

## FLEA Video #12: "Walking The Waves" (Matthew 14:22-33)

One of my favorite Bible stories is mentioned three times in the New Testament. It takes place immediately after the feeding of the five thousand. The apostle Matthew tells us: ***Immediately Jesus made the disciples get into the boat and go on ahead of Him to the other side, while He dismissed the crowd - Matthew 14:22.*** The feeding of the 5,000 took place on the northeastern shore of the Sea of Galilee. Jesus is now wanting the disciples to get into a boat that had been waiting for them and proceed to the other side of the lake, the western side, probably to the area around a town named Capernaum. Then Matthew says: ***After He had dismissed them (the crowd), He went up on a mountainside by Himself to pray - Matthew 14:23a.***

So, Jesus was off by Himself but where were the disciples? In a boat but not having a good time at all: ***When evening came, [Jesus] was there alone, but the boat was already a considerable distance from land, buffeted by the waves because the wind was against it - Matthew 14:23b-24.*** The Sea of Galilee is an interesting body of water. At more than 690 feet below sea level, it is the lowest fresh-water lake in the world. By dimension it is approximately 13 miles long and a bit over 8 miles wide at its widest point. It is surrounded by mountains on the north, east and west. From May to October strong winds often sweep through this valley in a wind-tunnel effect (much like winds being compressed and strengthened by tall buildings in a downtown area), causing winds that can be extremely sudden and violent, with waves up to 20 feet high having been recorded. In a small fishing boat such as the one the disciples were in; this would have been an incredibly dangerous situation. But they were not alone.

As Matthew writes: ***Shortly before dawn Jesus went out to them, walking on the lake - Matthew 14:25.*** And it is the gospel writer Mark who lets us in on a little picture both of Jesus' power and His compassion: ***He saw the disciples straining at the oars - Mark 6:48a.*** He might have been separated from them physically, but they were absolutely always under His watch and care.

Then Matthew writes: ***When the disciples saw Him walking on the lake, they were terrified. "It's a ghost," they said, and cried out in fear. But Jesus immediately said to***

*them: 'Take courage! It is I. Don't be afraid" - Matthew 14:26-27.* Never fear; their Master was here. But somebody's not quite convinced - Peter.

*"Lord, if it's You," Peter replied, "tell me to come to you on the water." "Come," He said. Then Peter got down out of the boat, walked on the water and came toward Jesus. But when he saw the wind, he was afraid and, beginning to sink, cried out, "Lord, save me!" Immediately Jesus reached out His hand and caught him. "You of little faith," He said, "why did you doubt?" And when they had climbed into the boat, the wind died down. Then those who were in the boat worshiped Him, saying, "Truly You are the Son of God" - Matthew 14:28-33.* Though starting out in faith, Peter winds up in fear and doubt.

Why? His mind began to divide, distracted between the power of Jesus, of which he was pretty sure, and the power of the wind and the waves, of which he was absolutely sure. You see, faith in Jesus translates as a single-minded trust that sees only Him, understanding that what Jesus invites us to do can in fact be done. And it is a trust that, no matter the circumstances, Jesus is ALWAYS with us. Jesus Himself said so: *"[S]urely I am with you always. to the very end of the age" -Jesus Christ, Matthew 28:20b.*

And think about Who it is who is with us. Jesus Christ is God. Folks - He rules! And why not? This world is His; He owns every bit of it. That was His lake; that was His storm. He has complete sovereign control and ownership of all of heaven and all of earth. Nature itself exists to serve Him - including some rowdy waves becoming His sidewalk! The point is not whether there is a storm or not; often there will be. The point is knowing that Jesus Christ, the master of every storm, is with us. Here's the basic question: What do we truly believe about God? What do we truly understand about Jesus Christ? Jesus' question to Peter, "Why did you doubt?" gets to the heart of the matter. The walk with Christ demands a complete sell-out to Him, a complete commitment in faith and belief that He is all He says He is. No matter the circumstances, He wants to be the only thing we see ... period. He doesn't want us to be satisfied with being content in our own strength; He doesn't even want us to consider our own strength. He wants us to want Him - only Him. Hey, everybody experiences storms. The question is whether we want to have Jesus walking the storms with us.