

WANDERING HEART: JESUS SOUGHT ME

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Matthew 14:22-33

22 Immediately he made the disciples get into the boat and go on ahead to the other side, while he dismissed the crowds. 23And after he had dismissed the crowds, he went up the mountain by himself to pray. When evening came, he was there alone, 24but by this time the boat, battered by the waves, was far from the land,* for the wind was against them. 25And early in the morning he came walking towards them on the lake. 26But when the disciples saw him walking on the lake, they were terrified, saying, 'It is a ghost!' And they cried out in fear. 27But immediately Jesus spoke to them and said, 'Take heart, it is I; do not be afraid.'

28 Peter answered him, 'Lord, if it is you, command me to come to you on the water.' 29He said, 'Come.' So Peter got out of the boat, started walking on the water, and came towards Jesus. 30But when he

noticed the strong wind, he became frightened, and beginning to sink, he cried out, 'Lord, save me!' 31Jesus immediately reached out his hand and caught him, saying to him, 'You of little faith, why did you doubt?' 32When they got into the boat, the wind ceased. 33And those in the boat worshiped him, saying, 'Truly you are the Son of God.'

REFLECT & DISCUSS

1. Read the passage slowly. Then take a deep breath and read it again. What word, phrase or image stands out to you?
2. Jesus departs for a moment of solitude and prayer. How do you practice solitude and prayer?
3. Have you ever had an experience where you were first afraid of something that turned out to be beautiful, good, or beneficial? What happened, and what did you learn?
4. What might have been Peter's motivation in this story? Is he trying to prove himself to Jesus by doing what Jesus does? Is he earnest and eager, or brash and foolish—or maybe some of all this?
5. Peter is rescued/saved from the water. Like Moses pulled out of the Nile River, the Hebrew people ushered across the Reed Sea, the Israelites crossing the Jordan, the stories of God speak of people who

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cried out being rescued; even if not always in the way they imagined. Have you had an experience of God's rescue/saving in your life?

6. What is the “doubt” that Jesus calls out in Peter? Is it doubt in Jesus? Or self-doubt? Is it a doubt that caused him to get *out of the boat* when he would have been fine (or better staying) in it? Or something else?
7. Brian McLaren (*Faith After Doubt*) argues that doubt is how we move from one stage of faith to the next—without it, we don't learn, grow, or discover anything new. And without it, we might not take care to notice our own blind spots. How might Peter's doubt turn out to help him in the long run? What does he discover about himself and about Jesus through his doubting?