

Walking on Water

A 5-Day Devotional Bible Study

Based on Matthew 14:22-33

This week we journey into one of scripture's most beloved stories: Jesus walking on water, Peter stepping out of the boat, and the grace that catches us when we begin to sink. Each day invites you to sit with a piece of this story, reflect on what it means for your own life, and bring your honest heart to God in prayer. Whether the waters in your life are calm or stormy, this devotional is for you.

God in the Silence

KEY VERSE

Key Verse: "And after the earthquake a fire, but the Lord was not in the fire. And after the fire a sound of sheer silence." — 1 Kings 19:12

Devotional

Elijah was exhausted. He had fought hard for God, confronted the false prophets, and poured himself out in faithful service. And then, spent and weary, he stood on the mountain waiting for God to show up. He expected something grand, something unmistakable. There was a great wind, so fierce it split the mountains and broke rocks into pieces. There was an earthquake. There was fire. These were the kinds of dramatic moments where God had shown up before. And yet, we are told again and again: God was not in the wind, God was not in the earthquake, God was not in the fire.

And then came the sheer silence. And it was there, in that quiet and unexpected stillness, that Elijah encountered the living God.

How often do we do the same thing Elijah did? We wait for a sign that feels certain and obvious, an experience that shakes us to our core and leaves no room for doubt. We want our faith to feel like an earthquake. But God so often comes to us quietly, gently, in ways we almost miss if we are not paying attention. The sheer silence is not the absence of God. It is sometimes the very place where God is most present and most near.

This week, pay attention to the quiet moments. The ordinary Thursday afternoon. The stillness after prayer. The peace that settles in unexpectedly. God may be speaking right there.

Reflection Questions

1. When in your life have you looked for God in a big, obvious way and missed something quieter?
2. What does "sheer silence" look like for you? Where do you find stillness in your daily life?
3. Is there a moment you can recall when God showed up in an unexpected or quiet way?

Prayer

*Lord, teach me to be still.
Help me to stop demanding
that you show up in the ways I
expect, and instead open my
eyes and my heart to the
quiet, gentle ways you are
already near. In the silence, I
trust that you are there.
Amen.*

Take Heart. It Is I. Do Not Be Afraid.

KEY VERSE

Key Verse: "But immediately Jesus spoke to them and said, 'Take heart, it is I; do not be afraid.'" — Matthew 14:27

Devotional

The disciples had been out on the sea through a hard and frightening night. The wind was against them. The waves were battering the boat. They were exhausted, far from shore, and doing everything they could just to stay afloat. And then, in the dim light of early morning, they saw a figure walking toward them on the water and they were terrified. They thought it was a ghost.

And then Jesus spoke. "Take heart. It is I. Do not be afraid."

Notice something important here: Jesus did not say there was nothing to be afraid of. The storm was real. The wind was real. The waves were real. It was a genuinely frightening situation. Jesus did not pretend otherwise. He did not offer the disciples a false comfort that said everything was fine when everything was clearly not fine. Instead, Jesus said something far more powerful: *I am here. And because I am here, you are going to be okay.*

This is the heart of Christian faith. We are not promised that storms will not come. We are not promised that life will always be calm and easy and free from fear. What we are promised is that Christ comes to us in the storm. The promise is not the absence of trouble; the promise is the presence of Jesus. That changes everything. When we know we are not alone, when we know that the one who walks on water is walking toward us, we can take heart even in the middle of the very worst nights.

Reflection Questions

1. What storms, real or metaphorical, have you been navigating lately?
2. Have you ever confused Christian faith with the promise of an easy life? How does today's passage correct that misunderstanding?
3. What would it look like for you to "take heart" in the middle of a current difficulty?

Prayer

Jesus, you know the storms I am in right now. I confess that sometimes I expect faith to mean smooth sailing, and I am disappointed when the wind turns against me.

Remind me today that you are walking toward me even now, and that your presence is enough. Give me courage. Give me peace. Amen.

Lord, Save Me.

KEY VERSE

Key Verse: "But when he noticed the strong wind, he became frightened, and beginning to sink, he cried out, 'Lord, save me.' Jesus immediately reached out his hand and caught him." — Matthew 14:30-31

Devotional

Peter is one of those biblical characters we sometimes judge too quickly. He stepped out of the boat! He walked on water for a moment! That alone is remarkable. But then the wind caught his attention. The storm was still raging. It had been raging before he ever got out of the boat. But now, in the middle of this extraordinary thing he was doing, Peter became aware of it. He noticed. He got afraid. And he began to sink.

We are often tempted to read this moment as a story about Peter's failure. If only he had kept his eyes on Jesus. If only he had had a little more faith. But look at what actually happens next. The moment Peter cries out, the moment he says those three honest and desperate words, "Lord, save me," Jesus immediately reaches out his hand and catches him.

Peter did not have to get his faith perfectly together first. He did not have to prove that he was worthy. He did not have to stop sinking before Jesus would help. He simply cried out, and Jesus was already there. This is grace. Peter's grip on Jesus turned out to be far less important than Jesus's grip on Peter. The same is true for each of us. We may waver. We may doubt. We may find ourselves sinking. But the hand of Christ is already reaching. And nothing about our imperfect faith can outrun the love of God.

Reflection Questions

1. Can you think of a time when fear or distraction caused you to lose your footing in faith?
2. What does it feel like to know that Jesus reaches for us even before we have it all figured out?
3. Is there something in your life right now where you need to simply cry out, "Lord, save me"?

Prayer

Lord, save me. Those three words are sometimes all I have, and today I trust that they are enough. Thank you that your grip on me is stronger than my grip on you. Thank you for reaching before I even stop sinking. Catch me, hold me, and do not let me go. Amen.

Claimed by God: The Gift of Baptism

KEY VERSE

Key Verse: "Do you not know that all of us who have been baptized into Christ Jesus were baptized into his death? Therefore we have been buried with him by baptism into death, so that, just as Christ was raised from the dead by the glory of the Father, so we too might walk in newness of life." — Romans 6:3-4

Devotional

Water runs all through this story. The churning sea against the boat. The waves beneath Peter's feet. And today we are also invited to think of a very different kind of water: the water of baptism, poured gently over the heads of those who are claimed by God.

Baptism is not a promise that the storms will stop. It is not a guarantee that life will be easy or that faith will always feel certain. The honest truth is that there will be moments when the wind is against you. There will be times when God seems to come in ways you did not expect, or perhaps does not seem to come at all. There will be seasons of sheer silence and seasons of frightening waves. That is part of the human journey. Baptism does not take us out of that journey.

What baptism does is something more profound and more lasting. It is God's claim upon your life. When water is poured and the name of the Father, Son, and Holy Spirit is spoken, God says: *You are mine*. Not because of your perfect faith. Not because you will always hold tightly to God. But because God is always holding tightly to you. The promise made in those waters is sure and true, sealed by the power of the Holy Spirit, and nothing, not fear, not doubt, not storms, not silence, not even death itself can erase what God has declared over you.

Reflection Questions

1. How do you think about your own baptism? Does it feel like a living reality in your daily life?
2. What does it mean to you that God's claim on you does not depend on how tightly you hold on?
3. How might remembering your baptism change the way you face a current difficulty or doubt?

Prayer

Gracious God, thank you for claiming me as your own. On the days when my faith feels shaky and my grip feels weak, remind me that your hold on me has never loosened. I belong to you. Help me to live this week out of that deep and unshakeable truth. Amen.

You Are Never Alone

KEY VERSE

Key Verse: "And those in the boat worshiped him, saying, 'Truly you are the Son of God.'" — Matthew 14:33

Devotional

At the end of this remarkable night, everyone gets back in the boat. Peter is wet. The disciples were scared. The wind had been fierce and the waves had been brutal. And yet, when Jesus climbs in and the wind ceases, what do they do? They worship. Not because everything was easy or because they had handled it all perfectly, but because they had encountered the living God in the middle of the very thing that frightened them, and they would never be the same.

That is the pattern of this whole story, and it is the pattern of faith throughout our lives. God does not always come the way we expect. Sometimes God comes in the sheer silence and we almost miss it. Sometimes God comes walking toward us through the very thing that trips us up, the storm, the fear, the doubt. And sometimes faith looks like Peter: sinking, desperate, crying out with nothing to offer but honest need. But Christ comes. Christ reaches. Christ does not let go.

We were not meant to walk this journey alone. We are surrounded by a community of people who remind us of what is true when we forget. We carry one another's stories. We point each other back to the water, back to the promise, back to the words of Jesus: "Take heart. It is I. Do not be afraid." Whatever the waters look like in your life today, whatever wind has been blowing against you, you belong to Christ. And thanks be to God that Christ will never ever let you go.

Reflection Questions

1. Looking back over this week of devotions, which day's reflection meant the most to you and why?
2. Who in your life has helped remind you of God's presence when you were struggling to see it yourself?
3. What is one way you can carry this week's theme, "Christ is here and you are never alone," into next week?

Closing Prayer

Lord Jesus, this week we have sat with storms and silence, with sinking and with grace. We have remembered the waters of baptism and the promise that we belong to you. As we go forward, send us out with courage and with peace, knowing that wherever we go, you have gone before us. When the wind is against us, remind us that you are walking toward us. When we begin to sink, remind us that your hand is already reaching. You are the Son of God, and we are yours. Thanks be to God. Amen.