

The Fame of Jesus: Faith Over Fear

Matthew 14:22-33

MPS Jesus is Lord who conquers all fear when we put our faith in Him and focus on His Word.

OBJ Jesus reveals Himself as Lord to command our faith and conquer fear by THREE LESSONS.

INTRO Fear affects people in funny ways. While hiking in Montana I began to realize how “amped” I was as I started out. I was short of breath the moment I got to the trail. I finally realized that all the talk about grizzly bears was messing with me. I once climbed on our roof of the house one time to check something. As soon as I got on the roof I was paralyzed by fear. Twenty minutes later I finally came down. I don’t even remember why I went up there. Fear can drive you or paralyze you.

TRANS Have you ever paused to ask, “how do I react when fear strikes?”

READ Matthew 14:22-33

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

²³And after he had dismissed the crowds, he went up on the mountain by himself to pray. When evening came, he was there alone, ²⁴but the boat by this time was a long way from the land, beaten by the waves, for the wind was against them. ²⁵And in the fourth watch of the night he came to them, walking on the sea. ²⁶But when the disciples saw him walking on the sea, they were terrified, and said, “It is a ghost!” and they cried out in fear. ²⁷But immediately Jesus spoke to them, saying, “Take heart; it is I. Do not be afraid.”

²⁸And Peter answered him, “Lord, if it is you, command me to come to you on the water.” ²⁹He said, “Come.” So Peter got out of the boat and walked on the water and came to Jesus. ³⁰But when he saw the wind, he was afraid, and beginning to sink he cried out, “Lord, save me.” ³¹Jesus immediately reached out his hand and took hold of him, saying to him, “O you of little faith, why did you doubt?” ³²And when they got into the boat, the wind ceased. ³³And those in the boat worshiped him, saying, “Truly you are the Son of God.” **Matthew 14:22-33**

Jesus puts the disciples into the boat and sends them away while he dismisses the crowd. This is likely attributed to the fact that every time he performed a miracle, people tried to make him a political ruler, king. (John 6:15) Jesus avoids this, and protects the disciples from getting wrapped up in this. He dismisses the crowd and goes up on the mountain to pray, which is where he was headed just before the previous miracle occurred. It’s late now and Jesus is even more weary. But for Jesus, prayer and communion with the Father was always more beneficial, even more than sleep.

Matthew points out that while Jesus prayed through the night, the disciples struggled in the boat on the water. What should have been a short boat ride had turned into a night lost at sea due to winds. Sometime after 3:00Am¹ Jesus goes out to them. I love how Matthew presents Jesus coming out to them, with only a short phrase that states, “walking on the water.” It is almost as if it’s a minor detail. (Hey, John got a new car. It’s blue.) Maybe after Jesus has performed several miracles, we shouldn’t be so shocked. But just to reiterate, here He is walking on the water!

The disciples have been in the boat all night, blown off course by high winds, turning a trip of a few hundred feet into three to four miles. Likely exhausted from adrenaline overload and nerves frazzled, the disciples were terrified thinking it was a ghost. Matthew notes their reaction that is fueled by their great fear. Jesus responds to their fear and says, “Take heart; it is I. Do not be afraid.” Jesus calms their fear and instructs them to take courage by using the divine name of Yahweh, the covenant name for God as in Exodus 3. Then, He uses the most familiar announcement of God’s appearance in the Bible, “do not fear”. **Exhausted from battling the storm and fear-struck from seeing a ghost, Jesus calms the disciples by speaking the peace of His presence to them.**

¹ Leon Morris, [The Gospel according to Matthew](#), The Pillar New Testament Commentary (Grand Rapids, MI; Leicester, England: W.B. Eerdmans; Inter-Varsity Press, 1992), 381–382. Morris notes, “The fourth watch would cover the time “between three and six o’clock in the morning,” as GNB translates.”



TRANS Fear affects us all in different ways. Some get silent while others can't stop talking. So, Peter answers Jesus. And sometimes what you say because of fear only proves that you really are crazy.

Peter responds that if it is really Jesus to tell him to come out on the water to Him. Jesus says, "Come". Now stop for a moment before we consider what Matthew records next. This passage is known as Jesus walking on the water, but think about all that really occurs here. "So Peter got out of the boat and walked on the water and came to Jesus." Jesus is not performing miracles to impress the disciples. Jesus demonstrates His power so they will know who He is and believe! Only You didn't have to get out of the boat to believe in Jesus. But Jesus is not afraid nor intimidated by your doubts and questions. We come to know what Jesus was most concerned with once Peter gets distracted and starts to go under. Jesus takes hold of him and says, "O you of little faith, why did you doubt?" And don't miss this detail; this all happens on the water while the winds are still raging! THEN we read, "And when they got into the boat, the wind ceased." The disciples respond by worshiping Him. We know they didn't fully understand all this meant yet, as we will see later in Matthew's gospel, but this lesson led them one step closer to a full understanding of Jesus. **Jesus is neither threatened nor restrained by the storms of life. He shows up in the chaos so that you will know, confess, and worship Him as Lord.**

Gospel / Redemptive History – Literary Purpose

We are prone to think one miracle is all it would take for us to believe. But if we were among the disciples, we would have been in the same boat they were in. (Did you see what I did there?) We too are so prone to forget when we find ourselves caught up in a moment that triggers our fear and threatens our focus. **When we get distracted by fear, it proves that we are still living by sight, and not by faith.** Matthew shows us how Jesus revealed Himself so we can track the disciples' progression of understanding and growth in His Lordship. They still believe because they can see Jesus. He is teaching them to trust because of Who He is. This is an essential lesson for each Christ-follower today! **Jesus reveals Himself as Lord so we can trust in Him and live by faith.**

Jesus is Lord who conquers fear when we put our faith in Him and focus on His Word.

OBJ **Jesus reveals Himself as Lord to command our faith and conquer fear by THREE LESSONS.**

1. Jesus is Lord, our source to overcome fear by faith. 14:22-27

The disciples' fear was real. Matthew describes the wind's effect with a word that means "tormented", a word also used to describe demonic hostility, or spiritual warfare.² Prolonged struggle against the wind at sea produced physical exhaustion, which is always a prime opportunity for Satan's strongest attack. Spiritual warfare seldom begins with spiritual attack. Rather, when physical strength is weak, defenses and discernment lower, and then blows the winds of discouragement, doubt, and despair. Fear strikes not only in ways beyond our ability to defend, but more often at times of weakness when we are helpless to respond. **Jesus comes to us in our weakness as our source to overcome what fear produces.**

Jesus comes near as our source to overcome fear by faith in Him. When fear threatens, Jesus is always near. When fear attacks, He is powerful to calm the storm, sometimes around us, but always within us. When fear confuses, He is truth (I Am) in which we can take courage to clear the cloudiness, the chaos, and the clutter. Jesus commands the situation the whole time. There is an immediacy to Jesus' actions to source His followers. When temptation arises(.22), He provides a way of escape(1 Corinthians 10:13). When fear consumes(.27), He commands "*Fear not...*". And when faith falters (.31), He says do not doubt. (Matthew 21:21) **Jesus will never leave nor forsake you!** (Hebrews 13:5). Jesus confronts our fear with His presence and invites our faith to source His strength in us. **Lesson 1 Only Jesus overcomes fear when by faith you trust Him as your source.**

2. Jesus commands faith to obey Him by an undivided focus on His Word. 14:28-32

² Craig Blomberg, [Matthew](#), vol. 22, The New American Commentary (Nashville: Broadman & Holman Publishers, 1992), 234. Blomberg notes, "'Buffeted' is more literally tormented, a word that elsewhere can refer to demonic hostility against people (Matt 8:6; Rev 9:5)."



Peter asks, and Jesus says “Come.” That was the biggest thing Peter could possibly imagine in that moment, that he too could walk on the water. But Peter’s wildest imagination did not intimidate Jesus. He is the One who is able to do far more than we could ask or think. (Ephesians 3:20) [Jesus’ commands is not simply an order to obey but an invitation to trust.](#)

Obedience is not about accomplishing something FOR God but trusting in Him to be brought close WITH God and made LIKE Him. Peter lost focus on Jesus by seeing the wind / obstacle. Jesus picked him up. Jesus allows our failure to teach us His sufficiency. He is not afraid of your little faith, but He calls you to Himself by replacing your doubt with faith to obey. [Obedience is never about accomplishment, but intimacy in knowing God that produces transformation into Jesus’ likeness.](#)

TRANS And all of this is taking place while the winds are still blowing!

When they step back into the boat Jesus calms the winds. Jesus doesn’t come only to change our circumstances. He calms the real storm. The storm was not the disciple’s problem. Jesus knew where they were and what they were going through. The disciples had to learn that faith that conquers fear holds an undivided focus on Jesus by His Word. Doubt was the disciples’ problem that caused their fear to swell. Peter’s doubt was caused by trying to go after Jesus and get away from the storm.³ When you doubt, you are divided.⁴ James (1:6-8) states that doubt is doublemindedness, which makes you unstable in all your ways. When you refuse to focus solely on Jesus, you will not put your faith in Him because you allow all the things of this world to distract you. You are trying to run after Jesus along with everything else. [Faith means you destroy doubt by a fully consumed faith focus on Jesus.](#)

[Is there any area of your life where you are trying to follow Jesus AND some way of the world that is counter to His Word?](#) Fear will sink you every time. [Lesson 2 Jesus commands faith to obey Him by an undivided focus on His Word.](#)

3. Faith leads one to worship Jesus as Lord with our whole life. 14:33

When Jesus consumed their presence, the hostility of fear ceased, and the worship started to rise. The disciples did not yet fully know all it meant for Jesus to be Lord. But their faith to worship was growing in them to give more of themselves fully to serve Jesus. The more you learn and know who Jesus is, the more you worship Him. The more you worship Him, the more completely He fills your life with His presence and power. The more His power pervades your whole life, the more you become like Him. This is the point of Matthew’s account; that the disciples might come to know Jesus by faith so to worship Him more completely with their whole life. [Lesson 3 Faith in Jesus as Lord produces worship of Him in all of life with one’s whole life.](#)

[Are you experiencing more Jesus in your life? Are you worshipping Him with your whole life by faith, to obey, honor, and testify to His power in you? Are you serving Jesus so others can know Him?](#)

[Jesus is Lord who conquers fear when we put our faith in Him and focus on His Word.](#)

³ Craig Blomberg, [Matthew](#), vol. 22, The New American Commentary (Nashville: Broadman & Holman Publishers, 1992), 235. Blomberg notes, “The word “doubt” (from Greek distazō) suggests the idea of trying to go in two different directions at once or of serving two different masters simultaneously.”

⁴ R. T. France, [Matthew: An Introduction and Commentary](#), vol. 1, Tyndale New Testament Commentaries (Downers Grove, IL: InterVarsity Press, 1985), 242. “Doubt is literally ‘be divided in two’; true faith is single-mindedly focused on Jesus.”

