

Twelfth Sunday after Pentecost

Sermon Road Map

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Matthew 14:22-33

August 12, 2018

Oh, for a faith that will not sink!

- Contrast: Peter's *little faith* vs. the Canaanite mother of *great faith*
- Ask: What is faith? How do we get it and grow it? What does faith do?
- Do you know some actually think that **Peter's faith** - his act of believing, his confidence - made it possible for him to walk on water. As if Peter's faith was the power that buoyed him or made water walkable. **Really?**
 - ♦ No wonder: "You can do anything if you have faith - if you believe." **Not!**
 - ♦ Same thinking blames those not healed by a faith-healer - *lack of faith*
 - So Paul's failure to be healed (thorn in the flesh) was a lack of faith?
 - No! God said: *My grace is sufficient for you. My power is made complete in your weakness.*
- Think: What tone did Jesus use? *You of little faith. Why did you doubt?*
 - ♦ **sternly scolding** or **gently chiding challenge?**
 - ♦ *Little faith* is not good, not helpful.
 - ♦ When we see ours we pray: *Lord, save me! Save me from me!*

Oh, for a faith that will not shrink	That bears unmoved the world's dread frown
Though pressed by many a foe,	Nor heeds its scornful smile,
That will not tremble on the brink	That sins' wild ocean cannot drown
Of poverty or woe.	Nor Satan's arts beguile. CW 405:1,4

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- ❖ Peter - a disciple of *little faith*?
 - Yes at the moment Peter sank.
 - Yet by faith: Idea / request / act on - walking on water to Jesus.
 - ♦ If that's *little faith* I must have microscopic faith!
 - Even with *little faith* in faith Peter cried out: *Lord, save me.*
- ❖ Where does the faith referred to in the Bible come from? What is it?
 - *Indeed, it is by grace you have been saved, through faith — and this is not from yourselves, it is the gift of God.* Ephesians 2:8 - EHV
 - ♦ *For the mind-set of the sinful flesh is hostile to God, since it does not submit to God's law, and in fact, it cannot.* Romans 8:7 - EHV
 - *...faith comes from hearing the message, and the message comes through the word of Christ.* Romans 10:17 - EHV - Word also at work in Baptism.
 - Faith comes from God as a gift worked in people by the gospel.
 - Faith is the living active New Self created by God so we trust him.

- ❖ Faith **created** by the **gospel** is **fed, strengthened,** and **renewed** by **it.**
 - Exhausted (up to 12 hr. rowing) saw a person walking on water - terror!
 - ♦ Didn't view through lens of the gospel, but life experience with danger
 - "Take courage! It is I. Don't be afraid." **Pure gospel from Jesus.**
 - ♦ **Not** instruction and orders to be processed by the disciple's power!
 - ♦ **Powerful medicine** - smoothes hearts and chases fear from minds
 - ♦ *It is I. = I AM = It is me, the I AM.*
 - Not only not a ghost, but Jesus whom you know is Moses' **I AM**
 - ♦ **Faith fed. Fear fled.** Faith's focus on their trusted Friend and Savior.
 - Faith is the New Self's trust in the God of the gospel - trusts his word
 - ♦ Biblical faith always says "Yes, Amen" to God's word. It's reliable!
 - ♦ Peter responded by faith - putting faith into action.
 - ♦ ²⁸ "Lord, **since it's really You, give me an order to come to You, walking on top of the water.**" EAE
 - Jesus' word worked. Peter confessed this is Jesus, his Lord.
 - Only faith: *If Jesus can walk on water he can enable me to also.*
 - **Peter didn't trust self.** He asked permission. Trusted Jesus' word.
 - Faith trusting, with no hesitation, steps out to obey - focused on Jesus.
- ❖ Faith was challenged when Peter shifted focus
 - Focused on reality of the Lord Jesus and his word - solid footing
 - Focus on wind driven waves and Peter's experience - *what am I doing?*
 - Even *little faith* is faith. He instantly trusts the Savior to save. He saved!
 - Jesus saved Peter & the 12 - the wind ceased. John: instantly at land
- ❖ *You of little faith. Why did you doubt?*
 - Check: Where's your focus? What do you think is more real than Jesus?
 - You know Jesus has the power, love, commitment to keep you safe!
 - Come experience Jesus' reliability in worship steeped in God's Word
 - ♦ Worship is not just a response. An exercise to focus faith on Jesus.
 - ♦ Those who grow in Jesus' reputation and promises grow in trust
 - Then consider: When I face my next storm what will I do?
 - ♦ Scream in terror or bow in worship and pray to the Son of God?
 - Face your doubts today. Let Jesus replace doubt with faith's greater reality.

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"See, I lay a stone in Zion, a chosen and precious cornerstone, and the one who trusts in him will never be put to shame." 1 Peter 2:6/Isaiah 28:16