

Because It's You Matthew 14v13-33

Positive thinking can only get a person so far. We need resources from outside of us that themselves don't depend on circumstances. We're subject to all sorts of pressures and forces outside of our control, and sometimes we can feel like we're sinking. That's why people in Old Testament (OT) times were scared of the sea—only God could control it.

God promised in the OT that he would bring in a wonderful rule of "shalom" (peace, life & flourishing) through his King. Matthew is telling us that King and his Kingdom has drawn near!

1) Faith Comes and Feeds (14v13-21)

Jesus sees the powerlessness and brokenness of people and moves towards us in heartfelt compassion (v14), bringing healing. In this feeding miracle (v16-20), Jesus demonstrates his ability to rule over the physical world and to provide life abundantly (v19-20). He feeds 5000 men (perhaps 20,000 people in total) in the wilderness from just 5 loaves and 2 fish, reminding us of Moses and the manna from heaven.

Jesus explains this miracle in John 6: faith comes to Jesus, the very source of life, and feeds from him (see John 6v57-58). If we're trusting him for ourselves, we are connected to life itself and cannot die. Remembering that can calm our fears and restore our peace.

2) Faith Walks (14v22-29)

Jesus' life is the result of his relationship with his Father (John 6v57), and so he wants space to pray alone (Matthew 14v22-23). Between 3am and 6am he comes towards the disciples in their boat, walking upon the Sea of Galilee (v25). The disciples are terrified. They've just witnessed the feeding of the 5000, but this astounds them. They are truly terrified (v26). Jesus' compassion immediately moves towards them and he speaks to them personally saying, "I AM, don't be afraid" (v27). Jesus applies to himself the name of God which God made known to Moses in Exodus 3v14-15. *Do you need to know life in the face of death, and calm in the chaos? "I AM,"* Jesus says, "be strengthened."

Peter is attached to Jesus, his friend and Lord. As a fisherman, he's been subject to the elements on these waters all his life. Here is one who says, "I AM," and has authority over them. Peter wants to be about what Jesus is about and shows growing faith in Jesus in v28: "because it's you, say the word and I'll get out of the boat under your authority and power." Faith comes to Jesus, and faith walks the way Jesus walked. That must have been some walk in the Spirit for Peter, well out of his comfort zone, by the power of God.

Is the Lord saying today that we may need to get out of the boat to walk in the particular direction he is calling us at the moment? Christ's rule/ kingdom is present and powerful to enable us to walk through faith in Jesus.

3) Faith is Held Tight (14v30-33)

Was this a risky walk for Peter? His attention turns to the wind/ stormy conditions and his faith falters (v30). But Jesus doesn't falter—Peter's faith is always held tight. Immediately, Jesus reaches out takes hold of him (v30). Ultimately, it's not risky to follow Jesus, but it does mean stepping out of the familiar and living in the power of the Spirit. While still on the water(!), holding Peter, Jesus points him to the path he just walked by faith and says, in effect, "did you need to doubt?" *If we have got out of the boat many times and are feeling tired and buffeted by spiritual opposition, how can our past experience and Peter's experience here give us courage to keep walking?*

