



GROW AT HOME

DAILY DEVOTION

DAY 7

READ

MATTHEW | CHAPTERS 13 + 14

FOCUS

²⁵SHORTLY BEFORE DAWN JESUS WENT OUT TO THEM, WALKING ON THE LAKE. ²⁶WHEN THE DISCIPLES SAW HIM WALKING ON THE LAKE, THEY WERE TERRIFIED. "IT'S A GHOST," THEY SAID, AND CRIED OUT IN FEAR. ²⁷BUT JESUS IMMEDIATELY SAID TO THEM: "TAKE COURAGE! IT IS I. DON'T BE AFRAID."
²⁸"LORD, IF IT'S YOU," PETER REPLIED, "TELL ME TO COME TO YOU ON THE WATER." ²⁹"COME," HE SAID. THEN PETER GOT DOWN OUT OF THE BOAT, WALKED ON THE WATER AND CAME TOWARD JESUS. ³⁰BUT WHEN HE SAW THE WIND, HE WAS AFRAID AND, BEGINNING TO SINK, CRIED OUT, "LORD, SAVE ME!"
³¹IMMEDIATELY JESUS REACHED OUT HIS HAND AND CAUGHT HIM. "YOU OF LITTLE FAITH," HE SAID, "WHY DID YOU DOUBT?" ³²AND WHEN THEY CLIMBED INTO THE BOAT, THE WIND DIED DOWN. ³³THEN THOSE WHO WERE IN THE BOAT WORSHIPED HIM, SAYING, "TRULY YOU ARE THE SON OF GOD."

REFLECTION from PASTOR MATT CIANFRANI

When I was in High School I took a summer trip to Lake Havasu with a few of my buddies. When we got there, we swam in the lake and went rock jumping for a few hours. One of my buddies started to climb up the side of a bridge and suggested that I follow him. Being the idiot that I was, I followed him up the rock. With each new foot higher I climbed, I thought to myself, "What am I doing?!?" Finally, we arrived at a ledge 75ft above the water's surface. My buddy stepped out to the edge, counted to three, and jumped off and into the water. Then came my turn. My stomach was churning, my palms were sweaty, and my arms felt heavy.

As my friends in the boat below counted down from 3, my mind kept telling me, "Back up! Climb down!" In defiance of my panicked brain, I finally I mustered up the courage and stepped off the edge. What felt like minutes later, I splashed into the water below. I tell you this story because I ended up having so much fun I did it like 8 more times. That day I learned a valuable lesson: sometimes we have to embrace our fears and step out into uncertainty to experience the abundant life we were created for. Or as Peter would have said, "Sometimes we have to leave the safety of the boat to experience all that God has for us."

Over the years, I have heard many sermons on this passage. Many preachers share this account with a negative connotation, because Peter's walk on water was cut so short by his doubt. But I see the much greater implications for the disciples in the boat than for Peter. You see, if Peter had little faith, the other disciples had none. Not one of them was willing to leave the safety of the known, to step out and trust Jesus with the unknown.

The big question is: Would you get out of the boat? Or maybe the better question for many of us is: What keeps you from getting out of the boat? Do you not trust that God will take care of you? Do you not believe in the promises of Scripture? And finally, maybe the last question for you to ponder is: What is your boat? Maybe you are struggling to believe that God can turn the bad you have experienced into good. Or maybe you are full of worry and anxiety because your eyes have turned away from Jesus just like Peter's did thousands of years ago. I would encourage you during this time of difficulty to keep your focus on Jesus. Take this time to really develop your relationship with God by spending time with Him daily.

Lastly, I want to encourage you. When you think about it, Peter's faith is much like ours. His faith vacillates often because it is a complicated mixture: a ton of doubt mixed with tons of trust. But the good news is this: God does not wait for us to have perfect faith before He saves us. In our scripture reading for today, Jesus ran over to Peter. Jesus pulled Peter up out of his doubt and back into His arms, simply because God honored this man's faith, little and wavering though it was.



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REFLECTION from PASTOR MATT CIANFRANI (CONT'D)

I think God honored his faith because the mere presence of authentic trust is all that is needed. I charge you to lean into Jesus during this time, knowing that He has a plan and has promised to work all things for good for those who believe in Him.

QUESTIONS

- WHAT CIRCUMSTANCES IN YOUR LIFE ARE CAUSING YOU TO TAKE YOUR EYES OFF JESUS TO FOCUS ON THE STORM?
- HOW HAS GOD PROVEN HIS LOVE AND POWER TO YOU IN THE PAST?
- HOW IS GOD CHALLENGING YOU TO TRUST HIM TODAY?