

Walking upon the Water

Key Verse: *“And immediately Jesus stretched forth his hand, and caught him, and said unto him, O thou of little faith, wherefore didst thou doubt?”*
—*Matthew 14:31*

Selected Scripture:
Matthew 14:22-33

OUR LESSON BEGINS WITH

Jesus instructing Peter and the other disciples to board a boat and cross to the other side of the Sea of Galilee where he would meet them later. He had just fed the five thousand who followed him into the desert, and had sent them back to their homes. Now Jesus could be alone for a short while, and so he withdrew himself to a mountain to pray to his Heavenly Father. (Matt. 14:21-

23) Meanwhile, the boat in which the disciples were sailing was in the midst of the sea, and it was now dark. A strong wind had come up against them, and although they attempted to row to safety, they were unable to make progress.—vs. 24; John 6:18,19

As the night wore on, their difficulties continued. Then they saw a figure walking on the water toward them. They thought at first that it was a spirit, and they were full of fear, but Jesus then spoke to them, saying, “Be of good cheer; it is I; be not afraid.” (Matt. 14:26,27) Reassurance came to them through his words, so much so that Peter asked the Lord’s permission that he might walk to him on the water. Jesus granted the request, and Peter

left the boat, the record stating, “he walked on the water, to go to Jesus.”—vss. 28,29

Peter’s faith was stronger than the other disciples, and perhaps even stronger than ours might be today, given similar circumstances. Yet, as much faith as was required for Peter to even attempt to walk on the water, it was not strong enough. As he took his eyes off of Jesus, and caught a glimpse of the boisterous wind and the stormy sea, his faith wavered, and he began to sink. He cried out saying, “Lord, save me.” (vs. 30) The Master then caught him, and spoke the words from our Key Verse, “O thou of little faith, wherefore didst thou doubt.” The lesson having been given, Jesus and Peter entered the ship and joined the other disciples, and the wind immediately ceased. All of the disciples then offered the Lord their worship, realizing afresh that he was indeed the Son of God.—vss. 31-33

What lessons can we learn from this account, and what must be done to overcome a lack of faith as we go through the experiences of life, especially those that are of great difficulty? We answer first, that as the disciples of old requested of Jesus on one occasion, we should pray, “Lord, Increase our faith.” (Luke 17:5) Then, acting in harmony with such prayers, we should do our part in cultivating faith in our hearts, by regularly calling to mind the abundant precious promises of God as found in his Word.—Heb. 10:22,23; II Pet. 1:4; I John 2:24,25

Having made a covenant with the Heavenly Father, these promises are ours, and in our hearts and minds we should claim them in prayer and with thanksgiving. When trials, difficulties, perplexities, or the storms of life arise, we should think of, and hold fast to, God’s promises, remembering that they belong to those who love him and have given themselves in consecration to do his will. (Ps. 50:5; Mal. 3:17) Let us then resolve to trust the word of the Heavenly Father implicitly. “We know that all things work together for good to them that love God, to them who are the called according to his purpose.”—Rom. 8:28 ■