

Wandering Heart

Small Group Study & Video Devotional

Week Two - Rescue me from danger

Matthew 14:22-33

²² Immediately he made the disciples get into a boat and go on ahead to the other side, while he dismissed the crowds. ²³ And after he had dismissed the crowds, he went up the mountain by himself to pray. When evening came, he was there alone, ²⁴ but by this time the boat, battered by the waves, was far from the land, for the wind was against them. ²⁵ And early in the morning he came walking toward them on the sea. ²⁶ But when the disciples saw him walking on the sea, they were terrified, saying, "It is a ghost!" And they cried out in fear. ²⁷ But immediately Jesus spoke to them and said, "Take heart, it is I; do not be afraid."

²⁸ Peter answered him, "Lord, if it is you, command me to come to you on the water." ²⁹ He said, "Come." So Peter got out of the boat, started walking on the water, and came toward Jesus. ³⁰ But when he noticed the strong wind, he became frightened, and, beginning to sink, he cried out, "Lord, save me!" ³¹ Jesus immediately reached out his hand and caught him, saying to him, "You of little faith, why did you doubt?"

³² 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."

New Revised Standard Version (updated edition)

Wandering in the Text

Imagine Peter's motives in this story. Is he trying to prove himself to Jesus by emulating him? Is he earnest and eager, or brash and foolish – or a combination of all these things? Do you see yourself in any of his actions.

In response to the disciples' fear, Jesus says: "Take heart, it is I; do not be afraid." The verb used for "take heart" is **θαρσέω** (tharseó), which also means to be emboldened to show courage. Jesus says the same many times: Matt 9:2, Matt 9:22, Mk 6:50, Mk 10:49, Jn 16:33. What do you think Jesus means by "take heart"? Is it possible that Peter misinterprets his message and believes Jesus is calling him to "show courage" by stepping out of the boat? Is Jesus inviting them to "show courage" in a different way?

In Matthew 14:31, the word used for doubt, **διστάζω** (distazo), literally means "double-stance" or "going two ways, shifting between two positions." Does this make a difference in how you interpret the story? Is Jesus questioning Peter's doubt in Jesus, or Peter's self-doubt? Is he questioning Peter's inability to "take heart" in the midst of the raging storm? Is he questioning Peter's attempt to show bravado – by asking Jesus to command him to step out?

Consider two pivotal moments in this story as if they are frozen in time. The first is Peter attempting to walk on water. The second is Peter sinking, holding tightly to Jesus' outstretched hand. Might these two moments represent different postures (or stages) in faith?

Consider

Has there been a time in your life where you have stepped out in faith? Or, a time when you have held fast while you were sinking?

Is there a time in your life when your faith has given you courage?

How does God's rescue show up in Jane's story?

What do you think of Jane's perspective on the day in the Plano Park?

Why might it take courage to work with a Child Advocacy Center?

How does the poem "Rescue Me" express God's rescue?

Watch Week Two Video



www.whpc.org/new-blog/2024/2/19/lenten-journey-small-groups

Rescue Me

I'd rather not need rescue.
I'd prefer a five-step plan
and a quick-fix solution.
I'd prefer stubborn insistence
over honest vulnerability,
because rescue requires
asking for help.
Rescue names
the rising water.
Rescue sees the tired, treading feet.
Rescue feels
the swell of the wind
and the rain at a slant.
But when the floor falls out
and the world is on fire
and my small hands
cannot fix the hurt welling in me,
the prayer that slips out
is *rescue*
rescue
rescue me.

by Rev. Sarah Speed

Let us Pray

*God, you stand ready to rescue, but we don't always want your help.
We don't always want the path that you offer.
Help us to relax and give you control.
Give us eyes to see your help.*

Amen