

Keeping Our Eyes on Jesus Through the Storm

**Matthew 14:22–33; Romans 10:5–15;
Genesis 37:1–4, 12–28; Psalm 105:1–6, 16–22, 45
9 August 2026**

Let us pray

Loving Father, as we reflect on Your Word today, open our hearts to hear Your voice. Strengthen our faith, deepen our trust, and remind us that no storm is greater than Your presence. Help us to keep our eyes fixed on Jesus, who is always near, always faithful, and always ready to save.

Teach us to rest in Your promises: **"Be strong and courageous... for the Lord your God goes with you; He will never leave you nor forsake you"** as in Deuteronomy 31:6. Help us not to fear, for You are our God; strengthen us, uphold us, and carry us by Your righteous hand as in Isaiah 41:10; Be our refuge and strength, our ever-present help in times of trouble as in Psalm 46:1, and our safe refuge whenever we are oppressed or overwhelmed as in Psalm 9:9. Through Christ our Lord. **Amen.**

Today's Gospel from **Matthew 14:22–33** presents one of the most powerful images of faith in the entire Bible. The disciples were in a boat, battered by strong winds and rough waves. They had obeyed Jesus by getting into the boat, yet obedience did not spare them from the storm.

How often is that true in our own lives?

Sometimes we think that following Christ should make life easier. Yet the reality is that faithful disciples also encounter storms - storms of illness, financial hardship, broken relationships, grief, uncertainty, disappointment, and fear. Being a disciple does not mean we will never experience difficulties; **it means we are never alone in them.**

God made that promise long before the disciples stepped into their boat. Through Moses He declared *Deuteronomy 31:6*:

"Be strong and courageous... for the Lord your God goes with you; He will never leave you nor forsake you."

That promise reaches across every generation. Whatever storm we face today, God has not abandoned us. He goes before us, walks beside us, and remains with us through every wave.

As the disciples struggled through the night, Jesus came to them walking on the water. At first, they were terrified, thinking they were seeing a ghost. But then Jesus spoke those reassuring words:

"Take courage! It is I. Do not be afraid."

Those words still speak to us today.

Whenever fear overwhelms us, whenever anxiety clouds our minds, whenever the future seems uncertain, Jesus comes to us saying, ***"Take courage. It is I. Do not be afraid."***

Those words echo God's promise through the prophet Isaiah in *Isaiah 41:10*:

"Fear not, for I am with you; be not dismayed, for I am your God. I will strengthen you and help you; I will uphold you with my righteous right hand."

Notice that God does not promise the absence of storms. He promises His presence in them. He promises His strength when ours fails. He promises His help when we cannot help ourselves.

Peter's response is remarkable. He doesn't ask Jesus to calm the sea. He asks for something even greater.

"Lord, if it is you, command me to come to you on the water."

Jesus simply replies, ***"Come."***

And Peter steps out of the boat.

For a few incredible moments, Peter does the impossible - not because of his own strength, but because his eyes are fixed on Jesus.

Isn't that what faith looks like?

Faith is not pretending storms don't exist. Faith is choosing to focus on Jesus despite the storm.

But then Peter notices the wind. He becomes afraid. His attention shifts from Christ to the circumstances around him. Immediately he begins to sink.

Church, how often do we do the same?

We begin a new job trusting God, but then problems arise. We pray for healing, but the diagnosis doesn't improve. We trust God with our family, yet relationships remain difficult. We pray for financial provision, but bills continue to mount.

Slowly, our focus moves from Jesus to the waves.

Fear replaces faith. Doubt replaces trust. Hope begins to sink.

Yet notice something beautiful.

Jesus does not wait for Peter to climb back up on his own. The moment Peter cries,

"Lord, save me!"

Jesus immediately reaches out His hand.

That is grace, Church! That is Grace!

Jesus is never far away from those who call upon Him. Even when our faith is weak. Even when we fail. Even when we begin to sink.

The psalmist reminds us in *Psalms 46:1*:

"God is our refuge and strength, an ever-present help in trouble."

Not a distant help. Not an occasional help.
An **ever-present** help.!

Our salvation has never depended on the strength of our grip on Jesus, but on His unwavering grip on us.

Paul reminds us of this beautiful truth in our second reading from **Romans 10:5–15**.

He tells us that salvation is not something we earn through our own efforts. We don't have to climb into heaven or descend into the depths to find Christ.

Scripture says,

"The word is near you; it is in your mouth and in your heart."

Paul reminds us that everyone who calls on the name of the Lord will be saved.

Notice the connection:

Peter cried, **"Lord, save me!"** And Jesus did.

Paul says, ***"Everyone who calls on the name of the Lord shall be saved."***

The promise remains true today.

When we feel overwhelmed - call on Him.
When anxiety overtakes us - call on Him.
When life seems impossible - call on Him.
Jesus still reaches out His hand.

The story of **Joseph** in our reading from Genesis gives us another picture of trusting God during life's storms.

Joseph was deeply loved by his father Jacob, but because of that love he became the object of jealousy and hatred from his brothers.

He did nothing to deserve being betrayed. He was thrown into a pit, sold into slavery, and separated from his family. His dreams appeared shattered.

If anyone had reason to believe God had abandoned him, it was Joseph.

Yet throughout Joseph's life, God was quietly working behind the scenes.

What looked like rejection became preparation. What looked like defeat became God's pathway to deliverance.

Years later Joseph would become the very person God used to preserve countless lives during famine.

Today's Psalm—Psalm 105—beautifully reflects on Joseph's story:

"God sent a man before them—Joseph—who was sold as a slave."

Notice the perspective.

His brothers thought they were selling Joseph. But Scripture says God was sending Joseph - This testifies that Human betrayal did not cancel God's purpose.

Likewise, there may be moments in our own lives when we don't understand why certain things happen.

We may feel forgotten; Misunderstood; Rejected; Or stuck in circumstances we never chose.

Yet even in those seasons, the Lord remains our refuge. As **Psalm 9:9** assures us,

"The Lord is a refuge for the oppressed, a stronghold in times of trouble."

God does not abandon His children in their suffering. He becomes their shelter within it.

Just as God was working in Joseph's hidden years, He is also working in ours. Even when we cannot see it. Even when we cannot feel it. God's purposes continue unfolding.

Psalm 105 encourages us by saying:

"Give thanks to the Lord. Call upon His name. Remember the wonderful works He has done."

The Psalm is saying that Faith grows when we Remember:

The disciples forgot who Jesus was until He spoke - Peter forgot whom he was looking at when he noticed the wind - Joseph never lost sight of God's faithfulness despite years of suffering.

The Psalm invites us to Remember:

Remember His faithfulness yesterday.
Remember His promises today.
Trust Him for tomorrow.

Perhaps today you feel like Peter: You're walking through strong winds - You've started sinking beneath fear, discouragement, or uncertainty.

Jesus is saying to you, ***"Do not be afraid."***

Perhaps you feel like Joseph: Life has not unfolded the way you expected - Dreams seem delayed and People have disappointed you. **Remember that God's delays are not God's denials. He is still working.**

Perhaps you've been trying to carry every burden yourself.

Hear again the promises of Scripture: **"I will never leave you nor forsake you." - "I will strengthen you and help you." - "God is our refuge and strength." - "The Lord is a refuge in times of trouble."**

These are not merely comforting words - they are the unchanging promises of our faithful God.

Paul reminds us that salvation and hope are found not in our own strength but by calling upon the Lord.

Faith does not eliminate storms.

Faith reminds us who walks with us through them.

Trust does not guarantee calm seas.

Trust guarantees the presence of Christ.

The greatest miracle in today's Gospel is not that Peter walked on water. The greatest miracle is that Jesus never let Peter drown.

And He will not let you drown either. His hand is still extended. His voice is still calling, ***"Come."*** His promise still stands: ***"I am with you always."***

Conclusion

Church, life will bring moments of doubt, fear, and uncertainty. Like Peter, we may begin with bold faith only to find ourselves distracted by the winds around us. Yet the good news is that Jesus never abandons those who cry out to Him. His hand is always stretched toward us, ready to lift us up, strengthen us, and lead us safely through every storm.

Like Joseph, we may not understand the trials we face today, but God is faithfully weaving even our hardships into His greater purpose.

Like the psalmist, we remember that **God is our refuge and strength, an ever-present help in trouble**, and that **the Lord is our refuge in times of distress**. Like Moses, we take courage because **God will never leave us nor forsake us**. Like Isaiah, we hear the Lord say, **"Fear not, for I am with you... I will strengthen you and help you."** And like Paul reminds us, ***everyone who calls upon the name of the Lord will be saved.***

So whatever storm you are facing today, keep your eyes fixed on Jesus. Trust Him when the path seems impossible. Call upon Him when you feel yourself sinking. Remember that His power is greater than every wave, His love is stronger than every fear, His promises never fail, and His presence is nearer than you can imagine.

I pray that we leave our gathering today with unwavering faith, confident that the One who called Peter onto the water, who guided Joseph through suffering, who never leaves nor forsakes His people, and who saves all who call upon His name, is the same Jesus who walks with us today and forever.

In the Name of the Father, and of the Son, and of the Holy Spirit. Amen.