



## **Making Sense of Life When Life Doesn't Make Sense**

**Sermon 2  
Hope in a State of Helplessness**

**Matthew 14:22-33**

Sometimes we find ourselves in a really difficult situation in life. Sometimes those difficult cause to wonder how to make sense out of life when life, at least for the time being, just does not make sense.

It may be a disease, the death of a family member or close friend, a divorce, the loss of a job, or a myriad of other circumstances. Sometimes these difficult experiences of life come upon us due to poor choices we have made. Sometimes they come upon us as the result of poor choices others have made and we still feel and experience the fallout. Sometimes it is the direct result of us doing the right thing, but there are still ramifications due to our obedience. Today we are going to unpack a passage of scripture, Matthew 14:22-33 that reveals a specific situation in the life of Jesus's disciples, and they very like were asking these same question - this doesn't make sense, does it?

### **Biblical Context:**

This story is recorded by all four Gospel writers. There must be some very important truths and principles here for us to learn. Jesus had just come from a miraculous experience – feeding 5000 men, plus women and children by multiplying 5 little barley loaves and two small fish. The event took place near Bethsaida, near the northeastern shore of the Sea of Galilee. After the multitude was filled and the disciples gathered up 12 baskets full of food, this throng, according to John's account, wanted to make Jesus their king, even if it took force to do so. Jesus then dispersed the crowd and told the disciples to get in the boat and cross to the other side of the sea. He withdrew for a short while by going up to a mountain for prayer. It was while He was in prayer later that evening, and while the disciples were taking their boat to the other side of the sea, a treacherous storm started churning on the lake.

The Sea of Galilee, some 700 feet below sea level was surrounded by mountainous ridges. We are told that it was not uncommon for the cool sea breeze coming off the Mediterranean Sea, coming from west to east, would come over those mountains and collide with the warm air hovering over the Sea of Galilee and the result would be quick, unexpected, and strong storm raging over the sea. Vs 24 tells us this is exactly what happened to the disciples. They found themselves in a desperate, helpless situation.

## The Preaching Outline:

### Sermon 2 Hope in a State of Helplessness

#### Matthew 14:22-33

##### 1. The Fear of Helplessness

- a. They were in the middle of the sea and the wind was contrary
- b. The boat was being tossed – Greek = distressed; shaken from side to side and stem to stern.
- c. The disciples were rowing as hard as they could, but to no avail and were no match for the storm.

The disciples have now found themselves in a serious situation and they were afraid. **Yet, they were right in the center of God's will.** After all, they were being totally obedient – Jesus told them to get into the boat and to go over to the other side of the sea to Capernaum.

**Truth to remember:** Following and obeying God does not always mean you will flow through life with no problems. Obeying God might lead you right into the middle of problems. As this message unfolds, you will see some of the reasons for this.

##### 2. The Cheer of Hope

- a. Jesus is in the mountains praying – having one eye on the Father and one eye on the disciples.
- b. Jesus saw the storm and the crisis of the disciples
- c. Jesus moved into action
  1. Vs 25 – between the hours of 3am and 6am, Jesus went to them, walking on the sea.

Note: there have been some who have tried to explain away this miracle of Jesus walking on the water. For example:

- a) He did not really walk on the water; He was just walking along the shoreline, and it appeared He was just walking on the water
- b) It was winter time, and Jesus caught a large chunk of ice and pushed His way out to the disciples.
- c) This story is a myth – it did not happen at all.

##### In Summary:

We have the Shore Walkers, the Ice Walkers, and the No Walkers

We can dismiss all three of these easily:

**The Shore Walkers** – John tells us they had rowed 3-4 miles out into the lake. You could not possibly see someone walking along the shoreline from this distance, plus it was between 3am and 6am in the morning, and there was a big storm crashing down on them.

**The Ice Walkers** – could not be possible have been winter because earlier that day a huge crowd followed him near Bethsaida (the home of Phillip), and He had them sit down on some gorgeous green grass for the afternoon meal that He provided.

**The No Walkers** - these folks just do not believe in the supernatural at all or the veracity of the scriptures.

### 3. So Jesus moves into action –

**He walks** to them on the sea.

Notice the reaction of the disciples in vs. 26 “They were troubled and cried out in fear, ‘it is an apparition’.”

**He talks** to them on the sea.

- ✓ Be of good cheer...
- ✓ It is I...
- ✓ Do not be afraid...

**Notice this:** Be of good cheer, and don’t be afraid – These are nice, encouraging words, but Jesus, I have a question for you. Who are You to make two statements like this? After all, there is a huge storm that is about to take the disciples out. I have a hunch Jesus would be amused at my question and would probably respond with, “Did you not hear what I just said?” I said, “It is I...” And that stops me dead in my tracks because---

The statement, “It is I” in English is really just two words in Greek –

**ego eimi**, which literally translated means **I Am**. This is the same phrase Jesus used in:

John 6:35 - I Am (ego eimi) the bread of life...

John 8:12 – I Am (ego eimi) the light of the world...

John 10:7, 9 - I Am (ego eimi) the door...

John 10:11 – I Am (ego eimi) the good shepherd

John 11:25 – I Am (ego eimi) the resurrection and the life...

John 14:6 – I Am (ego eimi) the way, the truth, and the life...

John 15:1 – I Am (ego eimi) the true vine...

And the crucial “I Am” statement of Jesus that infuriated the Jewish leaders is

John 8:58 – Before Abraham was, I Am (**ego eimi**)

Thus Jesus knew immediately that Jesus was putting Himself on equal footing as Jehovah God because that is exactly what He told Moses in Exodus 3:14 when asked what His Name was – ***I AM WHO I AM***

So the I AM God, in the person of His Son, the Lord Jesus Christ, is out walking on the water He created. It's no problem for Him at all; and, He tells them, "cheer up fellas, don't be afraid."

4. **Conclusion:** vs. 29-33

a. **Peter's determined response:** "Lord, if this is really You, say the word, and I will take a sea walk with You."

- 1) Jesus says one word, "Come!" (Greek = erchomai in an imperative mood). Jesus said emphatically and with command, "Come!"
- 2) And Peter did what no other human, beside Jesus, has ever done in recorded history - he stepped out of the boat and those whitecap waves became his surfing board – he walked on the water toward Jesus. Wow!!!
- 3) But then --- he took his eyes off Jesus and started looking around at how frightful the storm looked, down he went!!

b. **Peter's desperate response:** Lord, save me...

- 1) Jesus immediately reached down and pulled him from certain death.
- 2) Jesus gave him a quick word regarding faith and doubt
- 3) They both got into the boat
- 4) They (the disciples in the boat) worshipped Him by confessing, "Truly you are the Son of God".

5. **Concluding Take-Aways:**

- a. Even Peter and the rest of Jesus' original disciples were not exempt from life's crises.
- b. Obeying God sometimes leads us right into the middle of a crisis.
- c. Even though Jesus was up on a mountain praying to the Father, He saw the disciples in their dark and rough storm. He also sees us when life's storms hit us.
- d. Jesus, the Creator of the universe and ALL that is (John 1:1-3) was able step out on the water He created and walk to His disciples. In His perfect timing, He too will demonstrate that He walks above our circumstances.
- e. As Peter obeyed the command of Jesus to step out and walk on top of the water, the Lord can help us to live above our storms of life.

- f. The disciples no doubt saw the boat as their apparent security. However, it was actually safer for Peter to be walking on the water with Jesus than to be fighting the storm in his own strength in the boat.
- g. As Peter kept his eyes on Jesus, he was victorious over the storm, walking on the water. But when Peter took his eyes off Jesus, the storm was about to drown him.
- h. Just as Peter experienced victory (albeit a short term victory) by keeping his eyes on Christ, we too can experience victory over our storms of life by keeping our eyes on Him.



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