

Getting Out of the Boat

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Matthew 14:21 "And those who ate were about 5,000 men besides women and children. Immediately..." You're going to find that word three times in this section. Immediately. Matthew and Mark love to use that word. "Immediately, He made the disciples get into the boat and go before Him to the other side while He dismissed the crowds. And after He had dismissed the crowds, He went up on the mountain by Himself to pray. When evening came, He was there alone, but the boat by this time was a long way from the land, beaten by the waves, for the wind was against them. And in the fourth watch of the night, He came to them walking on the sea. But when the disciples saw Him walking on the sea, they were terrified and said, 'It is a ghost!' They cried out in fear. Immediately, Jesus spoke to them, saying, 'Take heart. It is I. Do not be afraid.' Peter answered Him, 'Lord, if it is You, command me to come to You on the water.' He said, 'Come.' So Peter got out of the boat and walked on the water and came to Jesus. But when he saw the wind, he was afraid, and beginning to sink, he cried out, 'Lord, save me!' Jesus immediately reached out His hand and took hold of him, saying to him, 'O you of little faith, why did you doubt?' And when they got into the boat, the wind ceased, and those in the boat worshiped Him, saying, 'Truly, You are the Son of God.'"

Let's pray. Father, I would just ask You to give us that power to comprehend the love of Christ, and the glory of Christ, and the beauty of Christ that's to be found in this passage. Help us, Lord. Help us. I pray in Christ's name, Amen.

The question I want to pose to you this morning is this: Why is this here? Not why is it right here? Not why is this account in Matthew 14 instead of somewhere else? But why would God record this for us at all? Is this here just so we can say, yep, there's Peter again, bumbling; impetuous as ever, acting without thinking, sinking without believing. Listen, if that's all you get, may God help you to think again. Think, Christian! Think! Think! Why? Why does God preserve for us what He preserves for us? Why does God freeze events that happened 2,000 years ago - He freezes them in time. And He saved them for us. Why? Well, all you have to do is start thinking. What does Scripture say? Like you might go to 1 Corinthians 10 and say, ah, Exodus, Leviticus, Numbers... remember? The Hebrew children out there in the wilderness? The Apostle Paul says guess what that is? That is an example. That is for us. Those were written down for our instruction. Those people - they came out through the sea. They were with Moses. They went out into that wilderness. And they mumbled, they complained, they grumbled, there were serpents, there was judgment.

Why all of that? For our instruction upon whom the ends of the world have come; or the end of this age, the end of this time. We are the people that the end of the ages has come upon. Whatever was written in former times, Paul says in another place, what is it there for? Whatever was written in former times is for us; it's for our instruction. That what? Through the Scriptures, there would be endurance, encouragement, in the Scriptures that we might have hope. Or you think about Luke. What did he say? "O excellent Theophilus..." I am going to record some things for you so that you might know with a certainty. That's why these things have been recorded for us. Certainty. Hope. Or you think of the Apostle John. What did he say? He said, well, you know

what? There's a whole lot that Jesus Christ did, but there are some very specific things that I have recorded for you, why? So that you might know that Jesus is the Christ. That you might know who He is, and knowing, you might have eternal life. That's what we find. Scripture. This is Scripture.

And why is it here? Well, it's inspired. It's breathed of God. It's profitable. And you know what it's here for? It's to make the man of God complete or perfect. That's why these things are recorded for us. So we can't just say, well, you know, Jesus walking on water; Peter walking on water, that's a neat story, but it really doesn't have much implication in my own life. That's not true. It's an example. It is to give us certainty. It is to give us hope. It is to give us an idea about who this Christ is that we're dealing with. Certainty about Christ.

So, let's get a feel, just walk through the account, and get a feel. You might have noticed that I started reading in verse 21. Now, here's what I want you to do. Not just go through the account again, but I want you to put yourself in the disciples' place. Think with me here. What are these guys thinking? What have they seen? What's going through their minds? They just witnessed one of our Lord's greatest miracles - thousands and thousands of people - He fed them all. And then you read it, "Immediately, He made the disciples..." - He made - "...the disciples go down into the boat." Now, think what's going on in their mind. They're walking down to the boat. They've just been witness to this miracle. There was a power. There was a glory in all of that.

But you know what? It ended so strangely. And Matthew doesn't really pick up on this. John picks up on it. And so if you've got your finger there in John 6, I want you to see something. John 6:14, "When the people saw the sign that Jesus had done..." - the feeding 5,000 men plus women and children. That's the miracle that's being talked about. That's the sign. "...They said, 'This is indeed the Prophet.'" Now do you see what happened? All these thousands and thousands, they've been fed. And the crowd, they're saying, "Hey, this is the One!" "This is the Prophet!" "This is the One Moses spoke about!" Now, you know, doesn't it seem like that would be a good thing? The crowd began to recognize that? Isn't it amazing? It's mystifying how many times Jesus would say to people, "Don't tell anybody about Me." "Don't tell people what I've done." I mean, this is kind of similar. The people are recognizing something, and we look at it and we say, well, certainly that seems like it's a good thing. "This is indeed the Prophet who is to come into the world." But here's Jesus, "perceiving then that they were about to come and take Him by force to make Him King, Jesus withdrew again to the mountain by Himself."

Now, here's the thing, I want us to imagine being those disciples. They're watching all this. They knew. They knew - you know, those disciples were asked: "Who do men say that I am?" But, "Who do you say that I am?" They say, "You're the Christ." You see, they knew this. And you can imagine them looking. Yes! The crowd is jumping on board. The crowd sees who He is. The people are finally getting it. They're beginning to understand what we already understood. You can imagine them, they're getting in the boat, and there's such a mystery about Christ. There's a power. There's a beauty. There's a glory. But something just so perplexing. The people are saying, "It's time to make Jesus King!" And that's what they were waiting for. That's what the disciples were waiting for. They kept asking Him, "When? "When's the Kingdom?" "Is it now, Lord? It's now, right?" "You're going to take the throne now and we're going to sit on these

thrones with you and that's all going to happen." So they're seeing that. You can imagine them. This is the moment we've been waiting for. It's all coming together. And Israel's lining up. The people are lining up. But the problem is Jesus doesn't cooperate. He doesn't take His throne. He shuts the whole thing down. Immediately, He dismisses the disciples. He dismissed the crowds. And He goes up on a mountain to pray.

You know, they're getting in the boat, and they begin to head out. And they're thinking... I mean, how would you be thinking if you saw this sort of miracle happen? But then everything you thought about the Messiah and His coming and being King - and Jesus shut it down. He's so supernatural. He's so powerful and pure. But He just doesn't do what He's supposed to do. If He's the King of Israel, then why? Why this? And so they're going out there. And what we see from the account, darkness settles around them. Of course, there's got to be this wind.

A buddy and I rowed out in a row boat out onto Three Mile Lake up there in Paw Paw, Michigan. It was beautiful. We had our fishing poles. We rowed out on this lake pretty far and while we were out there, a cold front blew in. Wind - and it was not so nice going back. It was cold. It was windy. Not waves like we find here, but that was difficult, rowing against that. I remember what that was like.

Here are these guys. Darkness settles in, and this wind whips up. And my understanding is their boats had a sail. But what's happening is that wind is blowing directly at them. That sail does no good. They have to grab the oars. We're told it's the fourth watch of the night. That's between 3 and 4 a.m. They started in evening. They've been rowing 3 to 4 miles is what we're told. Wind, storm. Can you imagine that?

And you hear one of them. Maybe it was Thomas back there. "What is that?" I don't know if it was like that. This unearthly fear grabs them. Someone or something is moving across the top of the water. It's dark. It's stormy. This is not good. I mean they literally cry out, "It's a phantasm!" It says they screamed with terror! These are men's men. These are sailors, fisherman. These guys are gripped with fear. The thing I love about this is one of those immediately comes in right here. "Immediately..." Everything changes. Immediately, this sweet, familiar voice. Steady voice. It comes to their ears over the howl of the wind. "Take heart; it is I. Don't be afraid." And there's Peter. I mean, put yourself in there, among these 12 guys. And there's Peter. And I'll tell you what, it all registers with him right away. Bang bang! It's the Lord! I know that voice. "Lord, if it's You, command me to come to You." And that answer that comes back across those waters, above the howl of that wind, it's not: "That's silly, Peter." "Come."

And the thing about it is, Matthew tells us what happens next. Look at Matthew 14:29. What happens next? "So Peter got out of the boat." Now just stop right there. Peter expected to walk, not swim. You know what? John 21? There's another time Peter's in the boat. And the Lord comes to the shore. And you remember John says, "Hey Peter, that's the Lord." Do you remember what he did? He threw himself into the water. You throw yourself into the sea when you plan to swim. But you know, that's not what it says here in Matthew 14. It's different. Peter got out of the boat and walked. He didn't throw himself into the sea. He wasn't thinking, "Lord, command me to come to You and I'll swim to You." That's not what he was thinking. Peter walked on water. The truth is we half expect Jesus to walk on water. Why? Because He can take loaves and fish... He did stuff like this. We expect it. We expect it, not if we were there, and we were beholding it first hand. I'm just saying 2,000 years removed, we expect Jesus to be

able to do this. But the thing is Peter is doing it. And if you were actually there, imagine you're one of the other 11. This thing is getting more surreal by the moment. And the thing is, we're so used to the story, that we miss the ridiculousness of it all. The fact is the supernatural is mounting up here. Jesus walks across the water. Peter gets out of the boat. He walks across the water. He sinks. He comes back up. He and Jesus walk on the water again back to the boat. They get in the boat. The wind stops. And then the thing that Matthew doesn't tell us that John tells us is that then they were immediately at the shore. I mean, the miracles are stacking up here. They're coming at us in a hurry.

And here's the thing, you know when you go to John's account, you know what happened. They're back at the land. And those people that were on the other side that ate of the fish and the bread, they were trying to figure all this out. Now, wait a second, the disciples went in the last boat. Jesus didn't get in the boat with them. How did He get here? These aren't the disciples. These aren't the ones that know. This is the crowd that ate the bread and the fish the day before. And specifically in John's Gospel, they ask Him. They say, "Rabbi, when did you come here?" "When did You come here?" What they're really looking for is an explanation. How did you get here? When? This doesn't make sense that You could be here already.

Now, again, put yourself in the disciples' spot. Imagine if you're Peter. You know what's happened the night before. And the crowd's asking. And you're like, "Yeah, yeah! Tell them! That was exciting! Jesus, tell them!" You could imagine they're ready to jump out of their shoes to say, "Let me tell you how He got here! And when He got here!" But, silence. Not a word of explanation. "Jesus answered them, 'Truly, truly, I say to you, you're seeking Me not because you saw signs, but because you ate your fill of the loaves.'" And you know what's interesting, He freely then speaks about the feeding of the 5,000. He speaks about the feeding. He speaks about the spiritual implications of this and how all this works out. He's the Bread of Life. John 6 is full of that. He has no problem talking about the miracle that happened the day before. But you know, all that happened on the sea that night, He's absolutely silent. And we might just say, why? Well, the obvious reason is that the miracles at sea were not for the crowd. Who were they for? They were for the disciples. And for us.

For all of this, what is the lesson? What's the lesson in all of this? I'm going to use this word "impetuous." Impetuous. Oftentimes, we hear Peter - impetuous. What does that mean? Acting without thinking. But you see, here's the thing, is this teaching us that we should not be impetuous like Peter, and that we ought to be much slower to jump out of the safety of our boats? Is that what this is teaching? I doubt it. The emphasis is not on Peter sinking. The emphasis is to be found in these words: "Take heart; it is I. Do not be afraid." Now see, here's the thing. This account is found in Matthew's Gospel, Mark's Gospel, and John's Gospel. And you know what's interesting? The Peter incident is only preserved once. But in all three of them, God wants us to know; He wants us to hear what Jesus said to them. "It is I. Be of good cheer." "Take courage. I have come." That's the heart of this. It's not: Lose heart when it comes to getting out of the boat or you'll end up sinking like Peter. That's not the issue. It isn't primarily about Peter's failure or Peter's faith. It's primarily about Jesus' presence. Jesus has come. He is on the scene. That's the issue. Take heart. Take courage. You can be of good courage if you've got the Lord and the Lord has come and the Lord is there. And didn't He say, "Lo, I am with you always..." "I'll never leave you or forsake you." This is what this is all about. His presence. These

three accounts hit us all with this reality. The emphasis is that when Jesus shows up things happen. What happens? A believer walks on water. Not just any place, any time, but at that place and time where Jesus comes; where Jesus is. That's what this is all about. And if anybody says, "No, no... it's not that. This can't be teaching that when Jesus is with me, I can do impossible things like walk on the water." If that's what you're thinking, you're missing the whole point. When Jesus came on the scene, the water obeyed Him. It held Him up. It held Peter up. The wind obeyed Him. The boat obeyed Him. That's what happens when Jesus comes. Take heart. Take courage. Be of good cheer. It is I. Do not be afraid. Jesus is saying that when I've arrived, when I'm with you, you're good.

What we don't want to do is attack Peter. I mean, look, this whole account was not lost on Peter. Peter saw the Lord. It's the Lord! "Command me to come to You." He got out of that boat and he walked. It was not lost on him. Look, we can attack Peter, and that's oftentimes what happens when we read this. Oh, there's Peter again... he's sinking over there. No, Peter walked on water. Yes, he sank. Yes, we can say, well, he tried to keep Jesus from going to the cross. That's true. Yes, he denied him three times. That's true. Yes, he fell asleep in the garden. But I'll tell you this, he's the only one that trusted the Lord enough to get out of that boat and walk on water. That's a reality. He wasn't showing off. He wasn't being presumptuous. Why? Because Peter heard the Lord's voice. Some kind of confidence grabbed hold of him and he got out and he walked. And I'll tell you this, Jesus never faulted him for getting out of the boat. Jesus never faulted him for saying, "Lord, command me to come." He never faulted him for getting out of the boat. He never faulted him for walking on the water. He only faulted him for one thing. Only one thing - for doubting Christ once he was out of the boat.

Listen. Presumption was never the problem here. I get the feeling sometimes, especially among those who bear this name "reformed" or "Calvinistic." It's almost like I get this feel that caution is the word of the day. That was not the case in Scripture. That is not the case. You cannot show me verse after verse after verse where Jesus was saying, "Guys, be very careful, lest you trust Me too much." Never did that come across. Nothing like that.

You know what you find? You find that there in the Sermon on the Mount, we heard about it last night. God so clothes this and He takes care of that, and what does He say? "O you of little faith.... trust Me." You remember they were out there one day and they were in a boat again. They were with Jesus. And He said, "Beware of the leaven of the Pharisees." And they say, "Oh! We forgot to bring bread!" And He said, "O you of little faith." Or you remember another day. "Lord, why could we not cast that demon out of that young man?" "Because you didn't have faith." Isn't this what we get hit with over and over again? Or you remember another time that there was wind out there on the Sea of Galilee. And Jesus fell asleep in the boat. He didn't come walking on the water that time. But He woke up and same thing. "Why do you not trust Me?"

You know, the thing is, we typically tend to fear presumption. Oh, I find that so often! We want to be so careful lest we be presumptuous, when in fact, Scripture seems to suggest that just the opposite is the issue. "Peter, why didn't you trust Me?" Not: "Peter, you idiot!" "Why were you so overconfident to step out of that boat?" It's not that. That's not what you find in Scripture. Constantly, Jesus is saying, "Do you not yet perceive?" "I fed the 5,000. I fed the 4,000. Is that not resonating in your head? That when I'm with you, you're good? When I'm with you, I supply

your needs. When I'm with you, impossible things happen. So trust Me! And get out of the boat! Don't stay in the boat!" Oh, I am so convinced, we've got all these reformed people. You'll carry your Jonathan Edwards out of here, but all the time, you're in the boat. And Jesus has no hesitation to call us out.

Let me ask you this, as you and I sit in our little boats looking over the side. Based on verses like this, do you get the feeling that God's more concerned that we're going to just rashly spring out of the boat and foolishly trust Him to help us and protect us in some crazy endeavor done in His name? Or is God more concerned (incomplete thought) He wants us to step out. He wants us to do crazy endeavors in His names' sake. Those 120 came down from that upper room. That was a totally crazy endeavor they were about totally. Is God more concerned that lacking faith, we be too timid to ever get out of that boat? That's what it seems like here.

Do you know what the boat is? Do you know what a boat is? The boat is where you don't walk on water. It's the place of safety, of security. In fact, do you know what it is? I'm going to show you something here. Look with me at how Matthew's account ended. What does it say? They worshiped. Do you see that? If you look there, Matthew 14. Verse 33, "Those in the boat worshiped Him saying, 'Truly, You are the Son of God.'" You know what John 6:21 says? John 6:21 says they were glad to take Him into the boat. Now think with me. Gladness. Worship. Do you know what Mark says? Listen to this. We haven't looked at Mark's text yet. Mark 6:51-52 - same account. Let me read it to you. You don't have to turn there. "He got into the boat with them, and the wind ceased, and they were utterly astounded." They worshiped. They were glad. They were astounded. Listen to this. "They were utterly astounded, for they did not understand about the loaves, but their hearts were hardened."

Do you know that that is a reality? You can be glad in the Lord. You can sing the hymns and you can worship Him, and yet, there is a hardness to trust Him how He would be trusted. Because all three - same account. And under inspiration they tell us that despite the worship and the gladness, there was yet a hardness in these people of God. They weren't perceiving. They weren't getting what these things really meant. There's probably somebody ready to say, "Hey, look. What do you want us to believe? Do you want us to believe that we can go down to the water here and walk on the water?" "Listen, preacher, you and I can walk down there afterwards and you're not going to walk on it and I'm not going to walk on it. So what do you have to say to that?" I would say this. Now, I don't know if out there on the horizon somewhere you can see a mountain like the folks that come from Denver. You can see those great big mountains on that range. But what are you going to say? You can't move that mountain? Our Lord says you can move that mountain. The reality is we can move mountains looking to Christ in faith; looking to God in faith. Water can hold us up just as certainly as mountains can be moved. That is the reality. When Jesus is with me, I can just as confidently expect that water to do miraculous things as I can expect a mountain to move. We need to have faith to look at these things the way the Lord meant for us to look at these things. Listen, what did He say? What did He say when He walked here? He looked at some people one day and He said, "Which is easier for Me to say? Your sins be forgiven or rise up and walk?" What's easier to say? Walk on water? Peter, come to Me? Or walk on scorpions and serpents and crush Satan shortly under your heel? Or to walk on your sins - to walk above your sins, your problems, your doubts, your

fears, your unbeliefs? Which is easier to say? To step out in faith. Presumption is not the problem. The point is that we worship.

I know we worship. We're interested in the character of God. We want to see God big. But let us not be the kind of people that worship and even are glad, but there is this hardness of unbelief. We worship, but... You don't want that "but" there. And the thing is, isn't it amazing? Jesus is willing. "Lord, command me to come to You." "Come." And you know what? Something that I find remarkable in Mark's Gospel account of this is this: Mark 6:48 says, "About the fourth watch of the night, He came to them..." Now listen to this. "...He came to them walking on the sea. He meant to pass them by." Do you ever read things like that and it's like what? "He meant to pass them by." What does that sound like? Luke's Gospel - you remember the two on the road to Emmaus? It sounds remotely similar to that. That He acted as if He was going to go further. He intended to pass them by.

Does anybody ever get tired of those doubtful prayers? "Thy will be done..." Now, I know that's a biblical prayer, and I know it's got a right place, but Christians who hesitatingly look at life and are always in doubt about whether they should ever do anything - oh yes, they admit that God is able to do things at least in theory. But the feeling I get is that Jesus might intend to pass by, and He will pass by if we don't need Him. But you notice He always stops for those who need Him. You find that all through the Scriptures. Always stopping for those who need Him.

Oh, there are ten thousand reasons why we don't get out of the boat. Why? It's dark out there. The waves are big. There's likely an undertow and I'll be pulled under. We don't have enough money to get out of this boat. So we just sit there. "Well, the Lord's will be done." "If He wants me to get out of the boat then He'll take me out of the boat." But it's all so doubtful. I mean, after all, liquid molecules - they cannot support the weight of a human being. That doesn't work. It just can't work. The lake is deep and the side of the boat is high. This whole endeavor is doubtful. Let us hear Peter. "Lord, command me to come."

Here's a question. If you had been in the boat that night, would it have occurred to you to ask the Lord to command you to come? Think about it. Seemingly, it did not occur to eleven. But would it have occurred to you? And if you say I hope it would have, well then, I would say, let it occur to you now.

I want to point something out. Difficulties do not mean that something is not God's will. I find Christians who want to interpret God's dealings with us that way. Oh, there's a problem. There's a roadblock. There's a bump. There's difficulty there. (Incomplete thought) Think of Abraham. Was there difficulty set in the way of his faith? Like, maybe he's old, and his wife is old. That's a difficulty. Joseph - there were some difficulties there. He's finding himself in the prison. That is a difficulty. Lazarus - that was a difficulty. He was four days dead in the grave. Peter - dark, stormy, water. Have you ever noticed? God likes to put obstacles in our way. Why? That tests our faith. That tests what we think of Him. Bunyan had it, right? Did he not? Pilgrim came to the Hill of Difficulty and he went up that hill. He didn't go around. In fact, going around was exactly the thing that he shouldn't do.

And if we get out of the boat, are we ever going to sink like Peter? Yes, that's going to happen. But you know the thing is, we're still okay. Why? Because the Lord is there and He cares for His people. Look at something. Look at Matthew 14:30. "When Peter saw the wind, he

was afraid." Now notice these words: "...beginning to sink, he cried out, 'Lord, save me!'" Don't you love that?

Just several weeks back, one of my daughters brought up some show, and I hope there's not something about it where you all want to crucify me if I say it, but there's some outdoorsman thing. Some guy named Bear Grylls. Some Englishman. Some outdoorsman. He's a nut. And he went to Scotland in a blizzard and he wants to show you how to survive. And of all things, he wants to show you how to really survive. So he comes up to a peat bog, and he's saying I'm going to go in here and it's blizzard and the snow's coming, and he says I'm going to show you how if you fall into a peat bog in a blizzard, how you survive. And so he builds this whole story and you're ready for him to jump in this peat bog and go up to his waist or something. He says, look, now that I've told you all about this, I'm probably going to step in here and find this thing shallow, and I'm just going to walk right across to the other side. So now you've kind of got the picture in mind that maybe it's not that deep. He's going to take a step in there and he may actually be able to walk across. He takes a step in there and he disappeared, like that. He was gone. Like (gasp!) And I was thinking that image, if Peter - bang! It would have just come out from under him. Boom! He's gone. Isn't that amazing? "Beginning to sink..." I thought, look, if the same thing happened to Peter that happened to Bear Grylls, he wouldn't have got three words out of his mouth.

What I see in that is even in Peter's unbelief, the Lord is with him. And he is not allowed to just go "woosh." "Beginning to sink..." That is encouraging. Because what the Lord was doing was He's allowing Peter to sink gradually enough so that he can cry out, "Lord, save me!" Peter began to sink. Every time you read that from now on, but notice the next thing. "Jesus immediately," - I love that! It doesn't say that Peter immediately sank and Jesus began to put out His hand. It's the opposite. Beginning... Jesus immediately. Guess what? You get out of the boat, we're like Peter. Don't look at Peter like he's some ridiculous case. Go look at yourself in the mirror and say I'm just like him. Because if you get out of the boat, you're going to have times you sink too. Like all those biographies I was showing you yesterday that I've read? Those guys - they sink too.

And here's the thing. I love this too. Because I remember 28 years ago, at the depth in the bog, in that peat bog of my own sin, the miry clay... Do you know that night the Lord saved me just three words and I don't think they came out of my mouth. I think I just thought them. "Lord, help me." I've heard sister Connie say the same thing. Three words. Lord, help me. Lord, save me. I've heard of people under demonic attack waking up in the night - something has them by the neck: "Lord, help me." And it's gone. And the thing is, Jesus did not say, "Peter, I wish you would get more sophisticated, more intellectual, more professional, more polished, if you think you are going to get My attention." What a prayer! "Peter, you insult Me with your simplicity." None of that. What a prayer for God's people who venture out of the boat. You can imagine our brother serving overseas, "God, help me." He stepped out of the boat.

What keeps us from daring to trust Christ more? You think about your own life. We've got our boats. Every one of us do. These places that if we trusted the Lord more we would get out of them. And the Lord's out there. "Come." It's like He was going to walk by them, but what? They needed Him. They cried out. He saw they were in terror. He came to them.

What keeps us from daring to trust Christ more? Is it hardness? This hardness. We don't perceive really what those 4,000 and those 5,000 that were fed were meant to show us. Have you ever found that when you've stepped out of the boat, that Jesus let you sink right to the bottom of the sea? It doesn't happen.

You answer this question. I want to answer this question. Where do you want to live your life? Do you want to dwell in that calculated safety of the boat? If we're to significantly advance, we need to step out. Out where? Out there. Beyond the side of the boat. Beyond. Beyond the boat. God calls us to a life where we can't walk where He wants us to walk, unless He holds us up. Tozer said this: One of the greatest proofs of our weakness is when there's no longer anything terrible or mysterious about us. When it can all be explained. Stepping out of the boat is stepping out into that realm of the supernatural. It's stepping out into the realm of God where you don't survive unless God is for you and undergirds you; unless God holds you up. I think we need more crazy Christianity. We need more people like Peter. They step out of the boat. And they step out with that confidence. Because not a confidence in self - it's a confidence in what Christ is going to do for us. Should we not intentionally take our churches and our families and ourselves down paths that demand more than our spiritual gifts? More than our logic? More than the current funds in the checking account?

Why? Because Christ is with us and He says, "Take courage." Why? Because by nature, we're timid. We're faint. "Take courage." Why? "I am with you." Don't ever be quick to say, "Oh, we can't do that. It's too big. It's too expensive. It's too far. It's too outrageous. It's just overall too impossible." We should fear that talk. We should fear staying in the boat and not putting our great God to the test. And I don't know what this means for all of our lives. I've been thinking about this message for weeks, and I've been thinking what does this mean for me? I want to get out of the boat. I don't want to live in the boat. I don't want to get to the end and just find I lived in the boat all the time. I should have been saying, "Lord, command me to come." "Command me to come." Because I find that He says, "Come."

Can you imagine Peter reminiscing in the years that followed? I imagine him sitting there, looking into the fire, thinking... thinking back to that night. Remembering. Reminiscing. Those words. He can hear them. He can hear that voice. "O you of little faith, why did you doubt?" And you know Peter didn't answer. Why? Because he never had a good answer to that question. He never did. It's really difficult to have an answer when you've just been walking on water to have the Lord say, "Why did you doubt?" What are you going to say? Think about this. Peter - seasoned fisherman. Sailor. Something happened in that wind right there. And it says it caused him to fear. What would it have taken to cause a man like Peter to suddenly fear? A great big gust that took him off his feet? But still, why? He'd been walking on water. "Why did you doubt?" In other words, you never need to. Peter thought about water. You can imagine. "I felt a firmness under my feet. It was like walking on land, and yet it wasn't like walking on dry land because there was no ground there. There was some unseen reality that held me up. And I felt it. I felt it give way when my eyes came off of Christ. I felt it. I felt it. It caused that knee-jerk prayer: 'Lord, save me!' I felt it give way. And I know it was not faith that held me up. It was God that held me up. And He held me up and there was a firmness as long as I was looking to Christ." And he could remember. There was a confidence. Peter had a confidence. A

tremendous sense of safety, of security. A tremendous freedom. "Peter, why did you fear?" Him just thinking, you know, I never did have a good answer to that question.

Father, I pray that some boats would be stepped out of. Father, please, help us to trust Your Son. Help us to bring You more glory. We see that it is a glory; it's a worship issue, as we see Abraham there in Romans 4, and we know that trusting You brings You glory. And I pray Lord, I want this. I want this. I want to trust You more. Help us. Help us to go forth from this place resting, trusting. I pray that this account may help us to be more certain, more confident, more established on this Person of Christ willing to help; would have walked past, but He came immediately. "It is I." "It is I." "Be of courage." Lord, we want that courage. I pray in Christ's name, Amen.