

Overcoming Doubt Amid Overwhelming Circumstances

Matthew 14:22-32; Mark 6:45-56; John 6:15-21

Sermon Outline

A. Feeling Abandoned and Alone (vs. 22-25; Psalm 28:1-3):

1. He made the disciples – Christ made (caused them) those, whose will He has been shaping, whose mind He has been renewing to follow Him, get into their boat ('the' boat).
2. Get into the boat – Getting into the boat is a one-time action signifying that this maybe a trial Christ does not plan to repeat.
 - a) He could have gone with them and pray after they got to the other side.
 - b) He could have made sure the storm did not rise on them.
 - c) He could have stopped the wind before they got into the boat.
 - d) Like in chapter 8 He has simply got up from His alone time and said 'peace be still.'
 - e) He could have simply sent the crowds away.
3. Go – Go is a present tense verb which means that they must keep going until, no matter what, they make it to the other side.
4. He sent the crowds away – Just like He sent the disciples away He sent the crowds away. They were both trying to make Christ function outside of the will of God (Luke 14:25-33).
5. He sent the crowds away – Sending the crowds away is no different than to issue a divorce decree. Their decision to make Christ King moved Him, especially since the disciples were going along with it, to disband the crowd and go away and pray.
6. He went up to pray – Christ was very intentional about going before God, by Himself, to make a petition or intercede in prayer. This word includes being prostrate before God requesting for something special.
7. Was a long distance – By the time Christ was alone on the mountain the disciples were continuously moving away from where He was so that they are long ways off.
8. Battered; torment – The storm was so fierce the waves against the boat it caused the disciple's mental anguish, and distress even though some of them were experienced sailors.
9. Contrary – The winds were going in the opposite direction.
10. In the fourth watch of the night – Christ decided the time He was going to meet up with them. When that time came Christ approached them on His own initiative.
 - a) The night was divided into four periods: 6:00 p.m. to 9:00 p.m.,

9:00 p.m. to 12:00 a.m., 12:00 a.m. to 3:00 a.m., and 3:00 a.m. to 6:00 a.m. The “fourth watch” (“three o’clock in the morning,” 14:25) was between 3:00 a.m. and 6:00 a.m. If the disciples had started around sunset (14:22–23), they had been rowing for about nine hours.^[1]

11. He came walking – Christ going to the disciples was a continuous action presentative of His commitment to make this a lifestyle pattern of serving them.

B. Our Fears Increase Doubt (vs. 26-27):

1. When the disciples – Christ approached those, whose will He has been shaping, whose mind He has been renewing to follow Him, not the crowd.
2. Saw – The word ‘saw’ here means that the disciples, who had spent significant time with Christ, had a full understanding, once and for all (aorist tense) who they were looking at. They clearly understood this in their minds.
3. Walking on the sea – Walking describes a behavioral characteristic that pleases God; it is a lifestyle pattern.
4. Walking on the sea – Jesus rescuing His disciples when they are in above their heads and they are in danger are continuous lifestyle patterns that Christ on His initiative will display. You see this with jail cells opening, a snake not poisoning the Apostle Paul, etc.
5. They were terrified – The disciples were experiencing mental and emotional distress so that they were extremely anxious and confused from the inside out.
6. They were terrified – The sight of Christ in a storm, the waves boisterous, the wind against them, exhausted beyond the stress and anxiety they were already experiencing. The entire experience was irrational.
7. And said – The disciples continuously kept verbally (seem like together) crying out in fear.
8. Cry out - What they were saying was verbalized with a sense of urgency, boisterous, disorderly and inarticulate words that was stimulated by their fear.
9. Fear – The disciples possessed a tormenting fear like someone surprising another person who was so caught up in what they were doing; they were unaware of the presence of the other person.
10. Immediately Jesus spoke - Jesus interrupted their expressions of fear by making sure they heard Him once and for all.
11. Saying: Tell, speak – Christ repeated Himself repeatedly when He spoke to them.
12. Take courage – By telling them to take courage Christ was repeatedly saying that they need to be cheerful, bold, confidence and to trust that it really is He whom they saw.
13. Do not be afraid – Verb, present, imperative, 2n person, plural+either middle

or passive, passive, deponent | finite verb – Christ commanded them to continuously not allow themselves to become frighten, terrified or shrink back from His presence.

C. Facing Our Fears Requires Faith (vs. 28-31):

1. Peter said – Peter verbally sought to gain Christ attention.
 - a) “If it’s you” betrays some element of doubt (‘Saw’) though the construction suggests reality. “Tell me” is authoritative and sits well with the address “Lord” as Peter asks Jesus to give the necessary command. Peter has no word like “to walk,” but speaks generally of coming to Jesus. It is interesting that Peter is of the opinion that if this really is Jesus, then He will enable his servant to move on the face of the waters.^[2]
2. Lord – Peter did not say Christ or Jesus, he said Lord, meaning that at this point he viewed Christ as one who has all authority, power and has divine power and dominion.
3. Command me to come – Peter was not going to leave the boat until the person who is Lord told him to. This is in the aorist meaning Peter was only asking for this moment and time. He was not expecting that this event made him a wave walker.
4. Christ said come – Christ command Peter to come, for this one time, to walk on the water.
 - a) I love the fact that Peter asked Christ to allow him to come to Christ walking on the water. What a power illustration of Matthew 11:25-30 – “all who are weary... come”.
5. Peter got out of the boat and walk – Peter readily obeyed Christ command, got out the boat and began walking towards Christ. Peter decided to listen to Christ and forsake his fear, his anxiety and complete distress and put every effort into walking on the water.
6. Came towards Christ – Peter’s full attention was on Christ and Christ alone. Despite the waves, and the boisterous wind Peter walked towards Christ.
7. But seeing the wind – Christ did not stop the boisterous wind. It remained continuously strong and vigorous. They saw this kind of wind in chapter 8:23-27 and Christ stood up and rebuked the wind. **They should have gotten pass this to just Peter walking on water.**
8. But seeing the wind was strong – Peter, especially being a fisherman, was completely aware of the danger of the winds and began to continuously make note of the fact that it never stopped. On the water it became even more vivid of how powerful the winds and waves are.
9. But seeing the wind was strong – Walking on the water was not as

significant as being willing to trust the Lord to do so in the midst of a major storm.

10. Frightened – Frightened means that Peter, being a fisherman, clearly understood the power of the wind and the waves and began to think independent of His Lord so that his common sense told him this is impractical.
11. Frightened – Peter’s knowledge, as a fisherman, became greater than his faith in Christ word to come.
12. Frightened – Learning it was Christ coming to them remove fear. Forgetting Christ told him to walk on the water cause the fear to return.
13. Cried out – Peter’s cry to Christ was so filled with fear his words were extremely loud and disorderly – in other words his words were so overcome with fear nothing he said made sense.
14. Cried out – What I love about this is when Peter’s faith failed he did not try to swim.
15. Lord save me – His lack of faith in Christ words (‘come’) did not change his perspective of who Christ is – ‘Lord’ and Christ ability – ‘save me’ – meaning deliver me because it is impossible for me to help myself – no need to start swimming.
16. Immediately Jesus stretched forth His hands – Jesus did not teach Peter about his failure before saving his life. Christ responds to Peter immediately.’
17. Took hold of him – Christ held Peter so there is no letting go (John 10:29-31). This could mean that Peter had made it close to where Christ was. Christ picked up a grown man on water and while Christ is standing on water put the grown man back in the boat. Christ could not do this if he was a ghost.
18. Saying; Tell, speak – Christ verbally challenging their faith was repeated over and over again.
19. You of little faith – The disciples faith was insufficient because they were double minded. They did not trust everything Christ said (Romans 10:17).
20. Why did you doubt – The disciples clearly understood what Christ said but because of the boisterous nature of the wind and powerful movement of the waves they ended up between two thoughts.

Reverencing God’s Ability Erases Doubt/ R

^[1] Hughes, R. B., & Laney, J. C. (2001). *Tyndale concise Bible commentary* (p. 410). Wheaton, IL: Tyndale House Publishers.

^[2] Morris, L. (1992). *The Gospel according to Matthew* (p. 383). Grand Rapids, MI; Leicester, England: W.B. Eerdmans; Inter-Varsity Press.