

Jesus Walking on Water

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[0 : 0 0] Father, as we come to worship you through your word, through listening to your word, I ask that you would touch our hearts, that you would bring your word in the deepest parts of our hearts, that we would know the freedom that you bring, the liberation that you bring from sin and from the evils that dwell so closely to us. So Lord, as we come here at this point of the service, would you bless us and pour out your Holy Spirit upon us. In Jesus' name, amen.

And you may be seated. So just a couple of weeks ago, I was walking to the pool. I like to go to the pool every morning, or I try to go every morning. I'm for five days a week. I get four usually, and it's one of the ways that I manage my stress. And as I was walking towards the location, one of my neighbors kind of called me over. And so I went over, and I hadn't really talked to him before. So we started talking, and we talked about, you know, his children and my son, because he had seen my wife and our son walking together down the street. And we eventually got to talking about what I do for a living. So I told him that I'm a pastor and that I, you know, I study theology as well. And he, you know, he was totally fine with that. He said, you know what, I actually, I believe in God. And he said these words. He said, I'm about 99% sure of God. And there's always, you know, that always that 1% doubt.

And I thought, you know, that's interesting. And so I shared with him, you know, I, you know, God did a, like, a marvelous work in my life that, and God did a full 180 in my life. So I know that for sure that God exists. But then as I was saying that, I was remembering, you know, I've had doubts in my life as well. I've had doubts even as a Christian. And so I shared that with him too.

And it's kind of a weird mix. And maybe some of you were listening very carefully in the Matthew text that I read earlier. But Jesus has some pretty interesting words about doubt. And so I'll invite you to turn to that. You know, we have some big questions about that because we all experience doubt. And so what would Jesus say if he were, you know, in the conversation with my friend and I talking about that 1% of doubt? Would Jesus be okay with that? Or how would that work? Maybe some of you have asked questions to Christians and they said, just believe. So we'll look at that. We'll look at Matthew chapter 14 and see what Jesus has to say about our doubts. Now, before we start at verse 22, it's helpful for us to remember that Matthew, who is the author of this gospel or this book in the Bible, Matthew is writing a historical account. He's claiming to be writing a historical account. Historical in the sense that he's an eyewitness. Historical in the other sense that this is part of a long train of God's acts in history. This is part of something, a continuation of something that God has been doing. So these are the two basic claims. We see that in the genealogy at the beginning of the book. And the third thing is that it has big implications for us today. So let's look at verse 22 and we'll start there.

Matthew chapter 14, verse 22. Immediately, Jesus made the disciples get into the boat and go before him to the other side while he dismissed the crowds. So just for a bit of context, Jesus just performed a big miracle. He just fed 5,000 people, 5,000 men, plus women and children. And before that, he had just heard the news that his cousin, John the Baptist, was executed. So he was going to find solitude.

[4 : 0 0] And on his way towards finding solitude and spent time with God, he stopped and he saw a big crowd that was following him. He had compassion on them. He fed them. And now he's dismissing the crowds and he's sending his disciples over because they have a mission to do. He's sending them over across the sea.

Okay, so now in verse 23, we see that, and after Jesus had dismissed the crowds, he went up on the mountain by himself to pray. And so Jesus was finding the solitude after hearing the news and after a lot of teaching and miracles and all these things. Now, some of you might be wondering, like, Jesus is praying?

You know, if we had, you know, if some of our friends, my wife and I's friends were, you know, when they come over to dinner, we pray in Jesus's name. And so they would maybe hear this and wonder, you know, is Jesus praying in Jesus's name? Like, how does that work? Like, is he just talking to himself? Well, and another part of this confusion around why Jesus would pray is that, you know, we think that prayer is only useful because we're in a bad situation. So why is Jesus praying? Well, very essential to prayer is communion with God.

Jesus, from all eternity, has been in communion with God the Father and with the Holy Spirit. And so Jesus is just continuing fellowship, communion with God. This is very right for Jesus. Why would he not pray?

Why would he not spend time with God the Father and God the Holy Spirit? And this is really, I know, this really, the reason why I'm spending time on this is because it really convicted me this week.

[5 : 43] You know, I haven't been spending that much time in prayer, maybe the last couple of weeks, actually. And maybe some of you are in that boat as well. That prayer has only become a duty where, you know, you're in need and you pray. You need something, you pray. You're in a bad situation, you pray.

But a huge part of prayer, a central part of prayer, is that it's communion with God. And so Jesus is reminding us of that essential truth today. So verse 23, we'll continue there. Verse 23b.

Now when evening came, he was there alone. So the evening, just before the evening, they had supper, they left, and now we're getting into later into the evening. Jesus was alone in the mountain and praying. But verse 24, but the boat by this time was a long way from the land, beaten by the waves, for the wind was against them. Now this section depicts a very common experience where we might sense that Jesus is leading us to a particular place, and then things are going wrong. Things are not going well. You're starting to fear for your life. And you're probably starting to wonder, Jesus, like, what were you thinking? Like, you sent me there. I'm sure some of you have asked that. I have asked that many times. Jesus, why did you allow me to go in this area and spend, you know, months here in this place where it seems like there was no fruit, where I was in danger? Jesus, why would you do that? Like, did you call us here? See, and based on our circumstances, we start to doubt and judge Jesus. God, I thought you led me to this job, or had me marry this person, or give this up, or to adopt these children, or fill in the blank. I thought you were calling me to this. Didn't you know that it would turn out this way? And this is a big mystery in the Christian faith, is that we don't always have an answer to that dilemma. We don't always have an answer at the end of our circumstances.

Sometimes we find out why God led us to a place. Other times, we don't. So I studied at McGill University, and I became a Christian there. Years after that, it became very obvious to me why after I had applied to the University of Toronto and received a substantial scholarship, was refused from the school a couple of months later. I went from full scholarship to refused from University. That didn't make sense to me. Years later, I became a Christian. That made sense to me.

God wanted me to go to Montreal so I could hear the gospel. That made sense to me. But, you know, why did I become a Christian at 19 and not at 12 or 3 or at 30? I don't know. Probably won't know until I see Jesus, until I get to heaven. But as the disciples are delivering these big life questions while holding on for their lives, something completely shocking and unexpected happens next.

[8 : 47] In verse 25, But when the disciples saw him walking on the sea, the disciples were terrified and said, It is a ghost. And they cried out in fear.

Sorry, I think I skipped there. Verse 25. And in the fourth watch of the night, he came to them walking on the sea. Okay, so the fourth watch is between 3 a.m. and 6 a.m.

So smack it right in the morning. And just by the way, if you call me between 3 and 6, I probably won't answer. I'll be sleeping. I have headphones. Or not headphones, I have earplugs.

But Jesus here is coming. He's coming to them. He's coming to them on the sea. It's really, really unexpected. This setting really shows us the helplessness of the disciples.

They're on the middle of the sea. And in the ancient cultures, the sea was known as the area of chaos, of death. And maybe some of you come from a northern community.

[9 : 50] Maybe we have someone from an indigenous community. You likely know quite a few people who have drowned. I know some people in my family who have drowned. The waters are a dangerous place.

We haven't mastered them completely. And so they're in this place of chaos. And not only that, but Jesus is in the mountain. Jesus is not useful in the mountain.

They need Jesus right there on the sea. And there's, I mean, there's no flare guns. There's no emergency helicopters. No phones. Everyone's asleep between 3 and 6.

Things are going really, really badly for them. But Jesus is walking on the water towards them. So here we are. The miracle.

Okay, so some of you are thinking, okay, walking on the water. How are you, Jonathan? How on earth, or maybe how on water, Jonathan, are you going to explain this to me?

[10:44] Like, please tell me that you're going to take a very symbolic view of this. Like, are you going to ask us to believe this really happened? If some of you have looked at this passage before and looked at commentaries, you would notice that many people have written many things about this.

And I'll just say there's a lot of foolishness that's been written about this. Some people have said that there's a low tide at that moment. And that Jesus is coming because there's a low tide.

So there's no miracle. He's just walking on the bottom of the sea. But if any of you have seen any pictures of under the water at the bottom of the sea, there's coral reefs and rocks. And so Jesus would be walking like this and cutting his feet and not enjoying this.

Like, I don't think that makes sense. Someone else wrote that there's, that Jesus projected an image of himself. Okay, well, wouldn't that be equally miraculous?

That Jesus projected an image of himself? Someone else wrote that Jesus is still close to the shore. He's walking on the shore, maybe a couple feet down from the shore.

[11:53] Okay, so Peter walks in the water? Like, how does that make sense? Because Peter walked from the boat towards Jesus. So Jesus doesn't walk on water, but Peter walks on water?

And other people have compared it to myths, but the literary genre is not the same. And some people said that it was first understood as myth, but later thought of as historical, but there's no proof for that.

So what is happening here? What is, is Jesus really walking on water? Well, if we can have our first point, Andrew, I think this will help us to remind us of what is happening.

So this is the point that we've been reminding ourselves as we are looking at these miracles over our series. This is a true story about Jesus and a real miracle. At least this is the claim that Matthew is making.

And we have to take him for what he's saying. We can't just think he's foolish, think he's stupid. This is a true story about Jesus and a real miracle.

[12:52] Now the examples above, to me at least, sound quite ridiculous. And part of that, I think, is because we don't, often we don't check our assumptions.

We have very strong assumptions and a lot of people have strong assumptions about the miraculous and about the world. And they bring those assumptions to the text and they can't, they can't listen to the text anymore. It's not making them more rational to have these very strong assumptions.

But we need to check our assumptions to be able to be reasonable with our assumptions. I wish I had the quotes with me, but Stephen Hawking, you might know him as one of the greatest physicists that ever lived, wrote a book in the Grand Design.

And at the very beginning of his book, in the thesis of his book, he talks about how laws created the universe. So we see, we can observe that there are laws, therefore the laws have always been there and the laws sustained the universe in the way that the whole universe functions.

So therefore, the laws must have brought the universe into existence. But how was, how were there laws before anything appeared?

[14:01] Like that just, the logic doesn't make sense. There's a really good book on his, as a response to the Grand Design by John Lennox, who's a Christian scientist. And even the title of the book, The Grand Design, like when you have a Grand Design, would you think that there's a Grand Designer?

Like, doesn't that just logically follow? See, God, who is the Grand Designer, the lawgiver, can reveal himself within his created order.

There's no controversy with that. It seems perfectly logical. And I was, I was thinking of how can I, what is a good image for me to communicate this with you this morning?

And I tested this at the eight o'clock service, and there was no riots or nothing, no objects thrown at me. So I'm going to share it with you as well. I think this is helpful.

If it's not, come tell me afterwards. But, for God to enter his creation, an act miraculously would be like a jazz artist improvising a stunning tune above the underlying chord sequence.

[15:05] I'm assuming a tiny bit of music knowledge and some experience with jazz music. Some of you maybe think that jazz is completely chaotic. It's just people playing random notes. I assure you, that's not the case.

There's, they have a sheet where there's a sequence that's happening and there are chords and the person who is improvising is improvising within those chords something that is quite logical and it's quite masterful, actually.

It's very impressive. Years ago, when I was at McGill, I studied French horn at McGill, I was asked to join the jazz ensemble, the McGill jazz ensemble for a concert.

They had a special guest from the States conducting and I was the third French horn player they asked. So you can, you can understand that French horn players don't usually like to be asked to play jazz in a jazz ensemble.

So we, so I went, I did the gig, I thought this would be cool and this will be fun but the conductor asked me to play a solo and I told him very kindly, sir, I don't play solos.

[16:05] I don't improvise. I'm a French horn player not a saxophone player and he said, ah, you'll be fine. Just pick two notes and just play them over and over again in a very good rhythmic sequence and you know what, actually I remember there was a French horn player once that played a solo in my band and he played this very famous tune and he just played a little bit more jazzy.

You'll be fine. So I thought, okay, I can do this. So I got to the concert, made a total fool of myself. It was completely chaotic. It had no sense with the music but the rest of the ensemble sounded great.

So, okay, that's a little anecdote to help us understand that for Jesus to walk on water, he's not obliterating the laws of nature but he, because he created the laws of nature, he understands them so well and because he's sovereign over the laws of nature, he can exercise his sovereignty over them in a way that is completely compatible even though he's walking on water.

He's the one who created those laws. Okay, so not only does Matthew claim the event to be historical, he also claims that it relates to a historical sequence, that God has been acting with his people for years, for centuries and millennia.

We see that God created the universe. We already looked at that briefly but he also revealed his mercy by delivering his people through a body of waters, the Red Sea. And not only that but we see the prophets who have done miracles that God had enabled them to do water miracles and the psalmists who sing about God delivering people from out of the water.

[17:45] See, this is completely consistent and historical. It's following the historical sequence of what God has done. And now Matthew is recording God before him walking on the waters.

So we've got our next point, Andrew. I think this will help us summarize what is happening so far. So Jesus walking on water isn't an impossibility or an isolated event.

It's an announcement that the sovereign Lord is here. Jesus walking on water isn't an impossibility or an isolated event. It's an announcement that the sovereign Lord is here.

So how do the disciples respond to Jesus walking on water? Like, do they yell, like, Jesus, come over here, save us, help us, we're dying here.

Is that what they do? Let's look at verse 26. We read, Now you might be thinking, like, that's odd.

[18:51] Like, didn't they just see Jesus multiply bread and feed over 5,000 people? Like, why wouldn't they just believe that Jesus was there and walking on the sea?

Now I think this verse is very helpful for us to understand that this is a real miracle, that people don't expect people to walk on water.

And it also, you know, just as a side note, like, this really shows that Jesus is both human, but also God, fully human, fully God.

And so there he is walking on water. And these people who are seeing this man, who is God, walking on water, are in awe.

Is this a ghost? Now some of you also might be thinking, okay, this is strange, but bear with me for a moment. Like, some of you have gone to the dentist.

[19 : 52] Maybe it was the 50th time you've been to the dentist. And, you know, you're fine, everything's good. The dentist, you know, it's three in the afternoon, the dentist has been doing this for five hours already.

They're well trained, they know what they're doing. But all of a sudden, when the buzzing instrument is coming close to your mouth, you're starting to wonder, uh-oh, is this the time when they're going to get it wrong?

Right? We all of a sudden start to forget, we start to fear. Just last week, I was flying from Halifax, and as you see in the blog, I went to Halifax to a conference, and I was sitting by the window. I love the window seat.

I was sitting by the window, and I saw the wings kind of going like this in the turbulence, and I started to wonder, how is this plane made? Like, are the wings kind of like, you know, drilled from the top, and there's kind of like a thing that goes on top, or are they like really built into the body? And I started to doubt, I started to fear, and it's poured, so they give you a drink. I was looking forward to my drink at that moment, so I can forget about what was, about my fear, that, wow, the wings might just like pop off, and the body, like, do these pilots, are these pilots trained for these moments?

[20 : 58] So, okay, so I think that something similar is happening here, that even though we have full confidence in something, or in someone, there's still times when we fear, because that's who we are, that's, that's, that's, that's just who we are as human beings.

We, we fear, our emotions can, can flood the, the rational part of us that, that causes us to fear. So, where am I here?

Okay, so here's, if I can have my, my next point, Andrew. We are cast away from God's presence. Therefore, our hearts become faint as we strive to survive.

Now, I use the word cast away here, deliberately. Some of you have seen the movie cast away, and you see what being on the sea and being in a boat for a long time does to you. But, the whole idea here of being cast away from God's presence, and therefore our hearts becoming faint as we strive to survive, brings us back to the very beginning of when God created everything, and created a garden, and created human beings to put them in the garden, and to relate to them.

See, in the garden, God created a place where love abounds, where there's provision, where we don't have to worry, we're in communion with God, everything is provided, and we enjoy.

[22 : 24] But now, now that human beings have sinned and rebelled against God, God exiled us or cast us out of the garden, out of this place of harmony with God, full provision with God.

So then, you know, we strive to survive, we fear, we get anxious. That's just part of life. And in some way, this, you know, we as human beings long for this return to harmony, so we create these institutions or politics and technology and the sciences to try to capture that goodness and that harmony, that safety and security that we had with God.

But, but this, you know, in these education systems or political systems or the sciences, although they, you know, we try to use them as means for salvation, they are not what, what will bring us satisfaction.

They are not the presence of God. Our salvation or our rescue really is being brought back into that relationship where God comes to us and rescues us to safety with him.

And this is what we see Jesus doing in verse 27. Let's look at verse 27. But immediately, Jesus spoke to the disciples saying, Take heart, it is I, do not be afraid.

[23 : 47] He says, Take heart, it is I, do not be afraid. If I can have my next point, Andrew. So this is the next point. I'm just, I've looked at the Greek and part of the original language is written in such a way that this would be a very logical conclusion.

This is what the disciples would have heard. They would have heard, Take courage. I am is here. Do not fear. Take courage.

I am is here. Do not fear. And when they would, when they would have heard this, they would have, you know, like in the movie when there's the memory flashback that comes and you just see the different scenes of one's upbringing, they would have, you know, Peter and Andrew and John, they would have heard, you know, they would have been brought back to the stories of when they were children and hearing of the God of Moses, the God who revealed himself to Moses saying, I am that I am.

Or the God who spoke to Isaiah saying, I am the Lord your God. Do not fear. They would have heard that divine name. They would have heard that God is with them. And this story tells us in a very powerful way that in the midst of our storms or our fears or our uncertainties, the Lord mercifully comes to comfort and to rescue.

Jesus is saying, Friend, your body is failing you. I am is here. You're facing poverty. I am is here. You're feeling lonely. I am is here.

[25 : 16] You're afraid of the future. I am is here. You're feeling hopeless. I am is here. Your marriage or your relationships are crumbling before your eyes. I am is here. I am is here.

And I think this is further pointed out by the bracketing statements, Take courage and do not fear. These are words, the most common commandments of God in the Old Testament. Take courage. I am is here. Do not fear. Now, I understand that sometimes God comforts us with the promise of the future, a future rescue.

And other times he rescues us as a sign of the future rescue. And so there's always that, we're always pointed towards that future culminating rescue when God makes all things new and brings us back into his presence.

And this story tells us that Jesus came to us in our exile and comes to us ready to help. Now, I often forget that God is near to my friends and my families and neighbors who are now Christians.

[26 : 31] I often forget that. I often forget that God is somehow in his providence near to them.

When I became a Christian, I remember kind of looking back at my life and being able to see some significant moments that I think the Lord was kind of pointing to me that he was there.

He was there. He was directing me this way. He was preparing me for that. He allowed this to happen so that I would cry out to him one day. It didn't make sense to me then. It made sense to me after. And so this, I think, is a very good encouragement for us to remember that God is near to our unbelieving friends and families and neighbors.

And this is part of Matthew's thesis. Emmanuel, God is with us. We pray because God is near. So what would you do if you were with the disciples in that boat in the middle of the sea, in the middle of the storm, and saw Jesus walking towards you and saying, I am is here.

Take courage. Do not fear. I am is here. Would you say, Jesus, bad grammar. I am here. Well, let's see what Peter does.

Verse 28. And Peter answered Jesus, Lord, if it is you, command me to come to you on the water. And Jesus said, come. So Peter got out of the boat and walked on the water and came to Jesus.

[27 : 57] Now when I read this, I don't see myself in Peter's shoes. I think, wow, like what an imagination. Like he sees Jesus walking on the water? I want to walk on the water too.

I just don't relate to that. I'm maybe more fearful or I'm more careful maybe. That's the word that I like to use, but I'm just more of a wimp. I don't see these opportunities and think, wow, I should do that too.

So anyway, wow, like what an imagination. What, you know, what ambition that Peter would ask Jesus to walk on water with him. It's worth noting that many, many people have written, you know, very polarized opinions on this scene that Peter, you know, like Peter is testing the Lord.

He's putting the Lord to the test and that's why he falls in the water. So we shouldn't do that. It's not a lesson for us. Other people, on the other hand, say, wow, like Peter asked and it was his faith that led him to ask and he walked on water and the others, they just stayed in the boat.

Like they weren't faithful or they weren't full of faith but Peter had faith and we should be like Peter. And so it's like, woo, like you're being pulled into the two extremities. Like what do we believe about this?

[29 : 11] Well, I see this not as a prescription but as a description. I think we can get lost when we focus too much on the disciples and try to gain, you know, too many insights from them.

We can sort of get ourselves into fog when we do that. I think that it's better for us to focus on Jesus and so I think, you know, I take the view that our faith and personality aren't necessarily isolated from themselves.

Peter's personality and faith combined had him ask Jesus to walk on the water. Okay, good. And both were involved in his, yeah, in his request but Jesus isn't surprised by these but he works with them.

He works with our personality. He created our personality. He works with our faith. He gave us faith. He works with both. I don't see this as a, necessarily as a prescription, however.

I see that as a description. And what happens in verse 30 is shocking. Let's take a look at verse 30. It says, But when Peter saw the wind, he was afraid and beginning to sink, he cried out, Lord, save me.

[30 : 23] And Jesus immediately reached out his hand and took hold of Peter saying to him, O you of little faith, why did you doubt? And so we see here that even though Peter had great faith and then doubted, that Jesus was merciful, Jesus was strong, Jesus was able to pull him out of the water and I think this is what the text is having us contemplate, is the faithfulness of Jesus and the mercy of Jesus.

Now this brings up some pretty significant questions, some big questions. Like, you might be thinking, like he actually, like Peter actually went out of the water, unlike the others.

Like, why did Jesus speak so harshly? Why did he say you had little faith and doubted? Like, isn't that, isn't that a bit harsh? Like, is Jesus punishing Peter for his ambition?

Can I have the next point, Andrew? Jesus may allow us to fall so that our faith won't lead to arrogance but to a call for mercy.

Jesus may allow us to fall so that our faith won't lead to arrogance but to a call for mercy. And this, this might be a bit hard for us to, to kind of, you know, wrestle with, but it really does go against what we would expect if Jesus' sole purpose was to cater to our felt needs.

[31 : 57] You know, if we have that relationship, if we think that we have this relationship with Jesus where, you know, he should just cater, he should just serve us and he should answer every, every prayer like we want him to, that's not a relationship and that's not how he works.

And I think Jesus may allow us to fall so that our faith won't lead to arrogance. It won't lead to that towering over God and trying to put him in a box and say, God, you owe this to me.

But, that we would cry and call for mercy. Jesus, save me. Lord, save me. That we would have that posture before him, that posture of humility. And so, we see in this story, this very powerful story, that God's mercy forms the basis of our faith and sustains us through our journey.

And this, just by the way, this is one of the reasons why I really like the Anglican way, the Anglican liturgy. I think mercy, seeking the mercy of God is at the very center.

And it's so easy for me to become arrogant. I become way more arrogant than I become humble. Who would have guessed? But I have the suspicion that you might have that experience as well, that it's way more easy for us to become arrogant or proud or heart of heart and think that others owe us certain things.

[33 : 21] You know, when we drive, like, you cut me off, well, you better drive fast because, like, I'm going to tailgate you. I don't know, like, how dare people do that to us?

But, but we're creatures. We're fallen creatures. And we're all in need of God's mercy. Now, some of you are probably thinking, okay, I can understand that Jesus is merciful by pulling Peter out of the water.

That's very good. That's very fine. But he rebukes him for doubting, like, we mentioned that just earlier, but, like, Jesus rebukes Peter for doubting. Like, isn't that, like, isn't that just one of those weird religious tactics to have people completely buy into the cult, like, without thinking things through?

Like, you're not allowed to ask questions. You have to just believe. You have to believe wholeheartedly. No questions, no doubts. And if you have questions or doubts, God is going to be angry with you.

God's going to curse you. Is this, is this what's happening here in the text? And I think this touches on what my friend and I were having a conversation over. You know, is Jesus okay with that one percent of doubt?

[34 : 35] Now, doubt is a very, very big theme, and I can't unpack the theme exhaustively. There's someone from our congregation whose sole purpose, his job, in his job, is to be a good doubter, is to read proposals and doubt every single word and phrase that is in the proposals and report to say, this is wrong, this is not good, this is not a good estimate, this is bad, you shouldn't do this, and, like, just completely doubt everything that the people sent him.

Other people, like myself, like I was pursuing a music career, and some of you maybe are musicians or are doing job interviews, and your sole purpose is to not doubt.

If you doubt, you'll miss your opportunity. You'll overthink things, so you try to suppress that aspect of you that doubts, and you just try to have full confidence in what you're doing.

But I understand that many of us are facing trials right now that have us doubting, so I want to be careful. I've tried to think of different degrees in different ways that we doubt.

I think one of the ways that we doubt as human beings is that we use doubt, we use skepticism or questions as a mask or as a hand that says, I'd rather keep my autonomy, thank you.

[36 : 00] I think a classic example of that is Jordan Peterson. We see him, you know, talking about God a lot, but talking about Jesus, no, and then he has very sophisticated ways of walking around the issues of the historicity of the Gospels and all that.

So in some ways, he wants to adhere to that, but no, like, if it's going to cost me my life, no thank you. And we use questions and we try to use doubt in that way to create a barrier.

And others who have intellectual doubts that, you know, if they were resolved, we would happily embrace the Christian faith or some truths about the Christian life.

like, I just, I'm struggling with Jesus with this one thing. Do you really mean that? And we feel pressed inside emotionally where we're not sure. But if the answer were to come, we would embrace that truth.

We would embrace Jesus. That's, I think, the second way that we tend to doubt. And the third way, I think, is when we have circumstances that bring trial over us and our emotions, you know, they get the best of us.

[37 : 09] And we wonder, God, are you good? Are you good in this? Are you still good in this? Are you faithful? Are you going to be faithful? God, are you going to be with us?

Are you going to be with me? And I think we see this with Peter, that he was convinced of Jesus walking on the water. Wow, like, Jesus, invite me. But then he saw the wind and he got afraid.

And so he began to sink. But what I find really interesting about this text is that there's no resolution to the question.

Oh, you of little faith, why did you doubt? Then it moves on. We see in verse 32, it just moves on to, and when they got into the boat, the wind ceased. See, I think Matthew used this question as a rhetorical device, as a very powerful way to have you and I ask that question of ourselves.

What is my doubt? What is my 1% of doubt? Is it a mechanism that I use to preserve my autonomy and preserve myself and do what I want?

[38 : 16] Is it a license to live my own personal lifestyle and enjoy things that are contrary to God's will? Or, you know, are my doubts really about finding out more?

Is it true skepticism where I would love to have the answer? And if you're in that position right now, if you're asking those big questions, feel free to talk with me or some of the others after the service. I would love to pray and walk through that with you. And for others, you know, it's really about the goodness of God. so-and-so in my family is sick.

Is God still good? So let's see how this story wraps up in verse 32. We see here, it says that when they got into the boat, the wind ceased.

And those in the boat worshipped Jesus, saying, truly, you are the Son of God. And so here we see in this story the power of Jesus as the Lord, the sovereign Lord over creation.

[39 : 24] We see the mercy of Jesus walking towards his disciples who are in trouble. He's walking on the sea in the middle of their trials and he's there with them. We see his mercy and he rescues Peter.

We see the big theme of salvation and worship where Jesus rescuing them and ceasing the wind brings worship. That they worship, they see Jesus and they say, truly, you are the Son of God.

See, this story, Jesus powerfully conquered the deadly powers of the sea and saved those on the sea. But this also powerfully captures what he would later do on the cross.

So if we have our last point, Andrew. Jesus on the cross is God's strong hand extended to all who cry, Lord, save me.

Jesus on the cross is God's strong hand extended to all who cry, Lord, save me. See, you and I are, in some ways, we're Peter.

[40 : 32] We're sinking. We're sinking and we are completely dependent upon the rescue and the mercy of Jesus. and there's no better way for us to contemplate the mercy of Jesus than looking at the cross where Jesus, the Son of God, who was all-powerful, gave up his splendor, gave up his glory, everything that, all the praise that was due to him, all the praise that he had in heaven, he laid it down and he came to die for us so that he could offer the ultimate rescue over our sin, over our death and he will one day put all of creation back into its proper order so that we will have full

harmony with God like in the garden.

Please stand. Jesus can meet you in the storm.

Jesus can meet us in our fears, in our uncertainties, in our hypocrisy, in our lack of faith, in our doubts, and any other situation. Some of you have doubts and again, I invite you to come talk with me after or talk with someone else and others of you are feeling lost or running away and you know it in the deep parts of your heart and you're wondering, you know, if I call out to Jesus, will that be good for me?

Will that be good? And I assure you, it is good. It is good to call out to Jesus. He will save you. He will save you from the deadly waters. Let us pray. Father, you are the ultimate giver of life and you sent your son Jesus that we might have life, that we may have life in him.

And I thank you, Lord, that you, Jesus, died on the cross for us, for our salvation. And I pray that the truths of your gospel would touch us so deeply today that, Lord, many of us here would understand the goodness that comes through our relationship with you, through repenting and turning to you and asking for your mercy.

[42 : 44] So, Lord, as we meditate upon these words, as we meditate upon the cross and what Jesus has done for us, I pray that you would bless us, that you would bless us and grow us and allow us to know that goodness of fellowship with you.

In Jesus' name, Amen.