

Thursday, March 11

Today's Reading: Matthew Chapter 14

Today's Devotional Message is by Pastor Don Moorman

"But Jesus spoke to them at once. "It's all right," he said. "I am here! Don't be afraid." Then Peter called to him, "Lord, if it's really you, tell me to come to you by walking on water." "All right, come," Jesus said. So Peter went over the side of the boat and walked on the water toward Jesus. But when he looked around at the high waves, he was terrified and began to sink. "Save me, Lord!" he shouted. Instantly Jesus reached out his hand and grabbed him. "You don't have much faith," Jesus said. "Why did you doubt me?" And when they climbed back into the boat, the wind stopped. Matthew 14:27-32 (NLT)

This curious little incident might be called "miracle interrupted". Jesus' disciples had gotten caught in a furious night-time storm on Lake Galilee and in the midst of the storm here comes Jesus walking on the water. As Jesus neared the boat Peter asks for permission to walk on the water. Jesus invites him to come. And against all the laws of physics Peter actually walks on water. For several steps Peter experiences a miracle but then he focuses on the stormy sea and his human frailty and loses the miracle. He calls out to Jesus for help. Jesus takes him by the hand, he reclaims the miracle and the two of them walk on water to the boat. In the Greek Jesus uses only four words to rebuke Peter, best translated, "Little-faith why did you hesitate in doubt?" The first word, "little-faith" is how he refers to Peter--like one kid calling another "scaredy-cat". The last part, "why did you hesitate in doubt?" almost surely refers to Peter doubting that he, Peter, could actually be walking on the water. Peter is not being rebuked for doubting Jesus but for doubting that, as a follower of Jesus, he could walk on water if that's what Jesus wanted him to do. The NLT translation says "Why did you doubt me?" but the word "me" isn't in the Greek. Had he lacked faith in Jesus he scarcely would have turned to Jesus for help as he was sinking.

So what's happening here? Peter experiences a miracle. Then he hesitates because he lacks the faith that in spite of the storm and his weakness he can continue to walk on water. So he loses the miracle and starts to sink. But he has the right spiritual response. He cries out to Jesus for help, Jesus reaches out, grabs him and again he can walk on water. He regains what may be called a Jesus-centered self confidence--a confidence based on the power of Jesus, not the weakness of our human nature. In Matthew 9 Jesus is approached by two blind men who have this same kind of faith. They had Jesus-centered self confidence. Verse 29 says, "He touched their eyes and said, 'Become what you believe.'"

Here's the skinny on this. Jesus wants to work miracles through you. Do you believe he wants to and do you believe he can through you and your life? If you answer no--probably accompanied by lots of excuses--then you will see little, if any, evidence of God at work. If you answer yes--without qualification--whatever miracle, whenever and wherever he wants, then you will hear Jesus say, "Become what you believe." And miracles will abound! Never lose faith. Never hesitate in doubt. You may be small but Jesus is great.

Mark 9:24 (TEV) "I do have faith, but not enough. Help me have more!" Amen