



Aug. 13, 2020 Mt. 14:22-33 & Genesis 37:1-4, 12-28

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[Zoom Connection](#)

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Link to [Beck](#) (paywall) other [Beck](#)

Stone, Naomi. [Centering in the Eye of the Storm](#)

Rolheiser, Fr. Ron. [Faith & a Time of Agnosticism](#)

[Monastery Sunday Homilies](#) 8/13/17

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ENTERING THE SCENE:

Three times in this passage we encounter the word; immediately. There is a sense of urgency that this word indicates each time it is used. It seems at pivotal points in our lives we are faced with choices that often seem to demand immediate responses. Jesus needed time alone, so he sends the disciples off. The disciples needed help in a dangerous situation and Jesus immediately comes to the rescue. Peter ventures out with his mustard seed sized faith, and finds he needs Jesus' immediate help.

Take some time now with this text, and then look within your own life situation to see what immediate needs are there that need Jesus' encouragement and help. Can going off by yourself to pray be a way of entering into this text so that you too can say with the disciples: "Truly you are the Son of God"?

Mt. 14:22-33

22 **Immediately** Jesus **made** the disciples **get into the boat** and **go on ahead** of him to the **other side**, while he **dismissed** the crowd. 23 After

he had **dismissed** them, he went up on a mountainside **by himself** to **pray**. When **evening** came, he was there **alone**, 24 but the boat was already a **considerable distance** from land, **buffeted** by the waves because the **wind was against** it. 25 During the **fourth watch** of the night Jesus **went out to them, walking on the lake**. 26 When the disciples saw him **walking on the lake**, they were **terrified**. "It's a **ghost**," they said, and cried out in **fear**. 27 But Jesus **immediately** said to them: "**Take courage! It is I. Don't be afraid.**" 28 Lord, if it's you," **Peter** replied, "tell me to **come to you on the water**." 29 **Come**," he said. Then **Peter** got down **out of the boat, walked on the water** and came toward Jesus. 30 But when he **saw the wind**, he was **afraid** and, beginning to **sink**, cried out, "**Lord, save me!**" 31 **Immediately** Jesus reached out his hand and **caught him**. "You of **little faith**," he said, "why did you **doubt**?" 32 And when they **climbed into the boat**, the **wind** died down. 33 Then those who were **in the boat** **worshiped** him, saying, "**Truly you are the Son of God.**"

DISCUSSION QUESTION: Once again Jesus tells Peter and us not to be afraid. In what ways have you been invited to "walk on water" this past week, and how afraid were you?

PRAYER: Lord, following you often calls me out of my boat of security into the waves of trust. When I keep you in focus, I do quite well. It is only when I look down, or in, and see the waves of fear around me that I start to sink. Help me always to keep your face in focus, so that when you invite me into love I can glide above the surface of the unknown to you. Amen

WORD STUDY AND QUESTIONS FOR REFLECTION:

IMMEDIATELY: Three times in this story we hear the word immediately.

When you use the word immediately, what do you want others to know? What does Matthew want us to know by using the word three (complete) times?

MADE: Jesus made/compelled the disciples to go on without him so that he could have time alone with God.

Have you ever 'made' others leave so that you could have time alone with God? If so, what was going on?

GET INTO THE BOAT / CLIMBED INTO THE BOAT: A boat was often used as a metaphor for the early church. The disciples, probably very reluctantly got into the boat as they were told. Later on, Jesus will help Peter, and together they climb into the boat with the rest of the disciples.

When was the last time you remember being 'alone' in the boat without Jesus? What do you remember about that experience? When was the last time you were conscious of Jesus being 'with you in the boat'? What do you remember about that experience?

GO ON AHEAD / CONSIDERABLE DISTANCE: The disciples did as they were told and went on towards the other side of the lake. They were far enough away to be in danger should a storm arise.

Have you ever 'gone ahead' as instructed by the gospel and found yourself beyond safety? What did you discover about your faith in that experience?

OTHER SIDE: Once again we find Jesus and the disciples trying to get away from the pressing crowds whose only goal seemed to be clinging to someone who could take care of them.

Have you ever had to go to 'the other side' to get away from someone who was using your relationship in order to delay their own growth in faith? Did they ever come to understand your withdrawal?

DISMISSED: We use this word when we want to indicate that we are taking control of a situation.

Do you think the disciples understood what Jesus was doing as he sent the crowds and themselves away?

BY HIMSELF / ALONE: Unlike Luke, Matthew seldom writes about Jesus going off alone to pray. In fact the only other time he will tell us this is in the garden before Jesus' arrest.

When you go off alone to sort out something, where do you go? Does it help to be alone?

PRAY: To pray is to beseech someone for something.

What do you think Jesus was asking God for now?

EVENING / FOURTH WATCH: The story starts out in the early evening and ends up at the end of night.

Have you ever gone into the night struggling with something? Did it resemble the rocky boat ride in this story? Did the onset of dawn bring you to the 'other side' of the struggle?

BUFFETED / WIND WAS AGAINST: To have the wind against you, battering you, makes any progress doubly difficult.

When was the last time the wind battered you as you tried to make progress in faith? Did this resistance play any positive role in your effort?

WENT OUT TO THEM / COME TO YOU ON THE WATER: When Jesus went out to the boat, Peter in his characteristic way, wanted to be first to test/prove his faith.

Only Matthew gives us this incident. What is Matthew telling us about Peter by including this story?

WALKING ON THE LAKE: Even today, we talk about people who 'walk on water'. Many religious traditions (see below) use this example when talking about the quality of a person's faith.

Have you ever 'walked on water', or used this expression to talk about someone else? What does this expression mean to you?

TERRIFIED / FEAR / SAW THE WIND / AFRAID / LITTLE FAITH / DOUBT: All these words indicate the main point of this story. Fear caused Peter to 'see' the wind and revealed how little faith he really had.

Has fear ever revealed how much faith you really have?

GHOST: People believed in spirits, including wind spirits that could play havoc with human life. The only remedy was believed to be a more powerful spirit to counter the annoying spirit.

Does this belief still persist today? If so, can you give an example?

TAKE COURAGE / DON'T BE AFRAID: When we act out of courage, not counting the cost to our own safety or wellbeing, we are not afraid in the same way.

When was the last time you acted out of courage unaware of your own wellbeing for the sake of another?

IT IS I: Jesus calms the disciples when he reassures them that it is truly himself, not a phantom.

Have you ever had an experience where Jesus identified himself to you in such a way that you can identify with this story? If so, what was it?

PETER: One of Matthew's "agendas" was to point to Peter as the one the early Church recognized as its leader.

How does this story help to do this for you?

SINK: To sink is to fall below the surface of something. In sinking, Peter eventually rises with Jesus' help.

Has 'sinking' ever helped you to rise? How?

LORD, SAVE ME / CAUGHT HIM: By calling out to the Lord, Peter was caught and saved.

Have you ever been caught and saved by calling out to the Lord? Did this experience help your faith to mature?

WORSHIPED: To worship someone or something is to recognize its priority over you.

When you attend church or take time alone to pray, are you able to enter into the recognition of God's place in your very being?

TRULY YOU ARE THE SON OF GOD: The gospels all are meant to bring us to this realization, that Jesus is truly God's son.
How does this story help you to do this?

PARALLEL TEXTS: Mt. 14:22f // Mk. 6: 45-51; Jn. 6: 16-21; Mt. 14: 24 // Mk. 1:35; Mt. 14:32 // Mt. 8:25f; Mt. 14:33f // Mk. 6:53-56; Mt. 16:16;

OTHER TEXTS OF THE WEEK: I Kgs. 19: 9, 11-13; [Ps. 85: 9-14](#); Rom. 9: 1-5; Mt. 14:22-33;
Revised Common Lectionary: Gen. 37: 1-4, 12-28; [Ps. 17: 1-7, 15](#); Rom. 9:1-5; Mt. 14:22-33;

SUPPORTIVE INFORMATION:

"You do not need to know precisely what is happening, or exactly where it is all going. What you need is to recognize the possibilities and challenges offered by the present moment, and to embrace them with courage, faith and hope." --Thomas Merton

The courage of faith is based, then, not only on conviction of truth, but also on ultimate trust in God. This ultimate trust is possible because the Christian already has made the final act of courage, which is to accept one's own acceptance by God. Christian courage, then, is rooted in grace. It is not something that one strives to attain on some ladder of merit, but something that is given by God. Having been given the gift of acceptance by God, "just as we are," the Christian is freed from anxiety. Fearlessness or courage is based on this grace of being both upheld by God and placing our trust in God. It is precisely this trust in God that enables one to speak truthfully and act justly without regard to those worldly vested interests that have a stake in lies and injustice.
Ruether, Rosemary Radford. "Courage as a Christian virtue," *Cross Currents* 33 (1983), p. 12.

(Walking on water seems to be a pervasive example of faith in many faith traditions) Buddhist Tradition:

A devout lay brother, while engaged in contemplation upon Buddha, walked across a river. Only when he had reached the middle of the river was he diverted by the sight of the waves from his meditation on Buddha and his feet began to sink; but by renewed concentration of his thoughts on Buddha he became master of his insecurity and happily arrived at the opposite bank..
Debelisu, Martin. *Jesus*. Westminster Press, Philadelphia. 1939. Pages 84-5.

NOW THE KING (KAPPINA), with his thousand ministers, reached the bank of the Ganges. But at this time the Ganges was full. When the king saw this, he said: "the Ganges here is full, and swarms with savage fish. Moreover, we have with us no slaves or men to make boats or rafts for us. But of this Teacher the virtues extend from the Avici Hell beneath to the Peak of Existence above. If this Teacher be the Supremely Enlightened Buddha, may not the tips of the hoofs of these horses be wetted! " They caused the horses to spring forward on the surface of the water. Of not a single horse was so much as the tip of the hoof wetted. On a king's highway proceeding, as it were, they went to the far shore.

I don't believe in them; I rely on them to get me through daily life! Karl Rahner on miracles

Farther on they reached another river. There, was needed no other Act of Truth. By the same Act of Truth, that river also, half a league in breadth, did they cross over. Then they reached the third river, the mighty river Candabhaga. That river also, by the same Act of Truth, did they cross over...

Queen Anoja, surrounded by a thousand chariots, reaching the bank of the Ganges and seeing no boat or raft brought for the King, by her own intuition concluded: "The King must have crossed by making an Act of Truth. But this Teacher was reborn not for them alone. If this Teacher be the Supremely Enlightened Buddha, may our chariots not sink into the water! "

She caused the chariots to spring forward on the surface of the water. Of the chariots not even so much as the outer rims of the wheels were wetted. The second river also, the third river also, she crossed by the same Act of Truth.-*Buddhagosa*

Commentary on the *Angulāraṇikāya*, q.v. 193-5, in William Norman Brown, *The Indian and Christian Miracles of Walking on the Water* (Chicago & London: Open Court, 1928) p. 10.

WALKING ON WATER

A Brahman had built his hermit's hut near the great river. Every day a milkmaid came over on the ferry and brought him some milk from the shepherd on the other shore. Sometimes she came rather late, which annoyed the Brahman. The milkmaid apologized, saying she often had to wait a long time if the ferryboat had just left or was on the other shore.

"Utter foolishness," cried the Brahman with scorn, "this ferryboat!" and he went on to say, somewhat hesitantly: "Child, a man of faith, with God's name in his heart and on his lips, is able to walk over the waters of the unendingly circling sea of innumerable deaths and rebirths unto the distant shore-and the mere waters of a river are supposed to stay his feet?"

The milkmaid stood before the holy man, silent and ashamed. Then she bowed down before him and, taking some of the dust at his feet, she placed it on her forehead.

The next day the milkmaid appeared promptly and so too on each day following. The Brahman was delighted by her zeal and finally asked her: "How is it that you are now always so punctual?"

The girl replied: "Master, I am doing as you told me to. With God's name in my heart and on my lips, I walk in faith upon the water; my foot does not sink, nor do I have need of any ferryboat."

The Brahman stood in silent amazement before the miraculous power of the name of God in so simple a creature; but he gave no sign of this and said:

"This is well and good. I shall go with you and watch you walk upon the water and I myself will walk with you across the river."

He wanted to observe the miracle working for the girl; if this young thing could do it, then it would have to work for him too.

When they came to the bank, the girl's lips were silently moving; gazing into the distance she constantly whispered the name of God and floated light as a feather on the water. The swiftly flowing water gurgled on beneath her without splashing up on her; the soles of her feet seemed not to be touching it.

The Brahman was amazed and, quickly gathering up the hem of his garment a little, began to murmur God's name as he entered upon the water. But he was unable to keep pace with the milkmaid, who was continuously flying ahead with the supple flight of a swallow—he was in danger of sinking. The girl noticed this, gave a merry laugh, and called to him over the rushing water as she wafted away from him:

"No wonder, Master, that you are sinking! How is the name of God to bear you over the water when in the very act of calling to Him you lift up your garment for fear of getting the hem of it wet?"

Zimmer, Heinrich. Wisdom of India: Fairy Tales and Parables. Germany. 1938. Parabola, Fall 1990. Pgs. .63-4.

The real miracle is not to walk on water or set the sun spinning overhead. The real miracle is to walk on this earth and notice God's enormous presence in the material world. Thich Nhat Hanh

14.22-36: Jesus walks on water (Mk 6.45-52; Jn 6.16-21). 25: *Walking toward them on the sea*, like Cod, Jesus has power over the seas (Gen 1.9-10,21; Ex 14.21-22; Isa 43.16; 51-9-10; Hab 3.15; Ps 77-19; Job 9.8; 26.11-12). See i6.33n. 26: Ghost, Gk "phantasma," "apparition"; the term does not mean that the disciples thought Jesus was dead, only that there was some sort of visible manifestation. 27: Ex 3.14; Deut 31.6. A rabbinic story depicts the recitation of scripture during a storm (fa. B. *Bat.* 73a). 28-30: Perhaps a foreshadowing of Peter's later lack of faith. 31: *Little faith*, a frequent rebuke of the disciples, 6.30; 8.26; 14.31; 16.8; 17.20. *Doubt*, see 28.17.33: *Son of Cod*, here indicating Jesus' divine nature (cf. 2.15; 3.17; 4-3,6; 8.29); the phrase may have been a messianic reference (4Q246; 4 *Ezra* 7.28-29; 13.32); no Jewish texts identify the Messiah as the son of God. Pg. 28.
Levine, Amy-Jill & Brettler, Marc Zvi. *The Jewish Annotated New Testament.* NY. Oxford Univ. Press. 2011

Whoever stands in the way of [questions](#) that are marinated in doubt stands in the way of a faith that can stand the test of time, of trouble, of the turbulence that the world heaves at us almost daily. [Bill Tammeus](#)

Faith is more a breaking-through, which then allows you to hold on – precisely because now Someone is holding on to you!
Pg. 121. Richard Rohr: *The Naked Now*

Christian faith, in the face of all pessimism about the future of matter, affirms that, through God's grace, our evolving world can and will arrive at immediacy with God. It affirms that even now it has begun an irreversible stage of its history. Pg. 96.
Denis Edwards. *Jesus and the Cosmos*

Sometimes you say to yourself: the fire in me is going out. But you were not the one who lit that fire. Your faith does not create God, and your doubts cannot banish Him to nothingness. - Brother Roger of Taizé

"Faith is trust. Faith is a deep sense of connectedness with Being." Eckhart Tolle

Faith is an act of a finite being who is grasped by, and turned to, the Infinite. - Paul Tillich

SUGGESTED READINGS:

Links to all the books mentioned in this guide are on The Ark web site: www.theark1.com

Beck, Robert. *Sunday Homilies: Cycle A* 2014. Pgs. 152-156. To order contact [Carol Oberfoell](#)

Beck, Robert. *Sunday Homilies: Cycle A* 2008. Pgs.125-128. To order contact [Carol Oberfoell](#)

Wiederkehr, Macrina, OSB. *Seasons of Your Heart*. Morristown, NJ. Silver Burdett Co. 1979. WALKING ON WATER: Pages 69-70.

AFTER RESURRECTION HEARTS: Pages 145-146

Greeley, Andrew. *When Life Hurts*. Chicago. Thomas More Press. 1988. PARALYZED WITH FEAR: Page 32F.