

Question: Are You In It – Or On It?

Matthew 14:22-32 NIV - Jesus Walks on the Water

²² Immediately Jesus made the disciples get into the boat and go on ahead of him to the other side, while he dismissed the crowd. ²³ After he had dismissed them, he went up on a mountainside by himself to pray. Later that night, he was there alone, ²⁴ and the boat was already a considerable distance from land, buffeted by the waves because the wind was against it.

²⁵ Shortly before dawn Jesus went out to them, walking on the lake. ²⁶ When the disciples saw him walking on the lake, they were terrified. “It’s a ghost,” they said, and cried out in fear. ²⁷ But Jesus immediately said to them: “Take courage! It is I. Don’t be afraid.”

²⁸ “Lord, if it’s you,” Peter replied, “tell me to come to you on the water.”

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

³¹ Immediately Jesus reached out his hand and caught him. “You of little faith,” he said, “why did you doubt?” ³² And when they climbed into the boat, the wind died down.

Are You In It-Or On It?

In our lives, ***there are absolutely going to be times when our faith is tested.***

- Quite often many of these will be very obvious times of testing.
- Sickness, Lost Job, lost loved ones, etc.

There are also going to be times when ***others around us will not even know that testing is happening*** in our lives.

- Often still, there are ***inner struggles*** that go on in our personal lives.
- Times of doubting.
- Times of faithlessness.
- Times of fear.
- Times of ***inner struggle.***

These too are times of testing in our lives.

Realize this morning that **when I mention, “testing”, I am not** speaking about something that **God puts into our lives to test us.**

- But, rather things that **God allows into our lives that test our faith.**

When something negative happens in many people’s lives, they believe that God is making this happen to them - because of some sin or something that they did that made God mad.

- Understand however, that **God does not need to bring something bad** into our lives, **nature and the curse does** this all by itself.
- According to the scripture, **“The rain falls on the Just and the Unjust.”**

Matthew 5:45 NKJV - That you may be sons of your Father in heaven; for He makes His sun rise on the evil and on the good, and sends rain on the just and on the unjust.

- In other words, **stuff happens to everybody.**

Neither you nor I are absent from bad things or bad feelings that may happen in our lives.

The fact that **we are Christians does not** absolve **you or I from the “Rain”** that naturally falls from the sky.

Every now and then, ***the forces at work in this world are going to collide*** and when they do, **you or I** may very well be found **in the middle of it all.**

Bad stuff happens.

- To everybody.
- All the time.
- Every day.
- Church or no church
- Christian or no Christian
- Believer or no believer

So we understand that **“The rain falls on the just and the unjust.”**

- That is **not** the issue.
- That is set in stone
- There is **no** getting out of that.

We often times *pray* **“God, keep bad stuff from happening to me...”**

- And while **He may protect us** from some things, we have to understand that **He may allow us to go through** some of these ***to cause our faith to become stronger.***
- And when He does, we have to ***trust that He allows these for our benefit*** and **not our punishment.**
- And when these times come, we recognize that **there are two different positions that we can take** – regardless of the situation.
- And so I ask the question today – **Are you on it or in it?**

In our reading, we found that ***Peter* was in the midst of a raging storm.**

- **Winds** were blowing.
- **Waves** were perhaps crashing down around Him.

One minute **He is on top of the thing that could destroy him** and the next minute **he is in the midst of it**

So, let me ask you this morning,

Are you on top of the thing you are struggling with?

- Or are you **in it?**
- Do you have **control of it?**
- Or does it have **control of you?**

See, **you can be in control** of a situation **without having control** of a situation.

- If you’re going to have a surgery,
- **You’re not going to have control** of the situation, but ***you’re going to be in control*** of the situation.

Our faith is that God has it under Control

- I am not going to become stressed out...
- I am not going to become a basket case.
- I am not going to lose my mind, thinking about ***what the surgeons are going to be doing*** to me while I am asleep, because I **know** that I am a **child of God** and He is ultimately in control of what happens to me.

One minute, Peter is Proactive.

- His faith is strong
- He is bold
- He is confident
- He is sure

- **He knows** as he is stepping out of that boat and placing his first step on the water that **Jesus is not going to let him down**.

So he begins to walk... as many of us do... believing God for the miraculous.

- But then Life happens.
- The storms get louder.
- The waves get higher.
- And **the things that we were once on top of** in our life ***begin to pull us down into it***.

Then **the fear that was not a problem** at first becomes a problem.

- **The doubt** that you totally had under control the night you got baptized or received the Holy Spirit is now **beginning to pull you down**.
- **What was once under your feet** is now beginning to swallow you up.

I'm asking, are you on it or are you in it this morning?

- Are you **proactive** when it comes to the problems in your life or **are you reactive**?

- You see, **if you are proactive**, that means that you are **praying before** you need to pray.
- If you are **proactive in your walk with God**, that means you are reading your bible and studying His Word to grow, not because you are searching for the reason of your problems.

If you are **proactive**, you are **walking on the problems**.

- If you are **proactive**, you are **on top of things** spiritually.

But if you are sinking, *your walk with God has become reactive*.

- This means that **you are no longer in control** of the things that happen in your life, but rather **they are in control of you**.
- You are now responding to them **instead of them responding to you**, or your faith, or your prayers.

If you wait until you have a problem in your life to pray, you've waited too long.

- **If you wait** until your situations are destroying your faith to read God's Word, **you have waited too long**.
- If you wait till you are knocked down to your knees before you find an altar of prayer, it might be too late.

Are you on it or are you in it?

- **Is it under the control of your faith and knowledge of God's will** or **is it controlling your faith and knowledge of God's will?**

If you're not praying and believing God, you're like Peter sinking in the water.

- **You now need Jesus** to pull you out of your situation.
- But had **Peter been preparing himself** for the day he would someday walk on water with Jesus, **he may not have started to sink**.

I give Peter a lot of credit.

- **He was willing** to step out of the ship when Jesus called to him, unlike all the other people in that boat that day.

Matthew 14:31 - ³¹ **Immediately Jesus reached out** his hand and caught him. "You of little faith," he said, "why did you doubt?"

When you first read this verse, **it sounds like Jesus is giving Peter a hard time** because he only had a little amount of faith...

But compare this verse to **Matthew 17:20** - - -

Matthew 17:20 - He replied, “**Because you have so little faith.** Truly I tell you, if you have faith as small as a mustard seed, you can say to this mountain, ‘Move from here to there,’ and it will move. Nothing will be impossible for you.”

Evidently, **Jesus was asking Peter** why he doubted when in fact **he did have “a little faith”**.

Faith is like light, you don’t have to have a lot of it in order for it **to shine in the darkness**.

- In fact, a smaller light is **more visible the darker it gets**.
- And **faith** no matter how small or insignificant to an onlooker.
- **Shines it’s brightest** the darker the storm of life gets.

In verse 20, **Jesus is letting Peter know** that he did not have to sink.

- He had **enough faith** to overcome the storm.
- But what Jesus was asking Peter, was **“Why Did You Doubt?”**

You see **some people believe** that you either have faith or you have doubt.

- **They believe** that if their faith is very **small**, then their doubt must be very **large**.
- Or vice versa.
- Like a scale – up and down on either side depending on the weight

But **we are not talking about natural things** here today, **are we...?**

- We are talking about something spiritual.
- In fact, when **your faith** is at it’s absolute lowest; it still **outweighs any amount of doubt** that would come along.

CLOSE:

Truly I tell you, if you have faith as small as a mustard seed, you can say to this mountain, ‘Move from here to there,’ and it will move. **Nothing will be impossible for you.** Matthew 17:20

I’ve seen **mustard seeds**; they are extremely small.

- You can barely see them.
- But according to His Word, that’s enough **to move mountains**.

Peter had what he needed to walk on his storm – Do you?

- He had a little faith according to Jesus.
- If he had known **to trust his little faith**, he never would have sank in the storm.
- Peter's faith in God, however small was all he needed.

You say, *I'm hanging onto my last thread of faith today*, I say **Great**, *That's all you need*.

If you have faith as small as a mustard seed, you can say to this mountain -

Here's my *favorite part* of the reading,
"You can say to this mountain..."

This is what I've learned to do.

Speak to the mountain.

- Speak to the situation.
- **"Depression, you are not going to destroy me."**
- **"Worry, you will not continue in my life."**
- **"Situation, I am going to rise above you."**

PRAISE TEAM:

Are you reactive or proactive?

Are you on it or in it today?