LIFE BIBLE MINISTRY

Matthew 14 (Part 3) :22-36

Jesus Walks On the Water

Pastor Paul LeBoutillier · April 18, 2026

SERMON TRANSCRIPT

and open it up to Matthew chapter 14 and we will finish that chapter this morning chapter 14 this is the last section of the chapter bit which starts for us in verse 22 Matthew 14 22 goes like this immediately Jesus made the disciples get into the boat and go on ahead of him to the other side while he dismissed the crowd after he had dismissed them he went up onto a mountainside by himself to pray when evening came he was there alone but the boat was already a considerable distance from land buffeted by the waves because the wind was against it during the fourth watch of the night Jesus went out to them walking on the lake when the disciples saw him walking on the lake they were terrified it's a ghost they said and cried out in fear but Jesus immediately said to them take courage it is I don't be afraid Lord if it's you Peter replied tell me to come to you on the water come he said and then Peter got down out of the boat walked on the water and came toward Jesus but when he saw the wind he was afraid and beginning to sink cried out Lord save me immediately Jesus reached out his hand and caught him you have little faith he said why did you doubt and when they climbed into the boat the wind died down and then those who were in the boat worshipped him saying truly you are the Son of God when they had crossed over they landed at Gennesaret and when the men of that place recognized Jesus they sent word to all the surrounding country people brought all their sick to him and begged him to let the sick just touch the edge of his cloak and all who touched him were healed Wow let's pray Jesus we're listening for your voice this morning we just present our our hearts our spiritual ears spiritual eyes Lord you've given these to us that we might assimilate from this word what it is that you want to say we pray that you would speak to us today and direct our hearts according to this word we ask it in Jesus name Amen the events that we're looking at here in this passage obviously take place immediately after the miraculous feeding of the 5,000 which of course we dealt with last week but what what is actually going on in this passage well all the people have been fed you know by this miraculous thing and John by the way is the one who tells us one of the reasons why Jesus kind of quickly wanted to get the guys out of there and dismiss the crowd John tells us that it was because the people after this miraculous feeding we're gonna take Jesus by force and make him king and of course you know that wasn't the timing and it wasn't an earthly kingship that Jesus came to fulfill at this

time anyway and so Jesus knew that this thing needed to disperse needed to he needed to get on with things and and so he he sends the guys he says listen you guys just get in the boat and go and then he goes to dismiss the crowd the very large crowd sends them on their way and then we're told that once the people had been dismissed Jesus climbed up to the top of a high hill they call them mountains but if you've ever been to the area you can look at and go that's a mountain yeah that's that's as good as it gets so you know but it's you know you and I would probably call it a hill or a foothill or somebody he goes up to the top of this thing to to a place where he can be you know find some solitude and he can pray and according to the scripture he he prays what appears to be all night or at least the majority of the night and eventually we're told as Matthew continues the narrative that the disciples had not made their way across the lake or gotten very far maybe I think the Sea of Galilee something like four and a half miles across they probably had gotten somewhere around three miles out and it says that they were fighting a strong wind which you've heard mentioned many times can very quickly come up on the Sea of Galilee and it was impeding their process and then it goes on to say that in the fourth watch of the night which we'll talk about in a moment the disciples found themselves in very real trouble because the storm had worsened and you know they were in some danger of potentially losing their lives Wow well when we look at this thing when we look at this picture this this this this design that's given to us here in this passage we see an interesting picture of our lives I mean I'm talking about our many times our daily lives I mean what do we have here we have the Lord up in this hill mountainside sort of a thing praying and we have the disciples down on the water struggling against the wind dealing with the waves finding their lives in peril doesn't that kind of remind you of something it's like yeah that's kind of my life it's like the Lord up there you know and I know he's praying the Bible says that he ever lives to intercede you know for the Saints Jesus is seated now at the right hand of the Father interceding for the Saints meanwhile we're down here on the waters of life dealing with the winds and the waves and the peril and the danger and all the other stuff fearful that you know our lives might capsize at any moment it's really I mean this is just it's this little snapshot it's like here's your life you know sort of a thing it is really kind of a perfect picture I have no doubt that the disciples that night as they struggled against the wind and the waves felt very much alone you know it's hard not to feel that way when you're going through difficulties isn't it it's hard not to feel alone and many many times people will cry out to God at a time like that and say God where are you you know how long Lord are you going to forget me remember David said those very words I love love David's painful honesty with the Lord Lord how long how long are you gonna let this go on how are you gonna forget me forever you know and and that's just kind of the way it is when we're out on the sea and the winds and the waves are kicking around and and making life extremely you know turbulent and and and so forth I am though equally certain as certain as I am that the disciples felt alone I am equally certain

that Jesus from that vantage point you know on the hill probably never had his eyes off those guys all night long I'm willing to bet he was praying for them all night long knew exactly what was going on with them and so forth and you know the wind the wind oh the wind the wind in this passage is also such a perfect picture of hardship everybody knows that bucking the wind as we like to call it is a is a difficult way to go so much so that I maybe you've heard when when at a wedding or something like that when when people are making toasts to the couple it's not uncommon to hear someone in their toast say to the couple and may the wind always be at your back it's a it's a it's a it's a very nice way of saying you know may life carry you in a little more easier fashion because you know when the winds at your back it's it's usually pretty effortless in terms of traveling when the wind is against you that's a whole nother situation altogether you know when Sue and I just we just got back from our trip here last month to go see our family in the Midwest and so forth and we were pulling our travel trailer which this is like the third trip of significance and I what I mean significance I mean of distance that we've taken with our travel trailer we went once before to Minnesota we went to Southern California once with it and now back to the Midwest and when you're when you're carrying something like a travel trailer which is a much much higher profile than your own vehicle there's a lot to catch the wind you know and while we and we had to go across South Dakota two times I mean the entirety of South Dakota all the way out and then I don't know if you've ever traveled across South Dakota number one it's incredibly boring there's nothing to see except signs for well drug and that's it and and and and there's wind and and sometimes sometimes we've made trip and we found the wind at our back rarely unfortunately now this is one of those times it was it was like coming at our right you know like starboard side or whatever and just blowing us to smithereens made travel really really hard in fact in both going across South Dakota both directions we stopped about halfway through the state just to pull over and just rest you know I mean driving I find driving really relaxing for the most part. I actually like taking road trips. I just find it a nice way to unwind. As I know some people hate it, but I just really enjoy it. But let me tell you something, when the wind's against you, it's not enjoyable and it's not relaxing.

I mean, especially when you've got a 25 foot trailer and there's these, oh, and the other thing when you're in the wind, of course I'm in the slow lane, obviously, for obvious reasons. The wind's slowing me down, my load's slowing me down. And then these truckers pass you, and you know what happens when they get right up, right about up, the wind from their thing sucks you toward them. And the first couple of times, I about lost my salvation, but I was, you know, you're just, you're driving along, and I'm just, I'm kind of holding onto the wheel, and I see this guy coming up behind me, and it's like, vroom, I feel the thing pulling toward him, and it's like, ah, you know. But the wind is just this crazy sort of a thing.

In fact, I got to show you a picture. I haven't shown, some of you might have seen this. We stopped halfway through South Dakota. This is the picture I took. This is all there was to see, first of all, the rest of.

But you can see that the wind is practically ripping those flags off the pole. It was going 40 miles an hour. I mean, like slightly against us, you know, not head on against us, and so I turned around as we got out of the pickup, and started walking toward the rest area, you know, and I turned around, and I thought, well, that pretty much sums it up right there, and I just snapped the picture, you know, and just kind of went in and did my business, you know. Okay, and then I would go in the trailer and take about a two-hour nap and say, all right, let's do this thing again. Wind hadn't slowed down, but we're just gonna keep going anyway.

So this trip kind of presented us with a firsthand opportunity, at least me, to be reminded of how accurately the idea of wind depicts hardship, and just the difficulties of life, you know. Our good friends down in Oklahoma have been learning once again the terrible lesson of that very reality. But there's another thing about this passage that is also true about how God works in our life beyond the wind, and it's encompassed by the first few words of verse 25. Would you look with me there? Verse 25, just the first few words.

It says, during the fourth watch of the night. I don't know how that speaks to you, but first of all, let me explain what the fourth watch of the night is. The Roman, it was a military term, actually, the Roman military divided the watches of the night into four watches of three hours each, and so, you know, presumably, a sentry would take watch for one period, or one watch, which would be three hours, and they broke up the night into those four watches. In the fourth watch of the night, that would encompass the time period of approximately three to six a.m. And so what the fourth watch of the night kind of means for you and I in practical terms as we read this story is, Jesus decided to act, or was moved to act on behalf of the disciples really just before the sun came up, all right?

And you know, that is probably one of the most difficult times of the night. Have you ever heard the phrase, it's darkest just before dawn? It's kind of a common axiom. I think it's probably debatable from a scientific standpoint, but from a spiritual, emotional standpoint, it is very true. It is darkest just before dawn, why?

Because that represents that time period. The sun isn't up yet. It's gonna be up soon, but it's not up yet. And what that time period represents is the fact that you've been struggling all night long. And this is the end, but you don't really even know that it's the end yet.

All you know is you've been struggling all night long, and you're spent, and you are at the end of yourself. And I find that kind of interesting here because that is when Jesus makes his entrance. And I've found in my own life, and maybe you have too, that seems to be when he likes to kind of make his entrance, right around the fourth watch of the night. And many times you and I are allowed by God, providentially, sovereignly, to go through something in life for a period of time whereby we experience this duration of difficulty and trial. It doesn't mean that God's forgotten us.

It doesn't mean that he's ignoring us. In fact, I believe he has the situation well in hand. But when he shows up, it's usually the fourth watch of the night. It's right before the dawn. It's right when you and I have gotten to the end.

And I think that's one of the reasons why he waits, because he's waiting for you and I to get to the end of ourselves. Because you see, in the rest of the night, we can sometimes try to muster up our own personal courage or cleverness or whatever to try to battle the darkness or whatever situation we happen to be facing. But when we get to that fourth watch of the night, there's nothing left. We're spent. It's done.

It's over. I mean, there's nothing left but panic at that particular point, and fear. And that's exactly what we see is going on with the disciples here. Read with me here in verse 25. It says, during the fourth watch of the night, Jesus went out to them walking on the lake.

And yes, that means Jesus was walking on the water as you and I would walk across a field of grass. Look at verse 26. It says that when the disciples saw him walking on the lake, they were terrified. They were probably already very, very tense, very, very scared. These guys are fishermen.

They know how to deal with a boat. Most of them are fishermen, not all of them. But they also, I am quite certain, had a healthy respect and fear for the water. I'm willing to bet most of them knew somebody who'd been lost in a storm on the Sea of Galilee. I'm sure they had fear of what was going on.

But now to make matters worse, as they say, or to add insult to injury, they're further frightened by this vision or this sight that they believe is a spirit or a ghost of someone walking across the lake. And they're screaming. I mean, these guys are yelling. These are grown, burly men with big beards and muscles, and they're screaming like little girls. And they're like, ah, you know?

And it says they cried out in fear. That's just a crazy kind of a picture. But the next thing that they hear is the voice of Jesus, verse 27. But Jesus immediately said to them, take courage, it is I, don't be afraid. Have you ever read passages like that and just kind of almost laughed to yourself or at least smiled and thought, wow, don't be afraid?

Yeah, right. Here I am, I've been struggling all night long. I'm at the end of myself. I am at the end. I'm literally, if I'm not ready to, well, I've either pushed the panic button or my fingers on it, one of the two.

And now they see this sight that further, you know, frightens them. And Jesus comes along and says, don't be afraid. So what is his message? What is his message to them? What is his message to you and I?

Why do this? Was this just an exercise in coolness? Just to show them that he could walk on water? I mean, is that what's going on here? What exactly is, what's the purpose for this whole, the whole thing?

Well, I believe Jesus was making a point. I believe it was an important point. And that point is that, it's a very simple point. And the simple point is this, when life stirs up trouble, I am here. It's not rocket science.

It's really just kind of right there, but it's something you and I need to hear over and over because we keep forgetting it, right? It's elementary. I mean, this is ABC type stuff. One, two, three, simple, childlike understanding. When life stirs up trouble, I'm here, you know?

Sort of a thing. Because often, like I said before, you know, when trouble comes and you see it, you hear it on the news, you hear it, you know, elsewhere, but some tragedy takes place, some situation happens, and people will say, they'll just, they'll verbalize, where was God? You know where was God when that happened? Where was God when this took place? Where was God when this person was hurting, when this person, this and that and the other thing?

Where was God? I believe Jesus came walking on the water to show the disciples. and us that when trouble comes our way he's right there beside us and he reminds us and this is this is so important he reminds us that the winds and the waves that cause us so to fear so greatly are under his feet and that's the point these things that you fear so much these things that cause this panic just to rise up in you in an instant like a knee-jerk response these things are under my feet now you probably are familiar with that term when something is under someone's feet it means they're under his control his dominion his sovereign oversight the Bible talks about how you know God the Father has put all things under the feet of Jesus Christ it means given him all authority all power and so forth so Jesus allows the disciples to go through this crazy mind-wracking experience to remind them in a way that they will never forget as long as they live I am here I am with you and the things you fear the most are under my control are in my control now look with me again and beginning in verse 28 because now we have Peter jumping into the fray Lord if it is you Peter replied tell me to come to you on the water come he said then Peter got down out of the boat and walked on the water yeah that's what it says and came toward Jesus I have I have read

many different commentaries and statements and thoughts on what was going through Peter's mind why he asked what he did and so forth and everybody likes to speculate I don't know I was going through Peter's mind who knows what's going through Peter's mind that's a jungle I don't want to walk into but he did it he said it he you know for whatever reason and the Lord didn't rebuke him you know didn't deny him said one word come okay now again here's Peter he's a fisherman he knows what happens when you get out of the boat right he's done it before a couple of million times but this time he has a different expectation and he gets out of the boat and the Bible says he walks on the water toward Jesus now you and I read that and we're all kind of passé about you know yeah then Peter walked on the water do you know the Bible says that in the history of all mankind only two people ever walked on water it was Jeter Jesus and Peter he said you know Jesus is in pretty good company here did I say Jesus Peter's in good company excuse me I almost said Jeter which would be a cross between Jesus and Peter and that wouldn't make any sense at all anyway so he he actually walks on the water and and it is is amazing I wish I didn't have to say but we have to say but in fact Matthew says but verse 30 but when he saw the wind if that if those three words you know don't jump out at you from the page they should saw the wind when he saw the wind of course you know you can't see the wind you can see the result of what the wind does and that's what he was seeing but when he saw that he was afraid and beginning to sink cried out Lord save me and again just as the lesson from the earlier passage about the meaning of the wind and Jesus coming in the fourth watch of the night is all it all pretty clear to us as to what it means this lesson is pretty clear too we know that Peter started to sink because he took his eyes off Jesus right took his eyes off the Lord and he got them on to the waves that were crashing around him but again Peter's experience kind of betrayed him here a little bit didn't it because once again he's a fisherman he knows what the waves can do do you know did you know that the most powerful force on earth is water I don't know if you're aware of that not wind not fire water the most powerful force on the earth it can make things like Grand Canyons and stuff like that it can do incredible things and horrifying things all at the same time can pull a house off its foundation and take it down the river Peter knew the power of the waves he knew he knew did you hear me guys he knew here Oh what we know in here betrays us so often doesn't it what we know up here what we know to be true in this kind of intellectual sort of a you know the thing it betrays us because you know Proverbs says we're to trust in the Lord with all of our heart and lean not upon our own understanding what we know can betray us and what Peter knew and understood about the power of the waves and the danger of the waves at this particular point betrayed him because what he knew trumped his faith trumped his ability to keep his eyes on Jesus to stay above the waves you're right it just kind of overwhelmed it for a moment and so what did he do he started to sink and and his faith wavered and you know what our faith always wavers when we focus on what we know in my circumstances what I know well here's what I know and

we got it this whole world around us telling us what they know oh don't you get tired sometimes hearing what everybody knows we live in this age of knowledge and soon I make reference to this you know there's prophecies given actually about the last days of the last days when knowledge will increase we're living in that time right now you guys realize that right I mean we live in a day and age well we couldn't do it when I was kid when I was kid you know we used to we used to buy these dopey encyclopedia things for hundreds of dollars how many did you get now I'm forget it I'm not gonna even make you admit it but remember some guy would come along and say hi there he'd knock on the door I'm selling the Britannica encyclopedia set it's about $500 and you know and and my folks bought a set I don't know where they got the money because we were dirt poor with four kids and my dad was a teacher and and but we had them we had them and I remember at school you know they'd have them in the library several sets and we'd go and we I just pull out my phone now and get on Google I can find out anything anytime by simply talking into my phone I can find the most inane information but I can find also really amazing stuff we Sue and I would sit we'd be talking driving along on our vacation and I'd say you know wonder what the population of Vermilion South Dakota is what's the population of Vermilion South Dakota the population of a really is whatever you know and it's just it's just instant we just this is this we just live in this day and age where it just we've got all this information all this and you know what else we can we can use it for other things why is my back hurting so much right and then we have all this fear and we go to the doctor we know more than he does now and our information betrays us you know we're paranoid we're obsessive compulsive because of our information we have so much of it just coming out our ears and all the while God says to you and I oh don't lean on what you can understand don't lean because you know what that's that's a that's a broken staff you know you're gonna lean on that staff you're gonna fall down and Peter leaned on what he knew these waves can kill me yeah but you know what right now I'm in the hands of Jesus did he think he was walking on that water by his own power I mean if he if he really would have thought it through with the eyes of faith he would have said I'm walking on the water right now wait a minute that's impossible I must be here by the power of God that means nothing can touch me I mean you right that's the reason of faith and that's what he should have done but what he did is he looked at the waves he looked at the waves people what are you looking at right now what's going on in your life what are the waves what what is what is the wind in your life are you looking at it or are you looking at the Lord who can bring you up And allow that to be under your feet as well as his that's the point of the passage Unfortunately Peter, you know kind of becomes this example to us of how not to do it, but you know, that's kind of Pete You know Just like just like Peter though I mean, we don't laugh at Peter because we're so much like him just like Peter we sink We sink when we start to look at our problems we start to focus on our problems and so forth we we sink into the depths of our troubles and And I but well, I'll tell

you one thing I like about Peter here in this passage But even though his faith wavered it did not fail You know how I know that He still knew who to call Right. It doesn't say he just went down and then that was the end of Peter now there were 11 Or something like that, you know, what it says is is that Peter said Lord save me Oh smart man Smart man, and I loved I loved the response of Jesus too. He didn't say sorry bud Without faith, it's impossible to please me And right now I'm not very pleased I I Love the fact that Jesus just reached out and took him by the hand verse 31 That's what it says in your Bible, right?

In fact, my Bible starts with the word immediately Immediately Jesus reached out his hand and he caught him and so forth now he saved him Right grabbed him by the hand But he also spoke to him about His failure and he goes on in verse 31 and here's what Jesus said to him you of little faith Why did you doubt by the way, just in case you're wondering it's kind of a trick question He says you of little faith. Why did you doubt? you know the answer to the question is in the First part you of little faith. That's why he doubted you of little faith. It's like me saying Oh yours you have so weak arms.

Why couldn't you pick up that bag? I Just answered your question didn't I because you're of weak arms, right? So so Jesus is kind of you know, giving him the answer and also asking the question But he's also wanting Peter to think it through and then you know when God asks a question of you and I isn't because he's looking for information He's he's asking questions because he wants to get you and I to ponder the question and the answer Peter What's going on in your life? What what what what happened here that that your faith wavered and so forth? I want you to learn the lesson from this situation Peter needed to think about it You and I need to think about it.

Have you ever thought about the fact that when you and I mess up? I mean when our faith waivers God allows those things in our lives not to destroy us but to get us to think What's going on here Why did you do this why and You know Jesus also gave us the answer in the 15th chapter of John in case you ever want to go look at it I'll put it on the screen for you. Here's the answer to why our faith waivers. I am the vine You are the branches if you remain in me and I in you you will bear much fruit apart from me you can do Nothing now, by the way that includes walking on water Now remember what the water and the wind Represent represents the troubles of life You can't walk on those either. You can't have those under your feet apart from him How do you walk over life?

How do you become more than a conqueror? How do you become victorious in Christ the answer is right here in this passage I Am the vine you are the branches Stay connected stay in me You know Because apart from me you can do nothing, right? I mean Again, I want to remind you for you and I it's impossible to walk on water. It's impossible To go and find a body of water and tread across it that's impossible Do

you know what else is impossible for you and I to successfully walk over our problems alone? That is equally as impossible Remember that's what the water signify.

That's what they symbolize for you and I How do you become more than a conqueror? How do you become victorious in Jesus? It's doing it's walking over the water in his power That's how that's how we get it done You know ever so often when I'm reading when I'm studying and I'm putting together You know a teaching for a Sunday or Wednesday or whatever the case might be. I come across quotes that just If somebody says something in such a way that I just I read it and I go, oh that is so good There's no way I can possibly duplicate that. So I'm just gonna say it the way they said it here it is the Christian life Like walking on water is humanly impossible It can only be lived by the power of the Holy Spirit As long as we look away from every other object to Jesus only we can experience a supernatural life But the minute we become occupied with ourselves or our circumstances we begin to sink Then we must cry out to Jesus for restoration and divine power There's your summary statement.

Isn't that good? I just thought that was like I mean, this is like This sums up the the last part of Matthew chapter 14 in just such a powerful Comprehensive sort of a way that I just couldn't bear not to share it with you The whole the whole Christian life you guys the whole Christian life. It's impossible for you and I it's impossible There are people who are trying to live it in and of themselves in their own flesh in their own power. They are failing Miserably the only way you and I can walk in victory is to live it in the power of the Spirit We must constantly come to him Because there's always going to be challenges around every corner challenges all the time for us living that Supernatural life and and life presents all of all the challenges we need because we live in this fallen world This is full of problems All right So we come to him and what do we got to do? Well, this story makes it very clear to us You got to keep our eyes on Jesus and don't get them on your circumstances and this is probably one of the most challenging things that you and I face as believers because Circumstances loom in front of us and they become this all consuming Visual sort of you know stimulus in our lives that we just seemingly can't take our eyes off And so many people, you know when they come for prayer and I'm I you know I'm pleased that they're coming for prayer because that's like Peter They know who to cry out to but but they're coming just like Peter.

They're sinking They are sinking That's okay. Come this is the time to come when you feel yourself sinking. Don't condemn yourself Don't feel like well, you know great Christian. I am hey You know, you're just like Peter. Hey, I start to feel like Peter You're just like Peter.

Hey, I start to feel the water coming up around my ears I'm gonna go and call out to the one who can save me Lord Save me Let me tell you something Jesus can't resist those words He can't resist When one of his children cries out and says Lord save me I think he's gonna hold back and say no not today Not on your life He'll be right there Be right there to give you a hand now. You might get a rebuke too. Oh You have little faith Why did you doubt but it'll be a loving rebuke and you'll learn from it. You'll grow from it and That's what we need to learn From this passage. Amen You You You You you