

Let's Pray

Gracious Heavenly Father, we open our hearts to You today. Lord, life often brings unexpected storms—winds of doubt, waves of fear, and seasons where the waters feel too deep beneath our feet. Yet in the midst of every storm, You are the God who walks toward us, saying, 'Take courage! It is I. Don't be afraid.'

Lord Jesus, quiet the noise within us today. Open our eyes to see You in our daily trials, give us the courage to step out of our comfort zones, and grow our faith so we may anchor ourselves entirely in You.

May Your Holy Spirit speak to every heart in this room today. In Jesus' precious name we pray, Amen."

Growing Through the Storms

From the Mountain of Blessing into the Midst of the Storm

Dear friends, right after the miracle of feeding the five thousand, we arrive at a striking moment in Matthew chapter 14.

Jesus immediately made the disciples get into the boat and go ahead of him to the other side, while he went up on a mountainside by himself to pray. But as night fell, the disciples found themselves in serious trouble. The boat was already a considerable distance from land, buffeted by the waves because the wind was against it.

Notice something profound here: The disciples didn't enter this storm because they disobeyed God; they entered it because they obeyed Jesus. Jesus made them get into the boat.

Sometimes we assume that following God means smooth sailing. But spiritual growth rarely happens on calm shores. True growth happens out in the deep waters, where human strength reaches its absolute limit and faith must take over.

Shortly before dawn, Jesus went out to them, walking on the lake. When the disciples saw him, they were terrified, thinking he was a ghost. But Jesus immediately spoke to them:

"Take courage! It is I. Don't be afraid." Matthew 14:27

Stepping Out of the Boat

When everyone else was paralyzed by fear, one man dared to ask for more. Peter replied:

Lord, if it's you, tell me to come to you on the water.

"Come," Jesus said. Matthew 14:28-29

Think about what Peter did. To step out on the water, Peter had to do two things:

1. He had to leave the boat. The boat represented safety, predictability, and human security.
2. He had to fix his eyes entirely on Jesus.

Peter stepped over the edge of the boat, and for a miraculous moment, he walked on water!

Spiritual growth always requires a 'step out of the boat.' It asks us to leave our comfort zones—our self-reliance, our familiar routines, and our desire for control—and step onto the uncertain water, purely relying on the word of Christ.

Personal Testimony: Leaving the Safe Shore for Deep Waters

This truth is deeply personal to me.

Before coming to Canada, I was in a place of great comfort, security, and familiarity. I used to serve alone leading three churches—each with two thousand believers, supported by over twenty dedicated volunteers. I had my family around me, my brothers and sisters trusted and supported me, I had no language barrier, and I was in an environment I knew inside out. That was my "safe boat."

Then came a major turning point: I immigrated to Canada.

Suddenly, everything changed. I was plunged into a completely new culture, facing a daunting language barrier, with no family or long-time friends nearby. Even at church, everyone was unfamiliar. Overnight, I went from a familiar shore where I was surrounded by support, to being thrust into deep, turbulent waters where I felt entirely alone and helpless.

In those dark, uncertain nights, I felt just like Peter—stepping over the edge of the boat into a wild, howling wind. I prayed, "Lord, why am I here? It feels too hard, too lonely, and the waters are too deep!"

But in that quiet wilderness, the Lord gently spoke to my heart: "When you had everything to rely on, you relied on your environment. Now, out on the water, will you rely on Me?"

I realized I had to make a choice. I could sit in fear and cling to memories of the past, or I could fix my eyes on Jesus and take a step forward into the unknown.

I began to take small, faithful steps—learning the language, reaching out to new people, and serving with a humble heart despite the isolation. Did the waves stop immediately? No. There were still moments I felt myself sinking and cried out, "Lord, save me!"

And every single time, Jesus reached out His hand and caught me. Canada became my "walking on water" experience. It was in the cold, deep waters of transition that my faith transformed from trusting in my own abilities into anchored, unshakable trust in Jesus Christ.

4. Why We Sink and How We Grow

Why did Peter sink? Matthew tells us: "When he saw the wind, he was afraid."

Peter didn't sink because the water was too deep or the storm was too fierce. He began to sink the moment he shifted his focus from the Savior to the storm.

When we focus on our obstacles, our language barriers, or our isolation, fear paralyzes us. But when we fix our eyes on Jesus, His power sustains us through what should naturally overwhelm us.

Notice what happened when Jesus and Peter climbed back into the boat: the wind died down. And those in the boat worshipped Him, saying, "Truly you are the Son of God."

Every storm Jesus leads you through is designed to reveal more of who He is, elevating your faith from simple belief to profound worship.

5. Call to Faith and Conclusion

Dear brothers and sisters, what is the "boat" in your life today?

Is it a comfort zone you are hesitant to leave?

Is it a language barrier, a new environment, or a feeling of deep isolation?

Is it a desire to keep everything under your own control?

Jesus is standing out on the waters of your current situation today, calling to you: "Come."

Spiritual growth does not happen by staying safely inside the boat. It happens when you fix your eyes on Jesus, take that step of faith, and trust that His grace will hold you above the waves.

Even if you stumble, even if your faith flickers, remember: His hand is always extended, ready to catch you the moment you call out His name.

Let us step out in faith this week, look to Jesus, and watch our spiritual lives mature in His grace.

Amen!