

JESUS OVER CREATION

CORE PASSAGE: MATTHEW 14:22-33

CONTEXT

Jesus's popularity surged when He miraculously fed over five thousand people with just five loaves of bread and two fish. Unsurprisingly, the crowds wanted more of Jesus. To experience some much needed silence and solitude in the wake of John the Baptist's death, Jesus dismissed the crowds and retreated to a mountain by Himself after having sent His disciples on a boat across the Sea of Galilee. What happened next led the disciples to fear and then worship Jesus as the Son of God.

KEY CONCEPT

Because Jesus can do all things, we don't need to be afraid when following in His steps by faith.

As you examine Matthew 14:22-33:

- Recognize that when trouble arrives, we need not fear because Jesus is with us.
- Focus on Jesus as being worthy of your faith and being the source of your salvation from sin and death.



TIMELINE

Jesus Teaches with Many Parables (Matthew 13:1-53)

SESSION STUDY: Jesus Walks on Water (Matthew 14:22-33)

Jesus Raises Lazarus from the Dead (John 11:1-44)

Jesus Feeds the Five Thousand (Matthew 14:13-21)

Jesus Heals in Gentile Regions (Matthew 15:21-31)

Daily Readings

☐ **Day 1:** Matthew 14:22-36

☐ **Day 4:** Luke 14:15-24

☐ **Day 2:** Mark 6:45-56

☐ **Day 5:** Luke 14:25-35

☐ **Day 3:** Luke 14:1-14

☐ **Day 6:** Psalm 46



Scan this QR code to access this session's Scripture passages.

PERSONAL PREPARATION

MATTHEW 14:22-27

WITH JESUS, WE NEED NOT FEAR.

Underline the reasons the disciples were afraid.

22 Immediately he made the disciples get into the boat and go ahead of him to the other side, while he dismissed the crowds. **23** After dismissing the crowds, he went up on the mountain by himself to pray. Well into the night, he was there alone. **24** Meanwhile, the boat was already some distance from land, battered by the waves, because the wind was against them. **25** Jesus came toward them walking on the sea very early in the morning. **26** When the disciples saw him walking on the sea, they were terrified. “It’s a ghost!” they said, and they cried out in fear. **27** Immediately Jesus spoke to them. “Have courage! It is I. Don’t be afraid.”

THEOLOGY CONNECTION

GOD IS OMNIPOTENT: God is all-powerful: there is nothing God cannot do so long as it does not contradict His own nature or law. God has power and authority over the universe He created, from the largest solar system to the smallest particle. Affirming that God is all-powerful does not mean that God can sin—since that would go against His perfect moral nature. As Christians, we rest in the belief that the God who has all power is good, and we gain great comfort by knowing that an all-powerful God is working for our good and joy.



After feeding the five thousand, Jesus sent His disciples ahead of Him to the other side of the sea. For the next several hours, Jesus prayed alone on a mountain while His disciples made their trip without Him. Several details are necessary to keep in mind for the following narrative.

First, the disciples' boat "was already some distance from land" (v. 24). John's Gospel states the disciples had "rowed about three or four miles" (John 6:19). The Sea of Galilee is seven-and-a-half miles wide, so being some distance from land placed them in the middle of the sea.

Second, the disciples were some distance from land while "well into the night" (Matthew 14:23), and Jesus came to the disciples "very early in the morning" (v. 25). This would have been between three and six in the morning. So the disciples were rowing in the dark and dead of night.

Third, the disciples' boat was "battered by the waves, because the wind was against them" (v. 24). The Sea of Galilee is below sea level, surrounded by steep hills and mountains. This combination of geographic features causes rapid wind shifts and violent weather. With no land nearby, these conditions alone could have been terrifying.

What circumstances can cause you to experience fear?

In this "perfect storm" of fear, the disciples saw someone walking on the water. While we read this story knowing exactly who was walking on the sea, the disciples did not yet fully grasp Jesus's identity, so "they were terrified" (v. 26). Since no human can walk on water, they thought they were seeing a ghost. To address their fears, Jesus responded simply: "Have courage! It is I. Don't be afraid" (v. 27).

Why could Jesus tell the disciples to not be afraid?



PERSONAL PREPARATION

MATTHEW 14:28-33

WITH FAITH FOCUSED ON JESUS, WE CAN WALK AS HE WALKED.

Underline the reasons Peter began to sink under the waves.

28 “Lord, if it’s you,” Peter answered him, “command me to come to you on the water.”

29 He said, “Come.” And climbing out of the boat, Peter started walking on the water and

came toward Jesus. **30** But when he saw the strength of the wind, he was afraid, and

beginning to sink he cried out, “Lord, save me!” **31** Immediately Jesus reached out his hand,

caught hold of him, and said to him, “You of little faith, why did you doubt?” **32** When they

got into the boat, the wind ceased. **33** Then those in the boat worshiped him and said,

“Truly you are the Son of God.”



CHRIST CONNECTION

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Jesus’s divinity makes Him all-powerful, able to do all things. He invites us to live by faith in His power.

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After seeing what they thought was a ghost and hearing Jesus's voice, Peter did the unthinkable—he himself dared to walk on water. Remember: Mere mortals cannot walk on water; that's God's prerogative alone. But Peter was ready and willing if the faint shadow he saw on the water was in fact Jesus.

What Jesus did next not only displayed the power of His presence but also the power of His voice. At the command of Jesus, Peter stepped out of the boat. Peter could have done this for no one else. Only Jesus has the authority to demand faithful obedience.

And notice the direction Peter walked—directly “toward Jesus” (v. 29). His gaze was fixed on Jesus. Peter understood he could not walk on water by himself. This miracle was a result of Jesus's power over creation, and Peter had faith in Jesus's power over creation.

What does faith in Jesus look like for you today?

With his eyes on Jesus, Peter's steps stayed on the surface of the billowing sea. But what caught Peter's attention next weakened his faith. He saw “the strength of the wind” and “was afraid” (v. 30).

Peter's faith immediately turned to fear because he took his eyes off the source of his faith. In response to Peter's cry for help, Jesus wasted no time reaching out His hand, once again doing what only God can do: “Reach down from on high; rescue me from deep water” (Psalm 144:7). Jesus used His divine power not only to allow Peter to walk on water but also to save him from the water.

We might assume Peter had zero faith, given his sinking outcome, but Jesus didn't say that. Peter's faith wasn't bankrupt. “Little faith” is not the same as no faith (Matthew 14:31). Peter's response of “Lord, save me!” (v. 30) was similar to that of the man who cried to Jesus in Mark's Gospel: “I do believe; help my unbelief!” (Mark 9:24).

After Jesus and Peter got into the boat, the wind finally ceased, and then the disciples “worshiped [Jesus] and said, ‘Truly you are the Son of God’” (Matthew 14:33). Their confession foreshadowed the later confession of Simon Peter the doubter: “You are the Messiah, the Son of the living God” (16:16).

What are some ways we can grow in our faith in Jesus?

FROM FEAR TO FAITH

Case Study: Read Matthew 14:22-33. Consider Simon Peter's responses to his situation, how you might respond, and what we learn.

FEAR (vv. 24-26)	FAITH (vv. 27-29)	FOCUS (vv. 30-31)
WHAT SHOULD WE LEARN FROM PETER AND THE DISCIPLES' RESPONSE TO JESUS (vv. 27,32-33)?		

Where do you most identify yourself right now—fear, faith, or focus—and why?

How does Jesus's response to Peter give you peace of mind during hardship?

Key Concept: Because Jesus can do all things, we don't need to be afraid when following in His steps by faith.



HEAD

How does this story help you grasp the deity and humanity of Jesus?

PRAYING SCRIPTURE

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Read and pray through Psalm 46.
Thank God for His power to carry you through any trial life might bring. Ask God to strengthen your faith in Him for what's next.

PRAYER REQUESTS AND PRAISES



HEART

Looking at the trials in your life, what barriers to faith and obedience are keeping you from following Jesus more closely?



HANDS

What might God be calling you to do with your faith and focus on Jesus?

