

What was Peter thinking? What was he thinking when he got out of that boat? I suppose we'll never really know the answer to that question. I can remember as a child playing hide-and-seek with my father—sometimes he would pop out from some dark hiding place, scaring me half to death, but I vividly recall when he did that, running to him, not away from him. Maybe that's what was going on inside of Peter. Maybe in his fear, his first impulse was to run to his Teacher, even though he'd be running on waves.

It isn't that crucial for us to figure out why Peter called out “Lord, if it is you, command me to come to you on the water.” What is crucial is what happened next. What is crucial is that, for a few moments, it worked. Peter got out of the boat and walked on water and came to Jesus. To state the obvious, it was a scary situation. The disciples were in a boat in the dark in churning seas. Add to that scene the appearance of their teacher walking along on top of the waves—this would be more than enough to rattle anyone. But once Peter has the assurance that it really is Jesus, he hops out and goes directly to his Master and Lord. He just happens to be “going” on top of a wind-whipped lake.

Are you able to relate to that impulse? Have you ever been in a scary situation, a situation that would be enough to rattle anyone—and did you go directly to Jesus for help? Do you remember what happened when you did?

Well, we know what happened next to Peter. He had been doing the impossible. He had been stepping on the waves and it had been working, because Jesus was the focus. Getting to Jesus was the goal. But you know what happened next. Peter saw the wind. And when Peter saw the wind, he was afraid, and he began to sink. And this is precisely the point at which you and I can jump in and tread water with Peter—because we know what it means to “see the wind” and be afraid, even though Jesus is there.

It's easy to “see the wind” when you find out your job is in jeopardy, and naturally, you fear for your family and how you will provide for them. Have you “seen the wind” at the doctor's office, when he comes in the room and the news is not good? Have you “seen the wind” in a family that is fracturing, and breaking up before your very eyes? Have you “seen the wind” in current events—in wars and rumors of wars, natural disasters, end-times prophecies and predictions? Do you “see the wind” in a situation where there are no easy answers, and you are powerless to do anything about it? The cold wind of fear blows through all of our lives, and when we give that wind our full attention, things get worse, not better. When we give the wind of fear our full attention, like Peter, we start to sink. If we're giving that wind our full attention, that means we're not giving Jesus our attention. Without Jesus, there's only churning water, bitter wind, the fear of the unknown, and the terror of death.

Peter saw the wind, and he was afraid, and he began to sink. But Jesus was still there, and Peter remembered. Peter remembered Jesus, causing him to cry out, “Lord, save me!” And that is exactly what Jesus had come to do. He came not just to rescue Peter from drowning, but to

rescue him from the storm of sin. He came not just to rescue Peter, but to do the same for you and me.

You may be “seeing the wind” right now in your life. The wind of fear may be howling, and you may feel like you’re sinking. If that’s the case, I urge you to remember Jesus. Call out to him, “Lord, save me!” That’s exactly what He has come to do. He has come not just to walk on water, but to walk up Calvary’s hill and take the punishment for your sins on the cross. Having paid for your sin in full, he walks out of the tomb on the third day—providing the greater miracle of eternal life to all who believe. In faith, we cry out, “Lord, save me!” And He does. You can walk on the water of your baptism, remembering the faith and life God gave you from the font. You can drink from the living water of Christ’s forgiveness—his blood poured into you, along with His Body at His Supper. Hear the very voice of Jesus saying to you today, “Take heart, it is I. Don’t be afraid.” A life of faith is a life of remembering. It is remembering Jesus is there, even when we see the wind. It is remembering to cry out, “Lord, save me.” “Lord, have mercy.” “Lord, hear our prayer.” It is remembering your baptism, and remembering Jesus in Word, Bread, and Wine. “Lord, save me” is our song, it is His church’s anthem, every “hosanna” we sing is the same petition: “Save us now,” Lord Jesus.

Matthew supplies us with Jesus’ response to Peter’s desperate plea. He writes, “Jesus immediately reached out his hand and took hold of him, saying to him, “O you of little faith, why did you doubt?” And when they got into the boat, the wind ceased. And those in the boat worshiped him, saying, “Truly you are the Son of God.”

Jesus immediately reached out his hand and took hold of Peter. He didn’t let Peter drown. In his justice, he probably could have. “Peter, you doubter, here’s your reward!” But none of that with Jesus. It’s all about mercy. And there in the fellowship of that little boat, with the disciples worshipping Jesus, confessing Him as God’s own Son—what do you know? The wind stopped.

In fear, we rush to Jesus. We see the wind, we’re afraid, we sink, we remember, we call out, Jesus rescues us, he restores us, we worship Him, the wind ceases. There is peace. A life of faith is a life of learning and re-learning this pattern, established on the blustery Sea of Galilee. “Lord, save me!”