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RUF Bible Study – The Gospel According to Peter
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Walking on Water! – Matt. 14:22-33

22-23As soon as the meal was finished, he insisted that the disciples get in the boat and go on ahead to the other side while he dismissed the people. With the crowd dispersed, he climbed the mountain so he could be by himself and pray. He stayed there alone, late into the night.

24-26Meanwhile, the boat was far out to sea when the wind came up against them and they were battered by the waves. At about four o'clock in the morning, Jesus came toward them walking on the water. They were scared out of their wits. "A ghost!" they said, crying out in terror.

27But Jesus was quick to comfort them. "Courage, it's me. Don't be afraid."

28Peter, suddenly bold, said, "Master, if it's really you, call me to come to you on the water."

29-30He said, "Come ahead."

Jumping out of the boat, Peter walked on the water to Jesus. But when he looked down at the waves churning beneath his feet, he lost his nerve and started to sink. He cried, "Master, save me!"

31Jesus didn't hesitate. He reached down and grabbed his hand. Then he said, "Faint-hearted, what got into you?"

32-33The two of them climbed into the boat, and the wind died down. The disciples in the boat, having watched the whole thing, worshiped Jesus, saying, "This is it! You are God's Son for sure!"

What

Walking

Had been in a storm at another time and Jesus was sleeping and calmed it. Be muzzled.

This time Jesus had been praying. Mark, informed by Peter, tells us that Jesus had been watching.

Last time, Peter had been rebuked – how is it that you have no faith? This time he is determined to show that he does have faith. He doesn't want to hear those words again.

If it is you, then tell me to come out to you.

Why did he want to walk on the water to be with Jesus? How did that enter his brain? In just a few more minutes, Jesus would have been in the boat, so what's the hurry?

Peter knows that Jesus must call him to himself.

Courage/insanity, faith/foolishness

Peter actually did it; it was his first miracle.

But then he started looking around at the wind, the storm and things didn't look so good anymore.

He didn't seem to have any doubt when he stepped out of the boat and into the water – what was that like?

Then he looked at reality and he should have been sinking – gravity, what happened to gravity?

He somehow needed proof that what he was doing was possible. But that's only proveable by doing it.

Sinking

"The lesson is that Peter needed to sink in order to take the next step in Jesus. Because walking on water doesn't increase our faith, only sinking does! Those that ask for miracles and get them soon forget. But those who suffer for Christ's sake never forget. They have their own wounds to remind them. When we are hurting we do not flee to the rich and healthy for wisdom and real comfort. We seek out those who have fellowshiped in the sufferings of Jesus."²

Worshipping

"Up to this point, Jesus had been worshiped by the Magi, by a leper and by a ruler of the synagogue."³

This is the first time we see the disciples worshipping Jesus. "Truly you are the Son of God." They're starting to get it, though they have some rough spots ahead in regards to the agenda of the Son of God to come and die.

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For this series, I used commentaries all throughout the gospels. I also used as my base text Michael Card's book, *The Fragile Stone*. The reader should assume that none of the ideas expressed are original to me.

² The Fragile Stone, 53

³ The Fragile Stone, 54

In Mark's account, he doesn't focus on the greatness of the worship, but on the failure of the belief. Both are mixed together.

Another difference in the accounts is that in Mark's version, there is no mention of Peter walking on the water. Why not? It would be reasonable to conclude that it is because that Peter didn't ultimately succeed, so he wanted his failure to be left out. But I think (because of Michael Card) that it's because he succeeded. He didn't want people to know that he had made it as far as he had.