

32. Walking on Water

The Word of the Lord: The New Testament for Young Children

Notes for Parents & Teachers

32. Walking on Water

- a) Ask children what they think would happen if we tried to walk on a rough sea like in this story. They need to picture the big waves that the disciples had fought all night. When Jesus came to them it was in the fourth watch, that is, towards dawn—and they had been battling the waves all night, obviously terrified. They must also have been exhausted from fighting the waves and bailing water out of the boat.
- b) Maybe the dawn was just beginning to break, which is why the disciples could see the Lord, but not clearly enough to recognize Him. He must have looked like a ghost coming out of the (almost) dark.
- c) Talk about how brave Peter was, to be willing to walk to Jesus on those very waves he had been so afraid of. It was because he trusted the Lord that he could do it. Imagine how he felt as his feet didn't sink down.
- d) Here is the main point of the story. At first, Peter walked on the water because he trusted the Lord. He felt that the Lord could keep him afloat. But when the wind seemed stronger and the waves higher, he no longer trusted that the Lord could keep him afloat. Why? He trusted the Lord when the waves were quite high, but when they got higher, he felt that the Lord didn't have the power to overcome these bigger waves.

- e) Because Peter didn't trust the Lord enough, he began to sink. If Peter had really believed in the Lord's power, he would have had no fear. But because he didn't truly believe yet, he thought the Lord's power was limited and could only keep him up if the waves were weak.
- f) The moral of the story is that sometimes we say we believe in the Lord, but when something hard happens to us, we don't believe enough. That was why Jesus lifted Peter up but also rebuked him. He said, "O man of little faith, why did you doubt?" Having little faith meant that Peter didn't believe that the Lord really was God. Peter thought He was just a powerful prophet or something.
- g) In the end, the waves died down, and the disciples learned once again how powerful the Lord is.
- h) It's great to get children to remember that however hard something is, the Lord can help them, even if they feel He can't. You can use an example of a feeling, like being angry at one's brother, where it seems the anger is so strong it's no use asking the Lord to take it away.

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The Lord Walks on the Sea

After Jesus had fed the multitude of people, He told His disciples to get into a ship and to go before Him to the other side of the sea. Then Jesus sent away the people. And He went into a mountain by Himself to pray. It was dark now, and Jesus was alone.

But the disciples' ship was in the middle of the sea and was tossed by waves, for the wind was very strong.

Then halfway through the night, Jesus went to His disciples, walking on the sea towards them. When the disciples saw Him walking on the sea, they were worried saying, "It is a spirit." And they cried out in fright.

Then straight away Jesus spoke to them saying, "It is I. Do not be afraid." And Peter answered Him and said, "Lord, if it is You, tell me to come to You on the water." And Jesus said, "Come." And Peter got out of the boat, and he walked on the water to go to Jesus. But when Peter saw that the wind and the waves were rough, he became afraid. He began to sink, and he cried out, "Lord, save me!"

Immediately Jesus stretched out His hand and caught Peter and said to him, "O you of little faith, why did you not trust Me?" When Jesus and Peter got back into the ship, the wind stopped.

Then those who were in the ship came and worshiped Jesus saying, "It is true, You are the Son of God."

Matthew 14

