

IF YOU WANT TO WALK ON THE WATER, YOU'VE GOT TO GET OUT OF THE BOAT

And Peter answered (Jesus) and said, "Lord, if it is You, command me to come to You on the water.

Matthew 14:28 NKJV

I. Introduction: The Most Useless Miracle in the Bible?

A. Boat Sitters and Water Walkers

1. Whether you believe the Bible or not, the story of Peter walking on the water to Jesus is known around the world.

Pastor Ray Bible School Principle

When you encounter an unusual miracle or occurrence in Scripture, stop and take the time to see if you can discern some great principle contained therein. The more unusual passages often contain some of the most profound insights.

2. The unique thing about this miracle is that no obvious ministry purpose was accomplished:

- Peter wasn't asking to save the lost
- To heal the sick
- To raise the dead
- To cleanse the leper
- Or even to help a friend escape the embarrassment of running out of wine at his wedding reception.

3. No, Peter's request was, in a sense, purely selfish. Or was it? If it was, why wouldn't Jesus correct him, as He'd often done before?

- "Now Simon, aren't you really just wanting to show off in front of your friends?"
- "Hey, forget it. I, Jesus, am the only one who gets to do this miracle!"
- Or, "Peter, how selfish can you be? Why don't you ask me for souls?"

Theme

There's never true faith without taking a RISK!

4. I want to make 3 points today, 3 little couplet poems:

- (a) We all *share* the need for a *dare*.
- (b) We *all* have need of a *call*.
- (c) We've got to learn how to *float* without a *boat*!

II. Three Lessons for Water-Walkers

A. Principle #1: We all *share* the need for a *dare*

*When I was a kid, we would issue a “dare” to another kid...challenge them to do something scary, brave or commendable...sometimes all of us were afraid to do!

We were born to walk with Jesus in supernatural faith.

1. We all ***share*** a need for a ***dare***...we all want to step out. Take the supernatural away from Christianity, and you're left with just another religion.
 - a. Personal testimony, 1973...the hunger for MORE.
2. Like the young jet pilots in training in the film “Top Gun”, Christians have ***“the need for speed!”***
3. There are two kinds of people in the world...boat sitters and water-walkers...ALL believers are designed for “water-walking”...play it safe, sit in the boat...you'll never experience the things you were created to do!
4. What were the other 11 thinking? We know Jesus can do it, and we think Peter can do it, but we doubt if WE can do it! But nobody walks on water without getting out of the boat!

***There's an old story about a daredevil who walked on a tight-wire over Niagara Falls pushing a wheelbarrow. The crowd cheered as he crossed over and as he returned. The crowd said, “Do it again!” The daredevil asked one of the men, “Do you really believe I can do it again?” “YES,” the man replied and the daredevil said, “Then get into the wheelbarrow”!**

5. Faith is never real until you ACT on it. You can say you believe in Jesus all day long, but if you never DO anything about what you SAY you believe, it doesn't qualify as real faith!

Do you believe that there is only one God? Good! The demons also believe — and tremble with fear. You fool! Do you want to be shown that faith without actions is useless?

James 2:19-20 TEV

6. We easily forget that the heart of our call to Christ is the spirit of adventure!
7. The only reason this miracle occurred and Jesus Himself commended it was as a picture pattern for you and me! The desire for the supernatural is not selfish...it's biblical!

8. Barna Research tells us that Christian parents are losing their children spiritually at a record rate. Small children do OK, but we start losing them in mid to late teen years, or certainly after college. WHY? Could it be that we've failed to teach them faith? If we don't show them the excitement of the Christian life, they'll go find their adventure somewhere else!

9. The Bible is full of those who stepped out of the boredom of day to day living to seek adventure with God:

- Abraham, leaving his home country to follow God's call, going out, "he not where"
- Moses in Exodus 3:3-I will turn aside and see this great sight, why the bush is not burned
- The fishermen, called of Christ, who "immediately left their nets" and followed Him

10. How can we get excited about hearing faith on Sunday, then clinging to our little "boats" of security and comfort on Monday? How can we inspire the kids to believe in the supernatural and then tell them to go to school and get the safest job they can get?

11. It is just human nature to cling to man-made security, (like a boat), instead of a clear call from God, ("Come").

B. Principle #2: We All Must Have A Call

1. The idea of getting out of the boat always brings *FEAR* into the mix.

2. You can't EVER get to the place where big steps of faith don't bring big fights with fear!

3. Testimony: 1981, when we moved from Little Rock; 1985-when we "sold everything and trusted God"; 1988, when we built the Family Life Center at BWOC

- a. Oh, what faith, Pastor Ray!
- b. Really? We were terrified!

4. If you ever get out of the boat, you'll have to DO IT AFRAID!

5. The storm here represents any of the circumstances of life that threaten you, make you afraid, and drive you to cling to your little man-made boat of safety and security.

- a. Economic storms scare everybody and many disciples cling to their little boat and stop tithing and offering.

b. We know we ought to throw ourselves on the altar and totally surrender to Christ...but we're afraid of what He might require of us.

6. Which leads to principle #2: *We not only share a dare, we all need a call!*

**Then Peter called to him, "Lord, if it's really you, tell me to come to you, walking on the water."
Matthew 14:28 New Living Translation**

7. Getting out of a boat in the middle of the lake in a life-threatening storm? Better make sure it's Jesus!

a. Peter models a great truth: If it's really Jesus, the storm doesn't matter!

b. But is it really Jesus?

8. We've all seen presumption posing as faith. People can do the stupidest things sometime...in the name of "faith" or "following Jesus"...but it's not Jesus at all, it's just taking a dare Jesus didn't call for!

****The last 3 words on the tombstone of every daredevil....
"Hey, watch this!"***

9. Fear is such a powerful emotion that only a word from the Lord can overcome it!

**And Peter answered Him and said, "Lord, if it is You, command me to come to You on the water."
Matthew 14:28 NKJV**

10. Do you have a CALL from Christ to do the deal?

Then Moses answered and said, "What if they will not believe me, or listen to what I say? For they may say, 'The Lord has not appeared to you.'" And the Lord said to him, "What is that in your hand?" And he said, "A staff." Then He said, "Throw it on the ground." So he threw it on the ground, and it became a serpent; and Moses fled from it. 4 But the Lord said to Moses, "Stretch out your hand and grasp it by its tail" — so he stretched out his hand and caught it, and it became a staff in his hand — "that they may believe that the Lord, the God of their fathers, the God of Abraham, the God of Isaac, and the God of Jacob, has appeared to you."

Exodus 4:1-5 New American Standard Bible

a. The staff was more than a stick. It was a symbol of Moses' life. He was the shepherd of his father-in-law's sheep. The staff was his income, his livelihood. It represented everything Moses had been working on for 40 years!

b. There will be times in every believer's life, "defining moments", when Jesus will 'call' you to "walk on the water" with Him. But...you'll never walk on the water if you don't get out of the boat!

C. Principle Three: We're called to Float without a Boat

1. This specific call always includes taking a RISK!
2. Anything you can do in your natural strength, wisdom, charm, talent or understanding never qualifies as "water-walking". (We use the term "miracle" too freely sometimes-if it's something explainable within the abilities of man, it's not a miracle!)

Cause me to hear Your lovingkindness in the morning, For in You do I trust; Cause me to know the way in which I should walk, For I lift up my soul to You.

Psalm 143:8 NKJV

3. But what if He is in the middle of the lake and says, "Walk here?"

The Lord is my shepherd, I shall not want....He makes me lie down in green pastures; He leads me beside quiet waters...He guides me in the paths of righteousness for His name's sake... Yes, even though I walk through the valley of the shadow of death, I fear no evil; for Thou art with me...

Excerpt from Psalm 23:1-4 NASB

- a. Sometimes, God will guide you in a path that goes right through the "valley of the shadow of death!"
- b. God comes to you in the storm...at 3 am....and calls you to let go of your own path and come walk with Him...on the water...or through the shadow of death...where we must learn to "fear no evil", for God is "with us"!

III. Close and Review:

A. Practical Principles for Water Walkers

- The desire to experience the supernatural is not selfish—it's what you were created for!
- The call to get out of the boat usually comes in storms, sometimes at 3 a.m.!
- The call to walk on water will ALWAYS require getting out of the boat, which means stepping out of your "comfort zone" or "security"
- The call to walk with Jesus at this level will ALWAYS be accompanied by FEAR
- Faith and fear will compete for your attention and focus. Fear is God's wake-up call that our focus is on the wrong things
- The exhilaration of obeying the Lord will displace FEAR
- Only the loss of focus can sink you
- The winds and the waves have nothing to do with water-walking
- Jesus calls water-walking a "little faith"

- The spiritual growth you seek will always bring you to a defining moment and spoil you for ordinary living!

B. Close: Personal Testimony Regarding Our Move