

## INTRODUCE

Well, if you have your Bibles, and I hope you do,

- please grab them and turn to Matthew chapter 14.
- You can open a phone or a tablet to Matthew 14,
- or you can use one of the hard-backed black bibles
  - under every single chair.
  - You'll find Matthew 14 on page **820**.

A big welcome to our friends and family joining us online!

- You can click that bible tab on your screen to find Matthew 14.

## INTRODUCTION

So, last week we had the famous feeding of the 5,000 miracle, and today we have the uber-famous story of Jesus walking on water.

- So, I get two of the most famous stories in the Gospels...
- as my last two sermons leading into my sabbatical.

And I don't really want to belabor the point, but I want to get us right into it.

I think the main idea in this passage is the interconnectedness of KNOWING GOD and TRUSTING GOD.

So, from the outset, just to let all my type-A people breathe:  
let me give you my main point:

### **SLIDE AS WE KNOW GOD MORE, WE TRUST GOD MORE**

- The more we KNOW about GOD...
- the more our TRUST of GOD should grow.

And we're gonna see this in our text.

- We'll see 3 'KNOW GOD' moments
- and 3 'TRUST GOD' moments.

And I'm gonna say it repeatedly today, but...

- THE MOST IMPORTANT THING
- GOD IS DOING IN YOUR LIFE
- IS TEACHING YOU TO TRUST HIM

**BLANK SLIDE**

## TRANSITION

Alright! Let's get after it. Matthew chapter 14, starting in verse 22:

## MATTHEW 14:22

[22] Immediately he made the disciples get into the boat and go before him to the other side, while he dismissed the crowds.

## EXPLAIN: CONTEXT

So, the disciples had just participated in a miracle where close to 20,000 people were fed with five loaves and two fish.

- But immediately Jesus made the disciples...
- get back into the boat...
  - that they had travelled in that very morning,
- and head back onto the Sea of Galilee,
- and Jesus dismisses the crowds.

Verse 23:

## MATTHEW 14:23-24

[23] And after he had dismissed the crowds, he went up on the mountain by himself to pray. When evening came, he was there alone, [24] but the boat by this time was a long way from the land, beaten by the waves, for the wind was against them.

### EXPLAIN: STORM

So, Jesus heads up on a mountain to get with his Father in prayer. Now, scholars agree that this is still happening on the same day as the feeding of the 5000.

- And the sea is only about 5 miles wide...
- and John's account says that the disciples had made it...
- about halfway across because a storm had hit.

But this is a scene reminiscent of one we've already studied

Back in Matthew 8 we find another story...

- where Jesus is with his disciples in a boat,
- when a terrifying storm comes up,
- and the disciples rush to Jesus to save them,
- only to find him asleep.
  - They wake him,
  - he rebukes the storm,
  - and the disciples marvel at Jesus asking,
- *"What sort of man is this,*
- *that even the winds and sea obey him?"*

But note the difference here:

- this time Jesus isn't with them in the boat.
- AND this time Jesus sent them into the storm.

## **POINT: SEND**

And I don't know what this does to your theology...  
but this our first TRUST GOD moment. You see,

### **SLIDE SOMETIMES GOD WILL SEND YOU INTO STORMS**

- He won't just REACT to the storms that come,
- but in fact, he will SEND YOU into the storms.

Listen, they OBEYED the direct command of Jesus  
and ended up in a storm as the result.

- And you need to understand this...
- so that when storms hit you...
- you won't assume you're out of the will of God.

Certain storms are part of the will of God for you,

- because God is not just doing something FOR YOU,
- he's doing something IN YOU.

You've gotta know this about storms.

**THE MOST IMPORTANT THING GOD IS DOING IN YOUR LIFE  
IS TEACHING YOU TO TRUST HIM**

so, faith usually leads you THROUGH difficulty, not around it.

Verse 25:

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## MATTHEW 14:25

[25] And in the fourth watch of the night he came to them, walking on the sea.

### EXPLAIN: TIME

Now, note the time...Jesus has come in the fourth watch of the night.

- The night was measured from sunset to sunrise,
- and the Romans divided it up into four watches.

So, this is the last period of nighttime, from about 3-6am.

- Now, if they had left in the boat at about dusk,
- we're anywhere from six to nine hours later.

But you know what this means?

- It means Jesus didn't come immediately.
  - He let them fight the storm
  - for most of the night
  - by themselves.

### POINT: FIGHT

And listen, it's our second TRUST GOD moment:

**SLIDE** SOMETIMES GOD WILL LET YOU FIGHT THE STORM

Consider the facts of this story:

- It's like 3 in the morning,
- and the disciples are still battling this 5-mile boat trip.
  - I mean, I don't know how long it takes to row 5 miles,
  - but I know how long it takes to run 5 miles,
  - and it ain't 6 hours!
- Plus, some of these guys are professional fishermen
- who have worked the Sea of Galilee for their whole lives.

They must have been exhausted from the morning row to Bethsaida,

- and then from the miracle of feeding the 5,000,
- and now from this arduous storm battle.

They've gotta be at the end of their strength and resolve.

But this, yet again, is another TRUST GOD thing.

**THE MOST IMPORTANT THING GOD IS DOING IN YOUR LIFE  
IS TEACHING YOU TO TRUST HIM  
so sometimes he'll let you fight.**

## TRANSITION

Now, in Mark's account of this story he adds are really interesting, and I think, a really important detail. I'll put it up on the screen:

### **SLIDE MARK 6:48**

[48] And he saw that they were making headway painfully, for the wind was against them. And about the fourth watch of the night he came to them, walking on the sea. He meant to pass by them,

## EXPLAIN

Now, there is some debate as to what this little phrase means,

**“He meant to pass by them.” BLANK SLIDE**

But I have a hunch on something specific.

- In Exodus chapter 33 there’s a very interesting passage
- where Moses and God are talking.
  - And Moses is interceding for the Israelites
  - after they had made an idol, a golden calf,
  - and God sent a plague on the people...
    - it was a whole big thing.
- But now Moses is pleading with God
- to continue with the Israelites into the promised land.
- He’s asking him not to withdraw his presence from his people.

And here’s the text:

### **SLIDE EXODUS 33:17-23**

[17] And the LORD said to Moses, “This very thing that you have spoken I will do, for you have found favor in my sight, and I know you by name.” [18] Moses said, “Please show me your glory.” [19a] And he said, “I will make all my goodness pass before you and will proclaim before you my name ‘The LORD.’ [20] But,” he said, “you cannot see my face, for man shall not see me and live.” [21] And the LORD said, “Behold, there is a place by me where you shall stand on the rock, [22] and while my glory passes by I will put you in a cleft of the rock, and I will cover you with my

hand until I have **passed by**. [23] Then I will take away my hand, and you shall see my back, but my face shall not be seen.”

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## **POINT: REVEAL**

See, I think Jesus is doing a Yahweh and Moses throwback moment here.

Remember, AS WE KNOW GOD MORE, WE TRUST GOD MORE.

And I think this is a KNOW GOD moment for the disciples.

We've seen two of these TRUST GOD moments...

but this is the first KNOW GOD moment:

See, I think Jesus is about to **SLIDE REVEAL HE'S GOD** to them!

- He meant to pass them by.
- He was gonna show them his backside...
  - I don't even know what that means!!!
  - But can you imagine?
- Maybe some sort of Transfiguration moment or something!?!

But he's teaching them to KNOW GOD more

by REVEALING that HE'S GOD.

And AS WE KNOW GOD MORE, WE TRUST GOD MORE

**BLANK SLIDE**

## **TRANSITION**

But he never actually passes them.

Verse 26:



## MATTHEW 14:26-27

[26] But when the disciples saw him walking on the sea, they were terrified, and said, "It is a ghost!" and they cried out in fear. [27] But immediately Jesus spoke to them, saying, "Take heart; it is I. Do not be afraid."

### EXPLAIN: IT IS I

So, the disciples interrupt Jesus' walk on the sea...by freaking out!

- And you would, too!
- Even back then...
- People didn't just walk on water.

They see him, and they think it's a ghost, and are terrified.

But Jesus speaks to them to **take heart; it is I. Don't be afraid.**

Now, those words are unbelievably important. **It is I.**

- This is the fulcrum point of the story.
- And the Greek words that are translated **It is I**
- are **ego eimi** [ehgo-I-mee].
- And a more literal translation would read "*I it is*" or "*I am*".

Now, in Exodus...another Moses moment...

- but in Exodus 3
- we find the account of Moses
- speaking with God
- who shows up as burning bush.

And here's what is said:

## **SLIDE** EXODUS 3:13–14

[13] Then Moses said to God, “If I come to the people of Israel and say to them, ‘The God of your fathers has sent me to you,’ and they ask me, ‘What is his name?’ what shall I say to them?” [14] God said to Moses, “**I AM WHO I AM.**” And he said, “Say this to the people of Israel: ‘**I AM** has sent me to you.’”

### **POINT: SAYS**

Now, in the Septuagint,

- which is the Greek translation
- of the Hebrew Old Testament,
  - AND is the version of the Old Testament
  - which is quoted most often in our New Testament.

In the Septuagint’s translation of Exodus 3, it reads,

- **“God said to Moses, ego eimi.”**
- The exact same words! It is I. I am.

Now, isn’t this incredible what Jesus is doing here?

It’s the second KNOW GOD moment!

- In response to his disciple’s fear
- and wanting to teach them to TRUST GOD
  - he WAS going to REVAL HE’S GOD to them...
- but instead, he **SLIDE SAYS HE’S GOD**
  - Take heart!
  - I am!
  - Do not be afraid!

AS WE KNOW GOD MORE, WE TRUST GOD MORE  
and Jesus has just told his disciples,

- *“Hey, you wanna know why you can trust me?”*
  - *Why you can take heart and not fear?*
- *Because I am.”*

**BLANK SLIDE**

## TRANSITION

Now, let’s move to the Peter part of this story.

- This is everyone’s favorite part of the story,
  - and yes, it’s awesome,
- but I wanted to really spend some time
- on the first half of this story,
- because I think it’s just as important.

Verse 28:

## MATTHEW 14:28

[28] And Peter answered him, “Lord, if it is you, command me to come to you on the water.”

## EXPLAIN

Peter answer’s Jesus’ declaration with a play on words.

- If Jesus is proclaiming, *“I it is,”* or *“I am.”*
- Then Peter says, *“Lord, if you it is,”* or *“if you am”*...
- *then command me to come to you.*

Now, people sometimes like to rag on Peter in this story...

- and gosh, if I don't like to take my shots at Peter
  - whenever I get the chance,
- but I just don't think this is the story to do so!

See, Peter is the only one who seems to pick up what Jesus is doing here!

- You can see his TRUST growing!
  - Maybe it is that Peter has learned something...
  - from the experience of feeding 5,000.
- But, at the very least, he knows this:
  - if Jesus had the power to enable him
    - to take part in THAT miracle...
  - AND if he is the great I AM...
  - THEN he can command him to walk on water, too!

Now, to my mind, this is some serious trust!

I'm not sure I'd have that much trust!

## **ILLUSTRATION: NIAGRA FALLS**

I heard the story this week of Charles Blondin, who in 1869 was the first person to ever cross Niagara Falls on a tight rope.

**SLIDE** Here's a picture of him doing it.

Apparently 25,000 people showed up to watch him do this feat.

- People just love a possible horrific event, don't they?
- It's why Twitter exists!

But Blondin successfully crossed, and the crowd loved it!

And so, he wanted to one-up himself.

- So, he brings a mini kitchen with him
  - to the middle of the tightrope,
- cooks an omelet,
- eats it,
- and then walks the rest of the way across.

And people are just going nuts for this guy!

- So, then he gets a wheelbarrow...
- and he successfully wheels it across the tightrope!

And everyone is just astonished! *“What sort of man is this!”*

- So, he’s proves he can walk it...
- he can cook and eat on it...
- he can even push a wheelbarrow across it!

And so, he yells to the crowd,

- *“How many of you think I could carry 200 pounds across...*
- *in this wheelbarrow?”*
  - And they say, *“Of course you can!”*
- And he says, *“Are there any 200-pound people in the crowd?”*
  - *“Ugggh...”*
- *“Is there anyone willing to get in the wheelbarrow?”*
  - Crickets.

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## APPLICATION

Listen, all this KNOWING GOD stuff is not just so we can go:

- “Wow!”
- Incredible!
- DO the omelet thing again, Jesus!”

This is not the point.

- Jesus REVEALS that HE’S GOD
- And SAYS that HE’S GOD
- To get you into the wheelbarrow!
- To get you out of the boat!

And this is why AS WE KNOW GOD MORE, WE TRUST GOD MORE.

It’s not enough just to know about him...

**THE MOST IMPORTANT THING GOD IS DOING IN YOUR LIFE IS TEACHING YOU TO TRUST HIM.**

Verse 29:

### MATTHEW 14:29-30

[29] He said, “Come.” So Peter got out of the boat and walked on the water and came to Jesus. [30] But when he saw the wind, he was afraid, and beginning to sink he cried out, “Lord, save me.”

### POINT: SINK

- So, Jesus says, “Come on big boy!”
- And Peter’s is like, “Ahhh yeah!”
  - At least that’s how it goes in my head!

And Peter gets out of the boat...

- And he's gotta be like, "This is why I'm the rock, y'all!"
- But the others are like, "Yeah...you're sinking like a rock!"

Now, I just want to point something out in this part of the story.

- Peter doesn't start sinking AND THEN begins to freak out.
- No! He's walking on water...
  - but when he takes his eyes off Jesus,
  - he sees his circumstances...wind...waves...water...
- AND ONLY THEN does he begin to sink.

He starts thinking about his perilous situation...

rather than the enabling power of Jesus...

and so, begins to sink into the water.

And it's our third TRUST GOD moment:

**SLIDE** **SOMETIMES GOD WILL LET YOU SINK**  
**TO GET YOUR EYES BACK ON HIM**

Cause Peter,

- in his distress,
- cries out the best,
- and most honest prayer
- anyone of us can pray in a storm,
- "Lord, save me!"

He gets his eyes back on Jesus.

- So, when you waver...
- when you falter...
  - when you see the wind,
  - and become afraid,
  - and feel yourself starting to sink...
- PUT YOUR EYES back on him.

**THE MOST IMPORTANT THING GOD IS DOING IN YOUR LIFE  
IS TEACHING YOU TO TRUST HIM**

And this story doesn't give you an example to emulate,  
but a Savior to trust

Verse 31:

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**MATTHEW 14:31**

[31] Jesus immediately reached out his hand and took hold of him, saying to him, "O you of little faith, why did you doubt?"

**EXPLAIN**

Peter's sinking, and he cries out,

- and the text says he immediately takes his hand,
- and took hold of him.
- And then he says, "*O you of little faith...*"



Now, don't read this as a harsh rebuke from Jesus.

- Actually, when Jesus says **"O you of little faith,"**
  - the word "you" isn't in the Greek.
- So, this is more accurately, *"O little faith."*

I think it's more like a father to a child, *"O little faith."*

Don't read it as a rebuke...but as an encouragement! Read it as:

- *"You almost had it!*
- *You trusted!*
- *You were doing it!*
- *You were walking on water!*
- *O little faith,*
- *why did you doubt!?!"*

You see, Peter is growing in his TRUST of Jesus...but it weans a bit.

- Peter has the enthusiasm...but he lacks the extent.
- Peter has the passion...but he lacks the perseverance.
- Peter has the drive...but he lacks the duration.

You see,

- initial trust is not enough,
- we need sustaining trust...
- we need to keep trusting God more and more!

I keep coming back to it, but...

**THE MOST IMPORTANT THING GOD IS DOING IN YOUR LIFE  
IS TEACHING YOU TO TRUST HIM.**

And we're seeing Jesus do this with the disciples, especially Peter.

Now, let's finish the text, verse 32:

## MATTHEW 14:32-33

[32] And when they got into the boat, the wind ceased. [33] And those in the boat worshiped him, saying, "Truly you are the Son of God."

### EXPLAIN: MIRACLES

There are so many miracles in this story.

- Jesus finds the disciples through a stormy sea.
- Jesus walks on the sea.
- Peter walks on the water.
- And now, Jesus gets in the boat and the wind ceased.
  - He stills the storm again.
- Which, we've seen before, but again, it's incredible!

But I want notice the disciple's response to Jesus this time.

- Remember, last time they witnessed him stilling a storm,
- their response was,
  - *"What sort of man is this,*
  - *that even winds and sea obey him?"*
- But this time, they worship and say,
  - *"Truly you are the Son of God."*

They're TRUSTING God more as they are KNOWING God more.

### POINT: DECLARE

And this is the final KNOW GOD moment of this story.

- Jesus WAS going to REVEAL HE'S GOD.
- He then SAYS HE'S GOD.

And now the disciples **SLIDE DECLARE HE'S GOD**

Interestingly,

- this is the first time that any of the disciples
  - have called Jesus “the Son of God.”
- Thus far in Matthew’s Gospel...
  - he’s only been called that by the demons.

But as we can see, the disciples are growing in their knowledge of God, and thus are deepening in their trust of God.

**BLANK SLIDE**

## CONCLUSION

So, yes, this is a passage about Peter walking on the water, and yes there are plenty of applications for us:

- Maybe God has sent you into a storm right now.
- Maybe God is delaying...
  - he hasn’t come to your rescue immediately...
  - and you’re fighting through the night.
- Maybe God is even letting you sink
  - amidst the wind and the waves and the water
  - to get your eyes back on him!

But I say, with confidence, that whatever’s going on in your life...

he’s doing that to teach you to trust him.

**THE MOST IMPORTANT THING GOD IS DOING IN YOUR LIFE IS TEACHING YOU TO TRUST HIM.**

- And if he is who he says he is: if he is God...
  - HE REVEALED IT,
  - HE SAID IT,
  - they even DECLARE IT...
- but if he's God...then we can trust him.

**SLIDE AS WE KNOW GOD MORE, WE TRUST GOD MORE**

**ILLUSTRATION: WALKING**

And this is a Chandler illustration, but I want to end with this:

When you have your first kid,

- you are just waiting and anticipating
- when they'll take their first steps.

And I don't know what it is,

- but parents like to try to measure up against one another
  - on how gifted their kid is...
  - or how good their parenting is...
- based on how early their kid walks.

Like,

- "Oh, she didn't walk until 18-months...yikes."
- "Our little guy started at 7-months..."
  - Which is creepy, yo!
  - That's like a little chunky doll!

But, when Harper was starting to walk (which was at 11 months, FYI)

Here's how it happened:

- She would crawl up to the couch,
- and then she would pull herself up to the couch,
- and then she would shuffle to the end of the couch,
- and then she'd go one hand off...
  - We called it the wobbly cowboy...
- And I'd be a few steps away just saying,
  - *"Come to daddy! Come on girl!"*

Now, babies are disproportionate beings.

- Their shapes and sizes are all off.
- They have big-ole heads and tiny bodies.
  - It's like a cantaloupe on a toothpick.

So, Harper lets go of the couch, and goes step-step-step...  
and then that big ole' melon comes crashing to the ground.

- And you know what Maryse and I did?

WE LOST OUR MINDS!

- We were like, *"Oh my gosh! She's walking!"*
- We freaked out like she just split the atom or something.

And so, there's this monumental celebration of the fact that your kid took three or four steps...and then fell down.

Now, here's the thing, I've never seen any parents respond to step, step, step, fall by going,

- *"You call that walking!?"*
- *That's not walking! That's gravity!*
- *What's wrong with this kid?*
- *For a bacon bit I can make the dog walk on its back legs.*

It never happens like that. No!

- There is always this explosion of rejoicing
- that takes place
- over the steps.

And see, I think we sometimes think God is like a rotten parent...

who sees our falls, and thinks,

*“When is this kid gonna get this walking thing? Why are you sinking?”*

- But never once, as a father,
  - when my girl was learning how to walk,
- did I watch her go step-step-step-fall, and go,
  - *“Only three!*
  - *Not gonna do much in life if you walk like that!*
  - *Pathetic*”

No! When she fell I went crazy! Why? Cause my little girl was walking!

- And then I picked her up,
- and I brushed her off,
- and I set her on her feet so she could do it again...
- cause my baby was walking!
  - *“Come on girl...*
  - *do four this time...*
  - *O little faith.*
  - *You were walking on water.”*

**BLANK SLIDE WITH PADS**

Listen, this is my last sermon for a while, so let me leave you with this:

- Do you KNOW him?
- And do you TRUST him?

I'd like to end with us just inviting God into wherever you may be at today.

Maybe you're here today....

- and you've just been freshly filled with the Holy Spirit...
  - you feel kinda like you're walking on water!
- And if you're in that position, can you just thank him for it?
- Just say, *"Thank you, Lord! What a gift!"*

But maybe today you're in a storm...

- And you feel like you've been rowing all night...
- And you're exhausted...
- and you're wondering where he is...
- and all I'm saying is he's trying to teach you to trust him.
  - Why don't you invite God into that?
  - Why don't you invite him into the boat with you?
- Just say, *"God I need you to..."* and fill in the blank.

Or maybe you've never known or trusted him before in your life.

- You've never gotten out of the boat.
- You've never gotten in the wheelbarrow.
- But something today is tugging at your heart!

- And you have no idea what it's gonna look like,
- and you don't even know what you believe about all this,
- but you feel like maybe today...Jesus is becoming real to you.
- You're seeing him,
- and you want to get out of the boat...
- you want to walk to him.

Peter's words are for you.

- *"Lord, if it's you, command me to come to you on the water."*
- You pray Peter's prayer:
  - *"Lord, save me.*
  - *Save me!*
  - *If it's you, command me to come."*

And today he's saying

- *"come on.*
- *Let's go...*
- *Come to me.*
- *Trust me!*
- *Let's walk on water."*

Would you pray with me?



## RESPONSES:

Well, every week at Fathom we respond in 4 ways:

- COMMUNION – THE LORD’S SUPPER
- GIVING TITHES & OFFERINGS – [fathomchurch.org/give](http://fathomchurch.org/give)
- PRAYER - [fathomchurch.org/prayer](http://fathomchurch.org/prayer)
- SINGING

So, I’m going to read the Words of Institution from the Apostle Paul, we’ll take communion, and then we’ll sing:

### 1 CORINTHIANS 11:23–26 – WORDS OF INSTITUTION

[23] For I received from the Lord what I also delivered to you, that the Lord Jesus on the night when he was betrayed took bread, [24] and when he had given thanks, he broke it, and said, “This is my body, which is for you. Do this in remembrance of me.” **TAKE**

[25] In the same way also he took the cup, after supper, saying, “This cup is the new covenant in my blood. Do this, as often as you drink it, in remembrance of me.” **TAKE**

[26] For as often as you eat this bread and drink the cup, you proclaim the Lord's death until he comes.

Love you church, let’s stand and sing together.

## RESOURCES USED:

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