

Remembering when “you” walked on water.

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Our friend Peter always gets a bum rap when the story of walking on water is told. He was impetuous. He lacked faith. What Peter’s character portrayed was brashness, boldness, and the fierce loyalty of a true believer. It was these qualities that Jesus saw in Peter. It was these qualities that made Peter the leader and the rock on which Jesus was going to build His church. Peter wasn’t chosen or called because he was perfect. (A lot like you and me.) He was called because he would follow.

Walking on water was not the first time, or the last, that Peter got out of the boat. When Jesus called him to be a fisher of men – he got out of the boat. Was that brash and bold? He left everything. At one point when Jesus’ teaching became pointed and hard to take, Jesus asked the disciples, “Will you also leave me?” Peter’s affirmation was, “Where will we go, you have the words of eternal life?” Spoken like a true believer. Later, as the earthly ministry of Jesus was drawing to a close Peter said even if everybody leaves you I will never forsake you. I will die with you. Again, the affirmation of one who knows and believes.

When they came for Jesus in the garden it was Peter who had a sword, drew it and used it. He was going to defend Jesus in the way his personality knew how – with boldness. Jesus told him to put up the sword. Yes, we know how Peter’s brashness and boldness deserted him when asked if he was a follower of Jesus. Three times he denied it. Yet, he was the only one there of the disciples. He was being “faithful” as well as he knew how. And when the rooster crowed the realization of his human weakness and the limitation of his human faith was devastating and he wept bitterly. After the resurrection when they were out fishing again and Peter realized that the man on the shore was Jesus. It says, “He jumped into the water. The other disciples followed in the boat.” Leaving the boat seems to be a pattern for Peter’s life.

Peter sees walking on the water. In this case, Peter was not impetuous. He did not just hop out of the boat. He saw Jesus where nobody was expecting to see Him. Now, here is where this bold and brash personality comes in. “Lord, if it is you, tell me to come to you on the water.” Nobody else makes a peep, no one else even thinks about it. They are all holding onto the boat. The wind blowing through their hair is not an adventuresome wind but one

full of difficulties. They have been fighting the wind all night and now they are terrified seeing Jesus where they are not used to seeing Him. But the big bold personality, for whatever reason, asks to go. And Jesus says, "Come." And off he goes. Peter is making great strides until he looks at the wind "and beginning to sink, cried out 'Lord, save me!'" And the Lord does!

Do you recall your "walking on water experience?" I know that you are thinking but I've never walked on water. It really is not the question of the water. Walking on water is only one impossibility in our life with God. There are hundreds of impossibilities when we see God where He is not usually seen. And then like Peter we ask, "Lord if it is you bid me come." Recount the situations that you have been in where you are about to make a momentous decision and you ask, "God is this really of you?" It could be a new ministry, a new job, a marriage, a new position, a new relationship, or an old one. It could be a total departure from where you are, who you are. And you look out across the water and the wind and you ask "Lord, if is you ..." And you "hear" Him say "Come." And you go!

Everything is good as you start. Then you see the wind. And what was clear just moments ago now seems overwhelming and impossible. And you begin to sink. Then, you cry out, "Save me!" And He does! And, just like Peter, you have experienced Jesus in a place few expected Him to be. "Walking on water" is both exhilarating – and frightening. And the longer you can keep your eyes on Him and not the wind the further you go. Even though it is not recorded, the reality seems that when Jesus reached out His hand and caught Peter He helped him walk back to the boat – on the water!

So the next time when you ask, "Is it you Lord?" and He tells you to come know that His hand is there to save you and help you "walk on the water."