said Effie Mae, "I know you mean well, but Jim rejoiced to see green things growing because it meant that his mother and the young ones would be eating. This is his hoe, and when I'm hoeing I can almost feel his big, strong hands under mine and hear his voice saying, 'That's good, Mom, that's good.' Working is the only headstone I can give him."

Is your heart broken today? Does life seem empty? Do you feel like giving up? There is hope in the Master's example. Take up whatever duties lie before you. Dedicate them to God. Refuse the luxury of self-pity. Do something to lift the burdens of others. —D. J. D.

To EASE ANOTHER'S HEARTACHE IS THE WAY TO FORGET YOUR OWN.

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**THOUGHT** - The closer Jesus came to the Cross, the more He sought to make DISCIPLE MAKERS out of them. Tommy Nelson says that the best disciple makers are those who "smell their own mortality" who are near the end of their life, like salmon who die in spawning so that they may produce offspring. Here Jesus has reached a turning point in His ministry and begins to show how God brings men from a LEARNER to a responsible REPRODUCER. Look at v15 --> His disciples were saying send the people away because they were HUNGRY. The most important thing in the world is my belly they were saying. Before you become a REPRODUCER you have to deal with that inclination-- How I feel is important, God and people aren't important but my belly is important! "Me, me, me, I love myself. I have my picture on my shelf." So (1) You've got to see the crowd like Jesus saw them. (2) You give them something to eat: Jesus is saying here is a huge crowd and you obviously don't have the ability to do what I'm asking...He is telling them to LIVE A SUPERNATURAL life! Our response is like their's in Mt 14:17..."We can't do it. It's impossible." This is where we need to come in our lives...to acknowledge that we cannot do what He asks with our own wares. In Mt 14:18 note: Do not take your 5 loaves and 2 fishes to the multitude because the first big guy will eat them all. What you do is what He said...you take your life and bring it to Him. You go to Christ. **Have you come to verse 18 in your life? That place where you say "Bless me and break me and then give me away."**

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#### MATTHEW 14:14

IT was a tragic mistake. On July 3, 1988, the navy cruiser U.S.S. Vincennes shot down an Iranian airliner with 290 aboard. All were lost. The ship's captain mistakenly thought they were under attack by an F-14 Iranian fighter. Public opinion polls showed that most Americans opposed paying compensation to the victims' families. The cruel treatment of American hostages in Iran was still fresh in many minds. But President Reagan approved compensation. Asked by reporters if such payment would send the wrong signal, he replied, "I don't ever find compassion a bad precedent."

For many people, revenge is much simpler to practice. Yet compassion—caring for the physical, emotional, and spiritual needs of a person—is Christ's way. It reveals the heart of God for sinful people—for you and for me.

The feeding of the five thousand was a miracle born out of compassion. Jesus was moved by the physical and spiritual needs of the people (Matthew 14:14; Mark 6:34). He was not content to teach them and then send them on their way.

As Christians, we must look at the whole person through the eyes of Jesus. Being moved by compassion always sends the right signal. —DID

Lord, when my heart is moved by compassion, make my body move into action.

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And He was moved with compassion for them, and healed their sick. MATTHEW 14:14

Are you old enough to remember the 3-D craze of several decades ago? Using cardboard glasses with red and blue lenses, you could read comic books drawn and printed in a certain way and—voilà!—the flat, lifeless pages sprang to life in three dimensions. The 3-D glasses were even available for certain movies.

Wouldn't it be interesting to suddenly be able to look at the world through "Jesus-colored lenses"—that is, to be able to see the world as Jesus sees it? There must be a radical difference between what He sees and what we see simply because we don't always act like He did. For instance, what He saw evoked compassion on numerous occasions. Sick people, demonized people, lost people, hungry and homeless people . . . these were not just the froth on the wake of a fast-moving society. These were real people with real needs.

When Jesus looked at life, He always did the same thing—He gave. He gave of His time, His power, His wisdom . . . and ultimately, He gave His life. What do you see when you look at the world—and what do you do in response? The closer we get to Jesus, the more we'll see what He saw.

Seeing the world like Jesus means giving to the world like Jesus.

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At times, the world seems to be an uncaring, unsympathetic place. People are often cruel and indifferent, not giving a second thought to the plight of their suffering neighbors. Wrapped up in their own interests, they don't seem to notice the anguish and despair that is at their doorstep.

This could not be said of the Lord Jesus. Time after time He met the needs of suffering people. Luke 7 tells about Christ's compassion when He saw the widow stricken with grief over the death of her son. Jesus had compassion on her and healed the boy. Earlier, when He saw a man with leprosy—who was despised, ostracized, and no doubt terribly disfigured—He made him well (Luke 5:12, 13, 14, 15). Still today, Jesus looks upon human need with compassion.

A little girl whose mother had been taken to the hospital was spending the night alone with her father for the first time. Soon after her father turned out the lights, the girl asked quietly, "Daddy, are you there?" "Yes," he assured her. A moment later she asked, "Daddy, are you looking at me?" When he said yes, she fell asleep.

Likewise, every child of God can depend on the Savior's look of love. No matter how painful the problem or how deep the sorrow, we know He has His eyes fixed on us. And knowing that our Savior's compassionate gaze always watches over us should make us loving, caring people. Although the world may turn its eyes from suffering, the Christian, following the example of our Savior, should be alert to sorrow and quick to respond. —D. C. Egner. Our Daily Bread

**God loves every one of us as if there were but one of us to love.**

**Matthew 14:15 When it was evening, the disciples came to Him and said, "This place is desolate and the hour is already late; so send the crowds away, that they may go into the villages and buy food for themselves."**

NET Matthew 14:15 When evening arrived, his disciples came to him saying, "This is an isolated place and the hour is already late. Send the crowds away so that they can go into the villages and buy food for themselves."

NLT Matthew 14:15 That evening the disciples came to him and said, "This is a remote place, and it's already getting late. Send the crowds away so they can go to the villages and buy food for themselves."

ESV Matthew 14:15 Now when it was evening, the disciples came to him and said, "This is a desolate place, and the day is now over; send the crowds away to go into the villages and buy food for themselves."

NIV Matthew 14:15 As evening approached, the disciples came to him and said, "This is a remote place, and it's already getting late. Send the crowds away, so they can go to the villages and buy themselves some food."

GNT Matthew 14:15 ψ ας δ γενομ νης προσ λθον α τ ο μαθητα λ γοντες, ρημ ς σπιν τ προς κα ρα δη παρ λθεν· π λυσον το ς χλους, να πελθ ντες ε ς τ ς κ μας γορ σωσιν αυτο ς βρ ματα.

KJV Matthew 14:15 And when it was evening, his disciples came to him, saying, This is a desert place, and the time is now past; send the multitude away, that they may go into the villages, and buy themselves victuals.



YLT Matthew 14:15 and evening having come, his disciples came to him, saying, 'The place is desolate, and the hour hath now past, let away the multitudes that, having gone to the villages, they may buy to themselves food.'

ASV Matthew 14:15 And when even was come, the disciples came to him, saying, The place is desert, and the time is already past; send the multitudes away, that they may go into the villages, and buy themselves food.

CSB Matthew 14:15 When evening came, the disciples approached Him and said, "This place is a wilderness, and it is already late. Send the crowds away so they can go into the villages and buy food for themselves."

NKJ Matthew 14:15 When it was evening, His disciples came to Him, saying, "This is a deserted place, and the hour is already late. Send the multitudes away, that they may go into the villages and buy themselves food."

NRS Matthew 14:15 When it was evening, the disciples came to him and said, "This is a deserted place, and the hour is now late; send the crowds away so that they may go into the villages and buy food for themselves."

- **the disciples came:** Mk 6:35,36 Lu 9:12
- **send:** Mt 15:23 Mk 8:3

## NO FAST FOOD DINERS IN THE DESERT

**When it was evening** - When this was is not certain. Mark has "When it was already quite late...already quite late." (Mk 6:35<sup>+</sup>) Luke has "Now the day was ending" (Lk 9:12<sup>+</sup>) **Broadus** explains that "The Jews were accustomed to distinguish between the first evening and the second evening. Just what the distinction was, has not been certainly determined (Edersheim); it is commonly supposed that the first was from about 3 P. M. to sunset, the second from sunset on into the night."

**The disciples came to Him and said** - Luke says "the twelve came and said to Him." (Lk 9:12<sup>+</sup>)

**This place is desolate and the hour is already late**- Mark adds "His disciples came to Him and said, "This place is desolate." (Mk 6:35-36<sup>+</sup>) but not a desert because they sat on green grass (Mk 6:39+) The disciples, who are not always fast mentally, tell Jesus there are no "fast food" places! And since the hour is late the crowds need to hurry to the villages before the stores close. The Lord of all Creation has the stage set for His great sign which clearly points to His deity.

**THOUGHT** - By way of application remember that large crowds of people today are in a **desolate** place in their sin and in desperate need of the spiritual food of Christ, the Bread of Life.

**A T Robertson** - Not a desolate region, simply lonely, comparatively uninhabited with no large towns near. There were "villages" (κωμας [kōmas]) where the people could buy food, but they would need time to go to them.

**Desolate** (secluded) (2048)(**eremos**) when used as an adjective, normally describes places which are abandoned, desolate, or unpopulated. **Broadus** says **eremos** in this case was "a thinly inhabited region (Mt 3:1), without large towns, but containing villages. (v. 15.) Luke 9:10 shows that the region visited pertained to a city called Bethsaida, which must be distinct from the Bethsaida of Mt 11:21" **Eremos** is used several times in the description of the Feeding of the 5000 - Mt 14:13, 15, Mark 6:31, 32, 33, Lk 9:12, Jn 6:31.

**So send the crowds away, that they may go into the villages and buy food for themselves**- **Send** is **apoluo** (dismiss, send away), a command in the **arist imperative** (Do it now! Do not delay!) Luke 9:12<sup>+</sup> says "The twelve came and said to Him, '**Send** the crowd away, that they may go into the surrounding villages and countryside and **find lodging** and get something to eat; for here we are in a desolate place.'" Mk 6:36+ has "**send** them away so that (term of purpose) they may go into the surrounding countryside and villages and buy (**agorazo**) themselves something to eat."

**THOUGHT** - Applying this truth, how shortsighted of the disciples were to send away those who were hungry. We need to imitate Jesus and seek to meet their need. Jesus sometimes gives seemingly impossible challenges, but we need to give them something to eat. We alone have bread that satisfies the soul.

**Send away** (630)(**apoluo** from **apó** = marker of dissociation, implying a rupture from a former association, separation + **luo** = loose) is used often of sending a person or a group away from someone. Uses in Matthew (note 3 in chapter 14) - Matt. 1:19; Matt. 5:31; Matt. 5:32; Matt. 14:15; Matt. 14:22; Matt. 14:23; Matt. 15:23; Matt. 15:32; Matt. 15:39; Matt. 18:27; Matt. 19:3; Matt. 19:7; Matt. 19:8; Matt. 19:9; Matt. 27:15; Matt. 27:17; Matt. 27:21; Matt. 27:26

**Steven Cole** - Did you notice the contrast between Jesus' attitude toward the multitude and that of the disciples? Jesus welcomed them, but the disciples said to Jesus, "**Send them away**". It may be that the disciples were just being practical about how to meet the needs of the crowd, but given the situation, I think we are warranted to read some exhaustion into their voices. They were spent. They wanted a break.

**Mark Akin** - The tone of their request may be a bit harsh, but we can certainly understand the logic of it. The hour is late, the people are famished, they need something to eat, so send them on their way. They are becoming something of a nuisance.

**THOUGHT** Aren't we so often just like the disciples? Instead of being others oriented, we are so easily inconvenienced with our "me-my-mine" mindset! (cf Paul's exhortation to manifest unselfish Christ-like behavior toward others (Read Php 2:3-5+)).

**Warren Wiersbe** - Jesus sent the 12 Apostles out to minister because He had compassion on the needy multitudes (Matt. 9:36–38). This time, the needy multitudes came to them—and the disciples wanted to send them away! As yet, they had not learned to look at life through the eyes of their Master. To them, the crowds were a problem, perhaps even a nuisance, but to Jesus, they were as sheep without a shepherd. When **D.L. Moody** was building his great Sunday School in Chicago, children came to him from everywhere. They often passed by other churches and Sunday Schools to be with Mr. Moody. When asked why he walked so far to attend Moody's Sunday School, one boy replied, "Because they love a fella over there!" The children could tell the difference.(BEC)

#### THE MIRACLES OF THE LOAVES AND FISHES JABEZ BURNS

"And when it was evening, His disciples came to Him, saying, This is a desert place, and the time is now past; send the multitude away" (Matt. 14:15–21).

Christ performed such mighty works as no other man did. His miracles were numerous, public, full of mercy and compassion, and were all performed by His own power and in His own name. Let us at present consider the miracle of the loaves and fishes; and in doing so, I. Explain and Illustrate the Various Circumstances Connected with It, and notice II. The Spiritual Lessons Which It Teaches.

##### I. Explain and Illustrate the Various Circumstances Connected with the Miracle. Notice,

A. The occasion of the miracle. Christ had been healing and teaching the people; the multitude had been so deeply interested as to forget the necessary wants of the body; were ready to faint for want of food.

B. The place where the miracles were wrought. It was "a desert place." Had they been in a city or village where provision could have been obtained, a miracle would have been unnecessary. Christ never wrought one superfluous miracle. Here it was necessary that He should convince the people that He could spread a table for them in the wilderness.

C. The laudable anxiety of the disciples. They desired that the people might be dismissed, that they might retire and buy food in the villages. This was considerate and humane. We ought never to forget that our fellow-creatures have bodies as well as souls; and if we see a brother or a sister hungering and feel not for them, how dwells the love of God in us? Notice,

D. The surprising reply of the Redeemer. "They need not go away." Not only was the Messiah in the midst of them, but that Messiah was the God of nature and providence; His hands were daily opened for the supplying of every living thing with good. He then directed them to see what provision they possessed. This was necessary, that it might appear, first, that a miracle was really indispensable; and secondly, that the miracle might appear in its true and real character. It was found that five loaves or biscuits, and two small fishes, were all the provisions they could collect. How totally inadequate to the demands of the many thousands, the hungry multitude! Observe,

E. The commands Christ gave to His disciples.

1. That the provisions should be brought to Him. He did not despise and cast away the loaves and fishes; but made them, as it were, the seed-corn of that abundant supply which He was about to provide. The loaves and fishes were quite unavailing in the hands of the disciples; therefore, Christ received them that His almighty power might be employed upon them.

2. He commanded the multitude to sit down. That all might be done in order; that the number might be accurately ascertained; and that all might be easily and fully supplied. Then notice,

F. Christ's conduct with respect to the provisions. He took it, lifted up His eyes to heaven, gave thanks, blessed it, and broke it. What an example of piety and devotion! How anxious to acknowledge and glorify His Father! What majesty and glory would be seen in the face and actions of Jesus on this occasion! Then notice,

G. The mode of distribution adopted. "He gave it to His disciples, and they gave it to the people." Thus did He

exhibit His leadership and authority, and thus did He recommend His disciples to the people, as the distributors of His bounty, and the officers of His kingdom. Then observe,  
H. The creation and multiplication of the food which took place. The disciples went forth, supplying each with an abundance; and as they distributed, it increased in their baskets, so that 5,000 men, besides, no doubt, as many more women and children, ate and were filled. Notice,  
I. The lesson of frugality which Jesus taught. He then said: "Gather up the fragments, that nothing be lost." And behold, twelve baskets of fragments remained! Many thousand times more than the stock with which the meal was commenced! God is the source of abundance; but He will not sanction extravagance or waste. Let us consider,

## II. The Spiritual Lessons Which the Miracle Affords.

- A. In the people we see a striking representation of the moral condition of the human family. In a desert world—starving for want of food—no human means of supply.
- B. In the provision we see a true exhibition of the blessings of the gospel. Its source, Jesus; its apparent insufficiency, yet its abundance, yea, inexhaustibleness. Its freeness and cheapness; without money and without price. Its satisfying nature; all ate and were filled.
- C. In its distribution we see the nature of the office of the Christian ministry. It is—to receive from Christ's hands the bread of life, and to give it to a dying world. It is Christ's provision only they are to distribute.
- D. In the abundance remaining we see the boundlessness of gospel supplies. Myriads have eaten, and yet the bread is undiminished. We learn,
- E. That personal participation of gospel blessings is necessary to our happiness and satisfaction. We must not only be of the multitude, and hear, and see, and sit down with them; but we must, also, eat, receive Christ into our hearts by faith; and thus only can we enjoy the blessings of God's great, and full, and abundant salvation. The invitation is: "Come ye, buy and eat; ... and milk, without money, and without price."

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### P G Matthew —Matthew 14:15

There are two ways people try to solve problems. First is the way of the natural man. We begin by sizing up the problem. In Matthew 14, we read that there were five thousand men plus women and children, so we would take that fact into our accounting. Next, we notice it is a desolate, solitary place and there are no shops. Third, we look at our purses and determine that we have no money. Next, we look at the time—it is gone. So our conclusion, if we are Jesus's disciples, is that we cannot feed the crowd. We will say, "Jesus, you need to send these people away hungry. Let them go while there is still some daylight left. You gave us this problem to solve, we looked at everything, and this is our conclusion: There is no solution here."

This is the way people most often try to address their issues: they calculate and reason and take everything into account except God, who is with them in the person of Jesus Christ. This represents the height of unbelief. Yet this problem-solving method is common even among Christians who believe in the Bible and go to church. Remember the ten spies who came to Moses after spying the Promised Land? They reported, "It is a good land; it flows with milk and honey. But we cannot go in and defeat the people because they are stronger than we are. Compared to them, we are grasshoppers." These spies surveyed and calculated and came to a seemingly logical conclusion. But unbelieving human reason always fails because it leaves out the infinite, almighty, omniscient Creator and Sustainer of the universe.

This is our failing too. That is why we are often anxious, fearful, angry, and frustrated. And so the disciples counseled Jesus, "With our resources we cannot feed them—no one can. And we want to point out that it is late. So, please, send them away."

People are supposed to come to Jesus for solutions, but here the disciples wanted the crowd to go away. They failed because of unbelief. It is only when we have faith that we see Christ the Lord ruling and reigning. Let us bring our five loaves and two fish to him. Then we can watch him feed the five thousand with them.

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Only the **resurrection** and the **feeding of the 5000** are found in all 4 Gospels.

Clearly feeding of the 5000 is very significant and one of the main points is that this miracle (largest number of people affected by one miracle) was clear demonstration that Jesus was God and Creator!

**John Broadus** adds that "This is the first time in the course of Matthew's Gospel that John has appeared as parallel. The earlier chapters of John, as indeed the greater part of his Gospel, treat of events and discourses which the other Evangelists have not described. In the present case, John wishes to record the great discourse on the bread of life (John 6:22–71), and he therefore describes the miracle which occasioned it"

**John MacArthur** has an interesting statement that "In each gospel account this miracle is placed **at the climax of the Lord's ministry.**"

**A T Robertson's** note from **Harmony of the Gospels** - THE SPECIAL TRAINING OF THE TWELVE IN DISTRICTS AROUND GALILEE

Probably Passover in A.D. 29 to near Tabernacles in A.D. 29 or a year earlier (six months from spring to autumn). Just a year from the beginning of this Period till the Crucifixion. Emphasis now on the King of the Kingdom (the Person of the Messiah).

**Four separate withdrawals from Galilee are given,**

- 1. Mt 14:31-21, Mk 6:30-44, Lk 9:10-17, Jn 6:1-13
- 2. Mt 15:21-28, Mark 7:24-30
- 3. Matthew 15:29-38, Mark 7:31-8:9
- 4. Matthew 16:5-12, Mark 8:13-26
- 5. Notice that in every case he keeps out of Herod's territory, and in every case he goes to the mountains.

**THE FIRST RETIREMENT.**

- THE TWELVE RETURN,
- JESUS RETIRES WITH THEM BEYOND THE LAKE TO REST.
- FEEDING OF THE FIVE THOUSAND

THE FEEDING OF FIVE THOUSAND PLUS				
NOTE: Words in <b>Bold</b> are unique to that Gospel's account.				
GOSPEL	Matthew 14:12-24	Mark 6:30-46	Luke 9:10-17	John 6:1-14
THE SETTING TWO REPORTS	His disciples came and took away the body and buried it; and they went and reported to Jesus. - Mt 14:12+	The apostles gathered together with Jesus; and they reported to Him all that they had done and taught.- Mk 6:30+	When the apostles returned, they gave an account to Him of all that they had done. Lk 9:10a+	After these things Jn 6:1a+
WITHDRAWAL TO REST	Now when Jesus heard about John, He withdrew from there in a boat to a secluded place by Himself - Mt 14:13a+	He said to them, "Come away by yourselves to a secluded place and rest a while." (For there were many people coming and going, and they did not even have time to eat.They went away in the boat to a secluded place by themselves.- Mk 6:31,32+	Taking them with Him, He withdrew by Himself to a city called Bethsaida Lk 9:10b+	Jesus went away to the other side of the Sea of Galilee (or Tiberias). Jn 6:1b+

<b>REST "ARRESTED"</b>	When the people heard of this, they followed Him on foot from the cities - Mt 14:13b+	The people saw them going, and many recognized them and ran there together on foot from all the cities, and got there ahead of them. Mk 6:33+	But the crowds were aware of this and followed Him; Lk 9:11a+	A large crowd followed Him, <b>because they saw the signs which He was performing on those who were sick.</b> . Jn 6:2a+
<b>LARGE CROWD</b>	When He went ashore, He saw a large crowd- Mt 14:14a+	When Jesus went ashore, He saw a large crowd Mk 6:34a+		<b>Then Jesus went up on the mountain, and there He sat down with His disciples. Now the Passover, the feast of the Jews, was near. Jesus, lifting up His eyes</b> and seeing that a large crowd was coming to Him Jn 6:3-5+
<b>COMPASSION</b>	He felt compassion for them and <b>healed their sick</b> - Mt 14:14b+	He felt compassion for <b>t h e m because they were like sheep without a shepherd</b> ; and He <b>began to teach</b> them many things. Mk 6:34b+	Welcoming them, He <b>b e g a n speaking to them about the kingdom of God</b> and <b>curing those who had need of healing.</b> Lk 9:11b+	
<b>THE TIME WAS LATE</b>	When it was evening...the hour is already late, Mt 14:15a+	When it was already quite late...already quite late Mk 6:35a+	Now the day was ending Lk 9:12a+	
<b>SEND THEM AWAY</b>	The disciples came to Him and said, "This place is desolate...so send the crowds away, that they may go into the villages and buy food for themselves."- Mt 14:15b+	His disciples came to Him and said, "This place is desolate...send them away so that they may go into the surrounding countryside and villages and buy themselves something to eat." Mk 6:35b-36+	The twelve came and said to Him, "Send the crowd away, that they may go into the surrounding villages and countryside and <b>find lodging</b> and get something to eat; for here we are in a desolate place." Lk 9:12b+	

THE TEST (FAITH NOT SIGHT)	Jesus said to them, “ <b>They do not need to go away</b> ; you give them something to eat!” Mt 14:16+	He answered them, “You give them something to eat!” Mk 6:37+	He said to them, “You give them something to eat!” - Lk 9:13a+	Jesus said to Philip, “Where are we to buy bread, so that these may eat?” This He was saying to <u>test</u> him, for He Himself knew what He was intending to do. Jn 6:5b-6+
THEIR SOLUTION (SIGHT NOT FAITH)		They said to Him, “Shall we go and spend 200 denarii on bread and give them something to eat?” Mk 6:37b+	Unless perhaps we go and buy food for all these people.” Lk 9:13c+	Philip answered Him, “200 denarii worth of bread is not sufficient for them, for everyone to receive a little.” Jn 6:7+ (cf Jn 6:9b+)
WHEN LITTLE IS ENOUGH	They said to Him, “We have here only 5 loaves and 2 fish.”Mt 14:17+  He said, “Bring them here to Me.” Mt 14:18+	He said to them, “ <b>How many loaves do you have? Go look!</b> ” And when they found out, they said, “5 and 2 fish.” Mk 6:38+	They said, “We have no more than 5 loaves and 2 fish Lk 9:13b+	One of His disciples, Andrew, Simon Peter’s brother, said to Him, “There is a lad here who has 5 barley loaves and 2 fish, but what are these for so many people?” Jn 6:8-9+
JESUS SEATS THE GUESTS	Ordering the people to sit down on the grass Mt 14:19a+	He commanded them all to sit down by groups on the green grass. They sat down in <b>groups of hundreds</b> and of fifties. Mk 6:39-40+	He said to His disciples, “Have them sit down to eat in groups of about fifty each. - Lk 9:14b+  They did so, and had them all sit down. - Lk 9:15+	Jesus said, “Have the people sit down.” Now there was much grass in the place. Jn 6:10a+
JESUS GIVES THANKS	He took the 5 loaves and the 2 fish, and looking up toward heaven, He blessed the food Mt 14:19b+	He took the 5 loaves and the 2 fish, and looking up toward heaven, He blessed the food Mk 6:41a+	He took the 5 loaves and the 2 fish, and looking up to heaven, He blessed them Lk 9:16a+	Jesus then took the loaves, and having given thanks, Jn 6:11a+



<b>NOURISHMENT</b>	Breaking the loaves He gave them to the disciples, and the disciples gave them to the crowds, - Mt 14:19c+	He broke the loaves and He kept giving them to the disciples to set before them; and <b>He divided up the two fish among them all.</b> Mk 6:41b+	He broke them, and kept giving them to the disciples to set before the people. Lk 9:16b+	<b>He distributed to those who were seated; likewise also of the fish as much as they wanted.</b> Jn 6:11b+
<b>SATISFACTION</b>	They all ate and were satisfied - Mt 14:20a+	They all ate and were satisfied, Mk 6:42+	And they all ate and were satisfied; Lk 9:17a+	When they were filled Jn 6:12+
<b>FAR MORE ABUNDANT</b>	They picked up what was left over of the broken pieces, 12 full baskets. - Mt 14:20+	They picked up 12 full baskets of the broken pieces, and <b>also of the fish.</b> Mk 6:43+	The broken pieces which they had left over were picked up, 12 baskets full. Lk 9:17b+	<b>He said to His disciples, "Gather up the leftover fragments so that nothing will be lost." So they gathered them up, and filled 12 baskets with fragments from the 5 barley loaves which were left over by those who had eaten.</b> Jn 6:12-13+
<b>MIRACULOUS NUMBERS FED</b>	There were about 5000 men who ate, <b>besides women and children.</b> Mt 14:21+	There were 5000 men who ate the loaves. Mk 6:44+	There were about 5000 men - Lk 9:14a+	So the men sat down, in number about 5000. Jn 6:10b+
<b>PROPHET BUT NOT MESSIAH</b>				<b>When the people saw the sign which He had performed, they said, "This is truly the Prophet who is to come into the world."</b> Jn 6:14+
<b>JESUS SENDS DISCIPLES AWAY</b>	Immediately He made the disciples get into the boat and go ahead of Him to the other side, while He sent the crowds away. - Mt 14:22+	Immediately Jesus made His disciples get into the boat and go ahead of Him to the <b>other side to Bethsaida</b> , while He Himself was sending the crowd away. Mk 6:45+		

<b>JESUS PRAYS</b>	After He had sent the crowds away, He went up on the mountain by Himself to pray; and when it was evening, He was there alone. Mt 14:23+	After bidding them farewell, He left for the mountain to pray. Mk 6:46+	<b>So Jesus, perceiving that they were intending to come and take Him by force to make Him king,</b> withdrew again to the mountain by Himself alone. Jn 6:15+
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**Matthew 14:16 But Jesus said to them, "They do not need to go away; you give them something to eat!"**

NET Matthew 14:16 But he replied, "They don't need to go. You give them something to eat."

NLT Matthew 14:16 But Jesus said, "That isn't necessary-- you feed them."

ESV Matthew 14:16 But Jesus said, "They need not go away; you give them something to eat."

NIV Matthew 14:16 Jesus replied, "They do not need to go away. You give them something to eat."

GNT Matthew 14:16 ὁ [ ἡσο ς] ε πεν α το ς, Ο χρε αν χουσι ν πελθε ν, ὃ τε α το ς με ς φαγε ν.

KJV Matthew 14:16 But Jesus said unto them, They need not depart; give ye them to eat.

YLT Matthew 14:16 And Jesus said to them, 'They have no need to go away -- give ye them to eat.'

ASV Matthew 14:16 But Jesus said unto them, They have no need to go away; give ye them to eat.

CSB Matthew 14:16 "They don't need to go away," Jesus told them. "You give them something to eat."

NKJ Matthew 14:16 But Jesus said to them, "They do not need to go away. You give them something to eat."

NRS Matthew 14:16 Jesus said to them, "They need not go away; you give them something to eat."

- **they:** 2Ki 4:42-44 Job 31:16,17 Pr 11:24 Ec 11:2 Lu 3:11 Joh 13:29 2Co 8:2,3 9:7,8

## THE TEST OF THEIR FAITH

John's Gospel adds some details not found in the synoptic accounts - "Therefore Jesus, lifting up His eyes and seeing that a large crowd was coming to Him, said to Philip, **"Where are we to buy bread, so that these may eat?"** This He was saying to test ([peirazo](#)) him, for He Himself knew what He was intending to do." (Jn 6:5b-6+)

**Lenski** helps set the context - At this point we must turn to John 6:5–7+. When Jesus first stepped out of his retirement on the mountain side he put the question to Philip about buying bread for all these people. Jesus did this in advance in order to test out one of his disciples. Already then Jesus knew what he would do when evening would come. But all that Jesus got from Philip was that it would take more money than they had in their treasury to provide even a very little for so many people—not an inkling that Philip remembered Cana or thought of miraculous help on the part of Jesus in any way. Disappointed in Philip, Jesus descends to the multitude, heals the sick, and teaches about the kingdom until evening had actually come—entirely unconcerned about the bodily needs of the people and the passing of the time. The question put to Philip was evidently intended to have him report to the other apostles, and thus that all of them might think about it as the hours wore on. They did that but arrived at nothing. (ISMG)

**But Jesus said to them, "They do not need to go away-** This was the first shock to the disciples.

**You give them something to eat!"** (also in Mk 6:37+ and Lk 9:13a+) - The emphasis in the Greek is on **YOU**. Now comes the real test of the faith of the twelve. **Give** is a command in the [aorist imperative](#) calling for them to do it now. Don't delay. Put yourself in the sandals of the disciples with up to 20,000 stomachs "growling" in the background and Jesus says feed 'em! The disciples had commanded Jesus to **send** in the [aorist imperative](#) but Jesus now commands them to **give** in the same tense! I think Jesus' command takes precedence!

**Guzik** - With this, Jesus challenged both the compassion and the faith of the disciples. Yet He did not ask them to do anything to meet the need without also guiding them through the work.

**D A Carson** - "If they remembered the miracle of the wine in Cana (John 2:1–11), they should have asked Jesus to meet the need, not send the people away."

God uses us as instruments  
To help someone in need,  
So we must trust Him to supply  
When following His lead.  
—Sper

When God says do it, He's already planned the resources we need to accomplish the task.  
-- Randy Kilgore

**A T Robertson** - The emphasis is on **you** [hūmeis] in contrast with their "send away" (apoluson). It is the urgent aorist of instant action (dote). It was an astounding command. The disciples were to learn that "no situation appears to Him desperate, no crisis unmanageable" (Bruce).

The disciple's problem was they looked at their meager resources,  
and failed to look with eyes of faith at the Sufficient Savior!

**THOUGHT** - Their faith is focused on their insufficiency rather than trusting in the Master's sufficiency. They have not yet learned when God commands, God enables. Their faith was feeble and Jesus would will use this insufficiency to teach them of His all sufficiency. Man's extremity is God's opportunity. This is a lesson of which we all need to be frequently reminded. (cf 2 Cor 3:5-6+). Thank you Lord, for Your timely reminders! Amen.

**Life Application Study Bible** adds "Do you think God would ask you to do something that you and He together couldn't handle? Don't let your lack of resources blind you to God's power."

What is Jesus doing here? Jesus challenged the disciples to meet the people's needs. The disciples had been healing the sick and casting out demons, but now Jesus wanted the disciples to demonstrate faith in God's ability to feed the crowds. This is a direct challenge to their faith - their answer showed that they were still thinking naturally and not supernaturally!

**THOUGHT** - Jesus is teaching the disciples that He is the God of the impossible. What He commands, He enables. Oh, that we might face up to our own inadequacy, that we might come to learn by experience of His abundant adequacy which enables us to cope with any crisis.

Jesus has not changed (Hebrews 13:8+), He is still the God of the impossible situation or circumstance you might be experiencing as you read this comment. While there is no absolute guarantee the circumstance or situation will dramatically change, we can rest assured that He is also faithful as Paul said "No temptation (test) has overtaken you but such as is common to man; and **God is faithful**, who will not allow you to be tempted (tested) beyond what you are able, but with the temptation (test) will provide the (not "a" but "the") way of escape also, so that you will be able to endure it (IN OTHER WORDS THE TESTING CIRCUMSTANCE MAY STILL BE PRESENT BUT GRACE TO MAKE IT IS ALSO PRESENT! - cf 2 Cor 12:9-10+)." (1 Cor 10:13+).

Guzik applies this story

- The people are hungry, and the empty religionist offers them some ceremony or empty words that can never satisfy.
- The people are hungry, and the atheists and skeptics try to convince them that they aren't hungry at all.
- The people are hungry, and the religious showman gives them video and special lighting and cutting-edge music.
- The people are hungry, and the entertainer gives them loud, fast action, so loud and fast that they don't have a moment to think.
- The people are hungry—who will give them the bread of life?

**Spurgeon** - "You do not know what you can do, seeing I am with you," the Lord answered. "You can feed them all." O Christian church, never give up the most difficult problem. It may be worked out. The city may be evangelized, crowded as it is; the nations may be brought to Christ superstitious though they be; for he is with us.

They need not depart; give ye them to eat. Matthew 14:16.

The disciples thought it was time to send the multitude away to buy food. But it is never necessary to go away from Jesus for anything. All we need is in Him. Men are going in all directions foraging for food, but He is the Bread of Life. It is not necessary to supplement your diet with anything from the fleshpots of Egypt. All the vitamins and calories your soul requires are in Christ. He is Alpha and Omega—and all the letters between!

But He also said, "Give ye them to eat." We are His agents, His representatives today, and we need never send men away elsewhere from our sufficient Saviour.

But how can we give them to eat? The disciples saw only five loaves and two fishes. The Lord said, "Bring them hither to me." Bring what you have, all you have, and He will multiply it to meet the demand.

What a joy to represent a Lord who never meets an emergency that makes it necessary to dismiss the crowd! They need never depart—for to whom shall they go?

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### **Henry Blackaby - Don't Avoid the Impossible**

"They don't need to go away," Jesus told them. "You give them something to eat."—Matthew 14:16

Jesus asked His disciples to do something that clearly was impossible. There were five thousand men, along with their families, and they were famished. There were only five loaves of bread and two small fish—obviously not enough to feed a multitude. The cost of food for even a portion of the crowd would have far exceeded the disciples' small budget. It may have seemed absurd to the disciples that Jesus should ask them to distribute the paltry amount of food to the massive crowd. Yet that is exactly what Jesus asked them to do. Because Jesus had given the command, the disciples obeyed and witnessed an incredible miracle.

Christ will lead you into many situations that will seem impossible, but don't try to avoid them. Stay in the middle of them, for that is where you will experience God. The key difference between what appears to be impossible to us and what is actually possible is a word from our Master! Faith accepts His divine command and steps out in a direction that only God can complete. If you only attempt things that you know are possible with the visible resources you possess, those around you will not see God at work. You will be the one who receives the credit for a job well done, but God will have no part in it.

Take inventory of your life and the decisions you are presently facing. Have you received a word from the Master that awaits your next step of faith? If you will proceed with what He has told you, no matter how incredible it might seem, you will experience the joy of seeing your Lord perform a miracle, and so will those around you.

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### **Chris Tiegreen - God Provides**

"They do not need to go away. You give them something to eat." Matthew 14:16

"Man's extremity is God's opportunity of helping and saving." —Matthew Henry

IN WORD The disciples had not even considered that Jesus might be able to meet the needs of so many. More than five thousand people were gathered to hear Him and to receive healing from Him. As evening approached and people began to grow hungry, the disciples urged the incarnate Provider to send people away to buy food. The same God who had poured manna from heaven for millions in the wilderness was now being encouraged to send people off to find their own provision. And He could have done so; there were villages nearby (v. 15). But He did not. They needed to know that He is the Provider, the God of deserted places.

We tend to see our need as either too large to even ask God to handle or too small for Him to be concerned with. We are forgetful. Like the disciples, we must be reminded of the God of history. He is the Provider who clothes the lilies and who sustained an entire generation with water and food in a barren wilderness. Too small for God to address? He is the God of five loaves and two fish. Too large? He is the Creator and Sustainer of all that is—is anything too difficult for Him?

IN DEED What is your need? Whatever it is, it is entirely God's concern. He may instruct you in it ("You give them something to eat"), and the obedience is yours to carry out; but the provision is His. When given the opportunity to stress self-sufficiency or dependence on God, Jesus chose the latter. Let neither the enemy nor your own limited vision talk you out of dependence on Him. Contrary to the voices in our heads, no need is too small, and none is too large. He is the God of compassion (v. 14) and the God of abundance (v. 20), and best of all, He is our Father.

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### **Stephen Olford - "They do not need to go away."—Matthew 14:16**

The disciples said, "Send the multitudes away" (v. 15). Jesus said, "They do not need to go away." Herein is seen the very heart of my blessed Lord. The flesh in me would rather be unburdened of the responsibility of feeding the hungry, perishing multitude, even though the day of opportunity is drawing to a close (notice that it was evening). But the Lord essentially said, "They do not need to go away. They can go if they wish to. They must go if you force them. But as far as I am concerned, they do not have to go away." In fact, they were fed: "You give them something to eat" (v. 16). "They do not need to go away" (v. 16). "The one who comes to Me I will by no means cast out" (John 6:37).

Give me this spirit, Lord!

#### Matthew 14:17 They said to Him, "We have here only five loaves and two fish."

NET Matthew 14:17 They said to him, "We have here only five loaves and two fish."

NLT Matthew 14:17 "But we have only five loaves of bread and two fish!" they answered.

ESV Matthew 14:17 They said to him, "We have only five loaves here and two fish."

NIV Matthew 14:17 "We have here only five loaves of bread and two fish," they answered.

GNT Matthew 14:17 ο ὁ λ γουσιν α τ , Ο κ χομεν δε ε μ π ντε ρτους κα ὁ ο χθ ας.

KJV Matthew 14:17 And they say unto him, We have here but five loaves, and two fishes.

YLT Matthew 14:17 And they say to him, 'We have not here except five loaves, and two fishes.'

ASV Matthew 14:17 And they say unto him, We have here but five loaves, and two fishes.

CSB Matthew 14:17 "But we only have five loaves and two fish here," they said to Him.

NKJ Matthew 14:17 And they said to Him, "We have here only five loaves and two fish."

NRS Matthew 14:17 They replied, "We have nothing here but five loaves and two fish."

- Mt 15:33,34 Nu 11:21-23 Ps 78:19,20 Mk 6:37,38 8:4,5 Lu 9:13 Joh 6:5-9

A Little is a Lot with the Lord

### AN EVEREADY EXCUSE

John 6:5-6+ indicates that after "testing" Philip, "Philip answered Him, "200 denarii worth of bread is not sufficient for them, for everyone to receive a little." (Jn 6:7+)

John adds another detail - **One of His disciples, Andrew, Simon Peter's brother, said to Him, "There is a lad here who has 5 barley loaves and 2 fish, but what are these for so many people?"** (Jn 6:8-9+)

Mark 6:38+ And He said to them, "How many loaves do you have? **Go look!**" And when they found out, they \*said, "Five, and two fish."

**They said to Him** - Here we see the twelve (not just Philip) are now involved in the conversation.

**We have here only five loaves and two fish** - Philip looked at the money box and said "no way!" The twelve looked at the supplies they had and said "no way." The basic problem with both responses is that they look at what THEY possess, and fail to look at JESUS. Some of the twelve had been with Him at Cana and witnessed His creative power to make wine out of water. They either did not recall this creation miracle or thought that the size of the crowd precluded any similar miracle. Either way they fail to trust Jesus for the provision. In short, they had a faith failure. Their eyes looked at what they had, not at what Jesus could create.

**THOUGHT** - God's way of provision always begins with what we already have. He wants us to use what we already have wisely. Don't foolishly pray for more from God if you don't use what He already has given you in a godly way. (Guzik)

**John Broadus** - Origen, followed by Jerome and many Fathers, runs wild in allegorizing the bread, the walking on the sea, etc. Thus Jerome says the lad with five loaves and two fishes means Moses with his five books and two tables of the law; and Origen, that the reclining by hundreds denotes consecration to the Divine Unity (the hundred being a sacred number), and reclining by fifties

denotes remission of sin, through a mystical allusion to the Jubilee and the Pentecost. Such dreadful stuff from surpassingly gifted men ought to be a warning as to the perils of allegorizing. Some eminent recent rationalists make equally ludicrous attempts to explain away this miracle and that of walking on the waves. If these lifelike narratives, given in such vivid detail by all four Gospels, could be considered to represent mere legends, then the Gospels would be nowhere worthy of confidence.

**Spurgeon on We have here only** - He will not work without us. Whatever little gift or ability we have must be consecrated. Christ could easily have made loaves and fishes without taking their little stock, but that is not his way of working. "Bring what you have hither to me." Whenever we have a church that brings all its store to Christ — (when shall we ever see such a church?) — then he will be pleased to make sufficient for the multitude.

**Gotquestions** - At this point, the disciples should have recalled the many miracles they had seen Jesus do. Perhaps some of them did, but Andrew asked, "What are [five loaves and two fish] for so many?" (John 6:9). And Philip exclaimed, "It would take more than half a year's wages to buy enough bread for each one to have a bite!" (Jn 6:7).

**Utley** - They did not even have enough for themselves. Jesus was using this opportunity to show the disciples that what they have was enough and more if it was given to Him and if they trust Him!

As **Wiersbe** says "The first step is not to measure our resources, but to determine God's will and trust Him to meet the need."

**Guzik** comments that "it never entered their minds that Jesus might provide for the multitude with a miracle. God has resources that we know nothing about, so we can trust Him and be at peace even when we can't figure out how He will provide."

**Wiersbe** - The disciples had two suggestions for solving the problem: either send the people away to find their own food, or raise enough money to buy a bit of bread for everybody. As far as the disciples were concerned, they were in the wrong place at the wrong time, and nothing could be done! With that kind of approach, they would have made ideal committee members! Someone has defined a committee as a group of people who individually can do nothing and collectively decide that nothing can be done. (BEC)

**A T Robertson** - The disciples, like us today, are quick with reasons for their inability to perform the task imposed by Jesus.

**Brian Bell** - Christ can take our little and make it much. [Moses' stick. David's rock. Elijah's mantle/cloak. Widows jar/oil. Samson's donkey jawbone. A lil lad's lunch... Your monthly missionary support check. Your prayer. Your individual tithe. Your prep time for your SS class] Our means, His power.

**Charles Spurgeon** aptly declared: He it was who thought of the way of feeding them, it was a design invented and originated by himself. His followers had looked at their little store of bread and fish and given up the task as hopeless; but Jesus, altogether unembarrassed, and in no perplexity, had already considered how he would banquet the thousands and make the fainting sing for joy. The Lord of Hosts needed no entreaty to become the host of hosts of hungry men.

**Steven Cole** - **We must yield what we have, not what we don't have.** That sounds obvious, doesn't it? But so often we make up excuses about what we don't have and we fail to offer to Jesus what we do have. "If I just had more money, I'd give regularly to the church!" "If I just had the gift of evangelism, I'd witness more!" "If I just had the ability that others have, I'd serve the Lord." "If I just ..."! But Jesus didn't use all the bread in Bethsaida, which the disciples didn't have. He used the five loaves and two fish that they did have. Jesus doesn't ask you to give Him what you don't have. He asks you to give Him what you do have. A country preacher went to a farmer in his church and asked, "If you had two farms, would you be willing to give one farm to God?" "Yes," replied the farmer. "I only wish I were in a position to do it." The preacher persisted, "If you had \$20,000, would you give \$10,000 to the Lord's work?" The farmer replied, "Yes, I'd love to have that kind of money! I'd gladly give \$10,000 to the Lord's work." Then the preacher sprung his trap: "If you had two pigs, would you give one to the Lord's work?" The farmer blurted out, "That's not fair! You know I've got two pigs!" The Lord doesn't use what you don't have. He uses the inadequate things you have when you yield them to Him. ([Our Inadequacy. Christ's Adequacy](#))

**Matthew 14:18 And He said, "Bring them here to Me."**

NET Matthew 14:18 "Bring them here to me," he replied.

NLT Matthew 14:18 "Bring them here," he said.

ESV Matthew 14:18 And he said, "Bring them here to me."

NIV Matthew 14:18 "Bring them here to me," he said.

GNT Matthew 14:18 ὁ εἰπὼν, Φέρτε μοι δεῦρο.

KJV Matthew 14:18 He said, Bring them hither to me.

YLT Matthew 14:18 And he said, 'Bring ye them to me hither.'

ASV Matthew 14:18 And he said, Bring them hither to me.

CSB Matthew 14:18 "Bring them here to Me," He said.

NKJ Matthew 14:18 He said, "Bring them here to Me."

NRS Matthew 14:18 And he said, "Bring them here to me."

**And He said, "Bring them here to Me."** - Jesus issues another command to **bring** in the [present imperative](#). It is time to feed the people but in so doing He would "feed" the faith of the disciples. His subsequent actions would help build their faith. Utley writes that "This was the true purpose of many of His miracles. Compassion for the needy and the desire to build the faith of His disciples were the twin motivations of the miracles."

**A T Robertson** - Here is the contrast between the helpless doubt of the disciples and the confident courage of Jesus. He used "the five loaves and two fishes" which they had mentioned as a reason for doing nothing. "Bring them hither unto me." They had overlooked the power of Jesus in this emergency.

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#### **Warren Wiersbe - He said, "Bring them here to Me." MATTHEW 14:18**

The word "them" in our text refers to the five loaves and two fish in the hands of the lad that Andrew found in that huge crowd. (Andrew was gifted at connecting people with Jesus. See John 1:40–42; 12:20–26.) But how could the disciples feed over five thousand people with such a small supply of food? Even Andrew asked, "But what are they among so many?" (John 6:9). They didn't have sufficient funds in the treasury to purchase food, so the disciples had concluded that the best solution to the problem was to send everybody away. But our Lord's compassion for people put an end to that suggestion. In my own Christian life and ministry, when the resources were very low and the demands very high, the Lord has frequently said to me, "You give them something to eat" (Matt. 14:16). But Jesus always "knew what He would do" (John 6:6) and the resources were always provided. What must we do to receive his provision?

Be sure your heart is right. The heart of every problem is the problem in the heart. Jesus had compassion for the hungry crowd and refused to dismiss them. I used to tell my ministerial students that the easiest way to solve church problems is to get rid of all the people. It's easy to care for an empty building! But true ministry involves people, and we must learn to love them. The Lord never allows his obedient servants to get into circumstances they cannot handle with his divine help.

Survey the resources. When Andrew found the lad with the lunch, he made the mistake of measuring the demands by the lunch instead of measuring the lunch by the Lord. The lunch was small but their God was great! No matter how little we may think we have, we must remember that the Lord delights in taking the little things, the weak things, yes, and "the things which are not" (1 Cor. 1:27–28) to accomplish great things for his glory.

Give all you have to Jesus. The loaves and fish in the boy's hands were only a lunch, and in Andrew's hands only a contribution—but in the hands of Jesus they became a miracle. "Bring them here to Me" is one of the most gracious invitations anywhere in Scripture. Whatever battles you are fighting or problems or burdens you are carrying, put them into the hands of the Lord and then do what he commands. The miracle didn't occur in the hands of the disciples but in the hands of Jesus. Divine power multiplied the food and human hands distributed it.

Look up to heaven. It was a Jewish practice at meals to look up and bless God for his provision. "Give us this day our daily bread" is our request at the start of the day and we say "Thank you, Lord" as we sit at the table and eat. Obeying the command of Deuteronomy 8:10, my Swedish relatives also prayed at the end of the meal. In this simple gesture of looking up, Jesus reminded the crowd where the food was coming from. To God be the glory!

Work together in serving. There was plenty to eat and the disciples did their job well. They also filled twelve baskets full of the leftovers. (Never waste a miracle! I'm sure they gave the boy a supply to take home.) The crowd was so impressed they wanted to make Jesus king, but he went off on a mountain to pray (John 6:15).

When we find ourselves troubled about things that are beyond us, let's obey the voice of Jesus: "Bring them here to Me." We are not manufacturers; we are distributors.

When you have eaten and are full, then you shall bless the LORD your God for the good land which He has given you.  
Deuteronomy 8:10

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## Streams in the Desert - “Bring them hither to me.” (Matt. 14:18.)

ARE you encompassed with needs at this very moment, and almost overwhelmed with difficulties, trials, and emergencies? These are all divinely provided vessels for the Holy Spirit to fill, and if you but rightly understood their meaning, they would become opportunities for receiving new blessings and deliverances which you can get in no other way.

Bring these vessels to God. Hold them steadily before Him in faith and prayer. Keep still, and stop your own restless working until He begins to work. Do nothing that He does not Himself command you to do. Give Him a chance to work, and He will surely do so; and the very trials that threatened to overcome you with discouragement and disaster, will become God’s opportunity for the revelation of His grace and glory in your life, as you have never known Him before. “Bring them (all needs) to me.”—A. B. Simpson.

“My God shall supply all your need according to his riches in glory by Christ Jesus.” (Phil. 4:19.)

What a source—“God!” What a supply—“His riches in glory!” What a channel—“Christ Jesus!” It is your sweet privilege to place all your need over against His riches, and lose sight of the former in the presence of the latter. His exhaustless treasury is thrown open to you, in all the love of His heart; go and draw upon it, in the artless simplicity of faith, and you will never have occasion to look to a creature-stream, or lean on a creature-prop.—C. H. M.

### “MY CUP RUNNETH OVER”

There is always something over,  
When we trust our gracious Lord;  
Every cup He fills o’erfloweth,  
His great rivers all are broad.  
Nothing narrow, nothing stinted,  
Ever issues from His store;  
To His own He gives full measure,  
Running over, evermore.

There is always something over,  
When we, from the Father’s hand,  
Take our portion with thanksgiving,  
Praising for the path He planned.

Satisfaction, full and deepening,  
Fills the soul, and lights the eye,  
When the heart has trusted Jesus  
All its need to satisfy.

There is always something over,  
When we tell of all His love;  
Unplumbed depths still lie beneath us,  
Unscaled heights rise far above:  
Human lips can never utter  
All His wondrous tenderness,  
We can only praise and wonder,  
And His name forever bless.

—Margaret E. Barber.

“How can He but, in giving Him, lavish on us all things.” (Rom. 8:32.)

**Matthew 14:19 Ordering the people to sit down on the grass, He took the five loaves and the two fish, and looking up toward heaven, He blessed the food, and breaking the loaves He gave them to the disciples, and the disciples gave them to the crowds,**

NET Matthew 14:19 Then he instructed the crowds to sit down on the grass. He took the five loaves and two fish, and looking up to heaven he gave thanks and broke the loaves. He gave them to the disciples, who in turn gave them to the crowds.

NLT Matthew 14:19 Then he told the people to sit down on the grass. Jesus took the five loaves and two fish, looked up toward heaven, and blessed them. Then, breaking the loaves into pieces, he gave the bread to the disciples, who distributed it to the people.

ESV Matthew 14:19 Then he ordered the crowds to sit down on the grass, and taking the five loaves and the two fish, he looked up to heaven and said a blessing. Then he broke the loaves and gave them to the disciples, and the disciples gave them to the crowds.

NIV Matthew 14:19 And he directed the people to sit down on the grass. Taking the five loaves and the two fish and looking up to heaven, he gave thanks and broke the loaves. Then he gave them to the disciples, and the disciples gave them to the people.

GNT Matthew 14:19 κα κελε σας το ς χλους να κλιθ ναι π το χ ρτου, λαβ ν το ς π ντε ρτους κα το ς δ ο χθ ας, να βλ ψας ε ς τ ν ο ραν ν ε λ γησεν κα κλ σας δωκεν το ς μαθητα ς το ς ρτους, ο δ μαθητα το ς χλοις.

KJV Matthew 14:19 And he commanded the multitude to sit down on the grass, and took the five loaves, and the two fishes, and looking up to heaven, he blessed, and brake, and gave the loaves to his disciples, and the disciples to the multitude.

YLT Matthew 14:19 And having commanded the multitudes to recline upon the grass, and having taken the five loaves and the two fishes, having looked up to the heaven, he did bless, and having broken, he gave the loaves to the disciples, and the disciples to the multitudes,

ASV Matthew 14:19 And he commanded the multitudes to sit down on the grass; and he took the five loaves, and the two fishes, and looking up to heaven, he blessed, and brake and gave the loaves to the disciples, and the disciples to the multitudes.

CSB Matthew 14:19 Then He commanded the crowds to sit down on the grass. He took the five loaves and the two fish, and looking up to heaven, He blessed them. He broke the loaves and gave them to the disciples, and the disciples gave them to the crowds.

NKJ Matthew 14:19 Then He commanded the multitudes to sit down on the grass. And He took the five loaves and the two fish, and looking up to heaven, He blessed and broke and gave the loaves to the disciples; and the disciples gave to the multitudes.

NRS Matthew 14:19 Then he ordered the crowds to sit down on the grass. Taking the five loaves and the two fish, he looked up to heaven, and blessed and broke the loaves, and gave them to the disciples, and the disciples gave them to the crowds.

- **Ordering the people:** Mt 15:35 Mk 6:39 8:6 Lu 9:14 Joh 6:10
- **looking:** Mk 6:41 7:34 Lu 9:16 Joh 11:41
- **blessed:** Mt 15:36 26:26,27 1Sa 9:13 Mk 8:6 14:22,23 Lu 22:19 24:30 Joh 6:11,23 Ac 27:35 Ro 14:6 1Co 10:16,31 11:24 Col 3:17 1Ti 4:4,5

## JESUS' HOSTS A MESSIANIC BANQUET

What a contrast is this beautiful banquet with the malicious banquet of Herod which resulted in the loss of John's head which "satisfied" wicked Herodias anger. One banquet resulted in a abominable beheading and the other in an astonishing bounty!

**Ordering the people to sit down on the grass, He took the five loaves and the two fish-** Luke says "They did so, and had them all sit down." (Luke 9:15+) Mark 6:40+ says "They sat down in groups of hundreds and of fifties. "What a feast this was! Christ for the Master of the feast; apostles for butlers; thousands for numbers; and miracles for supplies!" (Spurgeon)

Jesus is the Good Shepherd and His command reminds us of Psalm 23:2-3<sup>+</sup> - The LORD is my shepherd, I shall not want. 2 **He makes me lie down in green pastures;** He leads me beside quiet waters. 3 He restores my soul; He guides me in the paths of righteousness For His name's sake.

**Broadus** - The other Evangelists show that he gave this command through the disciples; what he did through them he did himself (comp. on Mt 8:5)

**Ordering** (2753) see notes on [keleuo](#)

**And looking up toward heaven** - Jesus was doing what every Jewish father did at a meal. And what is Jesus showing His disciples (and us)? He is showing that even He as the Son of Man looked to His Father to meet needs, and we should follow His example.

"Pray, then, in this way: 'Our Father who is in heaven, Hallowed be Your name. 10 'Your kingdom come. Your will be done, On earth as it is in heaven. 11 '**Give us this day our daily bread.**'" (Mt 6:9-11)

**Spurgeon** - our Lord will not proceed till He has worshipped and rendered thanks. There is something in His glance and gesture—He looked up to heaven. What did that mean? "*O Father, these loaves and fishes are Yours. You have given them to us. We thank You for them. And now, O Father, the power to make these sufficient for the emergency comes from heaven. Grant it, we pray You.*" Brethren, always give that look upward before you begin your work. Say, "Lord, here am I, a poor nobody, trying to teach others and to bring souls to Christ. For what I am, I thank You, for I am that by Your grace, but if I am to be useful, You must make me so. Lord, I look up with the hope that You will look down." After our Lord had looked up to heaven, we find that He blessed and then He broke the loaves. Jesus must bless our labor or it will be fruitless. He could bless the bread for Himself, but we must look away from ourselves for the blessing. May Jesus bless you all, and He will, if you look up, and say, "Lord, bless us." ([The Miracle of the Loaves](#))

**McNeil** - In working for God, first look to Heaven. It is a grand plan. Over and over again our Lord Jesus Christ looked to Heaven and said, "Father." Let us imitate Him; although standing on the earth, let us have our conversation in Heaven. Before you go out, if you would feed the world, if you would be a blessing in the midst of spiritual dearth and famine, lift up your head to Heaven. Then your very face will shine, your very garments will smell of myrrh and aloes and cassia out of the ivory palaces where you have been with your God and Saviour. There will be stamped upon you the dignity and power of the service of the Most High God.

**Cleon Rogers** - In Judaism it was a stringent rule that nothing should be eaten without thanking God before and after the meal

**Utley on looking up ([anablepo](#)) toward heaven** - The common physical position for Jewish prayer was standing with the arms and head raised and eyes open. Jesus was showing that the source of His authority was the heavenly Father.

**Lane** - "Jesus faithfully followed the accepted form: he took the bread in his hands, pronounced the blessing, broke the bread into pieces and distributed it. The only deviation from normal practice was that while praying Jesus looked toward heaven rather than downward, as prescribed." (NICNT-Mark)

**He blessed the food** - Jesus clearly shows us the example to follow, acknowledging God as the source of all provision. This description is similar to the table fellowship of the Last Supper (Lk 22:19) and Jesus' meal with some of the disciples after His resurrection (Lk 24:30).

**Guzik** - "When Jesus blessed before the meal, He didn't bless the food; He blessed God for supplying it. The idea of praying before a meal isn't to bless the food; it is to bless God in the sense of thanking and honoring Him for blessing us with the food."

**Utley** has an interesting note - The normal position of prayer for the Jews was with the eyes and hands lifted up to heaven. It was unusual for them to kneel to pray. Our modern practice of bowing our heads and closing our eyes comes from the parable of the Pharisee and the sinner. If we are going to bow our head and close our eyes, to be truly biblical we should also beat our breasts (cf. Luke 18:9–14)!

**Blessed** ([2127](#))([eulogeo](#) from **eu** = good + **lógos** = word; see cognates [eulogetos](#) and [eulogia](#)) means speak good or well. When eulogeo is used by men toward men it means to speak well of with praise and thanksgiving (English [Eulogy](#) = an address in praise for one deceased). To say good or positive things. **Eulogeo** can be from men to God, from men to men, and from God to men. When God blesses men He grants them favor and confers happiness upon them.

**NET Note** - Gave thanks (NET translation = looking up to heaven he gave thanks and broke them) adds a note of gratitude to the setting. The scene is like two other later meals: Luke 22:19 ([eucharisteo](#)) and Lk 24:30 ([eulogeo](#)). Jesus gives thanks to God "with respect to" the provision of food. The disciples learn how Jesus is the mediator of blessing. John 6 speaks of Him in this scene as picturing the "Bread of Life."

**ESV Study Bible** - With the exception of "looked up," a praying gesture, all of these actions (**taking, said a blessing, broke, gave**) are found in the accounts of the Last Supper (Mt. 26:26; Mk 14:22; Lk 22:19; cf. also 1 Cor 11:23-24).

**And breaking ([klao](#)) the loaves He gave them to the disciples ([mathetes](#)), and the disciples gave them to the crowds** - A banquet with 5 bagels and 2 sardines! s **Brian Bell** says the disciples (and us today) are not manufacturers, but are only distributors. The miracle took place in Jesus hands, not the hands of the disciples. This feeding of the multitude surely recalls the Lord's feeding of the children of Israel in the wilderness.

**THOUGHT** - Jesus provided extravagantly, yet simply. As long as He was making food miraculously, He could

have provided steak and lobster and any number of other great things. But He simply gave people bread and fish. When Jesus provides, don't be surprised if He provides simply. The assurance that Jesus can provide—even miraculously—for all of our needs should be precious to us; it was to the earliest Christians. On the walls of the catacombs, and other places of early Christian art, loaves and fishes are common pictures. (Guzik)

**Wiersbe** - The miracle took place in His hands, not in theirs; for whatever we give to Him, He can bless and multiply. We are not manufacturers; we are only distributors.

**Gotquestions** - It is noteworthy that Jesus fed the people *through the agency of His disciples*. He could have simply snapped His fingers and caused everyone present to have a meal, but He didn't. Instead, He "gave . . . to his disciples to distribute to the people" (Mark 6:41). In this way, the disciples had to trust the Lord for everything they distributed. They could only give as they received. Philip, Andrew, and the rest were put in a position of total dependence upon the Lord for the supply. God still uses people the same way today.

**Spurgeon** "They had bread and fish. Jesus seems to have made that His standing bill of fare whenever He spread a banquet—bread and fish. They once gave Him a piece of honeycomb, but He seems always to have given them bread and fish. Bread was enough, was it not? Yes, enough, but not enough for Him to give, for He loves to supply a little more than enough. He would give a delicacy as well as a staple—there was bread and fish. When Jesus Christ makes feasts for souls He gives them staple—bread, all that they can need, all the necessities for their souls' life. Giving a sufficiency, He also gives excellence—He gives fish, there shall be savor and delight and peace with God" ([The Miracle of the Loaves](#))

**Constable** says that "The Jews had a tradition that when Messiah came He would feed the people with bread from heaven as Moses had done (Deut. 18:15) (Quoting Plummer). Elisha also had miraculously fed 100 men (2 Kings 4:42–44). This miracle proved Jesus' ability to provide for Israel as her King. It probably reminded the spiritually perceptive in the crowd of the messianic banquet that the Old Testament predicted Messiah would provide (Ps. 132:15; cf. Matt. 6:11)."

**Mark Akin** - God loves to demonstrate His power and sufficiency in our lives. Often He allows problems to invade our lives that are far beyond our abilities or resources to handle. Why? He wants us to look to Him. He wants us to come to the end of us and find Him right there.

**Brian Bell** - The sequence of verbs (blessed/give thanks, broke, gave) occurs again in Matt 26:26, which may hint that it represented a traditional blessing. 2. Jesus took bread, blessed and broke it, and gave it to the disciples and said, Take, eat; this is My body....Whatever He blesses, He breaks. Are we willing to be broken?

**Preacher's Outline and Sermon Bible** - The lesson is clear for every believer. Once we do our part, God will multiply our resources. There will always be enough to feed all—if we will only confess our inadequate resources, give thanks for what we have, and then give what we have. (cf Mt 6:33+ Mal 3:10+, Ps 24:1, Ps 41:1, Ps 50:10, Pr 11:25, Pr 22:9, Pr 28:27, Eccl 11:1, Isa 32:8, 58:10, Hag 2:8)

**Spurgeon** - A wonderful evening that must have been. Just as the sun's slanting rays would fall upon the mighty mass of people, Jesus Christ, the sun of righteousness, was scattering his beams of mercy over them at the same time. To him it is nothing to feed five thousand — nothing to do it with five loaves. Where he is present we may expect wonders, unless indeed our unbelief should hamper him, for sometimes it is too sadly true he could not do many mighty works there because of their unbelief. O my soul, chide thyself if thou hast ever thus hampered the hands of Christ.

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**F B Meyer - Our Daily Homily** - Matthew 14:19 Looking up to heaven, He blessed, and brake, and gave.

Stonewall Jackson was once asked what he meant when he used the expression, "Instant in prayer." "I will give you," he said, "my idea of it for illustration, if you will allow it, and not think that I am setting myself up as a model for others." On being assured that there would be no misjudgment, he went on to say; "I have so fixed the habit in my own mind, that I never raise a glass of water to my lips without a moment's asking of God's blessing. I never seal a letter without putting a word of prayer under the seal. I never take a letter from the poet without a brief sending of my thoughts heavenward. I never change my classes in the section room without a minute's petition on the cadets who go out and those who come in." "And don't you sometimes forget this?" "I think I can say that I scarcely do; the habit has become almost as fixed as breathing."

And if this was the habit of the servant, how much more of the Master. Frequently, in the Gospels, we are told of his heavenward look. It was as though He were always looking up for his Father's smile, direction, and benediction; so that He could be assured that what He was engaged in was in the line of his Father's Purpose, and that He might gain the needed power to act and wisdom to speak.

It is only thus that we shall be able to meet the hunger of our times. Our slender stores will not avail for so great a multitude. But if we bring them to Him, and place them in his hands, and look up to heaven for his enablement, we shall break and break again till all have sufficed and left. But this habit can only be maintained by those who go into the mountain of prolonged fellowship.

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“My body, which is broken for you.” (1 Cor. 11:24) - William MacDonald

Amy Carmichael lists four broken things in the Bible and the results achieved by them.

1. Broken pitchers (Judges 7:1849)—and the light shone out.
2. Broken flask (Mark 14:3)—and the ointment was poured forth.
3. Broken bread (Matt. 14:19)—and the hungry were fed.
4. A broken Body (1 Cor. 11:24)—and the world was redeemed.

Now it is our privilege to add a fifth to the list - a broken will, and the result will be a life flooded with peace and fulfillment.

Many who have been to the Cross for salvation have never been there for the breaking of their will. They may have a gentle, mild disposition; they may never speak above a whisper; they may have an outward appearance of spirituality; yet they may have a will of iron that keeps them from God's best in life.

It sometimes happens with young people who are in love and are contemplating marriage. Parents and friends with mature, wise judgment can see that it will never work. Yet the headstrong couple rejects any counsel that they do not want to hear. The same intractable wills that led them to the marriage altar soon lead them to the divorce court.

We've seen it with Christians who are determined to go into a certain business when they clearly have no experience or the necessary know-how. Against the advice of knowledgeable associates, they sink their own money and often money borrowed from loving friends. The inevitable happens. The business fails, and the creditors move in to pick up the pieces.

It is not uncommon to see the shattering effects of an unbroken will in Christian service. It takes a man and his family to the mission field, only to be repatriated within a year at great cost to the sending church. It drains funds from gullible Christians to finance a project that was man's idea, not God's—a project that proves to be counterproductive. It creates strife and unhappiness because one person refuses to work cooperatively with others; he must have his own way.

We all need to be broken, to take all our obstinacy, all our stubbornness, all our self-will and leave them at the foot of the Cross. That will of iron must be laid upon the altar of sacrifice. We must all say with Amy Carmichael:

Thou wast broken, O my Lord, for me,  
Let me be broken, Lord, for love of Thee.

**Matthew 14:20 and they all ate and were satisfied. They picked up what was left over of the broken pieces, twelve full baskets.**

NET Matthew 14:20 They all ate and were satisfied, and they picked up the broken pieces left over, twelve baskets full.

NLT Matthew 14:20 They all ate as much as they wanted, and afterward, the disciples picked up twelve baskets of leftovers.

ESV Matthew 14:20 And they all ate and were satisfied. And they took up twelve baskets full of the broken pieces left over.

NIV Matthew 14:20 They all ate and were satisfied, and the disciples picked up twelve basketfuls of broken pieces that were left over.

GNT Matthew 14:20 καὶ φαγον πντες καὶ χορτ σθησαν, καὶ ραν τ περισσε ον τ ν κλασμ των δ δεκα κοφ νους πλ ρεις.

KJV Matthew 14:20 And they did all eat, and were filled: and they took up of the fragments that remained twelve baskets full.

YLT Matthew 14:20 and they did all eat, and were filled, and they took up what was over of the broken pieces twelve hand-baskets full;

ASV Matthew 14:20 And they all ate, and were filled: and they took up that which remained over of the broken pieces, twelve baskets full.

CSB Matthew 14:20 Everyone ate and was filled. Then they picked up 12 baskets full of leftover pieces!

NKJ Matthew 14:20 So they all ate and were filled, and they took up twelve baskets full of the fragments that remained.

NRS Matthew 14:20 And all ate and were filled; and they took up what was left over of the broken pieces, twelve baskets full.

- **were satisfied:** Mt 5:6 15:33 Ex 16:8,12 Lev 26:26 1Ki 17:12-16 2Ki 4:43,44 Pr 13:25 Eze 4:14-16 Hag 1:6 Lu 1:53 9:17 Joh 6:7,11
- **They picked up:** Mt 15:37,38 16:8-10 2Ki 4:1-7 Mk 6:42-44 8:8,9,16-21 Joh 6:12-14

## JESUS SATISFIES OUR HUNGER

Yes, they were physically satisfied, but their souls were still empty! They lacked the heart attitude which Jesus had promised to bless in the Sermon on the Mount. Sadly, they hunger for physical sustenance, not spiritual sustenance!

"Blessed are those who hunger and thirst for righteousness, for they shall be **satisfied** (same verb used here - [chortazo](#)). (Mt 5:6+)

**And they all ate and were satisfied** - When Jesus feeds you, you will be satisfied! He gives more than enough! This reminds us of Ephesians 3:20+ "Now to Him who is able to do **far more abundantly beyond all that we ask or think**, according to the power that works within us." Where do you go to find satisfaction? Or are you like the old Rolling Stones' song "I Can't Get No Satisfaction?" John 6:11 says the multitude received "as much as they wanted."

**Satisfied** ([satiated](#)) ([5526](#)) ([chortazo](#) from **chortos** = fodder or grass or herbage of the field in general) means to feed with herbs, grass or hay to fatten animals (who gorged themselves until they could eat no more). Then it means to eat one's fill resulting in a state of being satisfied. **Chortazo** was used of the feeding of animals until they wanted nothing more. They were allowed to eat until they were completely satisfied. The picture is of animals who stayed at the feed trough until they wanted nothing more to eat. Luke uses the same word in Luke 6:21 "Blessed are you who hunger now, for you **shall be satisfied**. Blessed are you who weep now, for you shall laugh."

**Utley** - This statement is used in the Septuagint (i.e. the Greek translation of the OT) for the OT people of God being filled by the manna and quail (cf. Ps. 78:29; 105:40). This OT theme is developed in John 6 where Jesus fulfills the rabbinical expectation of providing food as Moses did. Jesus is the new Moses; His deliverance is the new exodus; and He brings the new age of abundance (cf. Ps. 132:15; Isa. 49:10).

**Spurgeon** on THE EATING. The disciples distributed the bread and the fish as quickly as they could and the people began to eat. They all ate of the provision and they were all filled. Now, what should every soul, here, conclude, but this—if Jesus has provided spiritual meat, He has not provided it to be looked at. He has not set it before us that we may merely hear about it. He has provided it that it might all of it be eaten. What is there for me? Lord, I am hungry, grant me a meal. O, souls, if you would hear sermons with the view of knowing what there is in them for yourselves—that you might feed upon them—what blessed work it would be to preach to you! ([The Miracle of the Loaves](#))

**They picked up what was left over of the broken pieces, twelve full baskets-** The 12 baskets full ensures that Jesus would feed His own men. Nothing was wasted. Note that this miracle does not describe the crowds reaction and therefore is meant primarily for the edification and encouragement of the 12 disciples.

**THOUGHT** - God will shatter the pint-sized expectations of what His followers can do if they would learn to bring Him what they have already been given. "Little is much when God is in it." When Christians are willing to offer their lives sacrificially, relinquishing their hold on whatever God has given them in terms of time, money, talents, etc., God will use these ordinary things to create extraordinary things. Christians must never believe their resources are too little to serve God. God delights in taking a humble, seemingly insignificant person and using him or her for His glory (see 1 Corinthians 1:27). ([Gotquestions](#))



**Baskets** (2894)(**kophinos** borrowed in Latin *cophinus*, and in English as *coffin*) a wicker basket typically used by Jews for carrying along Levitically clean food and apparently smaller than the (**spuris**) which was a quite different Greek word used in Mt 15:37; and the distinction is maintained in Mt 16:9, 10.. All uses describe the 12 baskets of broken pieces of bread after the feeding of the 5000. In both Matthew and Mark when Jesus describes these events He uses these two words with the same distinction (Mark 8:19-20+.; Matt. 16:9-10+). As Robertson says "Surely it is easier to conceive that Jesus wrought two such miracles than to hold that Mark and Matthew have made such a jumble of the whole business." **Kophinos** - 6x - Matt. 14:20; Matt. 16:9; Mk. 6:43; Mk. 8:19; Lk. 9:17; Jn. 6:13. Twice in Septuagint - Jdg 6:19, Ps 81:6.

**Broadus** - We learn from the satirical allusions in Juvenal (III. 14) that the Jews of that age in Italy were in the habit of carrying a basket in traveling, probably in order to keep a supply of such food as they could eat without ceremonial defilement; accordingly we are not surprised to find baskets here, even when the owners had neglected to put food in them. Perhaps each of the Twelve took a basket and filled it, which would account for the number of baskets mentioned. This command to save the surplus, 'that nothing be lost' (John 6:12), was suited to teach economy. It must be manifest that we have no right to waste anything, however ample our resources, when we see him who is the Lord of all, just after multiplying a little food into a vast quantity, now carefully saving the surplus pieces of coarse barley bread and fish. Thus also the disciples had constantly before them, for some days at least, a memento of the extraordinary miracle they had witnessed. Lacking in spiritual susceptibility, and living amid a succession of miracles, they needed such a reminder. (See Mark 6:52; Matt. 16:9.)

**Life Application Study Bible** - Why did Jesus bother to feed these people? He could just as easily have sent them on their way, but Jesus does not ignore needs. He is concerned with every aspect of life—the physical as well as the spiritual. As we work to bring wholeness to people's lives, we must never ignore the fact that all of us have both physical and spiritual needs. It is impossible to minister effectively to one type of need without considering the other.

**Brian Bell** - Jesus didn't only feed the 5000, but he taught the 12. He sent them home w/a doggie-bag reminder. [maybe Jesus has em carry the big basket all the way home so they don't forget this lesson] 1. Twelve baskets full - 1 per disciple. In the OT, God fed His people with manna, but there were no edible leftovers. Christ can overcome every difficulty and feed the multitudes. The disciples had many excuses - not enough \$, the wrong place, the wrong time - but Christ took what they had and met the need. He will do this today.

**MacDonald** - The disciples picture helpless Christians, with seemingly limited resources, but unwilling to share what they have. The Lord's command, "You give them something to eat" is simply a restatement of the great commission. The lesson is that if we give Jesus what we have, He can multiply it to feed the spiritually hungry multitude. That diamond ring, that insurance policy, that bank account, that sports equipment! These can be converted into gospel literature, for instance, which in turn can result in the salvation of souls, who in turn will be worshipers of the Lamb of God throughout eternity. The world could be evangelized in this generation if Christians would surrender to Christ all that they are and have. That is the enduring lesson of the feeding of the five thousand. (Believer's Bible Commentary)

**Wiersbe** points out that "John tells us that Jesus used this miracle as the basis for a sermon on "the bread of life" (John 6:22-66). After all, He did not perform miracles just to meet human needs, though that was important. He wanted each miracle to be a revelation of Himself, a sermon in action. For the most part, the people were amazed at the miracles, appreciated the help He gave them, but failed to get the spiritual message (John 12:37). They wanted the gift but not the Giver, the enjoyment of physical blessings but not the enrichment of spiritual blessings. (BEC)

**Bob Utley** - Some commentators (William Barclay - **ED: BEWARE OF BARCLAY** - [SEE THIS ARTICLE](#)) deny the miraculous element and assert that the boy shared his lunch (cf. John 6:9) and that others in the crowd saw it and shared their lunches. If so, where did the twelve baskets left over come from? Our biases affect interpretation in the same way the biases of the people of Jesus' day affected them!

**Guzik** - Jesus "knew that wastefulness didn't glorify the God of all provision."

Where we see a lack He sees an abundance.  
Where we see human problems  
He sees and accomplishes divine possibilities.  
A little can become a lot with Jesus!  
-- Mark Akin

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## Gathered fragments remind us that:

1. Another Day of Need Will Surely Come
2. The Blessings of God Should Not Be Wasted
3. Grateful Hearts Make Full Use of God's Blessings (John Mayshack)

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### Utley - SPECIAL TOPIC: THE NUMBER TWELVE

Twelve has always been a symbolic number of organization

1. outside the Bible
  - a. twelve signs of the Zodiac
  - b. twelve months of the year
2. in the OT
  - a. the sons of Jacob
  - b. reflected in
    - (1) twelve pillars of the altar in Exod. 24:4
    - (2) twelve jewels on the high priest's breastplate in Exod. 28:21
    - (3) twelve loaves of bread in the holy place of the tabernacle in Lev. 24:5
    - (4) twelve spies sent into Canaan in Num. 13
    - (5) twelve rods (tribal standards) at Korah's rebellion in Num. 17:2
    - (6) twelve stones of Joshua in Josh. 4:3, 9, 20
    - (7) twelve administrative districts in Solomon's administration in 1 Kgs. 4:7
    - (8) twelve stones of Elijah's altar to YHWH in 1 Kgs. 18:31
3. in the NT
  - a. twelve apostles chosen
  - b. twelve baskets of bread (one for each Apostle) in Matt. 14:20
  - c. twelve thrones on which NT disciples sit (referring to the 12 tribes of Israel) in Matt. 19:28
  - d. twelve legions of angels to rescue Jesus in Matt. 26:53
  - e. the symbolism of Revelation
    - (1) 144,000 (12x12) in 7:4; 14:1, 3
    - (2) twelve stars on the woman's crown in 12:1
    - (3) twelve gates, twelve angels reflecting the twelve tribes in 21:12
    - (4) twelve foundation stones of the new Jerusalem and on them the names of the twelve Apostles in 21:14
    - (5) twelve thousand stadia in 21:16 (size of new city, New Jerusalem)
    - (6) twelve gates of pearl in 21:21
    - (7) trees in new Jerusalem with twelve kinds of fruit (one each month) in 22:

**Matthew 14:21 There were about five thousand men who ate, besides women and children.**

NET Matthew 14:21 Not counting women and children, there were about five thousand men who ate.

NLT Matthew 14:21 About 5,000 men were fed that day, in addition to all the women and children!

ESV Matthew 14:21 And those who ate were about five thousand men, besides women and children.

NIV Matthew 14:21 The number of those who ate was about five thousand men, besides women and children.

GNT Matthew 14:21 ο ὁ σθοντες σαν νδρες σε πεντακισχ λιοι χωρ ς γυναικ ν κα παιδ ων.

KJV Matthew 14:21 And they that had eaten were about five thousand men, beside women and children.

YLT Matthew 14:21 and those eating were about five thousand men, apart from women and children.

ASV Matthew 14:21 And they that did eat were about five thousand men, besides women and children.

CSB Matthew 14:21 Now those who ate were about 5,000 men, besides women and children.

NKJ Matthew 14:21 Now those who had eaten were about five thousand men, besides women and children.

NRS Matthew 14:21 And those who ate were about five thousand men, besides women and children.

■ **about:** Joh 6:10 Ac 4:4,34 2Co 9:8-11 Php 4:19

## THE FEEDING OF MORE THAN 5000

"The feeding of 5,000 constitutes yet another of Jesus' messianic "signs," placing Jesus in the line of God's provision of manna to Israel in the wilderness through Moses (cf John 6:30-31+)." (Harmony of the Gospels)

**There were about five thousand men who ate, besides women and children** - Matthew's account indicates that there were many more than 5000 who dined with Jesus that night. He numbers the **men** at about 5000 but adds **women and children** which would suggest the crowd was closer to 15-20 thousand (or more).

**THOUGHT** - This large crowd partook of the physical bread Jesus gave them, but as John explains the majority refused the spiritual bread that He offered to them when He explained He was the Bread of Life. John records one of the more tragic verses in the Bible " As a result of this (JESUS' TEACHING HE WAS THE "BREAD OF LIFE") many of His disciples withdrew and were not walking with Him anymore." (John 6:66).

**NET Note** - The Greek word here is [anēr](#) (men), meaning "adult male" (BDAG 79 s.v. 1). According to Matt 14:21, Jesus fed not only five thousand men, but also an unspecified number of women and children.

**Wuest** - The word for "men" here is not **anthropos**, the generic term which could include men and women, but [anēr](#), the word for a male individual. Matthew adds that there were women and children. A wonderful miracle. It is recorded by all four Gospel writers. Two of them, Matthew and John were eyewitnesses, and Peter, also an eyewitness, reported it to Mark.

**Brian Bell** - John 6 makes it clear that the miracle of the feeding of the 5,000 was a sermon in action. Christ, through His Word, is the Bread of Life on whom we feed. It is the privilege - and responsibility - of His servants to give this bread to the hungry multitudes. The servants receive that bread personally from Christ, then pass it on to others.

**Barbieri** - "The significance of this miracle was intended primarily for the disciples. Jesus was illustrating the kind of ministry they would have after His departure. They would be involved in feeding people, but with spiritual food. The source for their feeding would be the Lord Himself. When their supply ran out, as with the bread and fish, they would need to return to the Lord for more. He would supply them, but the feeding would be done through them." (BKC)

**MacArthur** In spite of their people's rejection Jesus "generously fed them anyway, thereby providing a vivid illustration of God's common grace ([What is common grace?](#)), in which "He causes His sun to rise on the evil and the good, and sends rain on the righteous and the unrighteous" (Mt. 5:45+)."

**Toussaint** comments on the "sign" of the feeding 5000 (Jn 6:14+) - This sign was very important to three groups—the disciples, the believing remnant, and the wonder-watching unbelievers. >From now on the miracles are primarily for the benefit of the disciples in that they are designed to instruct them. But in addition they confirm the faith of those who believe and the unbelief of the unbelieving masses. That they are for the disciples' training is seen in the fact that the rejection of the Lord is evident. The cities in which He had performed most of His mighty works had already indicated their apathy and opposition. He had left the masses so that He could be apart with the disciples."

### Comparing and Contrasting Feeding of the Multitudes

Feeding **5000** was recorded in all 4 Gospels, but the feeding of **4000** was recorded only in Mark and Matthew.

#### Similarities:

- Both miracles involved huge crowds who were hungry
- Jesus used a small amount of bread and fish to feed a lot of people
- The disciples doubted the Lord's ability to provide but were also involved in distributing the food
- In both miracles, Jesus took the little they had, gave thanks, and multiplied it
- The crowds ate and were completely satisfied and a large amount of food was left over

#### Differences:

- The first miracle involved feeding 5,000 compared to 4,000 here
- The amount of bread is different – 5 loaves versus 7 loaves
- The leftovers from the first miracle go in 12 small baskets and in the second, 7 large baskets are used
- There are two different Greek words - smaller baskets = [kophinos](#) and larger baskets = [spuris](#)
- The first meal came after a day of teaching and this one follows three days of teaching
- One prayer in the feeding of 5000, two prayers in feeding of 4000
- The first miracle took place among Jewish people and this one happens in the Decapolis, a Gentile community

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Below is a chart adapted from Warren Wiersbe showing the differences;

Feeding 5,000	Feeding 4,000
Primarily Jews	Primarily Gentiles
Galilee, near Bethsaida	The Decapolis
5 loaves, 2 fish	7 loaves, “a few fish”
12 baskets over	7 baskets over
Crowd with Him 1 day	Crowd with Him 3 days
Spring of year (green grass)	Summer season
Tried to make Him King	No popular response

**NET Note** - Many commentators, on the basis of similarities between this account of the feeding of the multitude (Mk 8:1–10) and that in Mk 6:30–44, have argued that there is only one event referred to in both passages. While there are similarities in language and in the response of the disciples, there are also noticeable differences, including the different number present on each occasion (i.e., 5,000 in chap. 6 and 4,000 here). In the final analysis, the fact that Jesus refers to two distinct feedings in Mk 8:18–20 settles the issue; this passage represents another very similar incident to that recorded in 6:30–44.

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**QUESTION - [What can we learn from Jesus' feeding of the 5,000?](#)**

**Answer:** Aside from the [resurrection](#), the story of Jesus feeding the 5,000 is the only miracle recorded in all four Gospels. Obviously, the Gospel writers considered this a significant miracle. When Christ fed the masses that day, He began with only “five barley loaves and two fish,” borrowed from a boy’s lunch (John 6:9). To feed 5,000 people with five loaves and two fish is indeed miraculous, but the Greek term used in Matthew 14:21 specifies males, and Matthew further emphasizes the point by adding, “Besides women and children.” Many Bible scholars believe the actual number fed that day could have been 15,000—20,000 people.

Jesus’ disciples had wanted to send the people away because evening was approaching and they were in a remote place (Matthew 14:15). They knew the people needed to reach surrounding villages soon to buy food, find lodging, etc., or they would likely go hungry (Mark 6:36). But Christ had a better idea: “You give them something to eat” (Matthew 14:16). At this point, the disciples should have recalled the many miracles they had seen Jesus do. Perhaps some of them did, but Andrew asked, “What are [five loaves and two fish] for so many?” (John 6:9). And Philip exclaimed, “It would take more than half a year’s wages to buy enough bread for each one to have a bite!” (verse 7).

Jesus called for the bread and fish to be brought to Him (Matthew 14:18). He then gave thanks for the meal, broke the bread, and gave it to His disciples to give to the crowd. Amazingly, the entire multitude was fed with that small meal. Jesus provided “as much as they wanted” (John 6:11), and “they all ate and were satisfied” (Matthew 14:20). Christ did not just meet the need; He lavished them with so much food that there were “twelve baskets full of broken pieces and of the fish” left over (Mark 6:43).

God will shatter the pint-sized expectations of what His followers can do if they would learn to bring Him what they have already been given. “Little is much when God is in it.” When Christians are willing to offer their lives sacrificially, relinquishing their hold on whatever God has given them in terms of time, money, talents, etc., God will use these ordinary things to create extraordinary things. Christians must never believe their resources are too little to serve God. God delights in taking a humble, seemingly

insignificant person and using him or her for His glory (see 1 Corinthians 1:27).

Philip's mind immediately ran to the cost of the project. He quickly calculated how many man-hours of work it would take to feed all those people; he saw the task as impossible because he approached it as if everything depended on his own work. Jesus' approach was different. Jesus bypassed all human effort and did the impossible. It's "not by might nor by power, but by my Spirit," says the LORD Almighty" (Zechariah 4:6).

It is noteworthy that Jesus fed the people through the agency of His disciples. He could have simply snapped His fingers and caused everyone present to have a meal, but He didn't. Instead, He "gave . . . to his disciples to distribute to the people" (Mark 6:41). In this way, the disciples had to trust the Lord for everything they distributed. They could only give as they received. Philip, Andrew, and the rest were put in a position of total dependence upon the Lord for the supply. God still uses people the same way today.

Christians should also be reminded that their problems are never too large (the "many" of John 6:9) for God to handle. Surely, Andrew was wondering, "What good are we going to do with only five loaves and two fish?" Of course, theoretically, believers know God can easily multiply whatever He wants, to feed as many people as He wants—He is God. The problem comes when we are faced with a practical outworking of the theory; we tend to doubt that God will want to meet our need.

There is a foreshadowing of Christ's miracle in the life of Elisha in 2 Kings. Elisha told his servant to feed the people gathered there, although there was not enough food for the hundred men. One of the men said, "How can I set this before a hundred men?" (2 Kings 4:42–43) In the end, however, the men not only had enough to eat, but "they ate and had some left" (2 Kings 4:44). Isn't that just like God? He says He will do more than provide for His people; He will give an abundance (Psalm 132:15).

Christians must bring their lives to God in a spirit of obedience and sacrifice, no matter how insignificant they may think their gifts or talents are (Romans 12:1). When doing so, expect God to do far beyond what can be imagined (Ephesians 3:20). Also, Christians should trust that God not only wants to meet the needs of His children, but He wants to lavish His children with spiritual blessings, even to overflowing (Psalm 23:5). (SOURCE - [GotQuestions.org](http://GotQuestions.org))

#### Related Resource:

- [What were the miracles of Jesus? What miracles did Jesus perform?](#)

**Matthew 14:22 Immediately He made the disciples get into the boat and go ahead of Him to the other side, while He sent the crowds away.**

Berkley - He immediately urged the disciples to embark and to sail ahead of Him to the other side while He dismissed the crowds.

NET Matthew 14:22 Immediately Jesus made the disciples get into the boat and go ahead of him to the other side, while he dispersed the crowds.

NLT Matthew 14:22 Immediately after this, Jesus insisted that his disciples get back into the boat and cross to the other side of the lake, while he sent the people home.

ESV Matthew 14:22 Immediately he made the disciples get into the boat and go before him to the other side, while he dismissed the crowds.

NIV Matthew 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.

GNT Matthew 14:22 Κα ε θ ως ν γκασεν το ς μαθητ ς μβ ναι ε ς τ πλο ον κα προ γειν α τ ν ε ς τ π ραν, ως ο πολ σ το ς χλους.

KJV Matthew 14:22 And straightway Jesus constrained his disciples to get into a ship, and to go before him unto the other side, while he sent the multitudes away.

YLT Matthew 14:22 And immediately Jesus constrained his disciples to go into the boat, and to go before him to the other side, till he might let away the multitudes;

ASV Matthew 14:22 And straightway he constrained the disciples to enter into the boat, and to go before him unto the other side, till he should send the multitudes away.

CSB Matthew 14:22 Immediately He made the disciples get into the boat and go ahead of Him to the other side, while He dismissed the crowds.

NKJ Matthew 14:22 Immediately Jesus made His disciples get into the boat and go before Him to the other side, while He sent the multitudes away.

NRS Matthew 14:22 Immediately he made the disciples get into the boat and go on ahead to the other side, while he dismissed the crowds.

- **Jesus:** Mk 6:45
- **while:** Mt 13:36 15:39

## THE DISCIPLES DEPART IN A HURRY

### Related Passages:

Mark 6:45-46 Immediately Jesus made His disciples get into the boat and go ahead of Him to the other side to Bethsaida, while He Himself was sending the crowd away. 46 After bidding them farewell, He left for the mountain to pray.

**Broadus** - Found also in Mark 6:45–52; John 6:16–21. Luke here begins to shorten his narrative, continuing to do so up to Lk 9:50.

In the preceding section Jesus made them to lie down in green pastures, and now He will lead them beside still waters as He walks on the sea!

**What the Bible Teaches** - The multitudes had experienced a threefold blessing: 1. their sick had been healed (Mt 14:14); 2. they had been taught (Mark 6:34); 3. they had been satisfied with food. As a result, they claimed that the Lord was "that prophet that should come into the world" (John 6:14). Above all, they attempted to make Him a king by force (v. 15), an impossibility, since His enthronement would be by His Father God (Ps 2:6).

**Lenski** - It is John 6:15 who informs us regarding the reason for this hasty compulsion. The multitudes were so affected by this miracle that they were scheming to kidnap Jesus and in triumph to carry him as king to Jerusalem at the time of the Passover now close at hand (John 6:4). The Twelve would have delighted in such a scheme. Therefore Jesus separates them from the multitude and sends them away by themselves, in order soon to give them a new revelation of the kind of King he really is.

**Immediately** ([euthéos](#)) - Why the rush? The group was forced to move out because of what we read in John's parallel account, for surely when He came down from the mountain the crowd's desire to make Him king had not abated. And so we read in John 6:14-17+

Therefore when the people saw the sign which He had performed, they said, "This is truly the Prophet who is to come into the world." 15 So **Jesus, perceiving that they were intending to come and take Him by force to make Him king**, withdrew again to the mountain by Himself alone. 16 Now when evening came, His disciples went down to the sea, 17 and after getting into a boat, they started to cross the sea to Capernaum. It had already become dark, and Jesus had not yet come to them.

**Broadus** - This great miracle of feeding the multitude could not fail to make a profound impression; and the people who witnessed it took it as showing beyond question that "this is of a truth the prophet that cometh into the world" (John 6:14, Rev. Ver.), i. e., probably the prophet predicted by Moses. (Deut. 18:15, 18; John 7:21, 25; 7:40; Acts 3:22 7:37.) The Jews did not all identify 'the prophet' with Messiah; but the persons here concerned evidently did, for they were on the point of coming and seizing Jesus to make him a king. (John 6:15.) It was probably their design to carry him with them to Jerusalem to the approaching Passover, and there proclaim him the anointed king, whether he consented or not.

**He made the disciples** ([mathetes](#)) **get into the boat** - **Made** means He compelled or forced the disciples. This would strongly suggest that the disciples did not want to leave Him at this time.

Mark gives us the sequence of events writing "Immediately Jesus made His disciples get into the boat and go ahead of Him to the other side to **Bethsaida**, while He Himself was sending the crowd away. 46 After bidding them farewell, He left for the mountain to pray. " (Mark 6:45-46+)

**A T Robertson** on **made the disciples** - Literally, "compelled" or "forced." See this word also in Luke 14:23. The explanation for this strong word in Mark 6:45 and Matt. 14:22 is given in John 6:15. It is the excited purpose of the crowd to take Jesus by force and to make him national king. This would be political revolution and would defeat all the plans of Jesus about his kingdom. Things have reached a climax. The disciples were evidently swept off their feet by the mob psychology for they still shared the Pharisaic hope of

a political kingdom. With the disciples out of the way Jesus could handle the crowd more easily

**Constable** - There appear to have been several reasons for His unusual action. First, this miracle appears to have refueled the enthusiasm of some in the crowd to draft Jesus and to force Him to lead the nation (cf. John 6:15). Perhaps Jesus wanted to spare His disciples from this attractive temptation. Second, Jesus wanted to get away to pray (v. 23). Third, He wanted to prepare to get some rest (Mark 6:31–32). Fourth, He had an important lesson to teach them.

**Broadus** - It would seem strange to be compelled to leave the sacred spot, the interested crowds, the Master himself. So we, too, must often do what the Lord in his providence and his word clearly requires, even when it seems to us a strange and painful course.

**Made** (315) ([anagkazo](#) from [anagke](#) - compelling need requiring immediate action) refers to an inner or outer compulsion for someone to act in a certain manner and to do so with a sense of urgency (as a pressing necessity). This word was used in surgery of force to reduce dislocations, etc. (Liddell-Scott). **Thayer** on [anagkazo](#) - to necessitate, compel, drive to, constrain, whether by force, threats, etc., or by persuasion, entreaties, etc., or by other means. Used 9x - compel(3), compelled(2), force(1), forced(1), made(2).- Matt. 14:24; Lk. 24:13; Jn. 6:19; Jn. 11:18; Rev. 14:20; Rev. 21:16

**Boat** (4143) ([ploion](#) from [pleo](#) = to sail) in this context refers to a fishing craft boat as used on the Sea of Galilee (Mt 4:21f; Mt 9:1; Mk 1:19f; Mk 6:51, 54; Jn 6:19, 21f; Jn 21:3). See [Wikipedia description of the "Jesus Boat"](#) discovered in 1986. All uses in Matthew - Matt. 4:21; Matt. 4:22; Matt. 8:23; Matt. 8:24; Matt. 9:1; Matt. 13:2; Matt. 14:13; Matt. 14:22; Matt. 14:24; Matt. 14:29; Matt. 14:32; Matt. 14:33; Matt. 15:39;

**And go ahead of Him to the other side**- He sends them to **Bethsaida** on the western side, but as discussed below the use of this name does present some problems in interpretation.

**Lenski on the other side** - "To go ahead of him to the other side" implies that later on Jesus would join the disciples. Mark has, "to the other side towards (pros) Bethsaida" (Mk 6:45); while John writes that "they were going to (eis) Capernaum," (Jn 6:17) and that the next day the multitude also went to Capernaum. Bethsaida was merely a suburb of Capernaum, and thus either could be named as the destination.

**Hiebert on Bethsaida** - The location of this Bethsaida has been much discussed. That morning, according to Luke 9:10, Jesus and the Twelve had sailed toward **Bethsaida**, near which the feeding of the five thousand took place. This was **Bethsaida-Julius**, east of Jordan. But since John noted that the boat that night was headed toward Capernaum (Mk 6:17), and the boat actually landed on the western shore, where was this **Bethsaida** located? **Two different answers have been given.** Those who hold that there was only one Bethsaida understand the order to the disciples to mean that they were to cross the narrow bay to Bethsaida-Julius, where Jesus was expected to meet them, but that a strong northeastern wind suddenly came up and forced the boat toward the western shore. Others hold that there was **another city named Bethsaida**, called "Bethsaida of Galilee" (John 12:21), located near Capernaum, so that the direction could be spoken of as being either toward Bethsaida or Capernaum. It is not improbable that there should be two places named Bethsaida (Fishing House) on the shores of the lake, one in Galilee and the other in the tetrarchy of Philip. It must be admitted that we have no such direct evidence for a western Bethsaida as we have for Bethsaida-Julius, and the view of two Bethsaidas is now abandoned by many scholars. These scholars hold that the designation "Bethsaida of Galilee" is due to the fact that the city had spread across the Jordan. But other scholars insist that "the various Gospel narratives require, in the movements recorded, a western as well as an eastern Bethsaida, otherwise all is confused and unintelligible." Bethsaida clearly seems to be a town close to Capernaum. According to Matthew 11:20–24, Jesus upbraided Chorazin, Bethsaida, and Capernaum for their failure to repent although "most of his mighty works were done" in them. **This Bethsaida is clearly a Jewish city, not a Gentile place like Bethsaida-Julius.** Since all the disciples, except Judas Iscariot, seem to have been Galileans (Acts 1:11), it seems improbable that Peter, Andrew, and Philip were all natives of the Bethsaida of Gaulanitis (John 1:44). **Ruins of other towns near Capernaum make a western Bethsaida very probable.** Christie argues that a western Bethsaida is supported by the fact that tradition in the early Christian centuries mistakenly located the place of the feeding of the five thousand on the western side, holding that the similarity of the place names was the connecting link. **The existence of two Bethsaidas seems best to harmonize all the data.** (The Gospel of Mark - An Expositional Commentary)

**While He sent the crowds away** - **Sent away** is [apoluo](#) meaning He caused them to leave this area. John 6:15 says that "Jesus, perceiving that they were intending to come and take Him by force to make Him king, withdrew again to the mountain by Himself alone. the crowd from crowning Him king."

**Sent away** (630) see note on [apoluo](#)

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## **George Matheson - Jesus constrained his disciples to get into a ship Matt. 14:22**

Jesus constrained them to go! One would think that if ever there was the certain promise of success in a mission, it was here. Surely, here, if anywhere, a triumphant issue might have been confidently predicted; and yet here, more than anywhere, there was seeming failure. He sent them out on a voyage, and they met such a storm as they had never yet experienced.

Let me ponder this, for it has been so with me, too. I have sometimes felt myself impelled to act by an influence which seemed above me—constrained to put to sea. The belief that I was constrained gave me confidence, and I was sure of a calm voyage. But the result was outward failure. The calm became a storm; the sea raged, the winds roared, the ship tossed in the midst of the waves, and my enterprise was wrecked ere it could reach the land.

Was, then, my divine command a delusion?

Nay; nor yet was my mission a failure. He did send me on that voyage, but He did not send me for my purpose. He had one end and I had another. My end was the outward calm; His was my meeting with the storm. My end was to gain the harbor of a material rest; His was to teach me there is a rest even on the open sea.

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## **Vance Havner - Faith and Doubt Matthew 14:22-33**

IN the fourteenth chapter of Matthew, Jesus asks the sinking disciple Peter as He rescues him while walking upon the waves, "O thou of little faith, wherefore didst thou doubt?"

It is true that Peter sank in his venture of faith, but he walked further upon the water than any other mere man ever walked. He sank because he saw the wind boisterous and was afraid—that is, he took his eyes off Jesus and fixed them on circumstances. Back of it all was doubt that crept in and upset the firmness of his faith.

The Christian life is a "walking upon the waves" toward Jesus. But so many believers hesitate to leave the boat; they put first this foot, then that, into the water. There is nothing to fear if we walk toward Jesus and keep our eyes fixed upon Him. And even if our faith should momentarily yield to doubt, we may sink but we won't drown. For He is there to hear our cry and rescue us.

Doubt manifests itself in many forms. Some people doubt whether they are saved. God's Word has given us definite assurances of salvation—and to doubt our salvation, after we have trusted Christ, is simply to doubt God. We say we are doubting self, but really we doubt God—for salvation does not depend upon self but upon God. Such passages as Acts 16:31, 2 Timothy 1:12, John 3:16, 36, and the whole book of First John, as well as many other passages, give us God's clear word of certainty. And if we are not certain that we ever trusted Christ truly for salvation, we can trust Him at any moment and be certain!

An old saint, who lay dying, moaned that in his feeble mental condition he had forgotten all the promises of God and could recall none of them. "But God has not forgotten," wisely suggested the old minister who sat beside him. How precious that, though we forget, God does not!

Some doubt the doctrines and teachings of the Word and find it hard to believe some of the Bible. There is much there which I cannot understand, but none that I do not believe. I know that if I cannot understand a passage that does not mean that it cannot be understood. Doubt was the serpent's weapon in Eden. He raised a question: "Yea, hath God said?" In His wilderness temptation our Lord met the adversary with "Yea, God hath said!" There are too many question-mark Christians—and not enough of the exclamation-point kind!

Many more are bothered not so much with doubt of salvation or of the Scriptures but practical doubt in everyday matters. Peter believed in Christ, but he broke down here in a practical crisis. Theoretically we believe Romans 8:28, reading it some pleasant summer afternoon under a shade tree in a hammock. But when trouble, sickness and death arrive, is our theoretical faith actual?

Peter took his eyes off Jesus. We must keep "looking unto Jesus" and "consider Him... lest we be wearied and faint in our minds." Doubt spoils the faith-life. We shift from Christ to circumstance. Like the Samaritan woman, we argue that "the well is deep" (John 4:11). Like Martha, we reason that "he has been dead four days" (John 11:39). Like the Emmaus disciples, we reason that "this is the third day" (Luke 24:21). Against all that comes our Lord's challenge: "Said I not unto thee, that if thou wouldest believe, thou shouldest see the glory of God?"

Believing is seeing.

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## **Vance Havner - Walking the Waves Toward Jesus Matthew 14:22-33**



PETER is the only mere human who ever walked on water. Probably he did not go very far, but he went farther than anyone else ever has gone.

It is a stormy night, and the disciples in the boat are "tossed with waves, for the wind was contrary." Verily, we are in tempestuous times nowadays: the waves are boisterous, the wind against us. But Jesus is still walking the sea. Do not despair, however buffeted; in the fourth watch of your night He will come toward you.

The disciples are terrified when they see Jesus; they say, "It is a spirit!" They cry out with fear. How the old Book shows up the humanness of believers! It is a "spook"! Sometimes we do not know the Lord when He does come to our rescue.

Then comes the blessed reassurance: "Be of good cheer; it is I; be not afraid." No matter how dark the night, how nearly upset your frail bark, cheer up, the Lord is on the sea!

Peter speaks up: "Lord, if it be Thou, bid me come unto Thee on the water." He is throwing a challenge to the Lord. Yet I rather like his daring proposition. He is impetuous, venturesome, and it often gets him into trouble, but there is nothing dull and commonplace about Simon Peter. He does not say, "Lord, if it be Thou, come to our aid," but, "Let me come to Thee." He wants God to give him something to do, and God likes to give such men a dare. So Jesus says, "Come."

Peter walks some distance at least, but his characteristic weakness shows up. "When he saw the wind boisterous, he was afraid." He got his mind on circumstances—and when a believer looks away from Christ to circumstance, sink he must. He must cry for help—and the Lord rescues him, saying, "O thou of little faith, wherefore didst thou doubt?"

Are you alarmed in your boat and afraid to walk toward Jesus? You put first this foot, then that, into the water. "Yes, I know I should walk by faith and not by sight, but it looks so dangerous. I shall not hold out; are you sure He will keep me?"

What if you do have a sinking spell! Suppose you do weaken out there and think of the wind! Jesus is looking at you! Better to walk by faith a little way and have to cry "Lord, save me" than to live the smug, safe life of those who never step out on His promises! If you wait until you are sure that you never will sink, you will never walk by faith. But you can be sure of this: If you walk toward Him and call to Him when your faith grows small, you may sink but you will not drown! If only we faltering souls could see that and live by it, how we might tread triumphantly every stormy sea! He does not guarantee you that your faith will not falter, that you will not forget and begin to sink. But He has promised to lose no life committed to Him.

You are going through this world but once. Have you been up to now a poor, terrified doubter in a battered boat? Walk the waves toward Jesus! Friends may discourage you, the skeptical may laugh, smug and safe souls may rate you a crank, but resolve for yourself: "Live or die, sink or swim, I will take God at His word and Jesus at His challenge. I had rather sink a thousand times and have Him pull me up again than never to have stepped out on His promise."

As with Peter here, there will always be for those who dare a happy ending. Like him, you will walk with the Lord on the waves; the wind will cease; and you and those in the ship—believers who would not dare—will be constrained to cry, "Of a truth Thou art the Son of God!"

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### **Vance Havner - Walking the Waves to Jesus Matthew 14:22-33**

AFTER feeding the five thousand, our Lord got away from the multitude eager to make Him king and retired to a mountain to pray alone. He knew the danger of the superficial enthusiasm of crowds. Again and again in His ministry, we see such a reaction to the threat of popularity (John 2:23-25; Luke 14:25-33; Mark 1:37-38; John 6:22-26). Today we measure men by the approval of the multitude; but Jesus only had compassion upon them, as sheep without a shepherd.

While He was at prayer, the disciples were caught in a furious storm out on the sea. It must have been fearful to alarm seasoned fishermen! Our Lord once again proved His mastery over nature by an act which cannot possibly be explained away. He went to them walking on the waves. The storm-beset disciples, already terrified by the tempest, took Him to be a ghost. His answer, "Be of good cheer; it is I; be not afraid," carries the answer to fear. Notice the negative, "Be not afraid," and the positive, "Be of good cheer"—and between the two observe our Lord Himself, "It is I." He always changes negative to positive!

Impetuous Peter would walk to Jesus on the waves. He did not walk far, but at least he walked farther than any other man has gone! However, he took his eyes off Jesus and fixed them on circumstances, saw the wind boisterous and was afraid, and he sank. It is always so when we fail to look unto Jesus.

But the Lord rescued him. Are you afraid by faith to walk the waves, first this foot, then that, to Jesus? We will not have the boat of self-security if we commit ourselves to the walk of faith. We may be afraid that we will sink, but we should remember that even though we should sink, we will not drown! Peter sank, but he did not drown. We have no business getting our eyes off Jesus and going down, but if we do, let us remember that He is out there with us and will rescue us.

Our Lord rebuked Peter's weak faith: "O thou of little faith, wherefore didst thou doubt?" We are not believing when we are doubting. What must He say to us today, afraid to walk to Him in the smallest matters!

When He was received into the ship the wind ceased. Matthew tells us that they worshiped Him and Luke that they willingly received Him, but Mark adds they were "sore amazed" and "wondered" (6:51), for they considered not the miracle of the loaves, and their hearts were hardened. If they had rightly valued and appreciated the feeding of the five thousand they would have expected no less than His walking on the sea! We forget today what Christ has done, and it lessens our expectation of what He can and will do. Our hearts are hardened! We have no right to censure these stupid disciples, for we are even as they.

Coming to Gennesaret, our Lord at once began to heal throngs again. "As many as touched Him were made perfectly whole." If only we believed, might not a touch of Him who bore our sicknesses and infirmities still work its wonders?

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### **James Smith - Handfuls of Purpose - THE UNEXPECTED APPEARANCE Matthew 14:22-27**

The hungry multitude had just been fed and sent away. His own soul now hungers for secret communion with His Father. "Man shall not live by bread alone" (Matt. 4:4). He constrains His disciples to go before Him to the other side, and when the evening is come we see Him alone on the mountain. Here is a picture of Christ's present position and of His Coming again. Jesus is now on the mount of intercession before the Father. His disciples are still being tossed with tempest on the sea of this troublous world. But one day He will appear again and deliver His Church out of all its troubles. As Peter went to meet Him on the waters, so shall we meet Him in the air (1 Thess. 4:17). When Jesus came back to the boat He brought Peter with Him. When He shall appear then we also shall appear with Him in glory. Then those who see Him will also confess, "Of a truth Thou art the Son of God" (v. 33). This is a very fruitful theme. Let us gather some practical lessons—

I. The Obedient will be Tried. "Jesus constrained them to go before Him unto the other side" (v. 22). Perhaps it was with reluctance that they went, but they obeyed, and while doing His will they were severely tested. The trial of your faith is precious, more precious than tried gold. Observe the nature of their trials—

1. THAT IN WHICH THEY TRUSTED WAS LIKELY TO FAIL THEM. "The ship was tossed with waves" (v. 24). Every object of the believer's confidence will have a tossing. Jesus Himself had it. The little ships of our own making are too slim to bear the stress of strong temptation. In following Jesus let us beware of trusting anything apart from Himself. The arm of flesh, our own understanding or past experience, if trusted, can only bring the soul into dread and danger.
2. THAT WHICH MIGHT HAVE HELPED WAS AN ACTUAL HINDRANCE. "The wind was contrary" (v. 24). We, too, while seeking to do the will of our Lord may expect to meet with many a storm of opposition. The wind which wafted them across the lake now hinders their progress. The favour of men, which may have helped us at one time, may press against us at another. It is as fickle as the wind. But there is a deep need for every contrary wind in the experience of God's people. It only hindered these disciples from getting beyond the sphere of His own wonder-working power. It made them tarry till He came. Blessed detention!
3. THAT THEIR MOST STRENUOUS EFFORTS WERE OF LITTLE AVAIL. "He saw them toiling in rowing" (Mark 6:48). Ignorant of the Master's purpose to bless them among the billows, they toiled and struggled as earnest, honest men to save themselves. But they spent their strength in vain, as every one will do who seeks deliverance by their own works (Rom. 3:20).

II. The Obedient will be Helped. "Jesus saw them toiling in rowing," and made haste to their help. Comforting thought! He sees every stroke of the oar. He hears every groan of the heart, every half-choked sigh, and is an eye-witness to every bitter tear. Our fruitless efforts may prove a blessing by bringing Jesus Christ into closer touch with us. He came—

1. AT AN UNEXPECTED TIME. "In the fourth watch." As in nature, so may it be in our spiritual experience—the darkest hour is the hour before daybreak. He came in the hour of their greatest need—when their strength was exhausted, when all hope was gone. In perplexity cast the anchor of faith, and wait for the day.
2. IN AN UNEXPECTED WAY. "Walking on the sea." The great, surging billows, the source of the disciples' fear and dread, were now under His feet. He comes as the OVERCOMER to their help. They found their salvation where you and I will always find it, not in toiling, but in trusting. "My ways are not yours."
3. WITH AN UNEXPECTED BLESSING. "Be of good cheer. It is I; be not afraid." He does not at once remove the cause of their trouble (wind and waves), but He gives them rest in the midst of the storm. He may not take away the thorn, but He makes His grace sufficient (2 Cor. 12). He did not save from the fiery furnace, but He walked with them in it. This is the greatest blessing.

Even when Christ sends us out—we may encounter storms. It was so here; the disciples were sent out by their Master, even constrained by him to go upon the sea—and yet a terrific storm arose. We must not expect that when we begin to obey Christ—that we shall have all favoring breezes. We must not conclude, whenever we find obstacles or hindrances in anything we have undertaken, that we are not doing right, and that these difficulties are providential indications that we ought not to proceed in the course. They are providential; but they may have a different mission altogether to inspire us to stronger faith and greater endeavor.

Jesus sent his disciples out alone; but in all their life, they had few more profitable experiences, though the night was one of such terror. They knew their need of Christ after that experience, better than ever before. Then they had a new revelation of Christ's power and glory, which they never could have had if he had not stayed behind, and then come to them on the waves. We do not see Christ's cross, until we are left in the night of conviction. We can never understand the sweetness of the divine comfort, if we never have sorrow. So it may be a blessing for us sometimes, even to go alone a little way, to learn lessons we could never learn with Christ beside us. We can at least learn our need of him.

**Matthew 14:23 After He had sent the crowds away, He went up on the mountain by Himself to pray; and when it was evening, He was there alone.**

Berkley - And after He had dismissed the people He climbed the hill to pray. Evening had fallen and He was there alone.

NET Matthew 14:23 And after he sent the crowds away, he went up the mountain by himself to pray. When evening came, he was there alone.

NLT Matthew 14:23 After sending them home, he went up into the hills by himself to pray. Night fell while he was there alone.

ESV Matthew 14:23 And after he had dismissed the crowds, he went up on the mountain by himself to pray. When evening came, he was there alone,

NIV Matthew 14:23 After he had dismissed them, he went up on a mountainside by himself to pray. When evening came, he was there alone,

GNT Matthew 14:23 καὶ πολλὰς τὰς χλούς ἐβήετο εἰς τὸν ὄρειον προσεξασθαι. ὡς δὲ γένοιτο νύξ ἐγένετο.

KJV Matthew 14:23 And when he had sent the multitudes away, he went up into a mountain apart to pray: and when the evening was come, he was there alone.

YLT Matthew 14:23 and having let away the multitudes, he went up to the mountain by himself to pray, and evening having come, he was there alone,

ASV Matthew 14:23 And after he had sent the multitudes away, he went up into the mountain apart to pray: and when even was come, he was there alone.

CSB Matthew 14:23 After dismissing the crowds, He went up on the mountain by Himself to pray. When evening came, He was there alone.

NKJ Matthew 14:23 And when He had sent the multitudes away, He went up on the mountain by Himself to pray. Now when evening came, He was alone there.

NRS Matthew 14:23 And after he had dismissed the crowds, he went up the mountain by himself to pray. When evening came, he was there alone,

- **he went:** Mt 6:6 26:36 Mk 6:46 Lu 6:12 Ac 6:4
- **he was:** Joh 6:15-17

#### Related Passages:

Mark 6:45+ Immediately Jesus made His disciples get into the boat and go ahead of Him to the other side to Bethsaida, while He Himself was sending the crowd away. 46 After bidding them farewell, He left for the mountain to pray.

John 6:15+ So Jesus, perceiving that they were intending to come and take Him by force to make Him king,

withdrew again to the mountain by Himself alone.

## JESUS ASCENDS THE MOUNTAIN TO TALK WITH HIS FATHER

**Broadus** - There was no use in staying there any longer. The hope of rest was gone, and the fame of this great miracle would only increase the popular excitement, and augment the danger of arousing the jealousy of his enemies. So Jesus determines to return to the west side of the lake, where we shall find him the next day busy healing the sick (v. 34), and teaching in the synagogue. (John 6:24, 59.) For the present he wishes to be alone; so he proceeds to break up the vast gathering, and begins by separating the disciples from the people and himself. They were naturally slow to leave the scene of so astonishing a miracle. It is also likely that they sympathized not a little with the popular disposition to coerce Jesus into assuming the crown and sceptre of Messiah. (John 6:15.) Possibly, too, they saw indications of the coming adverse wind, and dreaded such a storm as that of 8:23. Whatever was the cause of their reluctance, Jesus 'compelled them,' of course by earnestly enjoining it

**POSB** - The disciples were caught up in the excitement. Christ had to send them across the lake and disperse the crowd in order to calm the disciples, keeping them from making a serious mistake. Of course, Christ knew that they would be fighting a storm, and having to strain against a storm and fight for survival would calm their excitement. His calming the storm would also prove His Messiahship and again show that He was in control of all things. It would show that He knew the best way to proclaim His Messiahship.

**Wiersbe** - John recorded the reason why Jesus was in such a hurry to dismiss the crowd and send the disciples back in the boat: The crowd wanted to make Jesus King (John 6:14–15). The Lord knew that their motives were not spiritual and that their purposes were out of God's will. If the disciples had stayed, they would certainly have fallen in with the plans of the crowd; for as yet, the disciples did not fully understand Christ's plans. They were guilty of arguing over "who was the greatest," and a popular uprising would have suited them perfectly. (BEC)

**After He had sent the crowds away** - **Sent away** is again [apoluo](#) the same verb the disciples had used in Mt 14:15 when they requested Jesus to send the crowds away. The difference of course is that the disciples wanted the people to go away empty, but the Lord sent them away full! Note that while He sent them away we learn from John 6:22+ that the people remained in the vicinity.

**Broadus** says "This he probably did by going about among them, saying that he should do nothing more that day, and requesting them to disperse. They noticed, however, that he did not go with the disciples, and having now no occasion for anxiety about food, they spent the night in that vicinity. (John 6:22+)"

**Sent away** ([630](#)) see note on [apoluo](#)

**He went up on the mountain by Himself to pray** - Mk 6:45 says "After bidding them farewell, He left for the mountain to pray."

**Phillips** - There is something awesome in the Lord's desire for tranquility, something that rebukes our neglect of the place of prayer. Robed in humanity, the uncreated Son of God-self-existing, possessed of all the attributes of deity, Creator of the universe-poured out His heart in prayer. If He needed to pray, how much more do we! (Exploring Matthew)

**Trapp** - "Whilst the disciples were periling, and well-nigh perishing, Christ was praying for them: so he still is for us, at the right hand of the Majesty on high." (Heb 7:25, Ro 8:34)

**Broadus** - We may suppose that he had come down towards the shore to see the disciples off, and now 'departed again' (John 6:15) to the mountain, and went up into a higher and more secluded portion. Here in the mountain solitude and mild spring air he continued the greater part of the night (cf "fourth watch" in Mt 14:25) in prayer.

**A T Robertson** - After the dismissal of the crowd Jesus went up alone into the mountain on the eastern side of the lake to pray as he often did go to the mountains to pray. If ever he needed the Father's sympathy, it was now. The masses were wild with enthusiasm and the disciples wholly misunderstood him. The Father alone could offer help now.

**MacArthur** makes an excellent point - Jesus' temptations neither began nor ended with the three in the wilderness immediately after His baptism. At the end of that session, the devil only "departed from Him until an opportune time" (Luke 4:13). The enthusiasm of the crowds and the disciples to make Him king was very much like the third temptation in the wilderness, in which Satan offered Jesus "all the kingdoms of the world, and their glory" (Matt. 4:8–9). "What better time to establish your kingdom than the Passover season, and in what better way than by marching triumphantly into Jerusalem at the head of thousands of faithful, enthusiastic supporters?" the devil may have asked. Jesus would surely gather many more thousands on the way to the Holy City, and His supernatural power would guarantee victory against any opposition. He could easily conquer the Herods, and even mighty Rome would be no match for the Son of God. He could bypass the cross and avoid the agony of having to take the sin of the world upon

Himself. (MNTC-Mt)

**Wuest** - The verb is [proseuchomai](#), which is used of prayer addressed to God, the prefixed preposition meaning "toward, facing," emphasizing the direct approach of the one who prays, in seeking God's face. It speaks also of the consciousness on the part of the one who prays, of the fact of God's presence and His listening ear.

**Pray** (4336) ([proseuchomai](#) from **pros** = toward, facing, before [emphasizing the direct approach of the one who prays in seeking God's face] + **euchomai** = originally to speak out, utter aloud, express a wish, then to pray or to vow. Greek technical term for invoking a deity) in the NT is always used of prayer addressed to God (to Him as the object of faith and the One who will answer one's prayer) and means to speak consciously (with or without vocalization) to Him, with a definite aim (See study of noun [proseuche](#)). Uses in Matthew - Matt. 5:44; Matt. 6:5; Matt. 6:6; Matt. 6:7; Matt. 6:9; Matt. 14:23; Matt. 19:13; Matt. 23:14; Matt. 24:20; Matt. 26:36; Matt. 26:39; Matt. 26:41; Matt. 26:42; Matt. 26:44;

To help us meet the challenges  
We face in every test,  
The Lord tells us to take the time  
To stop, to pray, to rest.  
—Sper

To avoid a breakdown, take a break for rest and prayer.

**And when it was evening, He was there alone** - **Evening** covers a period from late afternoon to shortly after sunset. Obviously it was now late in that evening period, for John 6:17 said "It had already become dark." **MacArthur** says **evening** "lasted from six to nine o'clock. The multitudes had been fed during the earlier evening (Mt. 14:15), which was from three to six." (MNTC-Mt) **Robertson** agrees writing this is "The second or late evening, six P.M. at this season, or sunset on."

"It seems likely from the use of '**evening**' in v. 23 (Mark 6:47; John 6:16), and from other expressions of John, that already in the early part of the night the disciples had gone out into the midst of the lake, and there continued to be harassed by the fierce opposing wind until towards morning." (Broadus

**Evening** (late) (3798) ([opsios](#) from **opsed** = long after, late, after the close of day) is a noun meaning late. **Louw-Nida** - pertaining to a point near the end of a day (normally after sunset but before night).

**POSB** - Christ wanted the disciples to begin learning one of the most important lessons of their lives: His presence would always be with them, not necessarily His physical presence but His spiritual presence. What they needed was great trust in Him (see Peter's demonstration of trust, vv. 28–29). The Lord's **presence** makes all the difference in the world. (See Mt. 8:23–27+)

1. Christ's presence is assured by personal preparation: prayer (Mt 14:22–23).
2. Christ's presence conquers fear (Mt 14:24–27).
3. Christ's presence stirs the hope of being saved (Mt 14:28–31).
4. Christ's presence conquers nature (Mt 14:32).
5. Christ's presence stirs confession and worship (Mt 14:33).

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**PLAYING SOLITAIRE** Seeking solitude was an important priority for Jesus (see also Mt 14:13). He made room in his busy schedule to be alone with the Father. Spending time with God in prayer nurtures a vital relationship and equips us to meet life's challenges and struggles. Develop the discipline of spending time alone with God; it will help you grow spiritually and become more and more like Christ. (Barton)

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#### WALK WITH JOHN CALVIN

"By going to the mountain he was seeking a time of prayer free from interruption.

"We all know how easily prayer can be quenched by the least distraction.

"Although Christ did not suffer from this weakness, he warned us by his example to be careful to disengage our minds from the snares of the world, so that we may be carried up to heaven.

"The most important thing is solitude. Those who pray with God as their only witness will be more watchful, will pour forth their hearts to him, and will examine themselves more carefully.

"The freedom to pray in all places does not prevent us from praying in secret."

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**Streams in the Desert** - "He went up into a mountain apart." (Matt. 14:23.)

ONE of the blessings of the old-time Sabbath was its calm, its restfulness, its holy peace. There is a strange strength conceived in solitude. Crows go in flocks and wolves in packs, but the lion and the eagle are solitaires.

Strength is not in bluster and noise. Strength is in quietness. The lake must be calm if the heavens are to be reflected on its surface. Our Lord loved the people, but how often we read of His going away from them for a brief season. He tried every little while to withdraw from the crowd. He was always stealing away at evening to the hills. Most of His ministry was carried on in the towns and cities by the seashore, but He loved the hills the best, and oftentimes when night fell He would plunge into their peaceful depths.

The one thing needed above all others today is that we shall go apart with our Lord, and sit at His feet in the sacred privacy of His blessed presence. Oh, for the lost art of meditation! Oh, for the culture of the secret place! Oh, for the tonic of waiting upon God!—Selected.

“It is well to live in the valley sweet,  
Where the work of the world is done,  
Where the reapers sing in the fields of wheat,  
As they toil till the set of sun.  
But beyond the meadows, the hills I see  
Where the noises of traffic cease,  
And I follow a Voice that calleth to me  
From the hilltop regions of peace.

“Aye, to live is sweet in the valley fair,  
And to toil till the set of sun;  
But my spirit yearns for the hilltop’s air  
When the day and its work are done.  
For a Presence breathes o’er the silent hills,  
And its sweetness is living yet;  
The same deep calm all the hillside fills,  
As breathed over Olivet.”

“Every life that would be strong must have its Holy of Holies into which only God enters.”

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**Streams in the Desert** - “He went up into a mountain apart to pray: and when evening was come, he was there alone.” (Matt. 14:23.)

THE man Christ Jesus felt the need of perfect solitude—Himself alone, entirely by Himself alone with Himself. We know how much intercourse with men draws us away from ourselves and exhausts our powers. The man Christ Jesus knew this, too, and felt the need of being by Himself again, of gathering all His powers, of realizing fully His high destiny, His human weakness, His entire dependence on the Father.

How much more does the child of God need this—himself, alone with spiritual realities, himself alone with God the Father. If ever there were one who could dispense with special seasons for solitude and fellowship, it was our Lord. But He could not do His work or maintain His fellowship in full power, without His quiet time.

Would God that every servant of His understood and practiced this blessed art, and that the Church knew how to train its children into some sense of this high and holy privilege, that every believer may and must have his time when he is indeed himself alone with God. Oh, the thought to have God all alone to myself, and to know that God has me all alone to Himself! —Andrew Murray.

Lamertine speaks in one of his books of a secluded walk in his garden where his mother always spent a certain hour of the day, upon which nobody ever dreamed for a moment of intruding. It was the holy garden of the Lord to her. Poor souls that have no such Beulah land! Seek thy private chamber, Jesus says. It is in the solitude that we catch the mystic notes that issue from the soul of things.

## A MEDITATION

My soul, practice being alone with Christ! It is written that when they were alone He expounded all things to His disciples. Do not wonder at the saying; it is true to thine experience. If thou wouldst understand thyself send the multitude away. Let them go out one by one till thou art left alone with Jesus. ... Has thou ever pictured thyself the one remaining creature in the earth, the one remaining creature in all the starry worlds?

In such a universe thine every thought would be “God and I! God and I!” And yet He is as near to thee as that

—as near as if in the boundless spaces there throbbed no heart but His and thine. Practice that solitude, O my soul! Practice the expulsion of the crowd! Practice the stillness of thine own heart! Practice the solemn refrain “God and I! God and I!” Let none interpose between thee and thy wrestling angel! Thou shalt be both condemned and pardoned when thou shalt meet Jesus alone! —George Matheson.

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### A W Tozer - The Need for Solitude

And when he had sent the multitudes away, he went up into a mountain apart to pray: and when the evening was come, he was there alone. —Matthew 14:23

Modern civilization is so complex as to make the devotional life all but impossible. It wears us out by multiplying distractions and beats us down by destroying our solitude, where otherwise we might drink and renew our strength before going out to face the world again.

“The thoughtful soul to solitude retires,” said the poet of other and quieter times; but where is the solitude to which we can retire today? Science, which has provided men with certain material comforts, has robbed them of their souls by surrounding them with a world hostile to their existence. “Commune with your own heart upon your bed and be still” is a wise and healing counsel, but how can it be followed in this day of the newspaper, the telephone, the radio and the television? These modern playthings, like pet tiger cubs, have grown so large and dangerous that they threaten to devour us all. What was intended to be a blessing has become a positive curse. No spot is now safe from the world’s intrusion.

Lord, help us somehow to escape today and retire to solitude, even if only for a brief time. Amen.

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### A Bit of Solitude

After sending the people away, he went up a mountain to pray by himself. When evening came, he was there alone. Matthew 14:23

When bedtime finally comes and the only sound is the night settling in, what do you do first? Do you grab the remote off your nightstand and flip to a rerun of your favorite old sitcom? Do you search for the ads in the newspaper to see who’s having the best sales on new shoes? Or do you take this time to be alone with God?

Jesus knew what it was like to be surrounded by people demanding His attention all day. What they asked of Him was all-consuming and He was the only one who could deliver. For those reasons, He made it a priority to slip away from everyone in the dark of night to spend time with His Father.

Do you have times of solitude where you can talk freely to your Father? As day becomes night and the day’s work is over, find a place where you can hear from the Lord a little easier than through the din of the busy day. You may find that solitude in the middle of your bed, snuggled up in your robe on the sofa, or soaking in a warm tub. The important thing is to find a private place to meet your Lord and pray.

**Matthew 14:24 But the boat was already a long distance from the land, battered by the waves; for the wind was contrary.**

Berkley 14:24 But the boat was by that time a good distance from shore and was tossed by the waves, for the wind was contrary.

NET Matthew 14:24 Meanwhile the boat, already far from land, was taking a beating from the waves because the wind was against it.

NLT Matthew 14:24 Meanwhile, the disciples were in trouble far away from land, for a strong wind had risen, and they were fighting heavy waves.

ESV Matthew 14:24 but the boat by this time was a long way from the land, beaten by the waves, for the wind was against them.

NIV Matthew 14:24 but the boat was already a considerable distance from land, buffeted by the waves because the wind was against it.

GNT Matthew 14:24 τ ὁ πλοὸν ὁη σταδους πολλο ς π τ ς γ ς πε χεν βασιανιζ μενον π τ ν κυμ των, ν γ ρ ναντ ος νεμος.



KJV Matthew 14:24 But the ship was now in the midst of the sea, tossed with waves: for the wind was contrary.

YLT Matthew 14:24 and the boat was now in the midst of the sea, distressed by the waves, for the wind was contrary.

ASV Matthew 14:24 But the boat was now in the midst of the sea, distressed by the waves; for the wind was contrary.

CSB Matthew 14:24 But the boat was already over a mile from land, battered by the waves, because the wind was against them.

NKJ Matthew 14:24 But the boat was now in the middle of the sea, tossed by the waves, for the wind was contrary.

NRS Matthew 14:24 but by this time the boat, battered by the waves, was far from the land, for the wind was against them.

- **battered by the waves:** Mt 8:24 Isa 54:11 Mk 6:48 Joh 6:18

#### Related Passages:

Mark 6:47+ When it was evening, the boat was in the middle of the sea, and He was alone on the land.

John 6:16+ Now when evening came, His disciples went down to the sea, 17 and after getting into a boat, they started to cross the sea to Capernaum. It had already become dark, and Jesus had not yet come to them. 18 The sea began to be stirred up because a strong wind was blowing. 19 Then, when they had rowed about three or four miles, they \*saw Jesus walking on the sea and drawing near to the boat; and they were frightened.

### TIME FOR A DIVINE POP TEST

**Wiersbe** - This experience of the disciples in the storm can be an encouragement to us when we go through the storms of life. When we find ourselves in the storm, we can rest on several assurances.

**Adrian Rogers** - No doubt He knew a storm was brewing. They would learn a great lesson that day. Jesus is an unusual teacher. He gives the test first and the lesson afterward.

**But the boat ([ploion](#)) was already a long distance from the land** - Literally, **already** many stadia. John 6:19+ says "when they had rowed about three or four miles." Mark 6:47+ adds that "When it was evening, the boat **was in the middle of the sea** and He was alone on the land." The point is that the disciples are as far from land as they can possibly be. They were in the area of maximum danger. God was setting the stage for another "command performance" by Christ and another test of the faith of the disciples. In short the Master Teacher was preparing His "learners" (disciples) for a "divine pop test." They have been in Jesus' "classroom" all day, first His teaching didactically and then teaching by demonstration (loaves and fishes). What had they learned on this incredible day of instruction?

**THOUGHT** - Adrian Rogers applies this picture to our lives - They were in the middle of the sea, the middle of the "problem" and the wind was contrary. Does it seem not only are you in the middle of a problem, but that the winds of life are in your face? And then not only the distance from the shore, and the direction of the wind, but the darkness of night. Maybe could hardly see their hand before their face. Have you ever been then? Not only are you in the middle of a problem, not only are the winds against you, but you're in darkness. You don't know what's what. Know where is where. Who is Who. It doesn't seem to make sense. If so you are in a good position for the performance of the Savior, the One Who still says "Be of good cheer... I Am." (Go to Mt 14:27)

**Distance** ([4712](#))(**stadion** from **hístēmi** = to stand) means a stadium, an established measure of distance, in length around 600 feet, 200 yards, 190 meters, or one-eighth Roman mile, almost a furlong. The plural occurs in both the masc. (stádioi) and neut. (stádia) forms.) Stadion - 7x - distance (1), miles (5), race (1). Matt. 14:24; Lk. 24:13; Jn. 6:19; Jn. 11:18; 1 Co. 9:24; Rev. 14:20; Rev. 21:16. Not found in the Septuagint.

**battered by the waves; for the wind was contrary**- **Battered** is in the [present tense](#) describing the boat being ([passive voice](#)) continually tossed about by the waves which were breaking against the side and likely forcing water into the boat. They were going

head on into the wind from the west which was **contrary**. They were heading directly into the blowing, contrary wind sovereignly sent by the loving God! John 6:18+ says "The sea began to be stirred up because a strong wind was blowing." The Sea of Galilee is almost 700 feet below sea level and when cooler air comes from the northern mountains rushing down into the lake and displacing the warm moist air, the result is a violent churning of the water.

Do you find yourself in a storm today?

Ask God for the strength and courage to weather it  
and for the wisdom to understand it, not waste it.

-- Warren Wiersbe

**Spurgeon** - It did not matter however. For if his disciples be in a storm, so long as Christ is praying for them all the storms in the world are unable to sink them. They had a good protector. From the outlook of that hill his eyes, which could see through the distance, observed and regulated every breath of wind, and every wave upon the lake.

**MacArthur** - The only means of movement was rowing, and they were desperately "straining at the oars" (Mark 6:48) for their very lives....The worst part was that Jesus was not with them. During a similar storm, they had awakened Him and He "rebuked the winds and the sea; and it became perfectly calm" (Matt. 8:26+). But now He was miles away.

**Barton** - The disciples had left sometime before sunset, so by the time evening came, they were a considerable distance from land. The disciples often fished during the night, so sailing out into the night was not unusual. However, the disciples were being blown off course, fighting the sea in their boat, buffeted by the waves. At least the last time this had happened, Jesus had been in the boat with them (although they had to awaken him to get his help, 8:23-27). This time, Jesus was alone on the land, and the disciples were left to fend for themselves (or so they thought) against another raging storm. The other Gospel writers record various details of this scenario. The disciples took down the sails and tried to keep control of the boat by strenuous rowing. For the entire night they fought the storm, able to row only about three or four miles (John 6:19). As Jesus prayed on the mountainside, he "saw the disciples straining at the oars" (Mark 6:48 NIV). (LAC)

**Spurgeon** - "The apostolic crew rowed, and rowed, and rowed, and it was no fault of theirs that they made no progress, 'for the wind was contrary unto them.' The Christian man may make little or no headway, and yet it may be no fault of his, for the wind is contrary. Our good Lord will take the will for the deed, and reckon our progress, not by our apparent advance, but by the hearty intent with which we tug at the oars."

**Battered** (tormented) (928) (**basanizo** from **basanos** - describes severe pain brought about by punitive torture) means literally to rub on the touchstone (basanos) or to test by means of the touchstone and then to test or make proof of anything. It is used in the passive to be harassed, distressed; of those who at sea are struggling with a head wind, Mk 6:48; of a ship tossed by the waves, Uses in Matthew - Neh. 11:8; Matt. 8:6; Matt. 8:29; Matt. 14:24

**Contrary** (1727) (**enantios** from **enanti** = over against in turn from **en** = in + **antios** = set against) is used primarily of place and means over against which pertains to being opposite.

**Brian Bell** - Did Jesus know the storm was coming? Yes. Did He deliberately direct them into the storm? Yes. Isn't this like, telling a child to cross the street when you know a car is coming? No! It's like, creating waves w/your left hand in a bathtub & holding a toy boat perfectly afloat w/your right hand. D. 2 Kinds of Storms: 1. Slide9c Storms of Correction - When God disciplines us (eg. Jonah). 2 Storms of Perfection - When God helps us grow (eg. here). In the 1st storm, Jesus rode it with them (ch.8). This one, He tests them being out of the boat. 3. Do you think that obedience to God always brings smooth sailing? No! Sometimes obedience places you right in a storm. [i.e. every storm is not of the devil] a) Example: Acts 4. Pete & John, obediently preaching & teaching. Result? Jailed. Be assured, If He has brought you into the middle of a storm...He cares for you & He prays for you. (Mt 14:23) We now are on the sea of humanity as He sits upon the shores of heaven interceding for US. 1. What if I told you Jesus was rt. in this next room praying for you. Wouldn't it not give you new courage to endure the storms/trials of life? He saw the disciples & knew their plight. (Mk. 6:48)

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**SOME STORMS COME JUST BC WE ARE HUMAN. SOME BC WE ARE BEING DISCIPLINED. AND SOME BECAUSE GOD IS TESTING OUR FAITH AS SEEN IN THIS STORM:** So there are storms that come because we are obedient! In this case the disciples had obeyed Jesus' request to depart and they soon encountered a storm. Please note: they were not in the storm because they disobeyed the Lord, but because they obeyed Him! He was testing and perfecting their faith. Later he came to them and stilled the storm; but the entire experience revealed to the men how weak their faith really was. God is always in complete control. When God permits Satan to light the furnace, he always keeps his own hand on the thermostat! When you find yourself in difficult circumstances, seek to discern through the Word and prayer whether your suffering is from nature, from God, or from Satan. Is God perfecting you? Is he disciplining you? Is Satan seeking to hinder your ministry or even destroy you?

**Wiersbe** - The storm came because they were in the will of God and not (like Jonah) out of the will of God. Did Jesus know that the storm was coming? Certainly! Did He deliberately direct them into the storm? Yes! They were safer in the storm in God's will than on land with the crowds out of God's will. We must never judge our security on the basis of circumstances alone. As we read our Bibles, we discover that there are two kinds of storms: storms of correction, when God disciplines us; and storms of perfection, when God helps us to grow. Jonah was in a storm because he disobeyed God and had to be corrected. The disciples were in a storm because they obeyed Christ and had to be perfected. Jesus had tested them in a storm before, when He was in the boat with them (Matt. 8:23–27). But now He tested them by being out of the boat. Many Christians have the mistaken idea that obedience to God's will produces "smooth sailing." But this is not true. "In the world you shall have tribulation," Jesus promised (John 16:33). When we find ourselves in the storm because we have obeyed the Lord, we must remember that He brought us here and He can care for us. (BEC)

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### **Streams in the Desert** - " 'The wind was contrary.' (Matt. 14:24)

RUDE and blustering the winds of March often are. Do they not typify the tempestuous seasons of my life? But, indeed, I ought to be glad that I make acquaintance with these seasons. Better it is that the rains descend and the floods come than that I should stay perpetually in the Lotus Land where it seems always afternoon, or in that deep meadowed Valley of Avilion where never wind blows loudly. Storms of temptation appear cruel, but do they not give intenser earnestness to prayer? Do they not compel me to seize the promises with a tighter hand grip? Do they not leave me with a character refined?

Storms of bereavement are keen; but, then, they are one of the Father's ways of driving me to Himself, that in the secret of His presence His voice may speak to my heart, soft and low. There is a glory of the Master which can be seen only when the wind is contrary and the ship tossed with waves.

"Jesus Christ is no security against storms, but He is perfect security in storms. He has never promised you an easy passage, only a safe landing."

Oh, set your sail to the heavenly gale,  
And then, no matter what winds prevail,  
No reef can wreck you, no calm delay;  
No mist shall hinder, no storm shall stay;  
Though far you wander and long you roam  
Through salt sea sprays and o'er white sea foam,  
No wind that can blow but shall speed you Home.

—Annie Johnson Flint.

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### **Streams in the Desert** - September 3

"And he saw them toiling in rowing." (Mark 6:48.)

STRAINING, driving effort does not accomplish the work God gives man to do. Only God Himself, who always works without strain, and who never overworks, can do the work that He assigns to His children. When they restfully trust Him to do it, it will be well done and completely done. The way to let Him do His work through us is to partake of Christ so fully, by faith, that He more than fills our life.

A man who had learned this secret once said: "I came to Jesus and I drank, and I do not think that I shall ever be thirsty again. I have taken for my motto, 'Not overwork, but overflow'; and already it has made all the difference in my life."

There is no effort in overflow. It is quietly irresistible. It is the normal life of omnipotent and ceaseless accomplishment into which Christ invites us today and always.—Sunday School Times.

Be all at rest, my soul, O blessed secret,  
Of the true life that glorifies thy Lord:  
Not always doth the busiest soul best serve Him,  
But he that resteth on His faithful Word.  
Be all at rest, let not your heart be rippled,  
For tiny wavelets mar the image fair,  
Which the still pool reflects of heaven's glory—  
And thus the image He would have thee bear.

Be all at rest, my soul, for rest is service,  
To the still heart God doth His secrets tell;  
Thus shalt thou learn to wait, and watch, and. Labor,  
Strengthened to bear, since Christ in thee doth dwell.  
For what is service but the life of Jesus,  
Lived through a vessel of earth's fragile clay,  
Loving and giving and poured forth for others,  
A living sacrifice from day to day.

Be all at rest, so shalt thou be an answer  
To those who question, "Who is God and where?"  
For God is rest, and where He dwells is stillness,  
And they who dwell in Him, His rest shall share.  
And what shall meet the deep unrest around thee,  
But the calm peace of God that filled His breast?  
For still a living Voice calls to the weary,  
From Him who said, "Come unto Me and rest."

—Freda Hanbury Allen.

"In resurrection stillness there is resurrection power."

#### Matthew 14:25 And in the fourth watch of the night He came to them, walking on the sea.

Berkley 14:25 In the fourth watch of the night He approached them, walking on the sea.

NET Matthew 14:25 As the night was ending, Jesus came to them walking on the sea.

NLT Matthew 14:25 About three o'clock in the morning Jesus came toward them, walking on the water.

ESV Matthew 14:25 And in the fourth watch of the night he came to them, walking on the sea.

NIV Matthew 14:25 During the fourth watch of the night Jesus went out to them, walking on the lake.

GNT Matthew 14:25 τετ ρτ ὁ φυλακ τ ς νυκτ ς λθεν πρ ς α το ς περιπατ ν π τ ν θ λασσαν.

KJV Matthew 14:25 And in the fourth watch of the night Jesus went unto them, walking on the sea.

YLT Matthew 14:25 And in the fourth watch of the night Jesus went away to them, walking upon the sea,

ASV Matthew 14:25 And in the fourth watch of the night he came unto them, walking upon the sea.

CSB Matthew 14:25 Around three in the morning, He came toward them walking on the sea.

NKJ Matthew 14:25 Now in the fourth watch of the night Jesus went to them, walking on the sea.

NRS Matthew 14:25 And early in the morning he came walking toward them on the sea.

- **the fourth watch:** . Mt 24:43 Lu 12:38

#### Related Passages:

Mark 6:48+ Seeing them straining at the oars, for the wind was against them, at about the fourth watch of the night He came to them, walking on the sea; and He intended to pass by them.

**COMMENT** - Jesus saw their difficulty. He still sees the difficulties which His disciples experience. **Straining** in in the [present tense](#) indicating the rowing was continually difficult! **Utley** adds that straining "comes from Greek into English as "torture." It was hard rowing against the wind."

#### Alan Carr - He Was Watching

1. He saw their labor - (Toiling = Torture [basanizo](#)) This describes our trials sometimes. He knows the load you bear - Heb 4:14-16; 1 Cor. 10:13; 1 Peter 5:7
2. He saw their opposition - Contrary = In the face!

He knows what you are fighting against right now! - Job 23:10; Psa. 1:6; Psa. 139:1-12

God knows what He is doing! Our job is to submit to Him and allow Him His way in our lives - Rom. 8:28, 2 Cor. 4:17. Grandma and "Has it come to that?" It always does! It might as well start there! He is absolute Sovereign and He never makes mistakes!

John 6:19+ Then, when they had rowed about three or four miles, they saw Jesus walking on the sea and drawing near to the boat; and they were frightened.

## JESUS OUT FOR AN EARLY MORNING WALK

**MacArthur** - Jesus knew of their situation long before it happened, and He did not have to rush away from prayer in order to be on time to help. The storm and the disciples were equally in His hands, and He knew in advance exactly what He would do with both. (Ibid)

**And in the fourth watch of the night** - This would be the hours just prior to dawn, from **three to six in the morning**. The Jews divided the night into four watches; the first was from 6 in the evening till 9 pm, the second from 9 to 12, the third from 12 to 3 and the fourth from 3 to 6; so that it may have just begun to be daylight before our Lord came toward the disciples. Note that this expression of time indicates Jesus prayed until (3–6 a.m.) probably seven or more hours. POSB adds "He prayed in a storm. A storm arose at some point, apparently long before 3 a.m. or the disciples would have already crossed the lake. The importance of prayer to Christ is strikingly seen in the fact that He prayed for so many hours in the midst of a storm."

**MacArthur** - Jesus waited a long time before He came to them, just as He waited until Lazarus had been dead for several days before He came to Bethany. In both instances, He could have come much sooner than He did and in both instances He could have performed the ensuing miracle without being present—just as He had done in healing the centurion's servant (Matt. 8:13). He could, of course, have prevented the death of Lazarus and the rising of the wind in the first place. But in His infinite wisdom Jesus purposely allowed Mary and Martha and the disciples to reach the extremity of need before He intervened. He knew everything about all of them, and had known it since before they were born. And He knew infinitely better than they did what was best for their welfare and for God's glory. (MNTC-Mt)

Jesus' delay was not due to indifference or inability to perform. He delayed but He was not too late. It is always within His power to fulfill His promise as He sees fit. God's "timepiece" is eternity so He sees things differently than we do. Remember that His delay is not necessarily His denial.

**He came to them, walking on the sea** - Just in the nick of time is a saying we often hear. Jesus is always "in the nick of time!" Here we see Jesus suspending the laws of gravitation which was another manifestation of His divinity, His omnipotence and His control over the creation He had created. Mark 6:48 adds "He came to them, walking on the sea; and He intended to pass by them."

**Barton** - While some might try to explain away this miracle by saying Jesus was simply on the shore, the Gospel writers made it clear that Jesus walked "on" the water. Not only that, but he walked a great distance. John recorded that the disciples had gone three or four miles by the time Jesus came to them (John 6:19). So the waves were indeed fierce. (LAC)

**John Heading** - The miracle is included in Matthew's Gospel to show the power of Christ, the weakness of faith, and the value of confessing the Son of God. (What the Bible Teaches)

**Spurgeon** - Jesus is sure to come. The night wears on and the darkness thickens; the fourth watch of the night draws near, but where is he? Faith says, "He must come." Though he should stay away till almost break of day, he must come. Unbelief asks, "How can he come?" Ah, he will answer for himself: he can make his own way. "Jesus went unto them, walking on the sea." He comes in the teeth of the wind, and on the face of the wave. Never fear that he will fail to reach the storm-tossed barque: his love will find out the way. Whither it be to a single disciple, or to the church as a whole, Jesus will appear in his own chosen hour, and his time is sure to be the most timely.

**Brian Bell** - Man's Extremity is God's Opportunity. He comes in the teeth of the wind, & on the face of the wave. [Jesus walked approx. 4 miles on the lake] He would have walked by (Mrk.6:48) So, What made Jesus stop? 1. Well, when they cried out. Yes but actually when they cried out for fear. Not, that they cried out Jesus! But when they cried out, AHHHH!!! a) Not when they cried out in faith...It was when they cried out in fear. Jesus simply heard their voice. Does that encourage you? I love this Jesus! It is a ghost! And they cried out for fear. Sometimes God shows up in a scary way not a comfortable way [Moses/burn bush. We need to

recognize the presence of God in...our pain...our hurts...our sorrow...our uncertainty. Recognize His voice when you can't see His face.

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**Alan Carr - He came to them -** He was already there:

- Hebrews 13:5 Make sure that your character is free from the love of money, being content with what you have; for He Himself has said, **"I WILL NEVER DESERT YOU, NOR WILL I EVER FORSAKE YOU,"**
- Matthew 28:20 teaching them to observe all that I commanded you; and lo, **I am with you always, even to the end of the age."**

**1. In the darkest hour -**

Phil. 4:6-7 Be anxious for nothing, but in everything by prayer and supplication with thanksgiving let your requests be made known to God. 7 And the peace of God, which surpasses all comprehension, will guard your hearts and your minds in Christ Jesus.

**2. The thing they feared most brought him to them** - Our need is evidence of His supply in waiting, and the guarantee of His presence!

Phil. 4:19 And my God will supply all your needs according to His riches in glory in Christ Jesus.

God is committed to you!

**3. When all possibility of human help was removed** - John 6:19 Then, when they had rowed about three or four miles, they \*saw Jesus walking on the sea and drawing near to the boat; and they were frightened. (Ill. 3 or 4 miles!); Heb. 11:1

God demands that He receive all the glory - Isa. 42:8; Ex. 20:5)

**4. He came in His own time** - God is seldom early, but He is never late!

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**Mark 6:48 - "He Would Have Passed By"** He cometh unto them, walking upon the sea, and would have passed by them. Mark 6:48.

With the Emmaus disciples, "he made as though he would have gone further." Here He walks the waves, while the amazed disciples suppose they have seen a spirit. He assures them, "It is I."

Joseph and Mary supposed He was with them when He was not. Here others supposed He was not with them when He was. Mary in the garden supposed Him to be the gardener. No wonder the old Negro maid said, "I never spouses. Dem spouses will get you into trouble."

When the storm rages, He is there. But He will pass by if you do not avail yourself of His presence. "He would have passed by them.... He made as though he would have gone further." Call upon Him. "Pass me not, O gentle Saviour: do not pass me by."

He came to them in their distress, but He did not come into the boat until they called. He did not go into the Emmaus home until they constrained Him. He will not intrude. There is a point beyond which He will not go. If we do not invite Him in, He will go on. (Vance Havner)

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[John Stevenson](#) - I believe that there was something in the boat that should have comforted the disciples. There were 12 baskets of leftovers which bore mute testimony to the power and the compassion of God. When they looked at those 12 baskets, they should have realized that the God who provided for the needs of the multitudes would not fail to provide for them in the midst of this storm.

We are guilty of the same thing. We have been blessed by the Lord in an abundant way. But when the storm comes, we forget. That is why we are instructed to remind one another. The world says, "Drink and forget your troubles." Jesus says, "Drink and remember."

This storm was no accident. It started when the disciples got out into the middle of the Sea. It ended when Jesus got into the boat with the disciples. It had a script. It was there for a purpose and when that purpose was accomplished, the storm stopped.

Storms are not very pleasant. They can be frightening. They are loud and wet and uncomfortable. But your storm is not an accident of nature. God has ordained your storm. It is His storm. He has a reason for it, even if you do not know what that reason is. And when that reason has been fulfilled, then your storm will end.

Now I want to ask you a question. Why did Jesus come walking on the water? It is more than that He merely wanted to get to the other side. It is to teach the disciples something. But what is it?

It is not to teach the disciples how to walk on water. They never learn to walk on water after this and most people running around today claiming to be able to perform miracles have problems with this one. (ED: [SEE JOEL OSTEEN WALKING ON WATER...WELL, SORT OF](#))

Jesus walks on water to prove to the disciples that He can. He can always do the impossible. Why do they need to know this? Because He is going to send them out to do the impossible, too. He is going to commission these very ordinary men to go out and make disciples of all men in every land. Impossible! They are not natural born leaders. They are not even seminary graduates. But they will accomplish the impossible. With God, all things are possible.

Why do you need to know this? Because God has called you to do the impossible. He has called you to leave a clean life in a dirty world. He has called you to be a faithful witness of Him. He has called you to be Christ to the world. And He has shown you that this is possible because He is with you.

**Matthew 14:26 When the disciples saw Him walking on the sea, they were terrified, and said, "It is a ghost!" And they cried out in fear.**

Berkley 14:26 And when the disciples saw Him walking on the sea, they exclaimed in terror, "It is a ghost!" and cried out from fear.

NET Matthew 14:26 When the disciples saw him walking on the water they were terrified and said, "It's a ghost!" and cried out with fear.

NLT Matthew 14:26 When the disciples saw him walking on the water, they were terrified. In their fear, they cried out, "It's a ghost!"

ESV Matthew 14:26 But when the disciples saw him walking on the sea, they were terrified, and said, "It is a ghost!" and they cried out in fear.

NIV Matthew 14:26 When the disciples saw him walking on the lake, they were terrified. "It's a ghost," they said, and cried out in fear.

GNT Matthew 14:26 ο ὁ μαθητα ὁ ντες α τ ν π τ ς θαλ σσης περιπατο ντα ταρ χθησαν λ γοντες τι Φ ντασμ σπιν, κα π το φ βου κραξαν.

KJV Matthew 14:26 And when the disciples saw him walking on the sea, they were troubled, saying, It is a spirit; and they cried out for fear.

YLT Matthew 14:26 and the disciples having seen him walking upon the sea, were troubled saying -- 'It is an apparition,' and from the fear they cried out;

ASV Matthew 14:26 And when the disciples saw him walking on the sea, they were troubled, saying, It is a ghost; and they cried out for fear.

CSB Matthew 14:26 When the disciples saw Him walking on the sea, they were terrified. "It's a ghost!" they said, and cried out in fear.

NKJ Matthew 14:26 And when the disciples saw Him walking on the sea, they were troubled, saying, "It is a ghost!" And they cried out for fear.

NRS Matthew 14:26 But when the disciples saw him walking on the sea, they were terrified, saying, "It is a ghost!" And they cried out in fear.

- **they were:** 1Sa 28:12-14 Job 4:14-16 Da 10:6-12 Mk 6:49,50 Lu 1:11,12 Lu 24:5,45 Ac 12:15 Rev 1:17

#### Related Passages:

Mark 6:49+ But when they saw Him walking on the sea, they supposed that it was a ghost, and cried out; 50 for they all saw Him and were terrified. But immediately He spoke with them and \*said to them, "Take courage; it is I, do not be afraid."



John 6:20+ But He said to them, "It is I; do not be afraid." 21 So they were willing to receive Him into the boat, and immediately the boat was at the land to which they were going.

## THE SAVIOR IN THE STORM

**When the disciples saw Him walking on the sea they were terrified, and said, "It is a ghost!"**- Struggling for their survival, they look out on the sea and catch sight of **Jesus walking on the sea**. This was not in their "wheelhouse" or realm of understanding. There were no Biblical examples of men walking on the water. This was the last thing they expected to see! They had never seen Jesus walk on water, and natural reasoning told them this could not be the actual person of Jesus! John 6:19 adds Jesus was "drawing near to the boat; and they were frightened."

**Constable** points out that "God had ordained that man rule over the sea before the Fall (Gen. 1:28). Here Jesus was doing precisely that; He was fulfilling God's purpose for humankind. This action gave testimony to His being the Second Adam (cf. Ro 8:27+; Ro 5:12–17+), the man who succeeded where Adam had failed."

It was a popular belief that spirits of the night brought disaster, which may explain why they cried out. The sense is that they raised a cry from the depth of the throat, letting out a shriek of terror! They looked with "natural" eyes, not eyes of faith, and instead of seeing the God-Man, they "saw" a Ghost-Mirage!

**THOUGHT** - Someone has written that fear is unwarranted where Jesus is present. Ponder that thought beloved. From the beginning to the end of our lives He is present. His Name at His birth (Mt 1:23+) was **Immanuel "God with us."** His promise before He left to ascend to His Father was "Lo, I am [present tense](#) with you always, even to the end to the age." (Mt 28:20). Do you believe Jesus' words? If I am honest, there are many times in my life when the winds and waves of adversity seemed like they would overwhelm me and sadly, I for the moment forgot the promises of His presence and His power. Lord, help us all to seize the words of truth "with you always even to the end" of our lives, so that we might fight by faith fearlessly through the many storms that assail each of us. In Your Name and for Your glory. Amen

Jesus' **walking** upon the water recalls the description of Jehovah in Job 9 would serve to demonstrate that Jesus' was God.

"Who alone stretches out the heavens And **tramples down** (treads on; Lxx = [peripateo](#) same verb as in Mt 14:26) the waves of the sea." (Job 9:8)

**Saw** (beheld, observed) ([2334](#))([theoreo](#) from [theaomai](#) = to look at closely or attentively or contemplatively - even with a sense of wonder; cp **theoros** = a spectator; English = theater) usually refers to physical sight but can also refer to perception and understanding. The idea is to gaze or look with interest and purpose, carefully examining with emphasis on attention to details and thus to behold intensely or attentively.

**Walking** ([4043](#))([peripateo](#) from **peri** = about, around + **pateo** = walk, tread) means literally to walk around (walk around in a complete circuit or full circle), to go here and there walking, to tread all around. The 39 uses in the Gospels always refer to literal, physical walking. Seven of the 8 uses in Acts are also in the literal sense. Note that the Septuagint rendering of Job 9:8 uses [peripateo](#).

**Ghost** ([5326](#))([phantasma](#)) means an apparition, phantom, a specter, a spirit, ghost. A supernatural being that has become visible but not material. This is a strong term used of "mental and spiritual agitation and confusion" (BDAG) **Wuest** adds "The word for "spirit" here is not **pneuma**, referring to a disembodied individual who had died, but **phantasma** "an apparition, a specter." The word was associated with magic and charms, thus with the system of Satan. When Luke (Lk 24:37) reports the fact of our Lord's post-resurrection appearance to the disciples, he uses the word **pneuma**, for there they thought they had seen some person come back from the dead. But to have somebody walk on the sea, that would be magic to them."

**THOUGHT** - They saw Him in the middle of the storm and they called Him a ghost. They saw the glow but did not recognize God. They saw the light but missed the Lord. When we see small lights on the horizon of our storms, we often have the same reaction. Because we look for the bonfire, we miss the candle. Because we expect the shout, we miss the whisper. But God often comes in the still, small voice. And the next time you are in the midst of your storm, stop and listen. He's closer than you think. ([Stevenson](#))

**F B Meyer** - He uses the element we dread as the path for his approach. The waves were endangering the boat, but Jesus walked on them. In our lives are people and circumstances we dread, but it is through these that the greatest blessing of our lives will come, if we look through them to Christ.

**Barton** - Jesus was (as far as they knew) alive and well, so they were terrified by what they saw. Once again, Jesus was doing the unexpected and the impossible. Again the disciples were not ready to grasp what it meant. (LAC)

The Old Testament often describes God's control over the seas. Jesus' walking on the sea was an unmistakable picture of his identity and power (see Job 9:8; 38:16; Psalm 77:19; Isaiah 43:16).

**And they cried out in fear** ([phobos](#))- Twelve brave men are reduced to fear by a storm and a Savior. They recognized the storm but not the Savior and thus they cried out in fear. "Exhausted, frightened, shocked—fearing and struggling for their lives and being face to face with a real apparition—the disciples were suffering an almost unbearable experience." (POSB)

**Cried out** ([2896](#)) see note below on [krazo](#)

**Gotquestions** - why did they not recognize Jesus? The answer is they were not looking for Him. Had they been waiting **by faith**, they would have known Him instantly. Instead, they jumped to the false conclusion that His appearance was that of a ghost. The point is this: **fear and faith** cannot live in the same heart, for **fear** frequently blinds the eyes to the presence of the Lord.

**Utley** - This was another nature miracle of Jesus for the purpose of strengthening the disciples' faith. They witnessed His power and authority in many different ways. But they still did not understand; they were still afraid.

**Spurgeon** - Yes, the disciples saw him; saw Jesus their Lord, and derived no comfort from the sight. Poor human nature's sight is a blind thing compared with the vision of a spiritual faith. They saw, but knew not what they saw. What could it be but a phantom? How could a real man walk on those foaming billows? How could he stand in the teeth of such a hurricane? They were already at their wits' end, and the apparition put an end to their courage. We seem to hear their shriek of alarm: "they cried out for fear." We read not that "they were troubled" before: they were old sailors, and had no dread of natural forces; but a spirit — ah, that was too much of a terror. They were at their worst now, and yet, if they had known it, they were on the verge of their best. It is noteworthy that the nearer Jesus was to them, the greater was their fear. Want of discernment blinds the soul to its richest consolations. Lord, be near, and let me know thee! Let me not have to say with Jacob, "Surely God was in this place; and I knew it not!"

**Brian Bell** - "There was a local rumor that the last thing a boatman saw before drowning in Galilee was **aghost** on the water." David Hewitt, I'd rather be in the midst of a storm & have the presence of Christ than be in calm waters & Jesus be nowhere around! "It's better to have Christ in a crisis, than to have life-as-usual w/o His presence." He leads me beside still waters! They had seen Him calm a storm, now they get to see Him trample it under foot.

**Phillips** - William Cowper was familiar with terror. A poor, often demented poet, he was in and out of insane asylums in an era when few greater horrors could beset a man than to be committed to a madhouse. It was that struggling saint of God who wrote:

Ye fearful saints, fresh courage take;  
The clouds ye so much dread  
Are big with mercy, and shall break  
In blessings on your head.

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## A SAVIOUR WHO SEES

"And seeing them distressed in rowing, for the wind was contrary unto them, about the fourth watch of the night he cometh unto them, walking on the sea; and he would have passed by them."—Mark 6:48.

INTRODUCTION.—Jesus saw much that escaped the eyes of others. He saw when others did not. May we not believe that He still sees as of old?

I. That He sees when His faithful disciples are distressed by earth's vicissitudes. Cite text; also Acts 4:23–31.

II. That He sees when His servants have difficult tasks to perform. Acts 18:9.

III. That He sees when a Christian needs courage to face the future. Acts 27:23, 24.

Read or quote "Does Jesus Care?" in closing. (Lappin's Sermon Outlines)

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**Sad or Glad?** For they all saw him, and were troubled. Mark 6:50, Mt 14:26. Then were the disciples glad, when they saw the Lord. John 20:20.

The disciples saw Him in a storm but supposed Him to be a spirit. They did not recognize Him. But in our second verse they saw the risen Lord and knew Him by the print of the nails in His hands and feet.

Surely the sight of the Lord should make us glad. But sometimes we wist not that it is He. He draws near, but, like the Emmaus

disciples, we have holden eyes. What should thrill us only troubles us. Indeed, as the Emmaus disciples related their experience, Jesus appeared, but they "supposed that they had seen a spirit." He quelled their fears then as He did in John's account by showing the marks of the cross.

We walk by faith, not by sight, these days, and are not granted a view of Him with our eyes. But in His dealings with us He still walks our seas and comes into our rooms through doors we have shut. Alas, that fear so often sees a spirit when faith should see the Saviour! What should bring triumph then brings only trouble. See Him and be glad! (Vance Havner)

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**Alan Carr** - He calmed their storm - They didn't recognize Him, because they were not looking for Him! How many times have we missed the presence of God in our time of need?

1. He came declaring His authority - ("It is I" = "I AM") (He is still God - Heb. 13:8)
2. He addressed their fear - (Stop fearing and never fear again!) (2 Ti 1:7)
3. He calmed their storm - The waves and the winds laid down at His feet like little puppies!
  - He can calm your storm also! Matt. 28:18) (Ill. The span - Isa. 40:12!
  - We have been ordered to the other side and we are going to get there too!

**Conclusion** The most amazing aspect of this story, to me anyway, is verse 51. What amazes me the most is that we are just like the disciples. Our storms rage, we finally call upon the Lord, He stills the storm and we stand there with our mouths open and say "WOW!". And, all the while, He is waiting on us to call on Him. What is your storm today? Folk, Jesus can handle it! Come on, call on Him and in His time, the wind will cease in your storm too. Sometimes, He calms us in the storm. He can still the storm in your heart right now, [John 14:27](#). Perhaps your problem is sin related - Jesus is a specialist in this area. In fact, He even suffered death so that He might be able to take care of your sin problem. But, He can't do it until you come to Him and ask! Won't you come?

**Matthew 14:27 But immediately Jesus spoke to them, saying, "Take courage, it is I; do not be afraid."**

Berkley 14:27 But He at once addressed them, "Cheer up! It is I; have no fear."

NET Matthew 14:27 But immediately Jesus spoke to them: "Have courage! It is I. Do not be afraid."

NLT Matthew 14:27 But Jesus spoke to them at once. "Don't be afraid," he said. "Take courage. I am here! "

ESV Matthew 14:27 But immediately Jesus spoke to them, saying, "Take heart; it is I. Do not be afraid."

NIV Matthew 14:27 But Jesus immediately said to them: "Take courage! It is I. Don't be afraid."

GNT Matthew 14:27 ε θ ς δ λ λησεν [ ησο ς] α το ς λ γων, Θαρσε τε, γ ε μι· μ φοβε σθε.

KJV Matthew 14:27 But straightway Jesus spake unto them, saying, Be of good cheer; it is I; be not afraid.

YLT Matthew 14:27 and immediately Jesus spake to them, saying, 'Be of good courage, I am he, be not afraid.'

ASV Matthew 14:27 But straightway Jesus spake unto them, saying Be of good cheer; it is I; be not afraid.

CSB Matthew 14:27 Immediately Jesus spoke to them. "Have courage! It is I. Don't be afraid."

NKJ Matthew 14:27 But immediately Jesus spoke to them, saying, "Be of good cheer! It is I; do not be afraid."

NRS Matthew 14:27 But immediately Jesus spoke to them and said, "Take heart, it is I; do not be afraid."

- **Be:** Mt 9:2 Joh 16:33 Ac 23:11
- **it:** Isa 41:4,10,14 51:12 Lu 24:38,39 Joh 6:20 14:1-3 Rev 1:17,18

#### Related Passages:

Mark 6:50+ for they all saw Him and were terrified ([tarasso](#) literally shaken or stirred up). But immediately He spoke with them and \*said to them, "**Take courage, it is I; do not be afraid.**"

John 6:20+ But He \*said to them, "It is I; do not be afraid." 21 So they were willing to receive Him into the boat, and immediately the boat was at the land to which they were going.

## WEAK FAITH GREAT FEAR

Recall Mt 8:26+ when Jesus declared “Why are you afraid, you men of little faith?” Here we go again.

And so as the story unfolds we see the greater *storm* was not on the seas but in the *souls* of the disciples!

**But immediately** ([euthus](#)) - Jesus sought **immediately** to quiet their fears.

**Jesus spoke to them, saying, "Take courage, it is I (Ego eimi); do not be afraid."** **Take courage** is in the [present imperative](#) calling for continuing firm or resolute in the face of danger or adverse circumstances. In short be courageous! Be brave! Be of good cheer! Have confidence and firmness of purpose in the face of danger! **Do not be afraid** is in the [present imperative with a negative](#) which means stop being afraid! It means to prohibit an action (fear) in progress. “Stop being afraid.” They were afraid. One writes suggests that “**it is I**” (ego eimi as in Lxx of Ex 3:14+) could be understood as the divine name “**I am**” (Hooker).

"Be of good courage, **I Am**."

This was a declaration of deity and speaks of His power.

-- Adrian Rogers

**Rogers** says - Now He didn't mean "I am of good cheer." He's saying don't be afraid, cheer up, I Am the Great I AM. That's literally what this word says in the Greek, I Am. "I Am" is the sacred name for deity. When Moses said, "Who shall I say sent me?" Yahweh said, "You tell them I AM sent you." "I was in existence when this wasn't even a vapor." The wind and the waves must obey their Master. Not "was" or "will be." He is always the Jesus of the here and now. The contemporary Christ. The Lord has always been "is" and always will be "is." He is the "I Am" in the midst of your storm. Your problems are but the pavement that brings Him to you. Your storm is a *super highway*. This speaks of His provision. This is an unfinished sentence. You fill in the blank. ("I Am \_\_\_\_\_.") "In Him we are complete." He is all that you will ever need. Not only is He necessary, He is enough. He is the great I AM. I found this, "To the Artist, He's altogether lovely. To the Architect, He's the Chief Cornerstone. To the Banker, He's the hidden treasure. To the Baker, He's the living bread. To the biologist, He is the life. To the builder, He is the Sure Foundation. To the doctor, He is the Great Physician. To the educator, He's the Great Teacher. To the farmer, He's the Lord of the Harvest. To the florist, He's the Rose of Sharon. To the geologist, He's the Rock of Ages. To the Jurist, He's the righteous judge. To the jeweler, He's the pearl of great price. To the lawyer, He's the advocate. To the publisher, He's the good tidings of great joy. To the philosopher, He's the wisdom of God. To the preacher, He's the Word of God. To the sculptor, He's the Living Stone. To the statesman, He's the Desire of All Nations. To the theologian, He is the Author and Finisher of our Faith. To the traveler, He is the New and Living Way. To the sinner—that's us, folks—He's the Lamb of God Who takes away the sins of the world. To the Christian, He's the Son of the Living God, the Savior, the Redeemer and Lord. He is the Great I AM.

**Wuest** on **it is I** - "**It is I**." The pronoun is used here for emphasis. Literally, "It is I and nobody else."

[Ego eimi](#) - I am - All the uses of this phrase in the NT - see concentration in Gospel of John - Matt. 14:27; Matt. 22:32; Matt. 24:5; Matt. 26:22; Matt. 26:25; Mk. 6:50; Mk. 13:6; Mk. 14:62; Lk. 1:19; Lk. 21:8; Lk. 22:70; Lk. 24:39; Jn. 4:26; Jn. 6:20; Jn. 6:35; Jn. 6:41; Jn. 6:48; Jn. 6:51; Jn. 8:12; Jn. 8:18; Jn. 8:24; Jn. 8:28; Jn. 8:58; Jn. 9:9; Jn. 10:7; Jn. 10:9; Jn. 10:11; Jn. 10:14; Jn. 11:25; Jn. 13:19; Jn. 14:6; Jn. 15:1; Jn. 15:5; Jn. 18:5; Jn. 18:6; Jn. 18:8; Acts 9:5; Acts 10:21; Acts 18:10; Acts 22:3; Acts 22:8; Acts 26:15; Acts 26:29; Rev. 1:8; Rev. 1:17; Rev. 2:23; Rev. 21:6; Rev. 22:16

**Barton** - The literal reading for “It is I” is “I am” (Greek, ego eimi); it is the same as saying “the I AM is here” or “I, Yahweh, am here” (see Exodus 3:14; Isaiah 41:4; 43:10; 52:6). Jesus, the “I AM,” came with unexpected help and encouragement during the disciples’ time of desperate need. Their need was real; their fear was real. But in the presence of Jesus, fear can be dismissed. (LAC)

**Spurgeon** - He did not keep them in suspense: “Straightway Jesus spake unto them.” How sweetly sounded that loving and majestic voice! Above the roar of waves and howling of winds, they heard the voice of the Lord. This was his old word also, “Be of good cheer.” The most conclusive reason for courage was his own presence. “It is I; be not afraid.” If Jesus be near, if the spirit of the storm be, after all, the Lord of love, all room for fear is gone. Can Jesus come to us through the storm? Then we shall weather it, and come to him. He who rules the tempest is not the devil, not chance, not a malicious enemy; but Jesus. This should end all fear.

**Rob Morgan** - Whatever your storm, whatever your gale, whatever your struggle, you have total access through His grace to those same three short, simple sentences: Be of good cheer. It is I. Don't be afraid. Those words are a great encouragement. In fact, they encouraged Peter to do something rather rash and reckless.

**Take courage** ([2293](#))([tharseo](#) from **tharsos** = boldness, courage) means to have courage. Be of good courage, be of good cheer or be unafraid. The idea is that the recipient of this command is to have

confidence and firmness of purpose in the face of danger or testing. Only used 7x - Matt. 9:2; Matt. 9:22; Matt. 14:27; Mk. 6:50; Mk. 10:49; Jn. 16:33; Acts 23:11. After speaking the upper room discourse to His disciples Jesus used this same verb declaring "These things (John 13-16) I have spoken to you, so that in Me you may have peace. In the world you have tribulation, but **take courage**; I have overcome the world."

Jesus gave these same words of encouragement again at the end of the Upper Room Discourse (John 13-16)...

"These things I have spoken to you, so that in Me you may have peace.

In the world you have tribulation, but take courage ([tharseo](#) in the [present imperative](#));

I have overcome the world."

(Jn. 16:33)

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**COURAGE!** When Jesus arrived, he made a huge difference! Because of Jesus—all he taught, all he did—your life is different now! You're not alone, and you're not lost. You have a heavenly Father, a living Savior, and a present helper, the Holy Spirit. All the problems that beset you are now theirs as well. Lest we forget, try this. At the end of a phone conversation, instead of "good-bye" say "courage!" Gently, softly, remind one another of what Jesus gives us. In the face of every trouble, every heartbreak, every troubling diagnosis ... courage! (Barton)

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**Adrian Rogers (excerpt from How to Be an Unsinkable Saint)** - Now would you like to walk on the water? Now remember here, that our Lord is teaching a spiritual lesson and the spiritual lesson is that whatever your problem, whatever it looks like is going to sink your ship is no problem to God. Let me give you some steps for walking on the water.

Step Number One, we'll call it Vision. The Vision. You must see Jesus. Look again if you will in Mt 14:27, 28, "But straightway Jesus spake unto them, saying, Be of good cheer; it is I—literally I AM—be not afraid. And Peter answered him and said, Lord, if it be thou, bid me come unto thee on the water."

They saw Him walking on the water. Faith is looking to Jesus and keeping on looking. What did Peter see when He saw Jesus? Don't miss this because this is the heart of the whole thing. When Peter saw Jesus walking on the water Peter saw that what looked like would be over Peter's head was already under Jesus' feet. That's very important you see this. What Peter thought was going to be over his head was under Jesus' feet.

John 16:33, Jesus said, "In the world you shall have tribulation: but be of good cheer; I have overcome the world."

You have tribulation? Jesus has overcome. No matter what it is, take your problem and double it, and double it again, and listen to your pastor—Jesus has overcome it. "In this world, you shall have tribulation. I have overcome the world." What you think is about to sink your ship is under His feet. Why did Peter say, "Lord, if it be you, bid me come to you on the water"? Do you think that Peter was just seeking a thrill? Do you think he just wanted to go back and say, "Guess what I did!" No. There was something about Jesus walking on the water and Peter seeing that that drew the heart of Peter like a magnet to Jesus. Now what Peter was saying is, "Lord Jesus, I want to put my feet where you have put yours. I want to walk in victory with you. I want to be one with you, Lord, walking on the water." That's what I pray you will see tonight, what I'll see tonight: A vision of Jesus conquering, superior, overcoming. Have you seen this?

Now, first of all, there is the Vision. You must see Jesus. Number two, there is the Voice. You must hear Jesus. Now look if you will now in Mt 14:28, "And Peter answered him and said, Lord, if it be thou, bid me come unto thee on the water. And He said, Come."

"Come." Have you ever heard Him say that to you? "Come." If you listen, you'll hear Him saying that. Now, Peter did not start out of that boat until he was ordered out of that boat. Until he was invited. Peter didn't name it and claim it. All faith is based a Word from God. That's what we've been talking about in our series in Hebrews Chapter 11, Champions of the Faith. We've given you Romans 10:17 over and over again, "Faith cometh by hearing and hearing by the Word of God." And the Word of God reveals the will of God. When Peter got out of that boat after Jesus said, "Come" he was not really walking on the water as much as he was walking on the Word. He is supported by the Word of God. How do you walk on water? You see Jesus. Understand Who He is. That He has overcome the world. Then you hear Jesus. There is the Vision. Then there is the Voice.

And then there is the Venture. He obeyed Jesus. Now most of us here believe that Jesus can walk on water. Most of us believe that theoretically, we could. I'm talking about over our problems. But that's all—it gets not much further than our notebooks, and therefore, it never really is faith. I've told you many times the difference between the belief and faith. Faith is belief with legs on it. Faith is obeying. Matthew 14:29, "And he said, Come. And when Peter was come down out of the ship, he walked on the water."

Faith is venturing everything in God's faithfulness. It is committing yourself to the Word and then to the waves. That's very hard for me to do. Faith's Vision, you see Jesus. Faith's Voice, you hear Jesus. Faith's Venture, you obey Jesus. And then notice the Victory.

He walked on the water. You must prove Jesus.

Now notice again, verses 29 and following, "And he said, Come. And when Peter was come down out of the ship, he walked on the water, to go to Jesus. But when he saw the wind boisterous, he was afraid; and beginning to sink, he cried, saying, Lord, save me. And immediately Jesus stretched forth his hand, and caught him, and said unto him, O thou of little faith, wherefore didst thou doubt? And when they were come into the ship, the wind ceased."

Use your imagination. What was it like for Peter? What was the sea like? Was it like concrete, or was it like Jell-O? Was it slippery? I don't know. But here's Peter out there. Now he's a fisherman. He's made his living on that water. And he steps over the gunwale of that boat, and puts his feet down on something solid. And he begins to walk. He says, "This is wonderful—look at this! Look. Look at this! I'm walking on the water." About that time, he sees some boisterous wave, maybe it slaps him in the face. He looks around and he sees the howling wind. And he stops saying "This is wonderful," and he says, "This is impossible—I can't do this!" And he begins to sink.

He takes his eyes off of Jesus and puts them back on the storm. And when he does, he begins to sink. You're saying to me, "That's right, Adrian, you're telling me to get out of the boat and walk on the water." You see what happened to Peter? You see how Peter sank? Yep, I wish that wasn't in the Bible. That's one of the saddest things in the Bible. You know, when old Peter sank and drowned there, and John dragged him back in the boat, and said, "That fool should have never gotten out of the boat to begin with." Now we've got to go tell his family. We've got to have a funeral. That was a sad funeral—Peter's funeral—oh, it was a sad funeral. And the disciples were criticizing one another for ever letting Peter get out of the boat. And Jesus was there saying, "Oh, boy, did I make a mistake. Inviting that man to get out of that boat, that was just a tragic thing. What a sad funeral that was, right?"

Now listen to me, I'd rather walk a little way on the water with Jesus then not to get out of the boat at all. You may have a sinking spell, but you will not drown. And though we deny Him, He cannot deny Himself. You know, the Bible says "The steps of a good man are ordered by the Lord, and though he falls, he shall not be utterly cast down for the Lord upholdeth him with His hand."

Well, friend you can trust the Lord! I'll tell you one thing about Peter. He may have had a sinking spell, but he walked further on the water than anyone else there that day did. Don't be afraid to trust the Lord. And I want to ask you another question: How did Peter get back into that boat? One of two ways: Either he walked back on the water, or he came back in the arms of Jesus. Either way sounds pretty good to me. He did not drown! He either walked back to that boat or he came back in the arms of Jesus and so that is faith's Venture. You must get out of the boat.

Now let's move on and think of faith's Value. The Value. You must worship Jesus. This is the whole point. The idea was not that Jesus was showing up, or doing some magical trick. No. Go down to Matthew 14:32, 33, "And when they were come into the ship, the wind ceased. Then they that were in the ship came and worshipped him, saying, Of a truth thou art the Son of God."

All of this brought about the worship of the Lord Jesus Christ. You see Jesus. You hear Jesus. You obey Jesus. You worship the Lord Jesus Christ. You see what He can do! You know I thank God for storms. I don't know what songs they sang back in Peter's time, but they just may have been singing that song by Andrea Crouch, "Through It all, through it all, I've learned to trust in Jesus. I've learned to trust His Word."

Now you may want to say in the comparative safety and comfort of the boat, but I sincerely believe this—you're safer on the waves with Jesus than you are in the boat without Him. I believe that. Sometimes we're afraid to send our children overseas to be missionaries. If our children are in the will of God, I'd rather have them overseas, I'd feel safer about them, then I would in the back bedroom, out of the will of God. You can trust them to our Lord. If He says, "Come," just get out of the boat with both feet. Now God is not calling us to walk on the water literally. He may, but that's not what the point of this story is. What God is calling us to do is to see whatever we think is a great problem as already under His feet. And if we will see Him, if we will hear Him, if we will obey Him, and worship Him, we're going to be walking on the water.

Conclusion - You know what? One of these days, the trumpet's going to sound. Jesus was up on the mount of the glory, up there alone praying, and they were down there in the midst of the sea pulling on the oars. They didn't see Him; but He saw them. You say, "Well it was night time." The night and the dark are alike to Him. He saw them. He knew they were there. He sent them there. He constrained them to go over to the other side. He didn't tell them to go under, He told them to go over. He sent them into a storm to teach them a lesson. And He came down from the mountain where He was there praying, and came down to help them out of that problem. Do you know where Jesus is right now? In the mountain of His glory. Do you know what He's doing right now? He's praying for us. Do you know He has His eye on you? He knows about you this very moment. And I believe soon, He's going to step off the mountain of His glory and come this time, not walking on the water, but stepping on the clouds. And He's going to say, "Come!" And we're going to rise to meet Him in the air. What a day that will be!

"... he walked on the water, to go to Jesus." Matt. 14:29

Peter probably did not walk very far but at least he went farther than anyone else ever has gone!

He threw the Lord a challenge: "If it be thou, bid me come unto thee on the water" (14:28). I rather like his daring proposition. He was impetuous, venturesome, often getting into trouble but there was nothing dull about him. He did not say, "If it be thou, come to our aid" but "Let me come to thee." The Lord likes to give men such a dare so he said to Peter, "Come." We ask God to prove his promises by waiting on us; he wants us to prove them by getting out of the boat and walking upon them.

But notice that Peter said, "Bid me come to thee." Christ must ever be the object of our walk of faith, we must not walk just for the thrill of it. And Peter would not start until invited. God will not sustain you in any ventures he has not ordered.

Will you get out of the boat and walk the waves toward him or will you keep on dabbling first this foot, then that, in the water but never standing on it? Suppose you do have a sinking spell as Peter did? You won't drown for the Lord is out there! Better walk by faith a little way and falter than to live the safe, smug life of those who never step out on his promises! Your faith need not fail and won't fail if you look unto him, but even if it does he will not lose you!

Don't live in the boat!

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**P G Matthew** - Jesus immediately said to them: "Take courage! It is I. Don't be afraid." —Matthew 14:27

In this passage Jesus commanded his disciples to get into a boat and cross the lake without him. This was a new experience for the disciples. They understood that Jesus would join them later, but they did not know how or when he would come. It was Jesus' intent that they grow in their faith.

When the disciples set out at Jesus' command, the weather was calm. Soon, though, it became stormy. Some Christians believe that if we are sent by God and we are walking in his paths, then everything will be smooth and easy. They think that no trouble or storm will ever face us, that no persecution will ever come our way, that we'll never have to endure sickness or poverty. This is a false view. The prophet Jonah faced a stormy sea because of his disobedience, but this does not mean that obedient Christians will never face trials. Even Christians who are led by the Spirit of God will encounter severe tests. The calm will change to a storm. It is life's storms that try our faith, not life's calms. These storms cause us to be aroused and awakened, so that we may trust in Jesus Christ alone.

And so we read that the wind rose up against the disciples. The sea became rough; the waves battered against their boat. The disciples were surely tempted to turn around and go back, yet they did not. Why? They were believers. Believers obey the commands of Jesus Christ. So they did not change their direction and instead strained at the oars. They worked hard as they endeavored to obey their Master in the face of adversity.

But notice and take heart: While the disciples were being buffeted by the waves, Jesus did not abandon them, nor were they hidden from his sight. He saw their struggle and interceded in private prayer for them.

What can we learn from this passage? Jesus is the omniscient God; he sees all things, and his eyes are especially on us, his disciples. He is interceding for us even now, and his prayer is always effectual. If Jesus sends us, no storm or enemy can defeat us; we will arrive at our destination.

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**Oswald Chambers** - But straightway Jesus spake unto them, saying, Be of good cheer; it is I; be not afraid. —Matthew 14:27

JESUS KNOWS EVERYTHING ABOUT US. He knows about our surroundings and our conditions. He knows better than we how to manage our daily affairs, such as how to manage a fish boat. Peter, with his experience along this line, had to acknowledge that Jesus knew more than he. Jesus sees the typewriting, the shorthand, the cleaning, the scrubbing, the preaching, and the praying that we do.

Moreover, Jesus experiences all of these things with you. You cannot get hold of God unless you realize the glorious fact that Christ lives in you and is working through you by the indwelling power of the Holy Spirit.

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**Spurgeon** - God says to you, "Fear not...I am thy shield, and thy exceeding great reward" (Gen. 15:1). Believer, grasp the divine word with a personal, appropriating faith. Think that you hear Jesus say, "I have prayed for thee, that thy faith fail not" (Luke 22:32). Think you see Him walking on the waters of your trouble, for He is there, and He is saying, "Be of good cheer, it is I; be not afraid" (Matt. 14:27). Oh, those sweet words of Christ! May the Holy Spirit make you feel them as spoken to you. Forget the others for awhile—accept the voice of Jesus as addressed to you and say, "Jesus whispers consolation; I cannot refuse it; I will sit under His



shadow with great delight.”

When I was a student at Columbia Bible College, I had several mentoring sessions with Dr. H. Edwin Young, then the pastor of First Baptist Church of Columbia. One day as we sat in his office, I said, “Dr. Young, sometimes you’re very hard to see. It took me a solid month to line up this appointment.” He smiled and apologized for that, then he said something I’ve never forgotten. “Rob, I’ve learned that if I’m always available, I’m never available.” He explained, “If I’m always available I become so drained and tired and depleted that I don’t have anything to give when I am available. I need time to recharge, to replenish, to cultivate my own soul, to stay fresh for the ministry God has given me.” Well, it doesn’t take a month for someone to see me. I don’t want to give you the wrong idea. But Dr. Young’s principle is important for all of us. We need time to ourselves and time when we’re shut away just with the Lord. I can’t get enough of those times. —Pastor Robert J. Morgan

Exhausted and frightened, they battled the rain,  
The wind, the waves, enduring the strain,  
Till finally their nerves could stand it no more;  
and their strength was all gone and their muscles were sore.  
But up on the mountain Jesus could see,  
every white-capping wave on the rough Galilee.  
And treading the billows like a carpet of sod,  
He came to their aid with the power of God.  
They worshiped Him then, with rejoicing and awe  
For the marvels He did and the wonders they saw.  
But better to praise Him with the storm at its worst;  
By remembering His power and promises first.  
—Pastor ROBERT J. MORGAN

**Matthew 14:28 Peter said to Him, "Lord, if it is You, command me to come to You on the water."**

Berkley 14:28 Peter answered Him, “Lord, if it is You, order me to come to You on the water.”

NET Matthew 14:28 Peter said to him, "Lord, if it is you, order me to come to you on the water."

NLT Matthew 14:28 Then Peter called to him, "Lord, if it's really you, tell me to come to you, walking on the water."

ESV Matthew 14:28 And Peter answered him, "Lord, if it is you, command me to come to you on the water."

NIV Matthew 14:28 "Lord, if it's you," Peter replied, "tell me to come to you on the water."

GNT Matthew 14:28 ποκριθε ς δ α τ Π τ ρ ο ς ε π ε ν, Κ ρ ι ε, ε σ ε, κ λ ε υ σ ν μ ε λ θ ε ν π ρ ς σ ε π τ δ α τ α.

KJV Matthew 14:28 And Peter answered him and said, Lord, if it be thou, bid me come unto thee on the water.

YLT Matthew 14:28 And Peter answering him said, 'Sir, if it is thou, bid me come to thee upon the waters;'

ASV Matthew 14:28 And Peter answered him and said, Lord, if it be thou, bid me come unto thee upon the waters.

CSB Matthew 14:28 "Lord, if it's You," Peter answered Him, "command me to come to You on the water."

NKJ Matthew 14:28 And Peter answered Him and said, "Lord, if it is You, command me to come to You on the water."

NRS Matthew 14:28 Peter answered him, "Lord, if it is you, command me to come to you on the water."

- **command me to come:** Mt 19:27 26:33-35 Mk 14:31 Lu 22:31-34,49,50 Joh 6:68 13:36-38 Ro 12:3

## THE SHEEP KNOW HIS VOICE

**Peter said to Him, "Lord ([kurios](#)), if it is You** - Peter was so impetuous. He was a mixture of great faith and great doubt. Note the "if" which might suggest a hint of doubt. In fact the "IF" is not "iffy" but is a first class conditional statement assuming what follows is true ("**Since** it is you"). Jesus had said His sheep would recognize His voice (Jn 10:3-4, 27) and Peter knew it was the **Lord** (just like

John did after the resurrection declaring to Peter "It is the Lord." Jn 21:7).

**Constable** - This is the first of three occasions in which Matthew recorded that Peter received special treatment (cf. Mt 16:13–23; Mt 17:24–27)....Peter evidently wanted to be as close to Jesus as he could be as often as possible (cf. John 21:7).

**Command me to come to You on the water** - **Command** is a command in the [aorist imperative](#) , asking the Lord to come to him. Peter, the outspoken, now is ready to step out on water! As **Adrian Rogers** phrases it "Peter wanted to share this victory with Christ. Please put under my feet what is already under Your feet. Peter is not seeking a thrill. There was something about Christ that drew the heart of this man like a magnet. He wanted to share that victory with his Lord."

**Broadus** - Seeing Jesus thus walking on the water, Peter immediately felt the desire natural to bold spirits to do anything which they see others do; and under a sudden impulse of confidence in Jesus—mingled, no doubt, with his usual self-confidence—he proposed and undertook to walk upon the water himself. We must remember that the Twelve, on their recent mission, had been empowered to work miracles. (10:8.) Perhaps also he was prompted by the desire to get near his loved teacher as soon as possible, as in John 21:7. Jesus consented to his coming. Peter would thus learn a needed lesson in the only way in which such confident spirits will learn, viz., from experience.

**Spurgeon** - You, who are wanting to get to Jesus, should make a desperate effort to get to him; even walk on the water to get to Jesus. Walking on the water might be an idle and evil exhibition; but to walk on the water to go to Jesus is another matter. Try it, and the Lord enable you to get to him!

**Toussaint** - The Evangelist here presents Peter in all of his impetuosity mixed with his great devotion. In keeping with Matthew's style of writing, these traits, which are first mentioned here, characterize Peter throughout the remainder of the Gospel. More significant is the fact that the place of preeminence among the apostles which Peter here assumes is never lost in the rest of Matthew's Gospel."

**Command** (order) ([2753](#)) ([keleuo](#)) means to set in motion, urge on. It is usually followed by an infinitive to indicate what is expected as a response. In the NT, used generally with the meaning of to command, order something to be done. This is the same verb Jesus had just used in Mt 14:18. All uses in Matthew - Matt. 8:18; Matt. 14:9; Matt. 14:19; Matt. 14:28; Matt. 18:25; Matt. 27:58; Matt. 27:64

**Brian Bell** - Peter forgot one thing at this point - The meaning of his name, Rock/petros/stone. But remember, anybody can sit in the boat & watch, it takes faith to leave the boat. (29) Time for a great lesson to be learned, the lesson of Come. 1. In the feeding of the 5000 we learned He was Provider. Now, how would He show Himself as Protector if they didn't ever need protection?

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### **James Smith - Handfuls of Purpose - A SUPERNATURAL WALK Matthew 14:28–34**

Jesus appeared to His storm-tossed disciples walking on the sea. To this purpose of His followers the wind was contrary, but the contrary wind was an opportune time for the Lord. They saw His wonders in the great deep of their distress.

**I. A Bold Request.** "Peter said, Lord, if it be Thou, bid me come unto Thee on the water" (v. 28). This was a great petition, but not too great. "If it be THOU." He is able to do exceeding abundantly above all we ask. Should our love to Christ not constrain us to walk even as He walked? What although other disciples shrink from such a prayer; let us seek the privilege of walking with Him, even where human wisdom and fleshly feelings cannot find a footing.

**II. A Gracious Invitation.** "He said, Come" (v. 29). The door is now open for the faith of Peter. He is invited to walk where none but the feet of faith dare go. The Christian's walk is a supernatural one. He walks by faith. This, in the eyes of the wise men of the world, is like walking on the sea. They cannot understand it. Every believer is invited by Christ to walk with Him on the deep as He walked.

**III. A Successful Venture.** "Peter went out of the ship, and walked on the water" (v. 29). The seemingly impossible can be accomplished through simple faith in the Word of Christ. There must be a going out if there is to be a going on. The life of faith implies the complete abandonment of every other source of confidence—out of the ship of self on to the Word of Christ. Jesus is not fully trusted until both hands are off every earthly prop.

**IV. A Momentary Failure.** "When he saw the wind boisterous he was afraid" (v. 30). Perhaps he expected the storm would cease when he stepped out on the invitation of the Lord Jesus. Our troubles don't all cease the moment we trust Christ. Our faith will be tried. Peter was afraid, and began to sink, because he was getting more concerned about himself than the Word of his Master. Even walking in Christ's ways will become a terror and a labour when our eyes are off Christ Himself.

**V. An Earnest Prayer.** "Lord, save me" (v. 30). "Let him that thinketh he standeth take heed lest he fall." Let him who is falling not hesitate to cry out for salvation. Out on the depths of the life of faith, where no unbeliever ever stood, Jesus will make us realise that, apart from His continual help, we can do nothing but tremble and sink. Peter was wise in crying as soon as he began to sink. Many

wait until they are up to the neck.

**VI. A Speedy Deliverance.** “Immediately Jesus caught him” (v. 31). Instant confession brought instant salvation. He leaps to the help of His needy ones (S. of S. 2:8). Peter was not sent back to the ship. There is no help for the troubled and tempted believer in the old life. Jesus caught Peter, so he found refuge in the “arms of Jesus.” These strong and willing arms are still outstretched (Psa. 138:7).

**VII. A Gentle Rebuke.** “O thou of little faith, wherefore didst thou doubt?” (v. 31). The tenderness of Jesus is very manifest. He will not break the bruised reed. We might think Peter’s faith was anything but little when he boldly stepped out on the swelling waves. Oh, how precious a thing faith is! If we have trusted Christ let us trust Him wholly. None perish that Him trust. Abraham staggered not, but was strong in faith.

**VIII. A Blessed Result.** “When they were come to the ship the wind ceased” (v. 32). Peter now walks with Jesus—saved from fear, where before he had feared and sank. His walking to Jesus was a testing time, but his walking with Him is calm and peaceful. The wind is still as boisterous as ever, but he fears no evil, for the Lord is with him. The near presence of Christ is the secret of a restful and triumphant Christian life. When Jesus came into the ship the wind ceased. Let Him into the heart; He maketh the storm a calm.

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### Cyril Hocking - WHEREFORE DIDST THOU DOUBT?

IT IS NOT a matter here of faith or unbelief, as is often the subject in the Epistle to the Hebrews, but rather the exercise of faith on the part of the believer. In the case of Peter here the Lord was rebuking his faith (cf. also other instances in Matthew, 6:30; 8:26; 16:8) in contrast to His approval of the great faith of others who were not of Israel, 8:10; 15:28. We recall that, as with Gideon, Peter was to develop from little to great faith, Judg. 7:22; Acts 2:41. Likewise it is, with us, as we exercise our little faith in a great God. Faith becomes stronger and greater the more it is used.

Twice in our section, Peter addresses the Saviour as Lord; ‘Lord, if ...’, v. 28; ‘Lord, save ...’, v. 30. The first relates to supposition, the second to salvation. Peter could walk upon the sea as long as his heart and eyes were fixed on the Lord. As soon as he looked elsewhere his faith faltered, providing warning and an essential lesson in our Christian walk. Peter’s extreme situation was met by the salvation of the Lord. Peter was sinking, but he knew the One to whom he must cry in order to be saved. ‘Lord, save me’, has been the language of every true believer in the Saviour, 1:21; 8:25. In saving Peter, firstly the Lord stretched forth His hand, as He had done also with the leper, 8:3. There is cleansing and salvation in the outstretched hand of Christ. Then He took hold of him, as with the blind man and others, Mark 8:23; Luke 9:47; 14:4. He is so quick to support and to reassure those who are coming to Him.

The effectual work of Christ in securing salvation is stressed here. Immediately He took Peter’s hand ‘and caught him’ even as he was sinking, only then rebuking his heart for his little faith, v. 31. Delay in these circumstances would have been inappropriate. Sometimes the Lord did delay, John 11:6, but in this ‘emergency’ on the lake He mercifully saved Peter in the nick of time.

It is good to know the immediacy of Christ’s salvation, Rom. 10:13. We turn from the prodigal’s ‘give me’, Luke 15:12, and even his ‘make me’, v. 19, to Peter’s ‘save me’. What a simple yet poignant prayer. When one is in such desperate straits as Peter, these words are so meaningful, cf. Matt. 8:25. If we find ourselves in similar extremity, sinking in waves of adversity, He is ready, willing and able to answer our prayer, Heb. 7:25. Remember, Peter was saved, v. 31, and the wind stopped, v. 32!

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**Matthew 14:29 And He said, "Come!" And Peter got out of the boat, and walked on the water and came toward Jesus.**

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Berkley 14:29 He said, “Come.” Peter got out of the boat and he walked on the water and came toward Jesus;

NET Matthew 14:29 So he said, "Come." Peter got out of the boat, walked on the water, and came toward Jesus.

NLT Matthew 14:29 "Yes, come," Jesus said. So Peter went over the side of the boat and walked on the water toward Jesus.

ESV Matthew 14:29 He said, "Come." So Peter got out of the boat and walked on the water and came to Jesus.

NIV Matthew 14:29 "Come," he said. Then Peter got down out of the boat, walked on the water and came toward Jesus.

GNT Matthew 14:29 ὁ εἶπεν, λθ . κα καταβ ς π το πλο ου [ ] Π προς περιεπ τησεν π τ δατα κα λθεν πρ ς τ ν ησο ν.

KJV Matthew 14:29 And he said, Come. And when Peter was come down out of the ship, he walked on the water, to go to Jesus.

YLT Matthew 14:29 and he said, 'Come;' and having gone down from the boat, Peter walked upon the waters to come unto Jesus,

ASV Matthew 14:29 And he said, Come. And Peter went down from the boat, and walked upon the waters to come to Jesus.

CSB Matthew 14:29 "Come!" He said. And climbing out of the boat, Peter started walking on the water and came toward Jesus.

NKJ Matthew 14:29 So He said, "Come." And when Peter had come down out of the boat, he walked on the water to go to Jesus.

NRS Matthew 14:29 He said, "Come." So Peter got out of the boat, started walking on the water, and came toward Jesus.

■ **walked:** Mt 17:20 21:21 Mk 9:23 11:22,23 Lu 17:6 Ac 3:16 Ro 4:19 Php 4:13

**And He said, "Come!"** - Jesus commanded Peter to come to Him. This word from the lips of the Lord Jesus has to be one of the most wonderful words in all of Scripture (read Mt 11:28-30+). While Peter may have been impetuous, he trusted in this one great word from Jesus.

Peter's not walking on water but on a word, "**Come!**"

-- Brian Bell

**Adrian Rogers** notes that "Peter did not start until he was ordered. God will not sustain you in any adventure that He has not ordered. But vice versa - every command is a promise. Faith is rooted in the Word of God and the will of God. It is stepping out on the promises and commands of God. Peter was really walking on the Word. You don't name and claim it. You may think and sink. Faith is venturing everything in God's faithfulness. It is committing yourself to the waves. Faith is belief with legs on it.

**Lenski** - Only under those circumstances could Jesus say, "Come!" The faith which Peter manifests Jesus accepts and justifies. If it had not been true faith, or if wrong and foolish motives had prompted Peter, Jesus would never have given his command. Those who criticize Peter ought to see that their criticism really strikes Jesus who consents to Peter's proposal. Peter is ready to make up for the cowardice of the superstitious fear he had had a moment ago by the courage of faith which now trusts Jesus' power enough to walk out to him at his command. We cannot agree that Peter intends to outdo and to outdare the other disciples, to show off his faith before them before the Lord as being greater than theirs as he afterward did when he said, "Although all shall be offended, yet will not I" (26:23). Peter makes no comparison between himself and the rest. If he had done so even silently, the Lord would never have replied, "Come!" but would have warned and corrected him exactly as he did on the later occasion. The Lord's "Come!" is the bidding Peter asks

The key to faith is looking to Jesus.

Peter saw that everything that threatened to be over his head was already under Jesus' feet.

--- Adrian Rogers

**Phillips** - All around Peter, the world was being torn apart. The wind was screaming in his ears and the boat was tossing like a piece of driftwood. But the surging billows were already beneath the Lord's feet. Jesus had walked some three and a half miles across the lake to reach the boat, which according to John 6:19 was twenty-five or thirty furlongs from its starting point. (All the circumstances that we are unable to cope with are also already beneath the Lord's feet.) The things that were beneath His feet, the Lord was going to put under Peter's feet as well. Peter was going to walk on water because he had faith, the vital link to the source of power. "Faith," according to Romans 10:17+, "cometh by hearing, and hearing by the word of God." Peter had heard the one word he needed: "Come." Upon it he could rest his faith and dare his all.(Exploring Matthew)

**THOUGHT** - Every person born is born "drowning," drowning in sin, dead in sin and destined for an eternal "drowning" not in water but in the [Lake of fire](#). Jesus is ever crying out "**Come to me.**" Have you come to Him and been saved from eternal drowning in the [Lake of fire](#)!

[\*\*Come, ye sinners, poor and needy\*\*](#)

Weak and wounded, sick and sore

Jesus ready, stands to save you

Full of pity, love and power

I will arise and go to Jesus  
He will embrace me in His arms  
In the arms of my dear Savior  
Oh, there are ten thousand charms

**And Peter got out of the boat (ploion), and walked on the water and came toward Jesus** - These are amazing words. Peter was experiencing a miracle.. In trust and obedience Peter has walked from the boat on the water and is close enough to Jesus Who is able to grasp him immediately (Mt 14:31).

**THOUGHT** - Peter was as we say "a walking miracle!" But are not all who have been redeemed by His blood also "walking miracles?" We may not walk on water, but far better, because of His grace and His Word and His Spirit, we can now walk on terra firma in a manner worthy of the Lord to please our Father in all respects (cf Col 1:9-13+). That is an even greater miracle than walking on water and it is a miracle we can and should be experiencing every day by His grace and for His glory. Amen.

**Lenski** - So Peter went over the side of the boat and walked, actually walked, on the waters in order to go to Jesus. In Jesus' eyes it was good for the others to see Peter's faith and its full justification on the part of Jesus.

**Phillips** - Picture the scene. Peter lifted one foot over the side of the boat and as the waves soaked his leg up to his waist, he was reminded that there was water out there and man cannot walk on water. But Peter pondered the word of God in Christ-"Come"-and lifted his other leg over the side. However, Peter still had an iron grip on the boat. He would not be exercising real faith until he let go. It was when he fixed his eyes on Jesus that everything came into focus and he let go. Then the impossible happened. He was no longer being ruled by circumstances; he was triumphing over them. Faith was operating in his life. Just outside our front door we have a thermometer. The mercury in that thermometer reflects the ups and downs of the temperature outside the house. That is all a thermometer can do: respond to the influence of the temperature. Inside the house, on a wall in the hallway, we have a thermostat. It too functions in relation to the temperature. During the winter when the temperature in the house falls to a certain point, the thermostat orders the furnace to bring the temperature back to the set number of degrees. During the summer when the temperature in the house rises to a certain point, the thermostat orders the air conditioner to bring the temperature back down again. The thermometer only reacts to the temperature, but the thermostat controls the temperature. The thermostat rules because it is connected by an unseen wire to a source of power. Every believer is either one or the other. He can be a thermometer going up or down with every change of circumstance. Or he can be a thermostat, influenced by the ups and downs of life, but instantly triumphing over them because faith links him to a wondrous source of power. So Peter was triumphing over circumstances. Peter had not mastered the theory of whatever dynamic was involved in walking on water, but his trust in Christ at that moment so linked him with Christ that Christ's mastery was transmitted to him. Peter's faith was the switch that turned on the power in his life. (Exploring Matthew)

**Guzik** has an interesting thought - We also know that it was on this occasion that Peter got out of the boat, walking on the water to Jesus (Matthew 14:28-31). There is reason—from history and subtle clues, not explicitly from the Scriptures—to believe that Peter was the main source for Mark's gospel. If this was the case, Peter may have left out the story because he didn't want to be exalted for walking on the water—or to be humbled for sinking.

**Barton** - Peter was not putting Jesus to the test, something we are told not to do (Mt 4:7). Instead, he was the only one in the boat who reacted in faith. His impulsive request led him to experience a rather unusual demonstration of God's power. Jesus' presence in the storm caused Peter to exercise a fearless faith. Peter overcame his fear and attempted the impossible. But notice that he did so only with Jesus' command to come. Notice also that he asked only to do what Jesus was doing; that is, he wanted to share in Jesus' power, some of which the disciples had already been experiencing (Mt 10:1). (LAC)

**Robertson** agrees writing "'Mark does not give the incident of Peter's walking on the water and beginning to sink. Perhaps Peter was not fond of telling that story."

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### Correcting Your Doubt -Selwyn Hughes

Jesus reached out His hand, caught hold of him, and said to him, "You of little faith, why did you doubt?"—  
MATTHEW 14:31

While it is possible for us to distinguish between doubt and unbelief in theory, it is not so easy in practice. Doubt can move in the direction of unbelief and cross the borderline, but when it does, it ceases to be doubt. The idea of "total" or "complete" doubt is a contradiction in terms, for doubt that is total can no longer be classified as doubt; it is unbelief.

Os Guinness points out that when we attempt to undertake a biblical analysis of doubt, we can come out with either a "hard" or "soft"

view of the subject. Those who take a "soft" view of doubt point to how vastly different doubt is from unbelief, and those who take a "hard" view of doubt point out its similarities.

Both views can be drawn out of the Scriptures. Error is usually truth out of balance, and it is important, therefore, that we get a balanced view of what the Bible has to say about doubt. In my view it can be summarized like this—doubt is not the same as unbelief, but unless corrected, doubt can naturally lead to unbelief.

This view has helped me avoid what I consider to be the extremes of being too hard or too soft on doubt. It is a condition which must be regarded as serious, but it need not be fatal. Don't allow your doubts to bring you into condemnation, for when faced and brought into clear perspective, they can be the catalyst to a deeper pursuit of God.

Prayer Father, when will I learn that in You all things serve—even doubt? Show me how to turn my doubts into stepping stones and use them to come into an even closer relationship with You. Amen.

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**Matthew 14:31 I WILL NOT DOUBT** - What a picture we have in this passage of the manner in which we often react when we are "tossed with the waves" of adversity and buffeted by the "contrary winds of human experience." When everything appears to be going against us, and the very foundations seem crumbling, how prone we are to forget that our Savior has promised, "I will never leave thee, nor forsake thee" (Heb. 13:5).

Oh, what peace we forfeit when we refuse to take God at His Word. How much better, keeping our eyes on Him and trusting His promises, to say with the poet:

I will not doubt though all my ships at sea  
Come drifting home with broken masts and sails;  
I will believe the Hand which never fails,  
From seeming evil, worketh good for me.  
And though I weep because these sails are tattered,  
Still will I cry, while my best hopes lie shattered,  
"I trust in Thee!"

I will not doubt though sorrows fall like rain,  
And troubles swarm like bees about a hive,  
I will believe the heights for which I strive  
Are only reached by anguish and by pain;  
And though I groan and writhe beneath my crosses,  
I yet shall see, through my severest losses,  
The greater gain.

I will not doubt, well anchored in the faith,  
Like some staunch ship my soul braves every gale,  
So strong its courage that it will not fail  
To breast the mighty unknown sea of death.  
Oh may I cry, though body parts with spirit,  
"I do not doubt," so listening worlds may hear it  
With my last breath.  
—Ella Wheeler Wilcox

May this be our trusting prayer today.  
Above the tempest's roar, faith hears His voice;  
And with its hand in His, it can rejoice.  
It fears no cloud, or wind that it can bring;  
Faith looks across the storm, and still can sing!  
—Anon.

I do not want merely to possess faith; I want a faith that possesses me!—C. Kingsley

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### **Oswald Chambers - Don't think now, take the road**

And Peter ... walked on the water to go to Jesus. But when he saw the wind boisterous, he was afraid.

Matthew 14:29–30 .

The wind was actually boisterous, the waves were actually high, but Peter did not see them at first. He did not reckon with them, he simply recognized his Lord, and stepped out in recognition of Him and walked on the water. Then he began to reckon with the actual things, and down he went instantly. Why could not our Lord have enabled him to walk at the bottom of the waves as well as on the top of them? Neither could be done saving by recognition of the Lord Jesus.

We step right out on God over some things, then self-consideration enters in and down we go. If you are recognizing your Lord, you have no business with where He engineers your circumstances. The actual things are, but immediately you look at them you are overwhelmed, you cannot recognize Jesus, and the rebuke comes: "Wherefore didst thou doubt?" Let actual circumstances be what they may, keep recognizing Jesus, maintain complete reliance on Him.

If you debate for a second when God has spoken, it is all up. Never begin to say—"Well, I wonder if He did speak?" Be reckless immediately, fling it all out on Him. You do not know when His voice will come, but whenever the realization of God comes in the faintest way imaginable, recklessly abandon. It is only by abandon that you recognize Him. You will only realize His voice more clearly by recklessness.

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### **You of little faith," he said, "why did you doubt?"**

Have we that faith which so realizes Christ's presence so as to keep us as calm and as composed in the rough sea as the smooth? It was not really a question of the rough or the smooth sea when Peter was sinking in the water, for he would have sunk without Christ just as much in the smooth as the rough sea. The fact was, the eye was off Jesus and on the wave, and that made him sink. If we go on with Christ, we shall get into all kinds of difficulty, many a boisterous sea; but being one with Him, His safety is ours. JOHN DARBY

Remember Christian, it is not your hold of Christ that saves thee—it is Christ; it is not thy joy in Christ that saves thee—it is Christ; it is not even faith in Christ (though that is the instrument)—it is Christ's blood and merits; therefore, look not to thy hope, but to Christ, the source of thy hope; look not to thy faith, but to Christ, the author and finisher of thy faith. And if thou doest that, ten thousand devils cannot throw thee down. There is one thing which all of us too much becloud in our preaching, though I believe we do it very unintentionally; namely, the great truth that it is not prayer, it is not faith, it is not our doings, it is not our feelings upon which we must rest, but upon Christ and on Christ alone! We are apt to think that we are not in a right state, that our business is not with self, but Christ. Let me beseech thee, look only to Christ; never expect deliverance from self, from ministers, nor from any means of any kind apart from Christ; keep thine eye simply on Him; let His death, His merits, His glories, His intercession be fresh upon thy mind. When thou wakest in the morning, look for Him; when thou liest down at night, look for Him. CHARLES SPURGEON

The work of the Savior is for the sinner; the Person of the Savior is for the saint; what He has done is for the former, what He is, is for the latter.

He had eternal life to give and He is the Son of the living God; by the former, the saint is drawn to Him; but the latter the saint is bound to Him. He not only meets all our necessities as sinners by His work, but also satisfies our affection and desires as saints by His Person. C. H. MACKINTOSH

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### **Streams in the Desert - (Matt. 14:29, 30.)**

PETER had a little faith in the midst of his doubts, says Bunyan; and so with crying and coming he was brought to Christ.

But here you see that sight was a hindrance; the waves were none of his business when once he had set out; all Peter had any concern with, was the pathway of light that came gleaming across the darkness from where Christ stood. If it was tenfold Egypt beyond that, Peter had no call to look and see.

When the Lord shall call to you over the waters, "Come," step gladly forth. Look not for a moment away from Him.

Not by measuring the waves can you prevail; not by gauging the wind will you grow strong; to scan the danger may be to fall before it; to pause at the difficulties, is to have them break above your head. Lift up your eyes unto the hills, and go forward—there is no other way.

"Dost thou fear to launch away?  
Faith lets go to swim!  
Never will He let thee go;  
'Tis by trusting thou shalt know  
Fellowship with Him."



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## THAT SINKING FEELING—MATTHEW 14:29–30 - Greg Laurie

IT IS ALL TOO EASY to get discouraged when you are serving the Lord. People won't always listen to you. They put you down and criticize you. Sometimes you'll patch up three problems and six more will take their place. You begin to wonder if you're making any progress at all. You can almost decide to give up.

It's at times like these that I have to ask myself, "For whom am I doing this? Am I serving man or God?"

There is nothing wrong with becoming weary in service. But we must never become weary of it. The Bible says, "Let us not grow weary while doing good, for in due season we shall reap if we do not lose heart" (Galatians 6:9).

The strength you and I need to keep going comes from spending time in God's presence. We will be able to do what He calls us to do only by remembering that we labor through Him and for Him.

Sometimes people ask, "How do you handle all the problems of the pastorate? How do you carry all those burdens?" I say, "I don't." If I personally tried to carry the problems of all the people in our congregation, I would be a basket case. I have enough trouble with my own problems. My shoulders weren't designed to carry others' burdens; they're not even designed to carry my own. I have been told to cast all my cares upon Jesus, for He cares for me.

Now of course, Scripture tells us to "bear one another's burdens" (Galatians 6:2). That does not mean we single-handedly carry them, but rather, we help and encourage one another and take our problems to God in prayer.

When someone asks me, "Here's my problem, Greg. What am I going to do?" I like to say, "Let's pray right now and put it in perspective by looking to God."

I can't answer everyone's questions nor can I carry their burdens. This is His church and we are His people. All the problems we face are His problems. All the problems I face are to be given to Him, because He has asked me to do that.

The author of Hebrews realized that the individuals to whom he was writing were discouraged. They were feeling sorry for themselves and saw life as hard. So he gave them a message fit for their condition: "Therefore strengthen the hands which hang down, and the feeble knees, and make straight paths for your feet" (Hebrews 12:12–13).

But before Hebrews 12 was written, the author wrote Hebrews 11, which is often called "the hall of faith." It contains the stories of faithful men and women who stood firm by trusting God's Word. There we find Noah, who obeyed God even when the request seemed ridiculous. He built an ark that saved his family and so became an heir of righteousness. We also find Abraham, who followed God's instruction to go to an unknown land in order to receive an unseen inheritance. Then there is Moses, who left a life of prominence and privilege to lead an often complaining, ungrateful people to the land God had promised them.

After showing all that these faithful people had endured, the writer then comes to the secret of their faith and perseverance: They "[looked] unto Jesus, the author and finisher of [their] faith" (Hebrews 12:2).

Are you weary in ministry? If so, there is only one cure: You need to take your eyes off of yourself and your own problems, off of other people, and fix them on the Lord. He will give you the strength to run.

The writer of Hebrews, alluding to the Greek games of that time, knew that when an athlete ran in a great race he could look up at any moment, at any place on the track, and see the stand where the judge was: the Bema Seat. Perhaps the judge was holding out the laurel leaves to be awarded to the winner, and when the runner looked up at the reward, it gave him the strength to finish the race.

In essence, the writer tells us, "You have been looking down too much. Look up! Keep moving forward."

That was Peter's problem as he walked on the Sea of Galilee. When he looked to Jesus, he walked on water—but when he took his eyes off of the Lord, he began to sink. If anyone ever experienced a "sinking feeling," Peter did!

But do you remember Jesus' response to Peter when the disciple began to sink? He said, "O you of little faith, why did you doubt?" (Matthew 14:31). There was never any need for Peter's feet to slip beneath the waves. Had he kept his gaze locked onto his Master's eyes, he would have known the thrill of Galilean surfing at its finest—no board, no wave, no problem.

Peter's episode reminds us that the calling of God is the enabling of God. When God calls you to do something, you can do it—if you keep your eyes on Jesus. In your own strength, you will fail. Every time.

Are you frustrated serving the Lord? Do you feel as though you have let God down? Maybe you have lost your perspective and

forgotten who you are serving.

Give your frustrations and disappointments to God, then let Him take care of your problems. Remember, your work for the Lord may not be appreciated on earth, but it will be richly rewarded in heaven. And His is the only opinion that counts.

Recall Peter's words in 1 Peter 5:7: "Casting all your care upon Him, for He cares for you." Perhaps as the Spirit directed Peter to record those words, the apostle remembered that day on the Sea of Galilee when he thought he was going to drown. But Peter did cast all his care upon Jesus and was not disappointed! Meditate on the wise words of Corrie ten Boom:

Look without and be distressed;

Look within and be depressed;

Look at Jesus and be at rest.

**Matthew 14:30 But seeing the wind, he became frightened, and beginning to sink, he cried out, "Lord, save me!"**

Berkley 14:30 but looking at the wind he was afraid and, beginning to sink, he cried, "Lord, save me!"

NET Matthew 14:30 But when he saw the strong wind he became afraid. And starting to sink, he cried out, "Lord, save me!"

NLT Matthew 14:30 But when he saw the strong wind and the waves, he was terrified and began to sink. "Save me, Lord!" he shouted.

ESV Matthew 14:30 But when he saw the wind, he was afraid, and beginning to sink he cried out, "Lord, save me."

NIV Matthew 14:30 But when he saw the wind, he was afraid and, beginning to sink, cried out, "Lord, save me!"

GNT Matthew 14:30 βλ πων δ τ ν νεμον [σχυρ ν] φοβ θη, κα ρξ μενος καταποντ ζεσθαι κραξεν λ γων, Κ ριε, σ σ ν με.

KJV Matthew 14:30 But when he saw the wind boisterous, he was afraid; and beginning to sink, he cried, saying, Lord, save me.

YLT Matthew 14:30 but seeing the wind vehement, he was afraid, and having begun to sink, he cried out, saying, 'Sir, save me.'

ASV Matthew 14:30 But when he saw the wind, he was afraid; and beginning to sink, he cried out, saying, Lord, save me.

CSB Matthew 14:30 But when he saw the strength of the wind, he was afraid. And beginning to sink he cried out, "Lord, save me!"

NKJ Matthew 14:30 But when he saw that the wind was boisterous, he was afraid; and beginning to sink he cried out, saying, "Lord, save me!"

NRS Matthew 14:30 But when he noticed the strong wind, he became frightened, and beginning to sink, he cried out, "Lord, save me!"

- **when:** Mt 26:69-75 2Ki 6:15 Mk 14:38,66-72 Lu 22:54-61 Joh 18:25-27 2Ti 4:16,17
- **Lord:** Mt 8:24,25 Ps 3:7 69:1,2 107:27-30 116:3,4 La 3:54-57 Jon 2:2-7 2Co 12:7-10

## SHORT BUT EFFECTIVE PRAYER

**But** - Term of contrast - This "but" almost buried Peter!

**Spurgeon** - "**But**": a sorrowful "but" for poor Peter. His eye was off his Lord and on the raging of the wind: "he saw the wind boisterous." His heart failed him, and then his foot failed him. Down he began to go — an awful moment is this "beginning to sink", yet it was only a "beginning," he had time to cry to his Lord, who was not sinking. Peter cried, and was safe. His prayer was as full as it was short. He had brought his eye and his faith back to Jesus, for he cried, "Lord!" He had come into this danger through obedience, and therefore he had an appeal in the word "Lord." Whether in danger or not, Jesus was still his Lord. He is a lost man,

and he feels it, unless his Lord will save him — save him altogether, save him now. Blessed prayer: “Lord, save me.” Reader, does it not suit you? Peter was nearer his Lord when he was sinking than when he was walking. In our low estate we are often nearer to Jesus than in our more glorious seasons.

**Seeing (blepo) the wind, he became frightened (phobeo)** - Fear blunted his faith and he began to flounder. He took his eyes off of Jesus (cf Heb 12:2) saw **the wind** (i.e., saw the wind whip up the waves). The waves caused his weak faith to waver! But let's don't be too hard on Peter until we have taken a few steps on water in the midst of a stormy sea!

**THOUGHT** - Someone has said: “There are three ways to look. If you want to be wretched, look within; if you wish to be distracted, look around; but if you would have peace, look up.” Peter looked away from Christ, and he immediately began to sink. He had God's eternal word, which was sure footing, and better than either marble, granite or iron; but the moment he took his eyes off Christ down he went. (D L Moody) . **Corrie Ten Boom** said it this way...

Look around and be distressed.

Look inside and be depressed.

Look at Jesus and be at rest.

(Heb 12:2+, Mic 7:7+)

**Phillips** - We note the boldness of Peter's trust during those few glorious moments when the treacherous waves were as solid as dry land beneath his feet. But there was a sudden breakdown of Peter's trust as he became aware of the angry wind and sea. He took his eye off the Lord and fastened it on his circumstances. Faith died and fear rose. The vital link to the source of power was severed and Peter began to sink. But all was not lost. The Lord had not challenged Peter to try this new kind of life only to let him perish when he failed. Jesus came alongside him. Peter fixed his eye once more on the Master and cried out, "Lord, save me" (14:30). Faith took hold once more and the Lord took hold. That mighty arm was outstretched to save. That hand, able to contain in its hollow the waters of the seven seas, caught the sinking disciple.

**Brian Bell** - He saw the wind about him, his heart failed in him, then his foot failed under him. Began to sink - The cause? When he took his eyes off the Savior, & placed them on the circumstance

**Rob Morgan** - But there's one overarching lesson to the entire episode. We have storms and we have a Savior who can walk across them. When, in the midst of the storm, we focus on the storm, we sink beneath it. When, in the midst of the storm, we focus on the Savior, we rise above it.

**And beginning to sink, - Sink** is *katapontizo* (only here and Mt 18:6) and in the active voice means to throw into the sea, but here in *passive voice* means to be in the process of drowning (sinking down into the water).

**Lenski** - For a little while Peter regarded the terrific force of the wind, piling up the waves about him far above his head. It is difficult to imagine this if Jesus and Peter were tossed up and down by these waves, their waters dashing over them. Before their feet the waters must have been smooth enough for walking. Peter was not in danger, but fright struck him when he looked at what was threatening all about him, and the thought that he was now away from the boat and that these waves were liable to swallow him at any moment. In that moment of fright Peter's faith gave way. He looked at the terrifying wind and forgot Jesus who was only a few paces away. And then he began to sink. The solid water was again becoming fluid under his feet. It is uncalled for to refer to Peter's ability to swim. The thought of swimming never came to Peter. When he felt himself sinking, he was afraid that the wind and the waves stirred up by it would engulf him. But this very fear that was due to what his eyes saw and his heart forgot made him instantly remember and turn to Jesus with the cry, "Save me!" (ISMG)

**Adrian Rogers** - Suddenly, an unkind wave slaps him in the face. He hears the howling of the wind. "A man can't walk on water. This is impossible." And he was right. When we take our eyes off Christ and put them on self, circumstances, and others, or we even look at our look, we begin to sink. "That's the problem. That's what would happen to me. Even Peter sank." Too bad for that part of the story. I hope you would not mention it. It spoils the whole story. Too bad Peter had to die so young. The disciples felt so bad when they lifted his body into the boat. John said, "I should never have let him try it. Impulsive Peter - just because Jesus said, 'Come'." His funeral service was one of the saddest stories in the Bible. Jesus rose to tell his friends how sorry He was that He could not reach Peter in time. He was sorry that He ever invited him to come. Suppose you have a sinking spell - you will not drown. Christ is your head. How can a man drown with his head above water? It is better to walk by faith a little way and falter than to live in complete untrust. Your faith need not fail, but if it does, He will not fail you. We learn to walk by failing. Psalm 37:23 says "The steps of a man are established by the LORD, And He delights in his way."

**Robertson** "Peter was actually beginning to sink (καταποντίζεσθαι [katapontizesthai]) to plunge down into the sea, "although a fisherman and a good swimmer" (Bengel). It was a dramatic moment that wrung from Peter the cry."

When you are sinking you don't have time to pray a long prayer.

**He cried out, "Lord, save me!" - Save me** is a command in the [aorist imperative](#) meaning "Do it now!" "Don't delay!" "I am in urgent need!"

**Lenski** - Peter had not overestimated his faith, nor had he wanted to show it off; nor did Jesus want to teach him a lesson by properly humbling him. Jesus never humbles faith but always encourages it. He encouraged that of Peter mightily when he told him to come. The trouble was that, instead of holding to his faith, Peter let go of it. This often happens even to men of strong faith. The things that faith has to overcome are such as, when they are looked at by themselves, are bound to create dismay and depress faith. The will of Jesus made the water solid only for Peter's faith and only in response to that faith. Thus, when doubt took the place of faith, the water began to return to its natural state.

We all sink at times of misplaced faith,  
but Jesus is always there and he is the only one who can pull us out.

-- Daniel Hill

**Barton** - Although we start out with good intentions, sometimes our faith is weak. In Peter's faltering faith we can see the path of discipleship. We have to exercise faith to have the power, but often we stumble and fail to grasp it fully. When Peter's faith faltered, he reached out to Christ, the only one who could help. He was afraid, but he still looked to Christ. When you are apprehensive about the troubles around you and doubt Christ's presence or ability to help, remember that he is the only one who can really help. (LAC)

**Cried out** (2896) (**krazo**) refers to a loud cry or vociferation, and is a strong word expressing deep emotion. **Krazo** is one of those [onomatopoeic](#) words, the very pronunciation of which imitates the hoarse cry of the raven ([listen](#)), and can be an inarticulate and brutish sound or an exclamation of fear or pain. In Lk 18:39+ the blind beggar cried "to cry clamorously; to scream or shriek." Uses in Matthew - Matt. 8:29; Matt. 9:27; Matt. 14:26; Matt. 14:30; Matt. 15:22; Matt. 15:23; Matt. 20:30; Matt. 20:31; Matt. 21:9; Matt. 21:15; Matt. 27:23; Matt. 27:50

**Save** (4982)(**sozo**) has the basic meaning of rescuing one from great peril. Additional nuances include to protect, keep alive, preserve life, deliver, heal, be made whole. All uses in Matthew. Matt. 1:21; Matt. 8:25; Matt. 9:21; Matt. 9:22; Matt. 10:22; Matt. 14:30; Matt. 16:25; Matt. 18:11; Matt. 19:25; Matt. 24:13; Matt. 24:22; Matt. 27:40; Matt. 27:42; Matt. 27:49

**Brian Bell - Lord Save me** - Aren't those great words? 1. The Unbeliever can cry them - Lord (you are God) Save (I am a sinner needing to be saved from my sins) Me (I'm personally in need). 2. The Believer can cry them - Lord save me from: my enemy, my flesh, my greed, my lusts, my covetousness, my pride, my ego, my corrupt heart, my immoral mind, my doubt.

**Believer's Study Bible** - Peter's experience is not uncommon in the modern era. Too much aware of the elements around him and the dangers which they imposed, Peter forgot to continue trusting the Christ who bade him come.

There is only One who knows

All the answers to my woes;

He will all my needs supply

When in faith to Him I cry.

—Morgan

Jesus hears even the faintest cry for help.

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**David Jeremiah** - His left hand is under my head, and his right hand embraces me.

Underneath me, Lord God, are Your everlasting arms. When Peter saw that the wind was boisterous, he was afraid; and beginning to sink he cried out, saying, "Lord, save me!" And immediately Jesus stretched out His hand and caught him, and said to him, "O you of little faith, why did you doubt?" Lord, You order my steps and You delight in my way. Though I fall, I shall not be utterly cast down; for You, Lord, uphold me with Your hand.

As one beloved of the Lord, I shall dwell in safety by You, who shelter me all the day long; and I shall dwell between Your shoulders. I cast all my care upon You, for You care for me. He who touches me touches the apple of Your eye, Lord God.

I shall never perish; neither shall anyone snatch me out of Jesus' hand. You, Father, who have given me to Jesus, are greater than all.

My great and gracious God, thank You for caring for me, protecting me, upholding me.

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## **Spurgeon - Morning and Evening - "Beginning to sink, he cried, saying, Lord, save me."—Matthew 14:30**

Sinking times are praying times with the Lord's servants. Peter neglected prayer at starting upon his venturous journey, but when he began to sink his danger made him a suppliant, and his cry though late was not too late. In our hours of bodily pain and mental anguish, we find ourselves as naturally driven to prayer as the wreck is driven upon the shore by the waves. The fox hides to its hole for protection; the bird flies to the wood for shelter; and even so the tried believer hastens to the mercy seat for safety. Heaven's great harbour of refuge is All-prayer; thousands of weather-beaten vessels have found a haven there, and the moment a storm comes on, it is wise for us to make for it with all sail.

Short prayers are long enough. There were but three words in the petition which Peter gasped out, but they were sufficient for his purpose. Not length but strength is desirable. A sense of need is a mighty teacher of brevity. If our prayers had less of the tail feathers of pride and more wing they would be all the better. Verbiage is to devotion as chaff to the wheat. Precious things lie in small compass, and all that is real prayer in many a long address might have been uttered in a petition as short as that of Peter.

Our extremities are the Lord's opportunities. Immediately a keen sense of danger forces an anxious cry from us the ear of Jesus hears, and with him ear and heart go together, and the hand does not long linger. At the last moment we appeal to our Master, but his swift hand makes up for our delays by instant and effectual action. Are we nearly engulfed by the boisterous waters of affliction? Let us then lift up our souls unto our Saviour, and we may rest assured that he will not suffer us to perish. When we can do nothing Jesus can do all things; let us enlist his powerful aid upon our side, and all will be well.

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## **George H Morrison - Whoever watches the wind will not plant; whoever looks at the clouds will not reap.—Ecclesiastes 11:4**

Just as a person may fail through too much zeal, so may a person fail through too much caution.

Our text has notable application in the great work of national reform. A certain disregard of obvious difficulties and of all that would discourage lesser spirits has ever been one mark of great reformers, whether in the church or in the state. When told that Duke George of Saxony was lying in wait for him, "I would go," said Luther, "if it rained Duke Georges." The winds were bitter and the clouds black as midnight, and Luther planted and reaped because he disregarded them. It is an easy thing to sneer at fanatics and to say that they are the ruin of their cause. It is an easy thing to make fun of the enthusiasts who are so terribly in earnest that they are not wise. But I will tell you those who are a thousand times more fatal to any cause than the enthusiasts are those who always eye the clouds and spend their days in shrinking from the wind. It is better to try and fail than to do nothing. We snatch our triumphs from the brink of failure. It is so easy to stand aside and criticize and magnify difficulties and raise objections. But we are here to plant and we are here to reap, as Luther knew and as every brave woman and man knows. Whoever watches the wind will never plant, and whoever looks at the clouds will never reap.

Then, I want you to apply our text to the great matter of decision for Christ Jesus. I want you to go away thinking of Peter when he walked on the sea to get to Christ. "Lord, if it's you, tell me come to you," and Jesus across the water cried to Peter, "Come"; whereupon Peter leaped out of the ship and walked on the water to his Lord. Then he regarded the clouds—how the wild rack was flying! He observed the wind—how boisterous it was—and, observing them, he began to sink and had to cry, "Lord, save me." Isn't Christ saying "Come" to someone here tonight? Isn't there someone like Peter who has heard his call? In such an hour the one thing that is fatal is to give heed to the uproar of the storm. O you of little faith, why do you doubt? He is mighty to save and powerful to keep. Disregard everything except the beckoning Savior, and by and by you will reap a hundred times what you planted.

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## **Donald Cantrell - "What to do when you're sinking?"**

- Mat 14:30—But when he saw the wind boisterous, he was afraid; and beginning to sink, he cried, saying, Lord, save me.
- Mat 14:31—And immediately Jesus stretched forth [his] hand, and caught him, and said unto him, O thou of little faith, wherefore didst thou doubt?

The mighty disciple had just done the impossible, he challenged the Lord to let him walk upon the sea, the Lord bid him to come, and so the disciple leaped onto the waters and started walking. He had experienced what only one other man had ever experienced, that other man was the Lord. As Peter took one step after another, he realized what was happening, the impossible was happening, his fleshly nature got the best of him. He began to look around, he saw the waves, he felt the mighty wind, he became afraid and started to sink.

Often times we enter into the place of wonderful experiences, things seem to be going so wonderful, so great, then like Peter we take our eyes off of the Lord, we look at the circumstances of life, and we began to sink. It is a fact, take your eyes off of the Lord, you will go under, you will be overtaken by the enemy. It is a fact, it is not a probability, it is a factual truth, if you stop looking at the

Lord, trouble is heading your way.

1. The Disciple & His Faith—See Him Walking
2. The Disciple & His Faltering—See Him Wavering
3. The Disciple & His Focus—See Him Wailing

In his moment of despair, Peter done something that was so right, he cried out to his Lord, "Lord, Save Me"!!! In our moment of distress we must learn to find Jesus, cry out unto him, he is available, he is able, and he wants to help. The disciple knew which direction to go to find help, do you? How often do we try to find help in every area, but the right area, we ignore the true source of help, right? In the space below, you may want to note some area's in your life that need the Lord's help: (Cantrell's Jewels)

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## **BEGINNING TO SINK. Matthew 14:30**

I like to think about the spontaneous character of Peter's prayer. As he begins to sink, as soon as he finds himself going down, he immediately prays, "Lord, save me" (Matt 14:30). Peter's faith was a living thing. It might not always walk on water, but it could always pray. Prayer is better than walking on water.

Your faith may not always make you rejoice. But if your faith can always make you trust Jesus' precious blood, that is all you need. Your faith may not regularly take you to the mountaintop, to bathe in the sunlight of God's countenance, but if it enables you to keep on the straight road to eternal life, you may bless God for such a faith.

Walking on water is not an essential characteristic of faith, but it is essential to pray when you begin to sink. Doing great things for Christ is not indispensable to salvation, but to have the faculty of turning your heart to Him in distress is a mark of divine grace.

I am sure that Peter did not intone his prayer. I am quite certain that he did not search for a proper musical background to match to the words. The prayer came from his heart. Great prayer wells up from the soul and flows freely from the lips because the heart compels the tongue to speak.

It is a blessed plan to set aside a time for prayer, a time for secret devotions, a time to be alone with the Savior. A regular habit of prayer is a great help to holiness. Even better is the spirit of prayer, because it promotes habitual, constant, fellowship with God.

**Matthew 14:31 Immediately Jesus stretched out His hand and took hold of him, and said to him, "You of little faith, why did you doubt?"**

Berkley 14:31 Instantly Jesus reached out His hand and took hold of him, saying, "You of little faith! Why did you doubt?"

NET Matthew 14:31 Immediately Jesus reached out his hand and caught him, saying to him, "You of little faith, why did you doubt?"

NLT Matthew 14:31 Jesus immediately reached out and grabbed him. "You have so little faith," Jesus said. "Why did you doubt me?"

ESV Matthew 14:31 Jesus immediately reached out his hand and took hold of him, saying to him, "O you of little faith, why did you doubt?"

NIV Matthew 14:31 Immediately Jesus reached out his hand and caught him. "You of little faith," he said, "why did you doubt?"

GNT Matthew 14:31 ε θ ω ς δ η σ ο ς κ τ ε ν α ς τ ν χ ε ρ α π ε λ β ε τ ο α τ ο κ α λ γ ε ι α τ , λ ι γ π ι σ τ ε , ε ς τ δ σ τ α σ α ς ;

KJV Matthew 14:31 And immediately Jesus stretched forth his hand, and caught him, and said unto him, O thou of little faith, wherefore didst thou doubt?

YLT Matthew 14:31 And immediately Jesus, having stretched forth the hand, laid hold of him, and saith to him, 'Little faith! for what didst thou waver?'

ASV Matthew 14:31 And immediately Jesus stretched forth his hand, and took hold of him, and saith unto him, O thou of little faith, wherefore didst thou doubt?

CSB Matthew 14:31 Immediately Jesus reached out His hand, caught hold of him, and said to him, "You of

little faith, why did you doubt?"

NKJ Matthew 14:31 And immediately Jesus stretched out His hand and caught him, and said to him, "O you of little faith, why did you doubt?"

NRS Matthew 14:31 Jesus immediately reached out his hand and caught him, saying to him, "You of little faith, why did you doubt?"

- **stretched:** Ps 138:7 Isa 63:12 Mk 1:31,41 5:41 Ac 4:30
- **took hold of him:** Ge 22:14 De 32:36 Mk 16:7 Lu 22:31,32 24:34 1Pe 1:5
- **You of little faith:** Mt 8:26 16:8 17:20 Mk 11:23 Ro 4:18-20 1Ti 2:8 Jas 1:6-8

**Immediately** - Peter was going down, but Jesus was not late in coming to His aid. This reminds me of a great passage in Hebrews 2:18+ which says "For since He Himself was tempted in that which He has suffered, He is **able** ([dunamai](#) in [present tense](#) = continually able) to come to the aid ([boetheo](#) - [boe](#) = a cry + [théō](#) = to run = to run on hearing a cry to give assistance especially to those in danger) of those who are ([present tense](#); [passive voice](#) = continually being) tempted ([peirazo](#)).".

**Spurgeon** - Our Lord delays not when our peril is imminent and our cry is urgent: "Immediately Jesus stretched forth his hand." He first "caught him" and then taught him. Jesus saves first, and upbraids afterwards, when he must needs do so. When we are saved is the fit time for us to chasten ourselves for our unbelief. Let us learn from our Lord, that we may not reprove others till we have first helped them out of their difficulties. Our doubts are unreasonable: "Wherefore didst thou doubt?" If there be reason for little faith, there is evidently reason for great confidence. If it be right to trust Jesus at all, why not trust him altogether? Trust was Peter's strength, doubt was his danger. It looked like great faith when Peter walked the water; but a little wind soon proved it to be "little faith." Till our faith is tried, we can form no reliable estimate of it. After his Lord had taken him by the hand, Peter sank no further, but resumed the walk of faith. How easy to have faith when we are close to Jesus! Lord, when our faith fails, come thou to us, and we shall walk on the wave.

**Jesus stretched out His hand and took hold of him** - Jesus responds before Peter goes under. What a way to learn a lesson in faith! All we need to do is put out hand in the Man from Galilee and He will save in the storm. The storm may still rage, but we are safe when we are in the hand of Jesus!

Peter, though wet to the skin, was a wiser man for his adventure. Wetter but wiser.

--- Brian Bell

**Stretched** (1614)([ekteino](#) from **ek** = out + **teino** = to stretch) means stretch out literally, as a gesture with one's hand stretched out. Jesus' stretched His hands out "toward His disciples" (Mt 12:49), to Peter drowning (Mt 14:31), to the leper (Mk 1:41, Mt 8:3, Lk 5:13, cf healing in Acts 4:30). **Ekteino** is used of the stretching out of Paul's hand as he prepared to offer his verbal defense (Acts 26:1). **Ekteino** refers to Jesus telling the lame man to stretch out his hand (Mt 12:13, Mk 3:5, Lk 6:10). As a euphemistic figure of speech referring to one's hands stretched out in crucifixion (Jn 21:18). In Mt 26:51 when they came to arrest Jesus Peter "extending his hand, drew out his sword, and struck." All uses - Matt. 8:3; Matt. 12:13; Matt. 12:49; Matt. 14:31; Matt. 26:51; Mk. 1:41; Mk. 3:5; Lk. 5:13; Lk. 6:10; Lk. 22:53; Jn. 21:18; Acts 4:30; Acts 26:1; Acts 27:30

**Took hold** (seized) (1949)([epilambano](#) from **epi** = upon + **lambano** = take hold of) means to lay hold of, get a good grip on, take possession of. All NT uses are in the [middle voice](#). All uses Matt. 14:31; Mk. 8:23; Lk. 9:47; Lk. 14:4; Lk. 20:20; Lk. 20:26; Lk. 23:26; Acts 9:27; Acts 16:19; Acts 17:19; Acts 18:17; Acts 21:30; Acts 21:33; Acts 23:19; 1 Tim. 6:12; 1 Tim. 6:19; Heb. 2:16; Heb. 8:9

**And said to him, "You of little faith, why did you doubt?"** - Not "You of NO faith." Peter had faith but it was little faith. That little faith had for a moment enabled him to experience victory over the raging waves, an experience no other human being has experienced and surely one he would remember to his dying day. Lord give us all "little" faith when the waves begin to crash against us in our lives. In Your Name. Amen.

**Doubt** is the rare verb (used here and Mt 28:17) **diatazo** (from **dis** = two ways - pictures wavering here and there) which means to lack confidence in, to think that something may not be true or certain, to waver, to hesitate, to be uncertain. Zodhiates adds that **diatazo** is "a figurative word taken either from a person standing where two ways meet and not knowing which to choose (inclining sometimes to one, sometimes to the other), or from the quivering motion of a balance when the weights on either side are approximately equal (when first one side, then the other, seems to be predominate)" (WSNT)

**Lenski** - Jesus' word to Peter is usually regarded as a rebuke. In reality it in a gentle way points out to Peter just what caused his trouble: too little faith when he looked at the wind, and doubt crowding out faith at the thought of danger. The cause of Peter's



doubting was apparent, but what purpose could he have in doubting (the aorist to indicate the momentary doubt that assailed him) when he knew that Jesus' call to him to come was intended only for faith and that his ability to walk over the water was wholly dependent on faith? Jesus' question must ever remain without an answer, for no rational or sensible answer can be given. No believer can ever find the least purpose for doubting, for doubting can have but one result, namely disaster. Every believer's purpose should be connected solely with his faith, for faith alone and always results in deliverance, safety, and praise of the Lord.

**Constable** - Jesus rebuked him for his weak faith even though it was stronger than that of the other disciples who remained in the boat. Jesus used this rebuke to help Peter and the other disciples see that consistent confidence in Himself was absolutely necessary. Peter became both a good example and a bad one. Jesus rescued him as God had rescued many others from watery graves (cf. Ps. 18:16; 69:1-3; 144:7).

**Barton** - Jesus' immediate response showed Peter that divine undergirding and power are present in times of testing. Jesus caught Peter, saving him from drowning in the waves. Peter had taken his eyes off Christ and was focusing instead on his situation. Jesus' question focused on why Peter allowed the wind and waves to overwhelm his faith. He momentarily despaired and so began to sink. His doubt became his downfall. (Ibid)

**Broadus** - He does not say 'of no faith.' And he does not rebuke Peter's self-confident presumption, but his weakness of faith, just as in 8:10, he commends the centurion's faith rather than his humility; see also 15:28. Of course faith would have no natural power to keep him from sinking, as it would in swimming, because he was performing a supernatural act; God chose to put honor upon faith by enabling him to do this, so long as he did not doubt. Peter must have felt a wholesome shame and confusion at the result of his bold attempt, but the other disciples had no time to notice it, nor he himself to be greatly pained, because all were engrossed with admiration for the wonder-working power of Jesus. Peter knew when to cry out - He didn't wait till he was drowning...but when he began to sink. This was a difficult situation for Peter. But he grew in the knowledge of himself & the Lord.

**Greg Laurie on little faith** - The phrase "little faith" is actually translated from one word in the original Greek, a word that has a quality of tenderness about it. It was as though Jesus were saying to Peter, "Oh, **Littlefaith**, you were doing so well! What happened?" And guess what? With his eyes back on Jesus, "**Littlefaith**" walked back to the boat. The storm was still raging, but Peter had his focus back, and with his eyes on Jesus he could once again do the impossible.

**Brian Bell - Oh you of little faith** - I don't think a rebuke...because a little faith was considered good. 1. I don't think it was the quality of his faith, nor the quantity of his faith, but the duration of his faith. It just stopped. Like each of ours at times. 2. Are you trying to live a mistake-free life? Failure is not an option it's a necessity. 3. Because it is the point of this passage...he had to fail to learn that God is our Protector/Deliverer/Savior. Maybe it's not even a story about a great faith, but about greater grace! a) A grace greater than my failure, greater than my divorce, greater than my bankruptcy, greater than the layoff, greater than my addiction, greater than my slip-up, better than my screwup. Steven Furtick sermon Peter failed at what he set out to do...but Jesus succeeded w/exactly what He intended to do. 1. Why does Jesus command Peter to do something that He knew would end in failure? Why does Jesus have you start off a relationship that He knows will end in failure? Why does Jesus have you achieve something that He knows He's going to take away?

**Ray Pritchard** - "You of little faith" comes out to four words. But in the Greek Jesus only used one word: "Little-faith." It's a title or a nickname. Jesus called Peter "Little-Faith." "Little-faith, why did you doubt?" By the way, where did this conversation take place? It took place out in the middle of the lake. It's still pitch dark, with the wind still howling and the rain beating down. The boat with the other disciples is rocking up and down a few yards away. Peter is sopping wet and scared to death. Jesus is standing on the water as Peter clutches his arm for dear life. After the Lord pulls Peter up from the drink, he decides that this is what the educators call a "teachable moment." So while they are out on the lake, Jesus shares a few things that will help Peter in his spiritual life. No doubt Peter is muttering under his breath, "Get me back to the boat. I promise I'll never pull a stunt like this again." Meanwhile back at the boat, the other fellows are watching this whole scene, their mouths wide open, their eyes as big as saucers. They never dreamed such a thing was possible.

To realize the worth of the anchor,  
we need to feel the stress of the storm.

As **G. Campbell Morgan** says "The storm couldn't disturb Him, but the unbelief did!"

**Little Faith** (3640) (**oligopistos** from **oligos** = little + **pistis** = faith) of one who does not believe or trust, not strong in trusting; a person not trusting firmly. Vine says this word is used only by the Lord, and as a tender rebuke, for anxiety. Three of the five uses occur related to the disciples crossing the lake in a boat. The other 2 uses deal with anxiety or worry. In fact in a sense all 5 uses have something to do with worry. Worry is the opposite of faith, that is, trust or confidence in God's abilities. In each of these cases, the disciples forgot what God was capable of doing. They forgot he is the almighty Commander and Creator. And whenever you worry, it means that you don't think God is up to handling your problems and your needs. We need to be like the old Mad

Magazine character who always said "[What, me worry?](#)" There is an old song "[Don't worry, be happy](#)" which is close to truth but it would be more Biblical if it said "Don't worry, be believing."

Matthew 6:30+ (Addressing the issue of worry or anxiety) "But if God so clothes the grass of the field, which is alive today and tomorrow is thrown into the furnace, will He not much more clothe you? You of **little faith!**

Matthew 8:26+ (Waves crashing over the side of the **boat**, afraid disciples are going to die) He \*said to them, "Why are you afraid, you men of **little faith?**" Then He got up and rebuked the winds and the sea, and it became perfectly calm.

Matthew 14:31+ (Peter got out of the **boat**, walked for a moment on water, but then began to doubt and sink) Immediately Jesus stretched out His hand and took hold of him, and \*said to him, "You of **little faith**, why did you doubt?"

Matthew 16:8+ (This is the third time they are in a boat) But Jesus, aware of this, said, "You men of **little faith**, why do you discuss among yourselves that you have no bread?"

Luke 12:28+ (Addressing the issue of worry or anxiety) "But if God so clothes the grass in the field, which is alive today and tomorrow is thrown into the furnace, how much more will He clothe you? You men of **little faith!**

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Chris Tiegreen - You of little faith," he said. "Why did you doubt?" Matthew 14:31

"F.E.A.R.— False Evidence Appearing Real."

—Anonymous

IN WORD If our ears are truly open to Jesus, we will probably hear such a rebuke daily. It is a gentle rebuke, coming from One who understands our frailties better than we understand them ourselves. But it is a firm reminder that the life we live is to be radically different from dependence on our human senses and reasoning that most of the world understands.

In this story, Peter has put Jesus to the test, in a sense. And Jesus lets him! "Come," He says, inviting Peter to walk on the water just as Jesus does. Peter's resulting experience mirrors ours. We hang in the balance between faith and unbelief, alternately fixing our gaze on Christ and then on the waves around us. Unfortunately, the latter frequently loom larger to us. We sometimes even obsess about this wind and these waves, which do not hesitate to tell us that we are doing the impossible—living supernatural lives. Frequently, we listen to them and we sink.

But the call of Jesus is this: "Come." We are to live supernatural lives. We may think we are being appropriately sensible when we measure the wind and waves and proceed with caution. But Jesus urges us to ignore them altogether and fix our eyes on Him. He alone is the true measure of our situation. When He tells us to step out on the water, we can, regardless of how many contrary warnings against it we have ever heard or imagined. His is the only voice we must hear.

IN DEED The circumstances of our lives, whether unusual crises or everyday difficulties, batter our senses into believing untruths. We cower at the authority of these winds and waves—these very concrete illusions—as though their authority is real. It isn't. We must do what is extremely difficult for us human beings to do—ignore them. We must get to the point where we hear His voice alone and become deaf to all others. Then we will know what it's like to walk on water.

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### Spurgeon - WALKING ON WATER. Matthew 14:31

The life of a Christian is described as walking by faith. To my mind, this is a most extraordinary miracle. Walking on water, as Peter did (Matt. 14:29), is more typical of every Christian life. It is like ascending an invisible staircase to the clouds; you cannot see a step, but you keep climbing toward the light. Looking down, all is dark, and before you lies nothing but clouds.

Yet for years, some of us have been climbing this perpetually ascending stairway without ever seeing an inch ahead. We have often paused and asked, "What next, and what next?" Yet what we thought was cloud has been solid rock. Darkness has been light, and slippery places have been safe. When the darkness was so dense that it could be felt, when the past had vanished, when nothing could be seen but the step we stood on, we said, "How did I get here? What a strange, mysterious life I have had." Then faith came to our aid and we believed, and believing, we see the invisible and grasp the Eternal. Now without stopping, we can run the shining way with joy.

Perhaps at this moment you feel that you are entering a gloomy valley. You have suffered a great loss, your spirit is sinking, and you are greatly depressed. Like Peter, your soul is sinking in the waves. A hand is reaching out to save you. You cannot sink while your

heavenly Father's hand is near.

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### **Vance Havner - Walking Or Watching The Waves?**

I am not going to bore you with a piece about my operation because you don't want to hear about it any more than I want hear about yours. But I would like to share a blessing that came out of it.

Operations are not cure-alls. They are often overrated and of temporary benefit. I was smitten with a couple of ailments, either of which could recur. Indeed, several physical possibilities could hang over my head like Damoclean swords if I let them. I faced two alternatives: I could live in uncertainty and worry about this pain and that symptom and what might happen next, but I would not live long under such a load. The other course, born of desperation, was simply to live in utter, childlike dependence on God. I had rather live only a week more in such blessed abandon than to plod along for years in an up-and-down fever of hopes and fears. To let go of everything and live "shipwrecked on God" is life's most wonderful experience. For me there was no other way if I was to survive. Of course I had sought to live that way for years, but finally it was that—or else. I had reached the point in a critical hour when I was ready to go or to stay, to get better or to be laid aside. Then, when the Lord seemed to indicate that He would spare me for a little longer, I was encouraged to believe Him for restoration of my strength and a return to my ministry.

So He has given me maybe a few more years to live by looking unto Him for every need of body, mind and spirit. In a day when we lean so heavily upon the arm of flesh, we talk of living by faith but we do very little of it. We have not been conditioned. In our scientific age, we limp around on our own devices. We sing Leaning on the Everlasting Arms, but we don't do it much. We have been taught to believe God for so little. We have not because we ask not, or we ask but we do not ask in faith and so we are like waves of the sea, driven with the wind and tossed. We have been taught to doubt God and to hedge prayer about with so many "ifs" and "yes buts" that we do not expect much to happen. I had rather believe God for too much than for too little.

Someone sent me a get-well card bearing a mustard seed in a tiny container. Underneath were the words: "If ye have faith as a grain of mustard seed,... nothing shall be impossible unto you" (Matthew 17:20). I treasure that card. We have that much faith, and look what our Lord says it will accomplish! It will move mountains! Nothing shall be impossible!

Our Lord is walking the stormy seas of life today, as He walked the waves of Galilee. He bids us leave the "security" of our little boats and walk the waves toward Him. What looks like safety is perilous without Him and what looks dangerous is the only safe course when we start toward Him. Peter was doing the safest thing on that stormy night when he got out of the boat at the Saviour's invitation. He may not have walked far but he walked farther on water than anyone else ever has! He sank, too, but he did not drown. It was one of the old saints who used to say that the Lord may let you be ducked but He won't let you be drowned! We shouldn't sink, but if we do He will save us. Along with His helping hand will come the gentle rebuke: "O thou of little faith, wherefore didst thou doubt?" (Matthew 14:31).

Peter watched the waves when he should have been walking them. And so do we. Each wave on a stormy sea is a step toward Him if you but make it so. Are you watching the waves or walking them?

I am thankful for an experience that has called me to get out of my "boat" to walk the waves at His bidding.

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### **AFRAID TO TRUST**

And ... Jesus ... caught him, and said . . . O thou of little faith, why didst thou doubt? Matthew 14:31

One of the great American naval vessels destroyed in World War II was the Wasp. Not until it became apparent that the flames had spread beyond hope of control was the order finally given to abandon ship. A surviving officer, Lieutenant Bodell, later said, "I climbed down the cargo net and dropped off into the water. Then I saw my first sign of panic, because some of those 'green kids' had no trust in their lifejackets, and instead of getting clear of the ship, were clinging to its plates by their fingertips — the worst thing you can do."

It would be easy to criticize the boys who held on to the side of the boat instead of pushing off into the water and trusting their well-tested lifejackets; but we "armchair" sailors who have not lived through such a holocaust would be heartless if we did. Rather, we should admit that in spiritual matters we conduct ourselves much like those sailors. Though we believe on the Lord Jesus Christ for our eternal salvation, we are reluctant to "let go and let God" take complete charge of our lives. Like Peter when walking on the waves, if we take our eyes off the Savior and look at the circumstances about us, we become fearful. Just as the frightened sailors still tried to help themselves by hanging on to the sinking, burning ship, we have a tendency to rely partially on our own strength, and to also look for some help from this wicked world.

Friend, keep your eyes on Jesus Christ and He will meet your every need. Trust Him completely and you will never be subjected to those words of rebuke reserved for wavering saints, "O thou of little faith, why didst thou doubt?"

'Twas not that Christ had moved or changed,  
When Peter's faith grew dim;  
But just that Peter saw the WAVES,  
Instead of seeing Him!  
—Maxwell

Faith is God's antidote for fear!

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**Warren Wiersbe - NT Words** - Everybody has faith in someone or something, no matter how much they may deny it. If you endorse a check or even deposit money in the bank, you have faith. If you give a prescription to a pharmacist and later take the medicine, you are exercising faith. To drive on the highway or even to step into an elevator and push a button requires faith. The most important factor is the object of our faith, which for the Christian is Almighty God. Christian faith is living with confidence that God will keep his promises, and this leads us to obedience and endurance, no matter what the circumstances and consequences might be. We walk and work and war by faith.

Every true believer has some measure of faith (Rom. 12:3), and that measure can increase as we walk with the Lord, even to the level of "great faith" (Matt. 8:10; 15:28). In our text, Jesus rebukes his disciples for their "little faith," a phrase he often used. If you examine those texts, you will learn some of the characteristics of "little-faith" believers.

Little-faith people are prone to worry, which is the message of our text. If our faith does not operate in the affairs of daily life, it will never operate in the great challenges of ministry or spiritual warfare. Faith in God is the secret of a worry-free heart (6:25–34). Everything must be brought to the Lord in prayer if we expect to enjoy his peace (Phil. 4:6–7). The early church emphasized prayer and the ministry of the Word (Acts 6:4), and both demand faith and help to build faith.

Little-faith people are easily frightened. A sudden storm broke out on the Sea of Galilee and the disciples were terribly frightened, but Jesus was asleep! (Matt. 8:23–27) The men woke the Lord and cried, "Save us! We are perishing!" Jesus stilled the storm on the sea but he could not still the fear in their hearts. Their problem was their little faith, and that may be your problem. Charles Spurgeon said, "Little faith will take your soul to heaven, but great faith will bring heaven to your soul."

Little-faith people are indecisive. According to Matthew 14:22–33, Jesus deliberately sent his disciples into a storm one night on the Sea of Galilee, while he remained behind. In the middle of the night, he came to them walking on the water. "Lord, if it is You," cried Peter, "command me to come to You on the water" (v. 28). Jesus said one word: "Come!" And Peter walked on the water to meet Jesus. But then Peter took his eyes off Jesus and began to look at the huge waves and to feel the strong wind. What happened? He began to sink! "Lord, save me!" he cried, and Jesus rescued him (vv. 30–31). Remember, Peter knew that body of water like you know your backyard, yet he became afraid and "halted between two opinions." Beware of being "double-minded" (James 1:8), but this is the plight of the little-faith person.

Jesus compared faith to a mustard seed, one of the smallest seeds known (Matt. 17:20). But the size of the seed is immaterial; it's the life within the seed that counts. Plant the seed and eventually you will have a large plant (13:31–32). Faith is like that tiny seed: if the seed is planted in the heart and nurtured, it will produce the plant. The Bible is "the words of faith" (1 Tim. 4:6), and the more we feed on God's truth, the stronger our faith will become. As we claim God's promises in prayer, our faith will mature.

According to your faith let it be done to you. Matthew 9:29

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**Ray Pritchard** - Before we leave this familiar story, let me make two observations about Peter.

"Peter, if you had just kept your eyes on me, you could have walked across the Atlantic Ocean."

1. Give Peter credit because he was willing to do what no one else was willing to do. Before you come down too hard on Peter for taking his eyes off Jesus, just remember that there were 11 other guys back in the boat watching this whole affair. Before you sink, you've got to be out on the water. As long as you stay in the boat, you'll never sink; but you'll never walk on water either.

This is not the story of Bartholomew walking on the water . . . because Bartholomew stayed in the boat.

This is not the story of Matthew walking on the water . . . because Matthew stayed in the boat.

This is not the story of James walking on the water . . . because James stayed in the boat.

This is about Peter walking on the water . . . because he was the only one with the courage to get out of the boat. Maybe some of the others wanted to, maybe they would have if Peter had stayed out there longer. But give the man credit. He did it, and they didn't. That's why this story is about him and the other 11 aren't even mentioned.

Before you criticize Peter for having “little faith,” you’d better remember that “little faith” is better than “no faith,” because that’s what those others guys had who stayed behind.

2. When Jesus called Peter “Little-Faith,” he was not rebuking Peter for attempting too much, but for trusting too little. Do you see the difference? Jesus is not saying, “Peter, you should have stayed in the boat.” Jesus did not rebuke Peter for getting out of the boat. To the contrary, Jesus is really saying, “Peter, if you had just kept your eyes on me, you could have walked across the Atlantic Ocean.”

That brings me to my final argument for getting out of the boat. If what I’ve said hasn’t quite convinced you, here is my last word to everyone who reads this sermon:

We’re all going to die some day.

We’re either going to die in the boat or out on the water.

Some of us will die sooner, some later, but no one gets off planet earth alive. We’re either going to die in the boat or out on the water. As I write these words, I am 56 years old, and frankly, I feel it every day. Not that I feel old—I don’t—but I know I’m not 25 years old. I look at my three sons, all of them in their late 20s, and I see in them not only potential but also enormous energy. They can run circles around me without breaking a sweat. Such is the course of life for all of us. Live long enough and you’ll see a younger generation rising beneath you.

#### Two Little Boys at the Cemetery

So I must tell you about a picture I found the other day. In a closet in the hallway next to our guest bedroom, we’ve got a box stuffed with hundreds of unsorted pictures that cover family events going back several decades. Because the box is a jumbled mess, I rarely take it down from the shelf because I can never find what I’m looking for. That was true this time. The picture I wanted I couldn’t find. But while thumbing through the photos I found one that must have been taken almost 25 years ago, when our two oldest sons were very young. On a vacation trip to the town in Alabama where I grew up, we visited the cemetery where my father is buried. (At the time my mom was still living. She would be buried beside my father many years later.) I snapped a photo of Josh (about 5 years old at the time) and Mark (about 3 years old) standing on either side of a large gravestone with the word PRITCHARD engraved in the middle. Josh is standing up straight while Mark is leaning on the top of the gravestone. They are wearing shorts so it must have been a warm summer day.

I can’t remember ever seeing the picture before. As I studied it, I was struck with the thought of the solemn march of time. A full quarter century has passed since that picture was taken. The little boys in that photo are both grown up and married. That picture reminds me that the generations come and the generations go.

My father.

Me.

My sons.

No one lives here forever. Fathers grow old and die. Little boys don’t stay little forever. Sooner or later we all have a date with death. Lest that seem depressing, I simply use it to remind myself that how I spend my life really matters because I won’t be here forever. An older generation taught us the truth this way:

Only one life, ‘Twill soon be past.

Only what’s done for Christ will last.

Christ calls us to find out what he is doing in the world, and then to fling ourselves wholeheartedly into his cause.

I want to live until the very last moment, fully invested for Christ and his Kingdom, doing everything I can to advance his cause in the world, taking risks on the basis of Kingdom principles. Staying in the boat may be comfortable and safe, but that’s not what the life of faith is all about.

Christ calls us to find out what he is doing in the world, and then to fling ourselves wholeheartedly into his cause.

In the end, who looks better? Peter who tried and sank or the other 11 who didn’t even try? There’s a reason we don’t preach about the other 11. They played it safe. Only Peter took the risk. That’s why we’re still talking about him after 2,000 years. I realize that it’s risky to walk on water. It’s possible that you might sink. But you’ll never know until you get out of the boat.

Heavenly Father, grant that we might be great risk-takers for the kingdom of God. Shake us loose from the security of staying in the boat. Help us to walk on the waters of faith because we believe that Jesus will hold us up. Amen.

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**Confident Hindu** - You may remember Rao, the Hindu holy man who flirted with fame in 1966. The old mystic believed he could walk on water. He was so confident in his own spiritual power that he announced he would perform the feat before a live audience. He sold tickets at \$100 apiece. Bombay's elite turned out en masse to behold the spectacle. The event was held in a large garden with a deep pool. A crowd of more than 600 had assembled. The white-bearded yogi appeared in flowing robes and stepped confidently to the edge of the pool. He paused to pray silently. A reverent hush fell on the crowd. Rao opened his eyes, looked heavenward, and boldly stepped forward. With an awkward splash he disappeared beneath the water. Sputtering and red-faced, the holy man struggled to pull himself out of the water. Trembling with rage, he shook his finger at the silent, embarrassed crowd. "One of you," Rao bellowed indignantly, "is an unbeliever!" - John MacArthur, in *Tabletalk*, April, 1990, p. 10

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**Spurgeon - Mr Fearing comforted** "O thou of little faith, wherefore didst thou doubt?" Matthew 14:31

Why did Simon Peter doubt? He doubted for two reasons. First, because he looked too much to second causes, and secondly, because he looked too little at the first cause. The answer will suit you also, my trembling brother. This is the reason why you doubt, because you are looking too much to the things that are seen, and too little to your unseen Friend who is behind your troubles, and who shall come forth for your deliverance. See poor Peter in the ship—his Master bids him come; in a moment he casts himself into the sea, and to his own surprise he finds himself walking the billows. His foot is upon a crested wave, and yet he stands erect; he treads again, and yet his footing is secure. "Oh!" thinks Peter, "this is marvellous." He begins to wonder within his spirit what manner of man he must be who has enabled him thus to tread the treacherous deep; but just then, there comes howling across the sea a terrible blast of wind; it whistles in the ear of Peter, and he says within himself, "Ah! Here comes an enormous billow driven forward by the blast; now, surely, I must, I shall be overwhelmed." No sooner does the thought enter his heart than down he goes; and the waves begin to enclose him. So long as he shut his eye to the billow, and to the blast, and kept it only open to the Lord who stood there before him, he did not sink; but the moment he shut his eye on Christ, and looked at the stormy wind and treacherous deep, down he went.

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**James Smith - Handfuls of Purpose - UNREASONABLE DOUBT**

"O thou of little faith, wherefore didst thou doubt?" (Matt. 14:31).

This "wherefore" of Christ has a mouth-stopping effect. There are many modern Peters who doubt, while in the very midst of light and privilege, and yet can give no reason why there is doubting. It was unreasonable, because he was assured of—

I. The Goodness of Christ. He had just witnessed the multitude being fed by Him with five loaves. He must have known the great compassion of Christ, yet he doubted. You may also go this far, to believe in His love, His suffering, and death, and yet have no assurance of salvation.

II. The Power of Christ. He is even now seeing Him walking on the sea. He knows that almighty power is His, yet he doubts. Are you not perfectly satisfied that He is divine, and that all power is His? Then wherefore do ye doubt?

III. The Presence of Christ. He was quite confident that the all-conquering Master was at hand, that he could both hear him and see him; yea, touch him and save him, yet he doubted. He is near to all that call upon Him. You know, as God, He is near, and that He stands at the door and knocks. Yet ye are in doubt.

IV. The Willingness of Christ. Peter had heard from the Lord's own lips His sweet word. "Come." He knew that the invitation was given to himself, and given by Him alone who could give such an invitation. Yet he doubted. Jesus still says, "Come unto Me" (Matt. 11:28). "You know this call is for such as you." Yet ye doubt "WHEREFORE DOST THOU DOUBT?"

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**Question:** [What was the meaning of Jesus walking on water?](#)

**Answer:** The miracle of Jesus walking on the water, recorded in three of the Gospels (Matthew 14:22–36; Mark 6:45–56; John 6:16–21), came on the heels of His miraculous feeding of the 5,000 with only five loaves of bread and two fish (Matthew 14:17). But it

was the miracle of Jesus walking on the water that, more than any other, convinced Jesus' disciples that He was indeed the Son of God (Matthew 14:32–33).

The story unfolds at the Sea of Galilee, which lies in the lower portion of the Jordan Valley in a mountain range that rises to 4,000 feet above sea level. The lake itself is 700 feet below the Mediterranean Sea. One of the more noteworthy aspects of this body of water is that it is greatly susceptible to sudden and extremely violent storms. These storms are caused by the cold air rushing down from the mountains surrounding it and colliding with the warm, moist air rising off the surface of the water itself.

“When evening came, his disciples went down to the lake, where they got into a boat and set off across the lake for Capernaum. By now it was dark, and Jesus had not yet joined them. A strong wind was blowing and the waters grew rough. When they had rowed three or three and a half miles, they saw Jesus approaching the boat, walking on the water; and they were terrified. But he said to them, ‘It is I; don’t be afraid.’ Then they were willing to take him into the boat, and immediately the boat reached the shore where they were heading” (John 6:16–21).

There are several significant points to recognize about this miracle.

**First, Matthew tells us that “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”** (Matthew 14:24–25). Though they were only to travel a short distance, the storm was so violent that, despite all their efforts to control their boat, the storm had driven them nearly four miles out into the very midst of the sea. Being the fourth watch of the night (3:00 AM to 6:00 AM), they had been rowing and straining at their oars for approaching nine hours! They were totally exhausted.

What is fascinating is they had begun to row in the early evening and yet Jesus was still able to find them in the darkness and the storm some 8-10 hours later! This was a powerful wind! The sovereign God had sent it for a test of their faith. Despite the severity of the storm notice that the boat did not capsize but remained afloat the entire time they were straining at the oars! The point is that things are not always as bad as they seem. God kept them afloat. And remember that they were in the center of the will of the Lord, for Jesus had sent them across.

The Jews divided the night into three watches. The Romans divided it into four watches.

FIRST WATCH	6pm-9pm
SECOND WATCH	9pm-12 midnight
THIRD WATCH	Midnight-3am
FOURTH WATCH	3am-6am

**Mark tells us that, when the disciples saw Jesus walking on the lake, they thought He was a ghost.** They cried out, because they all saw Him and were terrified (Mark 6:48–50).

And this brings us to the second significant point of this miracle. Jesus always comes to us in the storms of life. This is reminiscent of the words of God to Isaiah: “When you pass through the waters, I will be with you; and when you pass through the rivers, they will not sweep over you” (Isaiah 43:2). The Lord may not come at the time we think He should come, because He knows when we need Him the most. Jesus had waited until the boat was as far from land as possible, when all their hope was gone. In essence, Jesus was testing the disciples’ faith, and this meant removing every human prop. Why did Jesus walk on the water? To show His disciples that the very thing they feared, the raging, seething sea, was merely a set of steps for Him to come to them. Often we fear the difficult experiences of life such as illness, loss of loved ones, and financial hardships only to discover that these experiences can bring Jesus closer to us.

But we have to ask, why did they not recognize Jesus? The answer is they were not looking for Him. Had they been waiting by faith, they would have known Him instantly. Instead, they jumped to the false conclusion that His appearance was that of a ghost. The point is this: fear and faith cannot live in the same heart, for fear frequently blinds the eyes to the presence of the Lord.

The third significant point is that Jesus proved Himself to be in command of the elements, something only God can do. He revealed this truth to the disciples who recognized His divinity and responded with a confession of faith in Jesus as God: “The wind died down. Then those who were in the boat worshiped him, saying, ‘Truly you are the Son of God’” (Matthew 14:32–33). This was the first time Jesus was called the Son of God by the disciples, a statement that, in fact, built on what they had said earlier about Him in Matthew 8:27: “What kind of man is this? Even the winds and the waves obey him.” Here they answer their own question: “Truly you are the Son of God.”



Though they had a long way to go in their spiritual understanding, the disciples were growing in their faith in the Lord. Also, this was the first time the disciples are said to have worshiped Jesus. In Matthew 2:11, the magi from the East worshiped Jesus. Later, a leper is said to have worshiped Jesus (Matthew 8:2). A synagogue ruler does the same thing in Matthew 9:18. But this is the first time the disciples worshiped Him. It is also important to note that their worship is joined to their confession (Matthew 14:33).

And this is what worship is, acknowledging who God is and praising Him both for who He is and for what He has done. It was in this story that the disciples took the first step and worshiped Jesus as the Son of God. ([Source - Gotquestions](#))

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**ILLUSTRATION** - A man was walking along a railroad track on a very dark night when he came to a bridge. He had gotten halfway across when he heard a train whistle up ahead. He quickened his pace, but soon could see the light of the oncoming locomotive approaching. With nowhere else to turn, he got down and lowered himself over the side, hanging onto the trestle as the train thundered past above him. However, after the train had passed, he found that he hadn't the strength to pull himself back up. He called out for help, but there was no answer. He hung there all night, terrified that he might slip and fall into the yawning abyss below. As day broke, he looked down to see a drop of only six inches. We are like that man. We look at our situation and it looks really bad. If we could only see it from God's perspective, it would be nothing at all. Jesus said that with faith we could move mountains. But the reverse is also true. Without faith, we tend to build our own mountains. ([Stevenson](#))

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**Spurgeon's Sermon Notes - Matthew 14:31**—"And immediately Jesus stretched forth his hand, and caught him, and said unto him, O thou of little faith, wherefore didst thou doubt?"

Our Lord did not question the doubter till he had saved the sinker.

His rebukes are always timely.

The question was not only well deserved as a rebuke, but it was specially instructive, and no doubt it proved useful in after years.

When the grace of faith is really present, doubt has to answer for itself, and to die if it cannot defend itself.

Oh, that it may die in us at once!

We will put the question of our text to the two great classes of men.

I. WHEREFORE DOST THOU DOUBT, O CHRISTIAN?

1. Let us mention some supposably valid reasons.

Can you quote past experience of broken promises?

Is the present evil beyond the power of Omnipotence?

Are the promises abolished? Are the purposes of grace annulled?

Has God himself changed? Is his mercy clean gone for ever?

None of these supposable reasons have any existence.

2. Let us hear your actual reasons; if you dare state them.

My sense of guilt is peculiarly deep and clear.

My inbred sin has risen upon me with terrible fury.

My failures justify despair when viewed by the side of other men's attainments, and my own obligations.

My trials are so peculiar, so fierce, so long, so varied.

My heart fails me. I can bear up no longer.

My fears predict greater evils still, and threaten ultimate ruin.

Many such insufficient reasonings becloud the mind; and it may be wisdom to look them in the face, and so dissipate them.

3. Let us view these reasonings from other standpoints.

How would you have viewed them when first you believed?

How did you view former trials when they came in your way; and how do you view them now that you have overcome them?

What do you think of your trials when you are lying in Jesus bosom—assured of his love?

How do you speak of them when you are instructing others?

How will they appear to you when you get to heaven?

Jesus is now near you. How can you take such gloomy views of things in his presence?

4. Shall we hint at the true reasons of your doubting?

You were self-confident, and that confidence has failed you.

You looked too much to things seen by the light of sense; and now that it is dark, you are in consequence troubled.

You took your eye off from your Lord.

Perhaps you neglected prayer, watching, repentance, etc.

When you find out the real reason of your doubt, cry for pardon, and seek to the Holy Spirit to restore faith, and set you right.

## II. WHEREFORE DOST THOU DOUBT, O SINNER?

The Lord's hand is stretched out to save sinking sinners.

Do not distrust the power of Jesus to save you from sinking.

### 1. Let us suppose good reasons for your doubting.

Have others believed and perished?

Have you yourself tried faith in Jesus, and found it vain?

Has the blood of Jesus lost its power?

Has the Holy Spirit ceased to comfort, enlighten, renew?

Is the gospel abrogated? Is God's mercy clean gone for ever?

None of these can be answered in the affirmative.

### 2. Let us hear your apparent reasons.

Your sins are great, numerous, aggravated, and singular.

You cannot think that salvation is for you.

You have refused the gospel call so long.

Your heart is so dreadfully hard and unfeeling.

None of these are sufficient reasons for doubting Almighty love.

### 3. Let us learn the way to deal with such unreasonable doubting.

Repent of it, for it dishonours the power and promise of the Father, the blood of Jesus, and the grace of the Holy Spirit.

End it, by simply believing what is so surely true.

Run as far as possible the other way. Believe up to the hilt.

In every case, let us be sure that to believe God is sanctified commonsense, and to doubt him is an extravagance of folly.

## MODERN INSTANCES

Mr. Haslam has reported a conversation between two poor aged Christians to the following effect: "Oh!" said the husband, who was evidently the weaker vessel, "I've got so little faith, I do get these 'ere doubts so much." "Yes," added the wife, "and ye keeps them, Peter, and brings them to me."

Though the providence of God may be exceedingly dark, the language of faith is, "The Lord is ready to save." If you look into your past experience, you will find that God has done great things for you. Is it not true that nine-tenths of all the difficulty you have anticipated have never come to pass at all? I have great sympathy with Billy Bray, whose wife said to him, when he came home, having given all his money away, "I never saw such a man in my life. Thee'lt go and look after other people's wives and children, and help them, and thee own wife and children may starve." Billy, with great force, said, "Well, woman, thee'st never starved yet;" and that was the fact, for there she stood, a living witness to his word.—Henry Varley.

Good old Mr. Crisp, who had been President of the Baptist College at Bristol for fifty years, was towards the end of his life fearful that his faith would fail. Being reminded of the passage, "He that spared not his own Son, but delivered him up for us all, how shall he not with him also freely give us all things?" he said, after repeating and dwelling on the last words, "No, it would be wrong to doubt; I cannot, I dare not, I will not doubt!"—S. A. Swaine, in "Faithful Men."

When darkness long has veiled my mind,  
And smiling day once more appears,  
Then, my Redeemer! then I find  
The folly of my doubts and fears.

I chide my unbelieving heart;  
And blush that I should ever be  
Thus prone to act so base a part,  
Or harbour one hard thought of thee.  
Cowper.

Certain persons think that doubting is a needful part of Christian experience, but it is by no means the case. A child may have a deep experience of its father's love, and yet it may never have known a doubt of him. All the experience of a Christian is not Christian experience. If many Christians are despondent, it is no reason why I must be: it is rather a reason why I should watch against it. What if many sheep suffer from the fly; am I to be anxious to have my fleece fly-blown in order to be like them? Never doubt the Lord till you have cause for it; and then you will never doubt him as long as you live.

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## Joseph Stowell - IN THE MIDST OF DOUBT

IMMEDIATELY JESUS REACHED OUT HIS HAND AND CAUGHT HIM.—Matthew 14:31

Have you ever held back from obedience because you were afraid of failure and full of doubt? Jesus wants to help you. But His help is most readily available when we are willing to step out and obey. Moses had to step into the Red Sea before it parted, and Peter also knew that obedience proceeds empowerment.

We first meet Peter when Jesus asks him to put the boat into deeper waters and let down the nets. Peter is quick to respond with doubt but also with obedience: "Master, we've worked hard all night and haven't caught anything. But because you say so, I will let down the nets" (Luke 5:5). And you know the rest of the story. Though doubting, he obeyed, and Jesus met him there.

Do you remember when he walked on water? Seeing a ghostly figure approaching from a distance, the disciples were terrified until they heard their Lord's voice: "Take courage! It is I. Don't be afraid." Peter doubtfully replied, "Lord, if it's you, tell me to come to you on the water." Jesus said, "Come." Peter stepped from the boat. Imagine the courage it took to obey at that moment!

When the winds began to blow, Peter shifted his gaze from Jesus to the troubled waves and began to sink. But Jesus was there. Reaching out His hand to Peter, He caught him. "You of little faith," He said, "why did you doubt?" (Matthew 14:25–31).

The lesson is not in Peter's failure and doubt. It is rather that he was willing to do what seemed unlikely and dangerous. Most of us would not have thrown the nets one more time into the sea, and more certainly would not have stepped out of the boat. But Peter did, and in the midst of his doubt and lapse of faith, Jesus was there to reward and instruct.

Get busy! As long as you are moving in the right direction, He will help you get past your fears and failures and lead you to experiences of fruitful joy.

What is stopping you from full surrender? Give it up and meet Jesus in His fullness as you obey. (Strength for the Journey)

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## C H Spurgeon - WALKING ON WATER. Matthew 14:31

The life of a Christian is described as walking by faith. To my mind, this is a most extraordinary miracle. Walking on water, as Peter did (Matt. 14:29), is more typical of every Christian life. It is like ascending an invisible staircase to the clouds; you cannot see a step, but you keep climbing toward the light. Looking down, all is dark, and before you lies nothing but clouds.

Yet for years, some of us have been climbing this perpetually ascending stairway without ever seeing an inch ahead. We have often paused and asked, "What next, and what next?" Yet what we thought was cloud has been solid rock. Darkness has been light, and slippery places have been safe. When the darkness was so dense that it could be felt, when the past had vanished, when nothing could be seen but the step we stood on, we said, "How did I get here? What a strange, mysterious life I have had." Then faith came to our aid and we believed, and believing, we see the invisible and grasp the Eternal. Now without stopping, we can run the shining way with joy.

Perhaps at this moment you feel that you are entering a gloomy valley. You have suffered a great loss, your spirit is sinking, and you are greatly depressed. Like Peter, your soul is sinking in the waves. A hand is reaching out to save you. You cannot sink while your heavenly Father's hand is near.

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## Vance Havner - According to Your Faith

Because of unbelief:

Israel was set aside nationally (Rom. 11:20).

The generation that came out of Egypt failed to reach the Promised Land (Heb. 3:19).

Christ could do no mighty works in Nazareth (Matt. 13:58).

Christians and churches are powerless before a demonized world (Matt. 17:20).

O Ye of Little Faith

Faith and care (Matt. 6:30).

Faith and fear (Matt. 8:26).

Faith and doubt (Matt. 14:31).

Faith and spiritual stupidity (Matt. 16:8).

"...Lord, I believe; help Thou mine unbelief" (Mark 9:24).

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## Matthew 14:32 When they got into the boat, the wind stopped.

Berkley 14:32 After they had gotten into the boat, the wind quieted.

- they got into: Ps 107:29,30 Mk 4:41 6:51 Joh 6:21

### Related Passages:

Mark 6:51+ Then He got into the boat with them, and the wind stopped; and they were utterly astonished, 52 for they had not gained any insight from the incident of the loaves, but their heart was hardened.

John 6:21+ So they were willing to receive Him into the boat, and immediately the boat was at the land to which they were going.

## GOD IS SILENT AND POWERFUL!

**When they got into the boat** ([ploion](#)), **the wind stopped** - **The wind stopped** through the will of Jesus. Jesus did not speak or command the wind to stop. It simply stopped. It was His presence and His power and His authority. When we think God is silent, He is not. His Word always speaks truth and His Spirit always illuminates that truth to our mind and heart. The creation obeys its Creator! What the Creator created, He controls! God is behind the scenes and controls the scenes He is behind. **Stopped** is "the verb is **kopazō** (only in Mt 14:32, Mk 4:39+ = "the wind died down", Mk 6:51+) "to grow weary or tired," hence, "to cease from violence, cease raging." The noun form means "beating, toil, weariness;" Vincent says; "a beautiful and picturesque word. The sea sank to rest as if exhausted by its own beating." (Wuest)

**Spurgeon on wind stopped** - The Greek word implies that the wind was tired, weary, "done up," as we say. It had had its boisterous time, and spent its force; and now it knew its Lord's voice, and, like a tired child, fell asleep.

**THOUGHT** - Just a thought - How did they get back to the boat to get in the boat? Remember Jesus took Peter's hand. He did not pick him up like a lifeguard does when someone is potentially drowning. So what's the point? Peter surely walked with Jesus the few steps back to the boat. How? ON THE WATER. We can ask Peter in heaven to confirm this, but simply looking at the details strongly suggests this is what happened. If indeed it did, it would show that Jesus was not trying to shame or embarrass Peter because he walked on water with Jesus back to the boat. Peter's experience reminds us of the promise of God in Isaiah 43:2-3a

"When you pass through the waters, I will be with you; And through the rivers, they will not overflow you. When you walk through the fire, you will not be scorched, Nor will the flame burn you. 3 "For I am the LORD your God, The Holy One of Israel, your Savior (Lxx uses same verb [sozo](#) in the present tense which Peter used in Mt 14:30)

John 6:21+ supplementing Matthew and Mark, adds the detail that "immediately the boat was at the land to which they were going." Another miracle in Jesus true "course" in miracles (Steer clear of the human "[Course in miracles](#)")

**Spurgeon** - So that Peter's walk and his rescue had happened in the face of the tempest. He could walk the water well enough when his Lord held his hand and so can we. What a sight! Jesus and Peter, hand in hand, walking upon the sea! The two made for the ship at once: miracles are never spun out to undue length. Was not Peter glad to leave the tumultuous element, and at the same time to perceive that the gale was over? "When they were come into the ship, the wind ceased," it is well to be safe in a storm, but more pleasant to find the calm return and the hurricane end. How gladly did the disciples welcome their Lord, and their brother, Peter, who though wet to the skin, was a wiser man for his adventure!

**Barton** observes that "as had occurred once before when the disciples had experienced another storm, the wind ceased and the sea once again became calm (see also Mt 8:26+). Jesus had revealed to them his complete mastery over nature. (See Isaiah 51:9-16 for a dramatic description of God's power over the sea.)" (LAC)

"He came walking on the waves;  
and so he puts all the swelling storms of life under his feet.  
Christians, why be afraid?  
--- Augustine

This passage reminds me of His power described in Hebrews 1:3+ "And He (JESUS) is the radiance of His glory and the exact

representation of His nature, and **upholds** ([present tense](#)) all things (HOW MANY?) by the word of His power ([dunamis](#); cf Lk 1:37ASV+). When He had made purification of sins, He sat down at the right hand of the Majesty on high." And in Colossians we read of His sustaining power (Col 1:17+) which says "He (JESUS) is before all things, and in Him all things (HOW MANY?) hold together."

**THOUGHT** - Do you feel your life is out of control dear follower of Christ? If so, you might ask the Spirit to illuminate your mind and heart with these eternal truths in Hebrews and Colossians. He is the same God before Whom the wind stopped and He is able to do the same in our lives. While He may not always remove the storm, He is ever able to hold us fast in and through the storms of life! Hallelujah! Thank You Jesus. Amen!

**Brian Bell** - We need to trust Him even when we cannot see Him physically there alongside us. He **will** send us - He **will** watch us - He **will** come to us - He **will** talk w/us - And, we **will** reach shore (As John 6:21+ wrote "immediately the boat was at the land to which they were going.")

#### **Matthew 14:33 And those who were in the boat worshiped Him, saying, "You are certainly God's Son!"**

Berkley 14:33 Then those in the boat knelt before Him, saying, "Truly, You are the Son of God!"

NET Matthew 14:33 Then those who were in the boat worshiped him, saying, "Truly you are the Son of God."

NLT Matthew 14:33 Then the disciples worshiped him. "You really are the Son of God!" they exclaimed.

ESV Matthew 14:33 And those in the boat worshiped him, saying, "Truly you are the Son of God."

NIV Matthew 14:33 Then those who were in the boat worshiped him, saying, "Truly you are the Son of God."

GNT Matthew 14:33 ο ὁ υἱ τοῦ πλοῦ προσεκύνησάν αὐτὸν λέγοντες, ἀληθὺς θεοῦ εἶσαι.

KJV Matthew 14:33 Then they that were in the ship came and worshipped him, saying, Of a truth thou art the Son of God.

YLT Matthew 14:33 and those in the boat having come, did bow to him, saying, 'Truly -- God's Son art thou.'

ASV Matthew 14:33 And they that were in the boat worshipped him, saying, Of a truth thou art the Son of God.

CSB Matthew 14:33 Then those in the boat worshiped Him and said, "Truly You are the Son of God!"

NKJ Matthew 14:33 Then those who were in the boat came and worshiped Him, saying, "Truly You are the Son of God."

- **worshipped:** Mt 15:25 28:9,17 Lu 24:52
- **God's Son** Mt 16:16 17:5 26:63 27:43,54 Ps 2:7 Da 3:25 Mk 1:1 14:61 15:39 Lu 4:41 8:28 Joh 1:49 Jn 6:69 9:35-38 11:27 17:1 19:7 Ac 8:37 Ro 1:4

### **TRULY THE SON OF GOD**

**And those who were in the boat** ([ploion](#)) **worshiped Him** - I love the "and" (or "then" in some other versions) here for it couples two pictures - the wind stopped, the twelve worshiped! They were overwhelmed by the manifestation of the omnipotence of Jesus. Worship is an appropriate response to a Man Who has just walked on the water and into the boat! Those **in the boat** would include Judas Iscariot who betrayed Him. Matthew indicates that here he worshiped Him! Amazing!

**Phillips** - The miracles had been performed to bring them to this grand realization of the true identity of their loved Lord. All had been designed to bring them to His feet in adoring worship. And any storm He sends to us will be worth it if it brings us to His feet.

The first result of walking with God is great joy, abounding joy,  
and secondly, a great sense of security, of abiding peace.

--R A Torrey

**Spurgeon** - Well might they worship, for they had seen abundant proof of his deity. They worshipped him, saying, "of a truth thou art the Son of God." They could not have meant by this, "Thou art a superior person, an excellent character." They would not, if they

were Jews, have worshipped a mere man; for of all things you ever saw in this life, you never saw a Jew that would worship any form that was visible to the eye. The captivity of Babylon delivered the Hebrew race from idolatry altogether. They may fall into superstition of another sort, but never into idolatry. Mark that. There has not been since that time a man of Jewish race who would have worshipped Christ if he had not believed him to be God.

**Worshipped** (bowed down) (4352)(**proskuneo** from **pros** = before + **kuneo** = kiss or adore) means to prostrate oneself in homage before another in the full sense of worship, not mere reverence or courtesy. When Jesus Christ was born into this world, He was attended and worshipped by angels. (Lu 2:13f). **Proskuneo** represents the most common Near Eastern act of adoration and reverence and also carries the idea of profound awe and respect. Some believe that the root word **kuneo** may be related to **kuon** which is the Greek word for dog and which then could be picturing a dog licking his master's hand. The word **proskuneo** literally means to kiss toward someone, to throw a kiss in token of respect or homage, to prostrate oneself in homage, to do reverence to, to adore and so to worship and show respect. In the ancient Oriental (especially Persia) the mode of salutation between persons of equal rank was to kiss each other on the lips. When the difference of rank was slight, they kissed each other on the cheek. When one was much inferior, he fell upon his knees touched his forehead to the ground or prostrated himself, and as he was bowing down he would be throwing kisses toward the superior. It is this latter mode of salutation that is intended by the Greek writers in the use of the verb **proskuneo**. Magi **worshipped** Him in Mt 2:2, 11. The disciples **worshipped** Him after His crucifixion and resurrection (Mt 28:17). Proskuneo in Matthew - Matt. 2:2; Matt. 2:8; Matt. 2:11; Matt. 4:9; Matt. 4:10; Matt. 8:2; Matt. 9:18; Matt. 14:33; Matt. 15:25; Matt. 18:26; Matt. 20:20; Matt. 28:9; Matt. 28:17.

**Saying, "You are certainly God's Son! - Certainly** is **alethos** (from **alethes** = true = conforming to reality) and means the One that the disciples saw reflected what He really in fact was (is), the Son of God! It is interesting that miracles before the people in general did not generate this type of acclamation, but the disciples' eyes were being opened to Who Jesus really was. Compare Jesus' question in Mt 16:15+ "who do you say that I am?" Simon Peter's responded "You are the Christ (THE MESSIAH), the Son of the living God." (Mt 16:16+) And as Jesus went on to explain the only way Simon Peter could make that proclamation was because that glorious truth had been revealed to him by Jesus' "Father Who is in Heaven." (Mt 16:17, cf John 6:44). The upshot is that here in the boat on a now calm sea, the Spirit began to show the disciples the true identity of the Man they called Jesus! Later on this same day Peter, speaking for all the disciples, more made the same confession in ampler form in John 6:68-69+.

**Adrian Rogers** - All of this brought about the worship for our Lord. Thank God for the storms. Peter making his way back to the boat may have been singing, "Through it all, through it all, I've learned to trust in Jesus." What is there about your life that cannot be explained? Anybody can stay in the comparative safety and monotony of the boat. God is calling you to get out of your boat and "walk on the water." The prince of the power of the air is driving humanity into frenzy. The hour is dark with unbelief. The winds of false doctrine are blowing strong. The frail boat of human achievement is being buffeted as never before. Can't you see Jesus in majesty planting his footsteps upon the sea of your difficulty? I hear Him calling you over the tumult of this world's wild and restless sea saying, "Christian, come unto Me." I don't know about you, but I want to get out of the boat with both feet. Soon our Lord is coming down from the mount of His glory. It cannot be very long. It is getting gloriously dark. The storms of mother earth are at their highest. When Jesus comes again walking on the water, it will seem like child's play. I shall go walking on the air - stepping on the clouds coming to Jesus.

**Constable** notes - The stilling of the wind is not the climax of the story. The disciples' worship of Jesus is. This is the first time they addressed Jesus with His full title (Mt 16:16; 26:63; 27:40, 43, 54; cf. Mt 3:17; 4:3, 6). This was a new high for the disciples in their appreciation of Jesus' person. "Retrospectively, the disciples, in making this confession, are giving answer to the earlier question they had raised in an equally perilous situation at sea: 'What sort of man is this, that even wind and sea obey him?' (Mt 8:27+)

**Son of God** - 43x in 43v - Matt. 4:3; Matt. 4:6; Matt. 8:29; Matt. 26:63; Matt. 27:40; Matt. 27:43; Matt. 27:54; Mk. 1:1; Mk. 3:11; Mk. 15:39; Lk. 1:35; Lk. 3:38; Lk. 4:3; Lk. 4:9; Lk. 4:41; Lk. 22:70; Jn. 1:34; Jn. 1:49; Jn. 3:18; Jn. 5:25; Jn. 10:36; Jn. 11:4; Jn. 11:27; Jn. 19:7; Jn. 20:31; Acts 8:37; Acts 9:20; Rom. 1:4; 2 Co. 1:19; Gal. 2:20; Eph. 4:13; Heb. 4:14; Heb. 6:6; Heb. 7:3; Heb. 10:29; 1 Jn. 3:8; 1 Jn. 4:15; 1 Jn. 5:5; 1 Jn. 5:10; 1 Jn. 5:12; 1 Jn. 5:13; 1 Jn. 5:20; Rev. 2:18

**Bailey** - "Several important lessons can be learned from this account. (a) Courage comes from knowing that Jesus is present. (b) The answer to fear is faith, and faith is best placed in the One who is identified as the 'I Am.' (c) Doubt is an evidence of a divided mind. (d) Confessing Jesus' divine sonship is evidence of faith."

**Spurgeon** - This seems to have been the first time that the disciples arrived at this conclusion so as to state it so positively; yet, do you not think that, after the miraculous multiplication of the loaves and fishes, they might have very fitly said, "Of a truth thou art the Son of God"? Sometimes, however, one wonder will strike us more than another; and, possibly, it was because they were in danger when this second miracle was wrought, and therefore they the more appreciated the coming of Christ to them at midnight. They

were in no danger when the multitude were fed; perhaps they were not themselves hungry. That strikes us most which comes most home to us, as this miracle did.

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### **Rob Morgan - The Gratitude Factor**

And how does the story end? It ends with thanksgiving, praise, worship, and awe. Then those who were in the boat came and worshipped Him, saying, "Truly You are the Son of God."

Now let's freeze-frame that picture, and let's go back one or two hours and freeze-frame that picture, too, when the disciples were at their moment of desperation. Put the two pictures side-by-side. Three o'clock: Exhaustion. Four o'clock: Exaltation. Three o'clock: Anguish and worry. Four o'clock: Awe and worship. Three o'clock: Acting as though Jesus had forgotten them and the storm had beaten them. Four o'clock: Realizing that Jesus had not forgotten them for one moment and that He was greater than the storm.

The secret of great faith is knowing at three o'clock that four o'clock is coming, and reacting accordingly.

It is replacing worry with worship, and doing so by faith. When the disciples looked out into the howling darkness at three o'clock, they could not see Jesus; but He could see them. Even at that very moment, He was making His way down the mountain, spreading an invisible carpet-runner across the waves and coming in their direction. But He was doing so in His own timing because He wanted to develop their spiritual muscles and teach them to trust Him even as the storm passes by.

The faith that pleases Jesus is being of good cheer at three o'clock because you know Jesus is going to make all things work together for good at four o'clock, and you're willing to wait patiently for His perfect timing.

The faith that pleases Jesus is the faith that adopts a four o'clock attitude in a three o'clock storm. It is the faith that remembers the words: Be of good cheer. It is I. Do not be afraid. And we maintain a sense of gratitude and grace even on stormy nights.

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**J C Philpot** - "Then those who were in the ship came and worshiped him, saying, Truly, you are the Son of God." Matthew 14:33

What a beauty and blessedness there is in the deity of the Lord Jesus Christ, when viewed by the spiritual eye! Our reasoning minds, it is true, may be deeply stumbled at the doctrine of an incarnate God. My own mind, I know, has sometimes been driven almost to its wits' end by this great mystery of deity and humanity combined in the Person of Christ, for it so surpasses all human comprehension, and is so removed beyond the grasp of all our reasoning faculties. It is not, indeed, contrary to reason, for there is nothing in it impossible or self-contradictory; but it is beyond and above the reach of human thought and tangible apprehension. But when we are led to consider what would be the most certain and most fearful consequences unless the Lord Jesus Christ were what he declares he is, God as well as man, we are compelled, from the very necessity of the case, to cast ourselves with all the weight of our sins and sorrows upon an incarnate God, as the shipwrecked sailor gladly casts himself upon the rock in the ocean as the only refuge from the devouring sea.

When we feel what sinners we are, and have been, look down into the depths of the fall, and see in some feeble and faint measure what sin is in the sight of a holy and pure God, what can save us from despair unless we see the deity of the Lord Jesus Christ investing his work upon the cross and his obedience with a merit that shall suffice to justify our guilty souls, wash away our aggravated iniquities, blot out our fearful crimes, and make us fit to appear in the presence of a righteous God? Thus we are sometimes absolutely compelled to throw ourselves on the deity of Christ, as ready to perish, because in such a divine Savior, in such precious blood we see a refuge, and we see elsewhere no other.

We then feel that if the deity of Christ be taken away, the Church of God is lost. Where can you find pardon? where justification? where reconciliation to God? where atoning blood, if there is no Savior who merited as God, and suffered as man? We might as well leap into hell at once with all our sins upon our head, as a sailor might spring over the prow of a burning ship into the boiling waves, to meet death instead of waiting for it, unless we believe by a living faith in the deity of the Son of God.

But sometimes we are sweetly led into this glorious truth, not merely driven by sheer necessity, but blessedly drawn into this great mystery of godliness, when Christ is revealed to our souls by the power of God. Then, seeing light in God's light, we view the deity of Christ investing every thought, word, and act of his suffering humanity with unspeakable merit. Then we see how this glorious fact of deity and humanity in the Person of Immanuel satisfies every need, puts away every sin, heals every wound, wipes away every tear, and sweetly brings the soul to repose on the bosom of God. Sometimes, therefore, from necessity, driven by storms of guilt and waves of temptation, and sometimes sweetly drawn by the leadings and teachings of the Holy Spirit, we lay hold of the hope set before us in the essential deity and suffering humanity of the Son of God, knowing that there is a refuge in him from sin, death, hell, and despair.

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**THE STORM Mt 14:24–33; Mk 6:45–52; Jn 6:16–21**

“In perils in the wilderness, in perils in the sea,” wrote Paul, describing the varied hardships encountered by himself in the prosecution of his great work as the apostle of the Gentiles. Such perils meet together in this crisis in the life of Jesus. He has just saved himself from the dangerous enthusiasm manifested by the thoughtless multitude after the miraculous repast in the desert; and now, a few hours later, a still greater disaster threatens to befall Him. His twelve chosen disciples, whom He had hurriedly sent off in a boat, that they might not encourage the people in their foolish project, have been overtaken in a storm while He is alone on the mountain praying, and are in imminent danger of being drowned. His contrivance for escaping one evil has involved Him in a worse; and it seems as if, by a combination of mischances, He were to be suddenly deprived of all His followers, both true and false, at once, and left utterly alone, as in the last great crisis. The Messianic King watching on those heights, like a general on the day of battle, is indeed hard pressed, and the battle is going against Him. But the Captain of salvation is equal to the emergency; and however sorely perplexed He may be for a season, He will be victorious in the end.

The Sea of Galilee, though but a small sheet of water, some thirteen miles long by six broad, is liable to be visited by sharp, sudden squalls, probably due to its situation. It lies in a deep hollow of volcanic origin, bounded on either side by steep ranges of hills rising above the water-level from one to two thousand feet. The difference of temperature at the top and bottom of these hills is very considerable. Up on the tablelands above the air is cool and bracing; down at the margin of the lake, which lies seven hundred feet below the level of the ocean, the climate is tropical. The storms caused by this inequality of temperature are tropical in violence. They come sweeping down the ravines upon the water; and in a moment the lake, calm as glass before, becomes from end to end white with foam, whilst the waves rise into the air in columns of spray.

Two such storms of wind were encountered by the twelve after they had become disciples, probably within the same year; the one with which we are concerned at present, and an earlier one on the occasion of a visit to Gadara. Both happened by night, and both were exceedingly violent. In the first storm, we are told, the ship was covered with the waves, and filled almost to sinking, so that the disciples feared they should perish. The second storm was equally violent, and was of much longer duration. It caught the twelve apparently when they were half-way across, and after the gray of dusk had deepened into the darkness of night. From that time the wind blew with unabated force till daybreak, in the fourth watch, between the hours of three and six in the morning. Some idea of the fury of the blast may be gathered from the fact recorded, that even then they were still little more than half-way over the sea. They had rowed in all only a distance of twenty-five or thirty furlongs, the whole distance in a slanting direction, from the eastern to the western shore, being probably about fifty. During all those weary hours they had done little more, pulling with all their might, than hold their own against wind and waves.

All this while what was Jesus doing? In the first storm He had been with His disciples in the ship, sweetly sleeping after the fatigues of the day, “rocked in cradle of the imperious surge.” This time He was absent, and not sleeping; but away up among the mountains alone, watching unto prayer. For He, too, had His own struggle on that tempestuous night; not with the howling winds, but with sorrowful thoughts. That night He, as it were, rehearsed the agony in Gethsemane, and with earnest prayer and absorbing meditation studied the passion sermon which He preached on the morrow. So engrossed was His mind with His own sad thoughts, that the poor disciples were for a season as if forgotten; till at length, at early dawn, looking seawards, He saw them toiling in rowing against the contrary wind, and without a moment’s further delay made haste to their rescue.

This storm on the Sea of Galilee, besides being important as a historical fact, possesses also the significance of an emblem. When we consider the time at which it occurred, it is impossible not to connect it in our thoughts with the untoward events of the next day. For the literal storm on the water was succeeded by a spiritual storm on the land, equally sudden and violent, and not less perilous to the souls of the twelve than the other had been to their bodies. The bark containing the precious freight of Christ’s true discipleship was then overtaken by a sudden gust of unpopularity, coming down on it like a squall on a highland loch, and all but upsetting it. The fickle crowd which but the day before would have made Jesus their king, turned away abruptly from Him in disappointment and disgust; and it was not without an effort, as we shall see, that the twelve maintained their steadfastness. They had to pull hard against wind and waves, that they might not be carried headlong to ruin by the tornado of apostasy.

There can be little doubt that the two storms,—on the lake and on the shore,—coming so close one on the other, would become associated in the memory of the apostles; and that the literal storm would be stereotyped in their minds as an expressive emblem of the spiritual one, and of all similar trials of faith. The incidents of that fearful night—the watching, the wet, the toil without result, the fatigue, the terror and despair—would abide indelibly in their recollection, the symbolic representation of all the perils and tribulations through which believers must pass on their way to the kingdom of heaven, and especially of those that come upon them while they are yet immature in the faith. Symbolic significance might be discovered specially in three features. The storm took place by night; in the absence of Jesus; and while it lasted all progress was arrested. Storms at sea may happen at all hours of the day, but trials of faith always happen in the night. Were there no darkness there could be no trial. Had the twelve understood Christ’s discourse in

Capernaum, the apostasy of the multitude would have seemed to them a light matter. But they did not understand it, and hence the solicitude of their Master lest they too should forsake Him. In all such trials, also, the absence of the Lord to feeling is a constant and most painful feature. Christ is not in the ship while the storm rages by night, and we toil on in rowing unaided, as we think, by His grace, uncheered by His spiritual presence. It was so even with the twelve next day on shore. Their Master, present to their eyes, had vanished out of sight to their understanding. They had not the comfort of comprehending His meaning, while they clung to Him as one who had the words of eternal life. Worst of all, in these trials of faith, with all our rowing, we make no progress; the utmost we can effect is to hold our own, to keep off the rocky shore in the midst of the sea. Happily that is something, yea, it is every thing. For it is not always true that if not going forward we must be going backward. This is an adage for fair weather only. In a time of storm there is such a thing as standing still, and then to do even so much is a great achievement. Is it a small thing to weather the storm, to keep off the rocks, the sands, and the breakers? Vex not the soul of him who is already vexed enough by the buffeting winds, by retailing wise saws about progress and backsliding indiscriminately applied. Instead of playing thus the part of a Job's friend, rather remind him that the great thing for one in his situation is to endure, to be immovable, to hold fast his moral integrity and his profession of faith, and to keep off the dangerous coasts of immorality and infidelity; and assure him that if he will only pull a little longer, however weary his arm, God will come and calm the wind, and he will forthwith reach the land.

The storm on the lake, besides being an apt emblem of the trial of faith, was for the twelve an important lesson in faith, helping to prepare them for the future which awaited them. The temporary absence of their Master was a preparation for His perpetual absence. The miraculous interposition of Jesus at the crisis of their peril was fitted to impress on their minds the conviction that even after He had ascended He would still be with them in the hour of danger. From the ultimate happy issue of a plan which threatened for a time to miscarry, they might further learn to cherish a calm confidence in the government of their exalted Lord, even in midst of most untoward events. They probably concluded, when the storm came on, that Jesus had made a mistake in ordering them to sail away across the lake while He remained behind to dismiss the multitude. The event, however, rebuked this hasty judgment, all ending happily. Their experience in this instance was fitted to teach a lesson for life: not rashly to infer mismanagement or neglect on Christ's part from temporary mishaps, but to have firm faith in His wise and loving care for His cause and people, and to anticipate a happy issue out of all perplexities; yea, to glory in tribulation, because of the great deliverance which would surely follow.

Such strong faith the disciples were far enough from possessing at the time of the storm. They had no expectation that Jesus would come to their rescue; for when He did come, they thought He was a spirit flitting over the water, and cried out in an agony of superstitious terror. Here also we note, in passing, a curious correspondence between the incidents of this crisis and those connected with the final one. The disciples had then as little expectation of seeing their Lord return from the dead as they had now of seeing Him come to them over the sea; and therefore His re-appearance at first frightened rather than comforted them. "They were terrified and affrighted, and supposed that they had seen a spirit." Good, unlooked for in either case, was turned into evil; and what to faith would have been a source of intense joy, became, through unbelief, only a new cause of alarm.

The fact of His not being expected seems to have imposed on Jesus the necessity of using artifice in His manner of approaching His storm-tossed disciples. Mark relates that "He would have passed by then," affecting strangeness, as we understand it, out of delicate consideration for their weakness. He knew what He would be taken for when first observed; and therefore He wished to attract their attention at a safe distance, fearing lest, by appearing among them at once, He might drive them distracted. He found it needful to be as cautious in announcing His advent to save as men are wont to be in communicating evil tidings: first appearing, as the spectre, as far away as He could be seen; then revealing Himself by His familiar voice uttering the words of comfort, "It is I; be not afraid," and so obtaining at length a willing reception into the ship.<sup>3</sup>

The effects which followed the admission of Jesus into the vessel betrayed the twelve into a new manifestation of the weakness of their faith. "The wind ceased: and they were sore amazed in themselves beyond measure, and wondered." They ought not to have wondered so greatly, after what had happened once before on these same waters, and especially after such a miracle as had been wrought in the wilderness on the previous day. But the storm had blown all thoughts of such things out of their mind, and driven them utterly stupid. "They reflected not on the loaves (nor on the rebuking of the winds), for their heart was hardened."<sup>5</sup>

But the most interesting revelation of the mental state of the disciples at the time when Jesus came to their relief, is to be found in the episode concerning Peter related in Matthew's Gospel. When that disciple understood that the supposed spectre was his beloved Master, he cried, "Lord, if it be Thou, bid me come unto Thee on the water;" and on receiving permission, he forthwith stepped out of the ship into the sea. This was not faith, but simple rashness. It was the rebound of an impetuous, headlong nature from one extreme of utter despair to the opposite extreme of extravagant, reckless joy. What in the other disciples took the tame form of a willingness to receive Jesus into the ship, after they were satisfied it was He who walked on the waters,<sup>2</sup> took, in the case of Peter, the form of a romantic, adventurous wish to go out to Jesus where He was, to welcome Him back among them again. The proposal was altogether like the man—generous, enthusiastic, and well-meant, but inconsiderate.

And yet that scene showed something more than the weakness of that disciple's faith. It showed also what is possible to those who believe. If the tendency of weak faith be to sink, the triumph of strong faith is to walk on the waves, glorying in tribulation, and

counting it all joy when exposed to divers temptations. It is the privilege of those who are weak in faith, and the duty of all, mindful of human frailty, to pray, "Lead us not into temptation." But when storms come not of their inviting, and when their ship is upset in midst of the sea, then may Christians trust to the promise, "When thou passest through the waters, I will be with thee;" and if only they have faith, they shall be enabled to tread the rolling billows as if walking on firm land.

"He bids me come; His voice I know,  
And boldly on the waters go,  
And brave the tempest's shock.  
O'er rude temptations now I bound;  
The billows yield a solid ground,  
The wave is firm as rock."

#### **Matthew 14:34 When they had crossed over, they came to land at Gennesaret.**

NET Matthew 14:34 After they had crossed over, they came to land at Gennesaret.

NLT Matthew 14:34 After they had crossed the lake, they landed at Gennesaret.

ESV Matthew 14:34 And when they had crossed over, they came to land at Gennesaret.

NIV Matthew 14:34 When they had crossed over, they landed at Gennesaret.

GNT Matthew 14:34 Κα διαπερσαντες λθον π τ ν γ ν ε ς Γεννησαρ τ.

KJV Matthew 14:34 And when they were gone over, they came into the land of Gennesaret.

YLT Matthew 14:34 And having passed over, they came to the land of Gennesaret,

ASV Matthew 14:34 And when they had crossed over, they came to the land, unto Gennesaret.

CSB Matthew 14:34 Once they crossed over, they came to land at Gennesaret.

NKJ Matthew 14:34 When they had crossed over, they came to the land of Gennesaret.

- **when:** Mk 6:53-56
- **the land at Gennesaret:** Lu 5:1

#### **Related Passages:**

Mark 6:53-56+ When they had crossed over they came to land at Gennesaret, and moored to the shore. 54 When they got out of the boat, immediately the people recognized Him, 55 and ran about that whole country and began to carry here and there on their pallets those who were sick, to the place they heard He was. 56 Wherever He entered villages, or cities, or countryside, they were laying the sick in the market places, and imploring Him that they might just touch the fringe of His cloak; and as many as touched it were being cured.

#### Gennesaret

**When they had crossed over** - From East to West. The Gospel of John gives an additional detail of how **they had crossed over** writing "**immediately the boat was at the land to which they were going**" (John 6:21<sup>+</sup>)

**they came to land at Gennesaret** - Note [Gennesaret](#) on the northwestern side of the Sea of Galilee (aka Sea of Gennesaret = Lk 5:1, Sea of Tiberius). **Gennesaret** was a fertile district, in which were situated the cities of Tiberias and Capernaum, extending along the western shore of the lake to which it gave name. Gennesaret was the name of a plain lying on the northwest side of the lake, about three and a half miles long, and at some points over two miles wide. It is glowingly described by Josephus who wrote "There is not a plant which its fertile soil refuses to produce, and its cultivators in fact grow every species" (Josephus goes on to describe the many fruits and favorable climate; cf. Josephus Wars. 3.10.8).

**Broadus on Gennesaret** - Stanley: "No less than four springs pour forth their almost full grown rivers through the plain; the richness of the soil displays itself in magnificent wheat fields; whilst along the shore rises a thick jungle of thorn and oleander, abounding in birds of brilliant colors and various forms," The soil is a dark loam, very rich; and by irrigation will produce three crops a year. We know of no large city in this plain, Capernaum was pretty certainly at Tel Hum, further north (see Mt 4:13); and Chorazin was probably at Keraseh, up in the hills (see Mt 11:21).

**THOUGHT** - **Daniel Hill** comments that "When the disciples left their intention was to sail to Bethsaida, the fishing village near Capernaum. But the storm blew them off course to Gennesaret, farther south and west. When they left, Jesus was not with them, but now, after walking to them on the water, He is with them. And now that He is with them, the change in destination is immaterial. **Principle:** Where you are going is not nearly as important as Who you are with as you go. All of us have plans, dreams, and aspirations, but the winds of change often alter our course. But if Jesus Christ is with us, leading us, where we are going doesn't really matter!"

**Matthew Henry** (Concise) - Whithersoever Christ went, he was doing good (cf Acts 10:38-39+). They brought unto him all that were diseased. They came humbly beseeching him to help them. The experiences of others may direct and encourage us in seeking for Christ. As many as touched, were made perfectly whole. Those whom Christ heals, he heals perfectly. **Were men more acquainted with Christ, and with the diseased state of their souls, they would flock to receive his healing influences.**

**Matthew 14:35** And when the men of that place recognized Him, they sent [word] into all that surrounding district and brought to Him all who were sick;

their sick to him.

NLT Matthew 14:35 When the people recognized Jesus, the news of his arrival spread quickly throughout the whole area, and soon people were bringing all their sick to be healed.

ESV Matthew 14:35 And when the men of that place recognized him, they sent around to all that region and brought to him all who were sick

NIV Matthew 14:35 And when the men of that place recognized Jesus, they sent word to all the surrounding country. People brought all their sick to him

GNT Matthew 14:35 κα πιν ντες α τ ν ο νδρες το τ που κε νου π στειλαν ε ς λην τ ν περ χωρον κε νην κα προσ νεγκαν α τ π ντας το ς κακ ς χοντας

KJV Matthew 14:35 And when the men of that place had knowledge of him, they sent out into all that country round about, and brought unto him all that were diseased;

YLT Matthew 14:35 and having recognized him, the men of that place sent forth to all that region round about, and they brought to him all who were ill,

- Mt 4:24,25 Mk 1:28-34 Mk 2:1-12 Mk 3:8-10 Mk 6:55

#### Related Passages:

Matthew 4:24-25+ The news about Him spread throughout all Syria; and they brought to Him all who were ill, those suffering with various diseases and pains, demoniacs, epileptics, paralytics; and He healed them. 25 Large crowds followed Him from Galilee and the Decapolis and Jerusalem and Judea and from beyond the Jordan.

Mark 1:28+ Immediately the news about Him spread everywhere into all the surrounding district of Galilee.

Mark 3:7-8+ Jesus withdrew to the sea with His disciples; and a great multitude from Galilee followed; and also from Judea, 8 and from Jerusalem, and from Idumea, and beyond the Jordan, and the vicinity of Tyre and Sidon, a great number of people heard of all that He was doing and came to Him.

Mark 6:54-55+ (PARALLEL PASSAGE) When they got out of the boat, immediately the people recognized Him, 55 and ran about that whole country and began to carry here and there on their pallets those who were sick, to the place they heard He was.

**And when the men of that place (topos) recognized (epiginosko = to know fully) Him** - Mark 6:54+ adds "When they got out of the boat, **immediately** the people recognized Him." It is as if the people were awaiting His arrival. And so the people **recognized** Jesus from experience ([epiginosko](#) means to know by experience), which they had obtained for they had seen Him work miracles before. He was becoming a well-known personality by this time. Today He would have invitations to all the talk shows! His popularity had spread and the populace was aware that this Man had power to heal those who were sick.

**THOUGHT** - Their recognition of Jesus is interesting because this was early in the morning (sometime in the

fourth watch of the night). Even without full day's sunlight they knew it was Jesus. But sadly the people knew Jesus' physical appearance but not His true identity. They knew Him but He did not know them! (cf Mt 7:21-23+) They failed to recognize that He was the Messiah, despite all of the authoritative teaching and multiple miraculous manifestations.

**They sent** ([apostello](#)) **word into all that surrounding district and brought to Him all who were sick** ([kakos](#)) (cf similar phrase in Mt 4:24+) - Mark 6:55+ tell us how they **sent** (word), for they "ran about that whole country." The healing of the woman in Mt 9:20-22+) took place not that far away in Capernaum not long before This passage does not say they were drawn to Him because of His teaching with authority, but because of His healing with power. Sadly, many still come to Jesus today for the wrong reasons and miss the greater healing power of His Word which is able to cure the body from the deadly curse of the "sin virus," and to restore to wholeness and new life, now and forever. Amen.

This section emphasizes that Jesus' fame/popularity was at an all time high. Everywhere He goes they are bringing Him their sick. There is no mention of teaching in this section. They recognized Jesus had the power to heal physically but missed the truth that He had the more important power to heal spiritually. The people are still more interested in Jesus' "healing." And so sadly today many "tele-evangelist" preachers ([see note](#)) prey on those who are sick and offer "miraculous cures" (usually for "contributions") but fail to present the soul saving Gospel. We call this the "[Health and Wealth Gospel](#)" and it is flourishing, not only in America but in other countries such in Africa where this false teaching is rampant.

The verb **brought** is [prosphero](#) which was commonly used in the sacrificial vocabulary. For example, **prosphero** was used in Hebrews to describe the priests bringing their offerings to God (e.g., Heb 9:7, 9+). Here in Matthew 14:35 those who are well are bringing those who are sick to God (Jesus is God), although sadly they came only for physical healing, not for spiritual healing He would have willingly given them! They missed the truth that this miracle working Man was God in the Flesh, [Jehovah Rapha](#), the Great Physician, Who had the power to heal spiritually all those who were **brought to Him**. As the writer of Hebrews said "how much more will the blood of Christ, Who through the eternal Spirit **offered** ([prosphero](#)) Himself without blemish to God, cleanse your conscience from dead works to serve the living God?" (Heb 9:14+)

**THOUGHT** - Have you brought anyone to your Jesus, that they might be cured of their uniformly fatal sickness of sin contracted from Adam (Ro 5:12+)? That is the great privilege we have today, to bring the broken, the downcast, the outcast, the rejected, the poor, the needy to our Great Physician, that He might cure them eternally! Lord, embolden each of us to proclaim Your Gospel (cf Eph 6:19-20+) and thereby to bring those sick in sin to the all sufficient Savior that them might receive a new heart and live forever with You in Heaven. Amen.

**Wuest** - What a pathetic picture. The people kept running from place to place, carrying their sick on pallets from place to place, wherever Jesus was reported to be or wherever it might be possible to find Him. This incident brings us near the close of our Lord's Galilean ministry, and to the time when His popularity was phenomenal.

**Matthew 14:36 and they implored Him that they might just touch the fringe of His cloak; and as many as touched it were cured.**

NET Matthew 14:36 They begged him if they could only touch the edge of his cloak, and all who touched it were healed.

NLT Matthew 14:36 They begged him to let the sick touch at least the fringe of his robe, and all who touched him were healed.

ESV Matthew 14:36 and implored him that they might only touch the fringe of his garment. And as many as touched it were made well.

NIV Matthew 14:36 and begged him to let the sick just touch the edge of his cloak, and all who touched him were healed.

GNT Matthew 14:36 καὶ παρεκλουν αὐτὸν νὰ μὴ νων ψωνται τὸ κρᾶσπιδου τοῦ ματοῦ αὐτοῦ· καὶ σοὶ ψαντο διέσθησαν.

KJV Matthew 14:36 And besought him that they might only touch the hem of his garment: and as many as touched were made perfectly whole.

YLT Matthew 14:36 and were calling on him that they might only touch the fringe of his garment, and as many as did touch were saved.

ASV Matthew 14:36 and they besought him that they might only touch the border of his garment: and as many as touched were made whole.

CSB Matthew 14:36 They were begging Him that they might only touch the tassel on His robe. And as many as touched it were made perfectly well.

NKJ Matthew 14:36 and begged Him that they might only touch the hem of His garment. And as many as touched it were made perfectly well.

NRS Matthew 14:36 and begged him that they might touch even the fringe of his cloak; and all who touched it were healed.

- **that they might just touch t:** Mt 9:20,21 Mk 3:10 Lu 6:19 Ac 19:11,12
- **fringe of His cloak:** Mt 23:5 Ex 28:33-43 Nu 15:38,39
- **cured:** Joh 6:37 7:23 Ac 3:16 4:9,10,14-16

#### Related Passages:

Mark 6:56+ (PARALLEL PASSAGE) Wherever He entered villages, or cities, or countryside, they were laying the sick in the market places, and imploring Him that they might just touch the fringe of His cloak; and as many as touched it were being cured.

### JUST ONE TOUCH!

**And they implored Him** - **Implored** is the common verb [parakaleo](#) (para = beside + kaleo = call) and is in the [imperfect tense](#) picturing one after another beseeching, even begging Him just to touch the fringe of His cloak. Mark tells us that Jesus was on the move writing "Wherever He entered villages, or cities, or countryside." (Mark 6:56+) Note the verb [parakaleo](#) literally means to call beside and thus is almost a play on words in this context, for again and again ([parakaleo](#) is in the [imperfect tense](#)) they **implored** Jesus to come close to allow a touch of His fringe.

**that they might just touch** ([hapto/haptomai](#)) **the fringe of His cloak** ([himation](#) which was divided up in Mt 27:35, Mk 15:24+) - **CSB** has "that they might only touch the tassel on His robe." **Fringe** is the noun [kraspedon](#) the outer limit of something and thus means the edge, border or hem of a garment (cf Mt 9:20; Mk 6:56; Lk 8:44, cf Lxx of Zech 8:23). In this case the word may refer to the **tassel** (Hebrew [tsitsit](#)), which was the **fringe** on the four corners of the outer garment ([see picture, another picture](#)) which Jews wore as a reminder to observe the commandments (Mt 23:5, cf. Nu 15:38, 39; Dt 22:12).

**Wuest** says the **fringe** was "a little appendage hanging down from the edge of the mantle or cloak." The Jews had such appendages attached to their mantles to remind them of the law." (Numbers 15:38-40 explains the OT background on fringes).

**Evans** writes that "In late antiquity it was believed that fringe of the clothes of holy men, such as Honi the Circle-Drawer or Hanina ben Dosa, could convey benefit. "Hanan ha-Nehba was the son of the daughter of Honi the Circle-Drawer. When the world was in need of rain, the Rabbis would send to him schoolchildren, and they would take hold of the hem [or fringe] of his garment and say to him, 'Father, Father, give us rain' " (b. Ta'anit 23b)." (BKBC-Mt-Lk)

#### Related Passage:

- Healing of woman who touched the fringe of His cloak described in Mark 5:24-34

**And as many as** - **As many as** indicates there was no limit to the numbers that Jesus could heal. And this applies spiritually for as Paul writes "WHOEVER WILL CALL ON THE NAME OF THE LORD WILL BE SAVED ([sozo](#))." (Ro 10:13+, used by Peter in his first sermon in Acts 2:21+ quoting from Joel 2:32+)

**Touched it were cured** - KJV = "were made perfectly whole." Clearly Jesus allowed them to touch the fringe of His cloak. When Jesus cured, He **cured** completely as shown by Matthew's choice of the verb [diasozo](#). Those who were cured were not just a "little better" but were completely cured.

This passage reminds us of the woman with 12 years of hemorrhage in Mark 5 who "thought, "If I just touch His garments, I will get well." (Mark 5:28+) After confronting her Jesus declared "Daughter, your faith has made you well; go in peace and be healed of your affliction." (Mk. 5:34+)

**Broadus** - Weiss thinks it incredible that there were now so many sick to be healed in the region of Jesus' common residence. But he had been absent some time, on the journey about Galilee (Mt 11:1), and the season of malarial fevers had come. For previous instances of a general statement concerning numerous miracles of healing, see Mt 4:23f.; Mt 8:16; 9:35.

**Robertson** - One must enlarge the details here to get an idea of the richness of the healing ministry of Jesus. We are now near the close of the Galilean ministry with its many healing mercies and excitement is at the highest pitch (Bruce).

**Ray Stedman** - This is a beautiful scene of the ministry of Jesus. As you can see, the story of the woman with the issue of blood who was healed by touching the hem of Jesus' garment as he was on his way to the house of Jairus has spread now throughout all the regions around Galilee. So wherever Jesus appears, instantly the people begin to bring out the sick and the diseased and the demon possessed, that they might touch even the fringe of his garment. And, as Mark tells us, "...as many as touched it were made well." This is a wonderful fulfillment of that beautifully poetic prediction, one of the most majestic passages of Isaiah the prophet (ED: CLEARLY DESCRIBING SIGNS THAT WOULD MARK THE FACT THAT THE MESSIAH HAD ARRIVED ON THE SCENE!), in Isaiah 35: "Then the eyes of the blind shall be opened, and the ears of the deaf unstopped; then shall the lame man leap like a hart, and the tongue of the dumb sing for joy." (Isaiah 35:5-6RSV+) We can see this in Mark's beautifully descriptive account, as our Lord fulfilled those other words of Isaiah, which Matthew quotes: "He took our infirmities and bore our diseases," (Matthew 8:17RSV+).

**Touched** (681)([hapto/haptomai](#)) means to grasp, to lay hold of with the basic meaning of touching for the purpose of manipulating. **Hapto** conveys the sense handling of an object as to exert a modifying influence upon it or upon oneself. The majority of the 39 uses are in the Gospels and are associated with Jesus touching someone (or someone touching Him) usually with a beneficial effect. Related uses in Matthew...

Matthew 8:3+ Jesus stretched out His hand and **touched** him, saying, "I am willing; be cleansed." And immediately his leprosy was cleansed.

Matthew 8:15+ He **touched** her hand, and the fever left her; and she got up and waited on Him.

Matthew 9:20+ And a woman who had been suffering from a hemorrhage for twelve years, came up behind Him and **touched** the fringe of His cloak;

Matthew 9:21+ for she was saying to herself, "If I only **touch** His garment, I will get well."

Matthew 9:29+ Then He **touched** their eyes, saying, "It shall be done to you according to your faith."

**Cured** (brought safely through [the illness])(1295)([diasozo](#) from **dia** = through + **sozo** = to save) means literally to save through (used literally in Acts 27:43, 44+, Acts 28:1, 4+), and then to save thoroughly. In Acts 28:4 they people saw said of Paul "he has been **saved** from the sea." The prefix **dia** means "through" and so the picture is of bringing one safely through the danger or distress of the illness, transporting someone through an ordeal to safety on the other side. The prefix dia gives the force of a complete deliverance and in this context of complete healing. In Luke 7:3 the centurion "sent some Jewish elders asking Him to come and **save** the life of his slave."