

Keeping Jesus on Your Screen

Text: Matthew 14:22-33 (ESV)

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

28 And 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 and walked on the water and came to Jesus. 30 But when he saw the wind, he was afraid, and beginning to sink he cried out, "Lord, save me." 31 Jesus immediately reached out his hand and took hold of him, saying to him, "O you of little faith, why did you doubt?" 32 And 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."

The Holy Bible: English Standard Version. (2016). (Mt 14:22–33). Wheaton: Standard Bible Society.

Intro. Keeping Jesus on your screen means that you keep Jesus the focus of your attention, and not someone or something else. We want to develop the capacity to do this all the time, but often it's in the crisis times – the times in the wilderness – where this capacity is developed.

This is not exactly a wilderness story, but it does have some “wild” in it! Wild waves and a wild experience for Peter!

I’ve said that no one goes into the wilderness by choice. But that is not quite true. The gospels repeatedly point out that Jesus goes off to be by himself, to be in solitude, to be alone with God in prayer.

But the disciples are “made” to get into the boat without him. All that is about to happen has a greater purpose that the disciples can yet know.

1. If we want to be where Jesus is, we gotta get outta the boat. And that is where Jesus WANTS us to be!
2. As soon as we take our eyes off Jesus, we are gonna sink. Every time. Jesus had the Father on his screen. So he didn’t sink.
3. What would you say to Jesus’ question, “Little Faithling, why do you doubt?” The older I get, the fewer excuses I have. I just say, “Good question, Jesus! After experiencing you faithfully save me time and time again, I don’t know why my faith is still so small!”

Conclusion: We might be tempted to see Peter’s experience as a failure – a failure of faith. But it was really a story of RISK, and risk leads to failure which leads to LEARNING! Following Jesus doesn’t mean we stop getting wet. It just means that, for all the times we got wet in the past, we still know that the best place to be is with Jesus. So when he invites us, we keep stepping out of the boat.