

Read: Matthew 14:22-33

Keep Your Eyes on Jesus, the Son of God

Matthew 14:22-33

Immediately Jesus made the disciples get into the boat and go on ahead of him to the other side, while he dismissed the crowd. After he had dismissed them, he went up on a mountainside by himself to pray. Later that night, he was there alone, and the boat was already a considerable distance from land, buffeted by the waves because the wind was against it. Shortly before dawn Jesus went out to them, walking on the lake. When the disciples saw him walking on the lake, they were terrified. "It's a ghost," they said, and cried out in fear. But Jesus immediately said to them: "Take courage! It is I. Don't be afraid." "Lord, if it's you," Peter replied, "tell me to come to you on the water." "Come," he said. Then Peter got down out of the boat, walked on the water and came toward Jesus. But when he saw the wind, he was afraid and, beginning to sink, cried out, "Lord, save me!" Immediately Jesus reached out his hand and caught him. "You of little faith," he said, "why did you doubt?" And when they climbed into the boat, the wind died down. Then those who were in the boat worshiped him, saying, "Truly you are the Son of God."

In the name of the Father and of the Son and of the Holy Spirit. Amen.

It's funny what people are afraid of. What scares you? Are you afraid of flying? Or talking in front of a lot of people? Does the dark scare you? Or spiders?

Do you know what Jesus' disciples were afraid of? Ghosts! Jesus had just fed five thousand people by multiplying a lunch meant for only a few. The disciples saw this and even helped serve and clean up after the meal. Jesus sent them out in the boat while he said goodbye to the crowd and prayed to his Father. But the winds and waves pounded the boat all night long. That's when Jesus came to his disciples, walking toward them on top of the water. Were they happy to see Jesus? No, they were scared. They thought they were seeing a ghost! Then Peter, just to make sure it really was Jesus, said, "Let me walk on the water too, Lord." And he did! Peter walked on the water! Then he saw something that scared him. All he could see was the pounding wind and waves. "Uh-oh," he must have thought, "what am I doing out here?!?"

He took his eyes off Jesus and began to sink.

There are so many things in life that are scary. Remember the last time you said, "Uh-oh"? It's a sign that we've taken our eyes off of Jesus. In scary moments we forget about him and his presence. We know that he loves us and strengthens us to do things we may think are impossible for us—like believing and speaking his truth. But when take our eyes off him and focus on our weaknesses and fears and the threats around us, we sink and say, "Uh-oh."

So, what's the solution? It's simply this: Keep your eyes on Jesus. See him on the cross dying for your every sin. See him rising from the dead in order to defeat your worst fear, death itself. See him ascending into heaven with the promise that he is with you always in this life. See his power over the pounding wind and waves. See his mercy to catch us when we are sinking. Be strong in him when things get scary.

The questions below are to help families discuss this devotion. The questions are divided by age group as suggestions, but anyone could reflect on any of the questions as they desire.

Questions for the Younger Children

- Name two things that really scare you.
- What did Jesus do or say that can help you not be so scared?

Questions for Elementary Age Children

- When the disciples saw Jesus, what did they think they were seeing? Why might that seem a bit strange to us? (Remember what he had just done.)
- How do we sometimes do the same thing?

Questions for Middle School and Above

- True or false: Ghosts are real.
- Identify the "wind and waves" in your life that causes your faith to falter like Peter. Then apply a lesson you learned from this devotion that will help calm your fear.

Closing Prayer:

Lord Jesus, ruler of wind and wave, help me to always keep my eyes on you, especially when things get scary and I feel weak. Amen.