

The title for today's message is: **And You Say You Can't Walk On Water**

Jesus said: **"Take courage! It is I. Don't be afraid"**

Grace and peace to you from God the Father and our Lord Jesus Christ. Amen.

Dear Brothers & Sisters in Christ, I read some 3 years ago that someone purchased the right to allow tourists to walk on the Sea of Galilee.

That's right, walk on water. They were going to build a Plexiglas bridge which would be just about one to two inches below the surface of the sea.

So for onlookers, a person will appear to be walking on water. Also giving the person walking on the bridge the feeling of walking on water.

Now at the time it wasn't clear how much it would cost to walk on this Plexiglas bridge. But I suspect it would be a fairly high price.

Tour companies all over the world would have statements included in their brochures like.

"Day 5: See the site of the Sermon on the Mount. Visit Capernaum. And walk on water at the Sea of Galilee."

I'm sure many people would like to be able to walk on water as Peter did, right?

That is to "walk on water." Now today, I offer you an incredible bargain! I'm going to save you hundreds of dollars!

That's right, forget the passport, forget the airfare, and forget the 5, 10 or 20 shekels that it will probably cost to walk on the Plexiglas.

And not only that, today I'll teach you how to really walk on water, and best of all, at no cost to you. **And You Say You Can't Walk On Water**

Well, you certainly can, in fact it's very simple. Just imitate the boldness of Peter, learn his weakness and trust in his savior, Jesus Christ.

Now the details of this story are few, yet they are familiar. As we heard last Sunday, Jesus fed 5000 people, with just 2 fish and five loaves of bread.

Look, with the feeding of the 5000 Jesus hoped it would back up the message He was preaching. Instead, the people there wanted to make Jesus their earthly king.

Well, having said that, Jesus dealt with this problem in two ways. First, He makes His disciples get into a boat and go on ahead of Him.

He wanted them to be removed from the temptation to join in and buy into the idea of Jesus as their earthly king.

Secondly, Jesus goes up on a mountainside by Himself to pray. He needed to spend some time alone with His Father.

Now Matthew tells us, "during the fourth watch of the night" (that would be sometime after 3 AM) Jesus went out on the water to catch up to His disciples.

It was dark, and the sea was choppy, the disciples' nerves were probably a little frayed from battling the storm all night.

And so when they saw Jesus, they thought they were seeing a ghost. Popular Jewish superstition held that the appearance of spirits during the night brought disaster, even death.

Even though the disciples had faith in Jesus, they weren't immune from the superstitions they grew up with therefore they cried out in fear.

Hearing their cries Jesus calms their fear by saying: "Take courage! It is I. Don't be afraid."

Here, Jesus' words certainly have given the disciples courage, and as Matthew tells it especially Peter.

Here Peter is willing to do something seemingly foolish. He was willing to jump out of the boat and walk on water if Jesus so commanded.

Peter said to Jesus, "Lord, if it's you, tell me to come to you on the water." And Jesus responded: "Come."

You know I think Peter has gotten an unfair shake in the retelling of this story.

When you hear this story, do you think of Peter's faith, or his lack of faith? Now, the scripture tells us, "Then Peter got down out of the boat."

Can you imagine the faith this would have taken! "Then again," we say, "there was every reason for Peter to have this kind of faith.

After all, he saw Jesus' miracles, he knew Jesus' power, and he also knew Jesus was the messiah, the Christ, the one sent by God to redeem Israel.

I've heard people say how eagerly they would have jumped out of the boat, and how they would have run and even skipped across the waves to Jesus.

Okay, maybe they would have, and maybe you would have too. But stepping out of a boat in the middle of the sea during a storm and at night.

Well, that just might require a little more faith than I have. But it seems to me unlikely that any of us will have a chance to prove it.

Now let me put this out on the table. Jesus gives us all sorts of opportunities to walk on water

That is, Jesus gives us the same sort of opportunity that He gave Peter in our text. An opportunity to demonstrate our trusting faith.

Look, walking on water is simply, having the boldness of Peter, a boldness that will do whatever Jesus commands us to do.

Yet were just as foolish, and just as weak as Peter was. When the wind and waves of life distract us.

Difficult family situations, illnesses, the death of a loved one and mountains of bills, whatever the case may be.

We take our eyes off Jesus and as we see the wind and waves of life we begin to doubt that our Lord will take care of us.

My dear friends in Christ, if we're ever going to walk on water, we need to learn how from Peter's weakness.

We need to learn to stay focused on Jesus, focused on his power, focused on his promises.

But as we confess that we have not always obeyed Jesus' command to step out of the boat.

So also we must confess that we have not always trusted Jesus' power once we have seen the wind and the waves.

Look, whether we've stayed in the boat entirely, or whether we've started to sink after we took a few steps out of the boat.

Whether this was caused by laziness, selfishness or fear, let us call it for what it is, let us call it, sin.

Look, for any failure to trust in Jesus wholly and completely is sin which condemns us, which causes us to sink, not merely into inactivity, but into the depths of hell.

How comforting, then are the words of Peter, and the response of Jesus. Peter faltered, yes, but only for a moment.

Instead of looking backwards at the boat, instead of thrashing around wildly in the sea and fighting the wind and the waves himself in an effort to get back to the safety of the boat.

He looked forward to his Savior, saying, "Lord, save me!" And how quickly Jesus acts! He reaches out His hand and catches him.

He gently reminds Peter of his foolishness when he says, "You of little faith, why did you doubt?"

Look, you and I have no reason to doubt, and when we have doubt, and we have taken our eyes off Jesus, even then we have no reason to doubt.

We do as Peter did, we pray, "Lord, save me!" We know Jesus will catch us when we have taken our eyes off him and have begun to sink.

Look Jesus has already done this, hasn't he? Like the hymn says, "When I was sinking down, sinking down.

When I was sinking down, sinking down beneath God's righteous frown, Christ laid aside his crown for my soul, for my soul."

My friends when Jesus removed His crown as the king of heaven, when Jesus refused to receive a worldly crown from the 5000 as their king.

When Jesus instead received a crown of thorns, he did so that He might pay the price for our sins.

Look, Jesus reached out His hand and caught Peter, and He has reached out and caught us and saved us from the depths of hell.

If Jesus can have us walk out of the clutches of Satan, He can also allow us to walk on water, to do great and bold things for Him as we live our daily life to His glory. And there you have it.

Do you want the thrill of walking on water? Listen for the voice of Jesus Christ calling you to get out of the boat and to come to Him. Then imitate Peter's boldness.

Learn from Peter's weakness, and don't be intimidated by the wind and the waves.

Instead, "take courage" and rely on Jesus, a Savior powerful and loving enough to save us from our sins, and therefore a Savior certainly powerful enough to allow us to, yes, walk on water.

Amen.

The grace of our Lord Jesus Christ and the love of God the Father, and the fellowship of the Holy spirit be with us forever. Amen.