

**Awaken 2016**  
**Charles Price**  
**Message #2**  
**November, 2016**

I just want to thank you for being with us on this tour. I am no longer, as you know, employed by the Peoples Church, no longer the pastor there. And it's been a joy for Hilary and I to be guests – that's right - with the rest of you, although the transition on Living Truth will take a little while so you will continue to think that I am still very involved - to some extent, involved for sure. But we have a wonderful team that God has raised up back in Toronto – great staff, great leaders reaching into the city of Toronto, reaching across the world.

The vision on which the Peoples Church was founded was to be a global mission church. Oswald Smith, who was its founder, applied to about six missionary societies to go and serve somewhere overseas and he was turned down by all of them, primarily on the grounds of his health.

He was rather frail and they said that because he was frail they thought it was a bad investment to train him and then send him off to the mission field only to die six months later, thought that was a bad use of money.

So he coined a phrase, “If you can't go, send a substitute” and he founded the Peoples Church initially to send and encourage people to go to the mission fields of the world.

And that has remained the DNA of the Peoples Church. And one aspect of how that has worked out.... (silence one minute out 4:30-5:30) some supporters monthly, sometime gifts, some on a regular pattern of their own choosing and if you would like to participate with us in that, then Ravi, the man you saw up here just now, is Director of Relationships with our donors and viewers and he is the man to talk to. And he won't ask you for a penny, but he will be able to facilitate what it is that you wish to do.

It is not our desire to go around asking people to support us. We give the opportunity for people to support. We believe if this is of God, God will provide the resources in the right time. When He stops providing them, it's time to realize that the direction has to be different.

So thank you to those of you who do participate with us as well.

Paul has jumped up and down a few times – has Paul ever been introduced to you? Yeah, you are saying, “Who's Paul?” Good question. Paul, are you here? Paul and Marion – are they here? Oh, he is outside.

Okay, well Paul is the director, executive director of Living Truth – has been for the last two years. And he has a great team working with him, some of whom are here this week, some of the camera crew. But there are editors, there are producers. There's a whole other team behind

the scenes as well – translators, and producing Spanish and Arabic programs, both of which are 30 minutes long.

And so we have a great team that God has brought together to enable that to take place.

This is going to be the last time that I speak to you. And Hilary and I will stay around and enjoy the next couple of days. And I mean enjoy, because this retreat is not sitting on us.

Those of you who may preach and lead and teach; you know you never let go – it's always sitting there, always on your mind and your heart. But once this is over, we are going to be free again and look forward to these next few days traveling with you up here in the northern part of Israel around Galilee and up further north as well.

But if you have got your Bible now, I am going to ask you to turn to John Chapter 6. And I am going to read from Verse 16 down to Verse 21, an event that follows immediately the event that we looked at yesterday.

We are talking about a day in the life of Jesus that took place on these shores of Galilee. Had the weather forecast been better, we'd be sitting right on the lakeside. But the forecast was we might have some storms today so we have to play it safe. And hence we are inside.

But you can still see the lake there behind me. And for those of you watching us on television, we are in one of the most beautiful parts of the region of Galilee and have enjoyed so much being able to walk by the side of the lake and just re-envision the many things that took place here with which our four Gospels are full.

Jesus only made I think it was three visits to Jerusalem during His three years of ministry. The rest of the time He was here in this area. So this is the focal point of the actual teaching and ministry of Jesus by and large.

And we looked yesterday at an event that took place one afternoon when He fed 5,000 hungry people who had stayed around longer than they expected to. They got hungry and Jesus fed them with the five loaves and two fish of a young boy who brought them to Andrew, and Andrew brought them apologetically to Jesus and said, "Here's some loaves and fish; what are they among so many?"

And Jesus took them and gave thanks. Now our point yesterday was that giving thanks is the key. It is the clutch which enables all the resources of God to be translated into practical living. Giving thanks is not just being polite; it is acknowledging utter dependence upon Him and saying, "Thank You, Father. This is not my ability that we are looking to; it is Yours."

And Jesus, as a man, as a real man, lived in dependence on His Father in that way.

But then when the sun began to go down and Jesus dismissed the crowd and they clearly didn't all want to go home; they had had a great day. They had experienced this wonderful feeding.

But when Jesus stayed back to send them home, He first put His disciples into a boat and sent them across the lake to Capernaum, which if you look from this area, is kind of directly in that direction.

We are in the very southern part of Galilee here. Capernaum is up on the northwestern side. And today, being a clear day, you can actually see through to Capernaum.

And let me read to you in John 6:16 what happened.

“When evening came, his disciples went down to the lake, where they got into a boat and set off across the lake for Capernaum. By now it was dark, and Jesus had not yet joined them.

“A strong wind was blowing and the waters grew rough.

“When they had rowed three or three and a half miles, they saw Jesus approaching the boat, walking on the water; and they were terrified.

“But he said to them, ‘It is I; don’t be afraid.’

“Then they were willing to take him into the boat, and immediately the boat reached the shore where they were heading.”

Now there are some details of this story that John doesn’t tell us that we will also comment on from the record in Matthew and Mark’s version as well.

But this was a deliberately orchestrated scenario by the Lord Jesus Christ. He intentionally, deliberately sent them out in the boat to cross to Caesarea and He knew what they didn’t know, that there was a storm brewing.

And they were caught in the midst of this enormous storm. And the reason why He sent them into this storm after such a great day seeing the feeding of the 5,000 is told us in Mark 6:51. When the storm had stilled it says,

“Jesus climbed into the boat with them, and the wind died down. They were completely amazed, for ...

Listen...

“...for they had not understood about the loaves; their hearts were hardened.”

Now of course they had seen a great show, you might say. They had seen a wonderful miracle. They had seen something David Copperfield could never do. By the divine power of God, His Father supernaturally multiplying the bread and the loaves. They had seen it.

They would probably talk about it for weeks. They would get home and tell their wives and tell their kids, if they have them, tell their parents, tell their neighbors, “You would never believe what we saw Jesus do across on that mountain.”

But, says Mark, they hadn’t understood about the loaves. And the reason is their hearts were hardened.

When we talk about people having hardened hearts, we tend to think about people like Pharaoh in the Old Testament whose heart was hard and wouldn’t let the children of Israel go.

We tend to think of pagans who are godless and who turn their backs on God, who want nothing to do with God. We tend to think those are people with hardened hearts.

But in this instance, it is the disciples who have hardened hearts. And the process that the Lord Jesus Christ, in His wonderful grace towards us will lead us through, is a process designed to break our hardened hearts, to bring us to that tender dependent, loved and loving relationship with Himself.

The symptoms of their hardened hearts were basically that they were not expecting to learn anything new for themselves. Yes, Jesus did this, Jesus did that, Jesus is this; but it was Him and it was us. It was there and it was here.

And the overflow of what Jesus Himself was doing into their lives was not something they were anticipating. Their hearts were hardened to it. They didn’t learn the lesson.

They didn’t notice Jesus gave thanks and say to one another, “Listen, in every situation that we find ourselves, all we need to do is just give thanks and trust God that, having thanked Him for His sufficiency, whatever the outcome is going to be will be His will and we will trust Him for it. They hadn’t learned that.

So He put them into a boat, sent them across into the lake. Their hearts were not tender, were not pliable, were not meek, were not humble, were not teachable. Their hearts were hard even though they had been eyewitnesses and the best friends of Jesus Christ.

Now I want to look at four simple things from this story.

I want to talk about where they were – that is, where the disciples were.

I want to talk about why they were there.

I want to talk about what they experienced.

And I want to talk about how they responded.

These are the where, why, what and how issues I want us to look at and talk about for these next few minutes.

Where they were, first of all, I want to comment on. And as Verse 16 [John 6:16] says,

“When evening came, his disciples went down to the lake, where they got into a boat and set off across the lake for Capernaum.”

Now that sounds like a very casual, the day’s over, we’ve been busy; let’s take a boat out and watch the sunset. It sounds like it could be as casual as that.

But Matthew and Mark both tell us what John doesn’t point out here. They both say that Jesus *made* the disciples get into the boat and go ahead of Him. It was Jesus’ idea.

And the destination was to be Capernaum. Capernaum had become the home to Jesus, as many of you know, that Jesus preached His first sermon in Nazareth. And as a result the whole crowd got so upset in the synagogue; they came forward, got hold of Him, dragged Him out to a cliff and were going to throw Him over the cliff. But He turned around, walked through them.

And He left Nazareth forever. He only once went back to Nazareth as far as we know in the next three years.

Instead He went and made His home in Capernaum. And it was in Capernaum that He met some of His disciples. The fishermen were fishing on Lake Galilee and so He met them there. And this is now where the whole team were living.

We don’t know much about the personal lives of the disciples. We know Peter was married. He had a wife. We know he had a mother-in-law tucked away there in Capernaum as well because she got sick one day.

Whether he had children, we don’t know. If they did, he was a rather absent father for much of the time because he was on the road with Jesus so much of the time.

There may have been older ones like Matthew who may have had their own families. We know there were some that were young and living with their parents.

James and John, the sons of Zebedee lived with their parents. They had an over-protective mother, you remember, was often running to Jesus and asking Him for special benefits for her two boys.

So basically when Jesus put them into the boat, as far as they were concerned, He was sending them home to bed. “You’ve had a busy day, boys. Go on home.”

And they set off unsuspecting that this calm evening would turn into a storm.

Verse 17 says,

“By now it was dark, and Jesus had not yet joined them.

“A strong wind was blowing and the waters began to grow rough.”

The weather on Galilee is unpredictable. We have seen that in these couple of days. The predictions were that we would have storms today and I wished that we did because it would fit my story. But it has been a most beautiful day.

Other times when, expected to be calm, it suddenly becomes rough and the wind blows. It can turn quickly. Of course it is like life, isn't it? You know your life and my life are actually unpredictable. I want to do this; I plan to do that, but we don't actually know what is going to happen tomorrow, and the whole of our lives could be changed like that.

This was going to happen for these disciples. Galilee was notorious for its violent storms. Right here in Galilee we are 682 feet below sea level – that's about 200 meters. Actually when we say these are mountains around Galilee, that is not strictly true. Galilee is a hole in the ground. It is a basin.

These mountains – you go up there – they go straight then because that is normal altitude. And Galilee is like a basin in the ground, a bit like the Grand Canyon, you know. It's not mountains on the side of the Grand Canyon - just a hole in the ground.

Galilee is actually a hole in the ground, a lake. It's got a plug hole at the bottom that we call the River Jordan. And down the plug hole goes all the water that overflows from here and ends up in the ditch which we call the Dead Sea. And we went there and it doesn't go anywhere except to evaporate from there.

But because we are low at the moment, 200 meters below sea level, when the wind comes down through the ravines and valleys of the Golan Heights, it starts to swirl until it reaches Galilee and can stir up these enormous storms and currents. So much so, that even these experienced fishermen whose job was to navigate this lake, were filled with fear.

And when Galilee was rough it could be very rough. There is another time, another storm, on the lake when Jesus was asleep in the boat - you may remember that story in Mark Chapter 8. And it says without warning a furious storm came up on the lake so that the waves swept over the boat.

Can you imagine that, where the waves come over the boat? So you catch fish the way you normally catch butterflies. You hold the net up and hope that the waves come over and you might get a few.

Those are incredible storms and that was on Galilee. And these disciples out in the storm may be wondering how bad will this get? Will we actually get home? Will we get shipwrecked out here?

They became filled with fear. That's where they were.

Secondly, why were they there?

They had left the shore before darkness fell. It was dusk; it was beginning to fall. They had been rowing for several hours.

And when the storm hit its worst, they were three and a half miles out, it tells us— three to three and a half miles here in John's Gospel. I think it's in Matthew it says three and a half, a bit more specifically. That's five or six kilometers out.

This lake is only thirteen kilometers wide, eight miles wide. So three and a half miles in puts them almost right in the middle of the lake, and probably in the epicenter of the storm.

Matthew's record in Matthew 14:24; Matthew 14:24 says,

“The boat was already a considerable distance from the land, buffeted by the waves because the wind was against it.”

Storms are frightening prospects and yet, you know, the Bible has some very constructive things to say about storms, some very positive things to say about storms and what storms will do for us.

In Isaiah 51:15 God says,

“I am the Lord your God, who churns up the sea so that its waves roar.”

Psalms 42:7 says,

“All your waves and breakers have swept over me.”

Job, in Job 30:22 says,

“You snatch me up and drive me before the wind; you toss me about in the storm.”

In each of those verses, God is responsible for the storm.

“I am the Lord your God who churns up the sea so that its waves roar.”

“All your waves,” says David to God, “and breakers sweep over me.”

Job says to God, “You snatch me up. You drive me before the wind. You toss me about in the storm.”

Because often it is in storms where you don't know what is going to happen next. We are out of control. We are no longer able to predict the next minutes.

It is often in storms that we discover most about God.

You know there are some things that we don't learn listening to sermons. There are limits on what will happen this afternoon and what has happened in the previous sessions.

There are things we don't learn by reading books. There are things we don't learn by going to conferences. We may hear about them but they become experiential to us when we go into storms, difficulties, unpredictable situations, because it is there that we experience and meet with God.

And Job, who said to God that "You snatch me up and You toss me about in the storm"; he says at the end of his book in Job 40:6 – rather it says there:

“Then the Lord spoke to Job out of the storm.”

The storm became the mouthpiece of God.

Now you remember that for these disciples, their hearts were hardened because they hadn't understood the feeding of the 5,000, the loaves and the fishes. And now this storm is going to speak to them.

They are there to hear and experience what the storm is going to do for them.

And so the third thing – where they were, and why they were there, what they experienced:

Verse 19:

“After they had rowed for three or three and a half miles, they saw Jesus approaching the boat, walking on the water; and they were terrified.”

John tells us they were terrified. Matthew tells us why they were terrified because Matthew says,

“When the disciples saw Him walking on the lake they were terrified. ‘It's a ghost,’ they said, and cried out in fear.” [Matthew 14:26]

The Living Bible says, “They screamed in fear.”

Matthew also tells us this was during the fourth watch of the night. The fourth watch of the night was between 3 a.m. and 6 a.m. They had been stuck out there for all those hours.

They are caught in the storm. They are afraid. And suddenly they see what appears to them to be a ghost walking to them on the water.

They are in the middle of the night, in the middle of the lake, in the middle of a storm and in the middle of a nightmare, haunted, as they initially thought.

There was no light, there was no land, there was no calm, there was no comfort - only fear.

You know fear is something, or it is provoked when something threatens us over which we have no control. We have to resign ourselves to be victims. And because we have no control, we have fear.

Illness can be a source of fear. We have no control over what may be a process going on in our bodies – some virus, some disease, something serious.

And the natural response when we are not able to control what is happening is fear because we don't know what is going to happen, we don't where this is going to go, we don't know what the end is going to be.

And in their fear, compounded by a ghost; is it an illusion? they probably wondered, an apparition? No, this is real.

And the fight or flight reaction to fear kicks in. They can't fly anywhere, they can't fight anything; they are just passively in the boat, scared to death.

And then the ghost spoke. And He said to them,

“It is I. Don't be afraid.”

It wasn't just so they would recognize Jesus' voice. “Oh yes, I recognize it – that's Jesus' voice.”

It's that what He said is, “It is I.” That is a bad English translation of the actual words in John 6:20. He said to them, “I AM. Don't be afraid.”

Now that's bad grammar. So maybe they tried to fix it by turning it around to “It is I.” But there is enormous significance in that because “I AM” is one of the most reassuring names of God.

The name of Jehovah in the Old Testament means, “I AM”. And Moses met God at the burning bush and commissioned him to go back to Egypt and he said, “Who shall I say has sent me when they ask me, ‘What is the name of the one who sent you?’ Who shall I say sent me?”

And God said, “I AM WHO I AM. Say to the Israelites, ‘I AM’ has sent you.”

It is a beautiful name that is difficult to have words to convey the full meaning. But it is the present tense name of God. I suggest it means He is fully present, fully available and fully sufficient. He is never outwitted, never outmatched.

In the middle of the storm this One who is fully present, fully available, fully sufficient says, “I AM.”

And it was Peter who began to put the pieces together and saw an amazing scenario that the very thing which threatened to be over their heads – the storm – was underneath the feet of Jesus.

When the waves rose, He rose on them. When they sank, He sank. When they rose, He rose. When they moved, it was the very thing they were afraid of. And the very thing that threatened to be over their heads was underneath the feet of Jesus.

And Peter must have worked this out.

I mentioned Job just now, God speaking out the storm, and Job says about God and the sea,

“He treads on the waves of the sea.”

Same idea. The waves of the sea are under His feet.

And Peter recognizes this. Now is everything under the feet of Jesus? The answer is yes.

In Ephesians 1:22 it speaks there God gave Jesus dominion and power and authority, not only in the present age but in the age to come,

“And God placed all things under His feet.”

What is excluded from that?

When Paul writes about the resurrection of Jesus in 1 Corinthians 15:25, he says,

“He must reign until he has put all his enemies under his feet.

“The last enemy to be destroyed is death.”

“For he has put everything under his feet.”

So Paul there is writing about the resurrection of Jesus and makes the general statement,

“He puts all his enemies under his feet.”

But the last enemy to be destroyed is death and He has put that under His feet by His resurrection.

And if Jesus Christ defeated the last enemy when He rose again from the dead, it means He has defeated everything which threatens to defeat me today. He had defeated everything that threatens to defeat me today because what threatens to be over my head is underneath His feet.

Now this is either gobbely gook religious spiritual jargon or it is liberating truth. And it may be to some of us this is jargon. “I don’t know what you are talking about in practical experiential ways. It’s the language of the Bible, the language of Christians, the language of preaching but it has no real experiential value to me,” which is what true of the disciples after the feeding of the 5,000 because their hearts were hardened.

Or it becomes liberating. And Peter also reasoned that if the threat to our heads, the waves of the storm were under His feet, is enough just to say, “That’s great Jesus! Well done! That’s fantastic! Good for You!”

No, Peter reasoned more deeply than that. He said, “How does this work for me? We’re stuck in the boat, buffeted by the winds. It doesn’t help us to know what threatens our heads is under His feet. It helps Him; it doesn’t help us at this point.”

So he says to the Lord,

“Bid me come to you on the water.”

That’s the fourth thing – what they did.

Matthew gives us this detail in Matthew 14:28,

“‘Lord, if it’s you,’ Peter replied, ‘tell me to come to you on the water.’”

Now there are a number of good things I won’t labour about that. He is saying, “Jesus, would You initiate this? Would You tell me to come? Will You tell me this is good? Will You tell me this is right?”

And that means your heart has to be in tune with God. When God leads us, we learn to discern His voice. And we discern it in different ways and we’re often – in fact, very often – not 100% sure if this is God speaking.

But as you wait and check it out, you learn in time to recognize the voice of the Spirit of God in your hearts because He does lead us, He does speak to us.

“If it is You, tell me to come on the water.”

“‘Come,’ Jesus said.”

I wonder if Peter expected that. I wondered if he went, “Oh, oh, oh, really? Um, I’m...not sure I meant that.”

I’m sure he got very nervous.

“Then” it says, “Peter got down out of the boat, walked on the water and came to Jesus.”

That’s a simple sentence of 16 words.

“Then Peter got out of the boat, walked on the water and came towards Jesus.”

That took courage. Faith and courage always have to be tied together.

Imagine putting one foot out of the boat was okay because the other foot was in the boat. Maybe he said to his brother Andrew, “Just hold my hand out just in case it doesn’t work.”

Then he put the second foot out of the boat. And to his amazement he began to walk on the water and I imagine the other eleven disciples in the boat were absolutely dumfounded.

“Look at Peter!”

We often criticize Peter for the fact he eventually sank but actually none of those eleven disciples even attempted to join Jesus on the water.

“Let me come and join You if it’s You.”

None of the others said that.

But you know if we are going to experience God, it is not going to be passively, it is not going to be checking out doctrinal boxes, it is not by all those kind of external things. It is going to be when courage and faith, dependence on God, are married together. “And because I trust Him, I will do” and it will take courage to do.

John Ortberg has written a book with a long title. The title is, “If You Are Going to Walk on the Water, You Have to Get Out of the Boat.”

Some of you may have read it. It is a very popular book. If you are going to walk on the water, you’ve got to get out of the boat. It is no good being passive; you have to become active and courageous.

When the Bible says, “Faith without works is dead,” it doesn’t mean that if you believe in God then you ought to feed the hungry and do some good works.

What it means is this: that if your faith in God is nothing more than wishful thinking or sentimental feelings, if it doesn’t lead you to courageously step out in obedience to God, your faith is dead.

And Peter here demonstrates the work of obedience by stepping out into this impossible situation. And many of us have a faith without works – we might feed the hungry but it is without works in the sense our lives are not lived in the spirit of obedience and dependence.

Obedience and dependence – these two things must go together. I have said a number of times they are like two wings on an airplane. Which wing on an airplane is the most important wing?

See obedience without dependence is legalism. That was the Pharisees we heard about yesterday. Dependence without obedience can lead to unhealthy forms of mysticism and mental games.

But obedience coupled with dependence, dependence coupled with obedience: dynamism.

Peter began to walk on the water.

And many of us remain in spiritual poverty because we never take the risk of obedience to God where we step into something that seems to be humanly, rationally incapable, unlikely, but we do it because we believe God is leading us to do it.

And stepping into a situation where God is not God, you are flat on your face, but if God is God you trust Him, you obey Him and you experience Him.

It is the courage that is lacking in many of us. The faith may be there but the courage is lacking.

We heard yesterday and again this morning about the man with the withered hand who was told to “stand on your feet” in front of the eyes of critical Pharisees who were there in order to spy out on Jesus’ breaking of the Sabbath. “Stand up” in front of all these critical eyes and in full view of the whole synagogue congregation who were gathered there on the Sabbath day.

“Get up.” And the man, who had probably spent his whole life marginalized, with his withered hand, unable to live a normal life; as Hilary said this morning, the word invalid that we use meaning in-valid - what a degrading term.

He had the courage to stand up and then Jesus said, “Stretch out your withered hand.” And Jesus healed him.

It was not a passive trust. It was not sitting down there with his withered hand where he normally sat and where he had always been. “Well, I believe You can heal withered hands – I know, because You have healed the blind, You have healed the lame. The crippled have walked and run and the lepers have been healed. I believe You can do it.”

But then sitting passively waiting for Him to do it, instead of saying, “Bid me, come and join You on the water; what do You want me to do?”

“Stand up.”

“Okay.”

“Reach out your withered hand,” which probably normally he could never do because it was a withered hand.

But he stretched it out as he did, so he was healed.

Like the man at the Pool of Bethesda, “Get up and walk.”

“Well, I have been here for 38 years. What do You mean, ‘Get up and walk?’”

“Get up and walk.”

He could have lain there and said, “Well, if this is a miracle, You get me up. You fill me with energy to bounce out of this thing.”

And when Jesus had gone he could say to the folks, “Did you hear when Jesus was here and He told me to get up and walk? Isn’t that amazing, isn’t it?”

No, he had to get up and walk. Get up and walk.

It seemed impossible, but he obeyed.

And every act of God; as a generalization, every act of God in people’s lives in the Scripture is precipitated by an act of obedience.

And it is the act of obedience, it is the raw, courageous fate, and it precipitates God doing something and intervening.

And Peter courageously stepped out of the boat. We don’t know how far he walked. He might have walked around the boat, I don’t know, did a little circle, may have gone up and down the lake a bit.

He may have waved to the disciples on the way and said, you know, “this is great, we’re having a great time here. Woo, I’m getting a bit sea sick here but it’s great.”

We don’t know how long he was out on the water, but we do know he ran smack into disaster because again, Matthew’s Gospel Chapter 14:30 says that,

“When he saw the wind, he was afraid and, beginning to sink, he cried out, ‘Lord, save me!’”

There are three stages here.

Firstly when he saw the wind. That doesn’t mean that as he walked around the boat, he suddenly noticed there was a wind blowing. “Oh, there’s quite a wind out here today!”

No, he knew there was a wind out there. He’d been in it all evening, been fighting against it. He was very aware of the wind.

But when it says, “When he saw the wind,” it means that the wind became his preoccupation again. And when the wind became his preoccupation again, he knew he was not in control and so the consequence was fear.

He is experiencing a miracle of Jesus and yet he is still afraid.

Why? Because his focus is moved from Jesus, on whom he was trusting, to the problem, which remained exactly the same.

He reversed what he believed when he got out of the boat. He got out of the boat because he saw that was threatening to be over his head was under the feet of Jesus. “And I am going to trust You to bid me join You on the water.”

But now he sees what is under the feet of Jesus is threatening to be over his head. He has reversed it.

So his natural consequence is fear.

You know faith is not an act. It becomes a disposition, an attitude. You don't say, “Well, Lord I will trust You and boom, something happens.”

Peter had trusted God, stepped out of the boat. Something had happened, but faith is ongoing, continuous, day by day, moment by moment. Not just saying in this situation, “Lord, thank You. I do trust You and thank You that You are at work,” and then sitting back and trying to make the rest of it work out ourselves.

But it is every day, “Thank You Lord. This is Your work. Thank You; this is Your ability. Thank You for Your presence. Thank You for Your strength.”

This is the clutch remember that engages the engine with the wheels. Thank You. It is the disposition of faith.

And Peter had turned away from seeing that what was threatening his head was under the feet of Jesus to seeing that what was under the feet of Jesus was threatening his head.

And he began to be terrified. He was afraid.

And then it says,

“Beginning to sink, he cried out, ‘Lord, save me!’”

It is the great moment when out of our depths we cry out. In fact it is pivotal when we say, “Lord, You do something.”

Hilary mentioned her parents in the last session. Her parents have been divorced for more than 40 years and both are with other spouses.

And her mother and her husband were in the doctor's recently. They have a number of issues and struggles but they haven't been courageous enough to be honest about them so they get the kind of help that they need.

They want, quite naturally, to retain as much independence as they can, to retain as much of their sense of not weakening.

And when they were in the doctor's surgery last week, her husband Bill said, after quite a lengthy conversation with the doctor, "We need help. We can't cope."

And he took his pen and he wrote on his paper, "At last Mr. Shepherd acknowledges he needs help."

Then he said, "This is what we can do."

Peter, as he begins to sink, acknowledges, "I need help. Lord, save me!" on his way down, seeing the jaw of the sea and the waves opening to gobble him up, "Lord, save me!"

And what did Jesus say in response? Did he say, "Peter, you are pretty useless, aren't you, hey? You are far too big to try and walk on water. Peter, lose a few pounds and then come and try it again."

Did He say that?

Or, "Buy yourself a pair of flippers and see if that will help."

No, when Peter cried, "Lord, save me!" at that moment the onus went completely away from Peter and completely to Jesus because it says in Verse 31,

"Immediately..."

"Immediately..."

When that cry, "I need You!" came,

"Immediately Jesus reached out his hand and caught him. 'You of little faith, why did you doubt?'"

"The issue, Peter, was not your fear – that's not what's causing you to sink; it is your lack of faith in Me. And you have acted courageously. You have acted in faith. But you have turned your attention away. Oh you of little faith."

You know, nothing becomes experiential without active faith in God.

The writer to the Hebrews says about the Israelites and about the people he is writing to in contrasting them, the Israelites in the time of Moses, "We also had the gospel preached to us just as they did, but the message they heard was of no value to them because those who heard did not combine it with faith.

They had a gospel preached to them, as you do to you, he said, but to them it was of no value at all. Not because the gospel itself was somehow inadequate, but they did not combine what they heard with faith.

And faith is not mustering up belief. Faith, by definition, is confidence in an object to the extent that the object in which we place our confidence is enabled to do something for us.

You are exercising faith right now, every one of you, on the chair on which you are sitting. You didn't think much about it. You know chairs well enough to know they are designed to hold you. But you sat in act of faith and you came in here just now; you put faith in the chair. And what is holding you in place is not your faith but the chair in which you put your faith because your faith in the chair enables the chair to do something for you.

Does that make sense?

If you're not sure, when nobody else is looking, take away the chair and sit on your faith. Faith is totally meaningless unless it is placed in an object for the purpose of allowing the object, enabling the object to do something for us.

Faith in God is a disposition of trust in God that enables God to work so the explanation for our lives becomes God at work in us.

That doesn't mean the storms all still and the problems all go away but it means in the midst of those difficulties, in the midst of the storms, in the midst of the hardships, in the midst of the darkness when we do not know what is coming next, we trust Him and we cling to Him.

And then Jesus and Peter climbed into the boat and joined the other eleven disciples. And Matthew 14:32 says,

“When they 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.’”

Now let me ask you a question. When they got into the boat and they all worshiped Him and said, “You are the Son of God,” was that mission accomplished?

The answer is no. It of course is a wonderful thing to be taken up with who the Lord Jesus Christ is, to wonder at Him, to worship Him. But that worship must lead to experience of Him, more than just worship Him up there.

We can put Jesus on a pedestal, and I mean that, and stick Him out there somewhere, rather than in our hearts be the One to whom we relate and trust and love and cherish and we enjoy the fact that He loves us and He cherishes us, as Brett spoke to us yesterday that “I love you because I love you because I love you,” to know that about Him.

And out of that will flow our experience of Him because when He climbed into the boat with them, and the wind died down, they were amazed for they had not understood about the loaves and their hearts were hardened.

And when they eventually arrived in Capernaum they probably felt, well, our hearts are not as hard now as they were before because, wow, we had seen something.

But you know it's a long process of breaking down our hearts – rarely in just one instance. And you follow through the years of Jesus' ministry; Peter didn't get it. For ages he got his doctrine, he could answer the question, "Who do men say I am?"

"You are the Christ, the Son of the Living God." [Matthew 16:16]

That was Peter.

"Blessed are you Simon son of Jonah, this was not revealed to you by man but by my Father who is in heaven." [Matthew 16:17]

"Peter, you have had this revelation from God. You are right about that."

But you remember when He came to the night before His crucifixion; Jesus met with His disciples in the Upper Room. And one of the things He said to them was this: "Before the night is out, all of you will desert Me."

Peter interrupted – you read this in Matthew 26,

"Even if all these desert you, I never will," said Peter.

"And I am sorry, Jesus, You feel that about us, but yeah, sure, you know, Thomas maybe, John is a bit sentimental; maybe when the pressure is on he will go. But I never will. You are forgetting about me. I will never leave You. I will never desert You – ever."

And Jesus said, "Peter, before the rooster crows in the morning..."

And I know what time roosters crow in Israel because I heard one several nights in a row in Jerusalem. Four o'clock in the morning they crow.

"Before the rooster crows in the morning you will deny Me three times."

And Peter said, "If I have to die with You, I will never disown You. Jesus, You don't understand me do You? If I have to – if they ever put four crosses on that hill and put me on the fourth, I'll be there. If I have to die, I will never desert You."

Peter didn't really know himself, and that night as Jesus was arrested and taken by the Romans, Peter followed at a distance, it says. And a girl came and said, "Aren't you one of His disciples?"

"One of whose?"

"That man just arrested – Jesus of Nazareth."

“No, I don’t know Him at all.”

“I’m sorry; I thought you were one of His.”

“No – mistaken identity.” (Phew! Got away with that.)

And somebody else came by and said, “Aren’t you one of His disciples?”

“No, somebody else just said that.”

“But you have got a northern accent.”

“Yeah, that’s fine, I come from Galilee, but no I’m not one of His disciples.”

And then somebody else came by and said, “You are one of His disciples.”

And I can’t tell you what Peter said because it is censored; it simply says Peter cursed and swore and denied any knowledge of Christ.

“I don’t blankety, blankety, blank, know the blankety, blankety, blank.”

Cursed and swore, and suddenly, cock-a-doodle-doo!

And you know, it says Peter broke down and wept bitterly - one of the best moments in Peter’s life.

“I can’t live out what I want to live out and what I believe is true. I can’t do it.”

And you remember that Jesus met with him after the resurrection. We won’t talk about that. But when He ascended – before He ascended He said, “You wait in Jerusalem. Don’t go running off and doing things. Wait until you are endued with power from on high.”

And when Peter realized his own bankruptcy, his own inability, on the Day of Pentecost he was filled with the Holy Spirit along with 120 other people. Peter got up and began to speak with power, with authority.

When in the next chapter, Acts 3, he met a crippled man at the temple gate, he asked him for money. “I don’t have any money,” said Peter, “but what I have I will give you. In the name of Jesus Christ, get up and walk.”

The man jumped to his feet and began to prance around. A crowd gathered and people came to Peter and Peter said, “Why do you look at me as if I, by my own godliness made this man walk? We didn’t do this. It’s the God of our father Abraham, the God of Isaac, the God of Jacob – He has made this man walk. I now know it is not what I do for Him; it’s what He will do in and through me. So don’t call me a miracle worker and don’t congratulate me. And don’t slap me

on the back. All I am is a person indwelt by the Spirit of God. It is Jesus who raised this man from the dead.”

Peter’s got it now. Not trying to live for Jesus now, but Jesus through His Holy Spirit living His life in us and we living in dependence upon Him, in humility with a heart that is not hardened but broken.

And I don’t know how God has been speaking to you over these few days. We wanted these few days because we believe that it is so important that we take time, not just to look at all the beautiful historical places and symbols that mean so much to us as believers in the Lord Jesus, but here in this place, on this trip we meet with the risen Christ Himself.

Some of us need to lift up a withered hand and let Him touch us. Some of us need to get away and be alone with Him, as we heard this morning, pull out of the crowd – not just here, but becoming part of our lives, there is time when we pull out and we are alone, just you and Him.

And He feeds your soul and feeds your heart.

Then we step out in obedience to Him and dependence on Him. And the language of our dependence on Him is “Thank You, Thank You. I can trust You.”

We are going to pray together. And if God has been speaking to you over this retreat and these two days to spend time in quiet meditation in those reflection times as we have listened to the Word of God, as we have engaged in conversation with one another – if God has spoken to you and you sense in your heart “there are barriers to my Christian life, there are huge walls in my Christian life that I have to break through, making the time to be alone with Him, having the courage to step out in obedience, lifting up my withered life to Him, while being willing to say, “Thank You” in every situation and trusting Him to be enough.”

And if there are those of us here this afternoon that sense that God has spoken to us, we don’t want to get back on the bus and hope it will all just go away; we want to do business with God, I am going to ask you in a moment to stand if that is true for you.

And I am going to pray for those who stand. I am going to pray that God, the Holy Spirit, will encourage you in the response you are making, will write into your heart the things you need to know, will give you the courage to go home from here back to your home, back to your work, back to your normal sphere, not with a determination to do better, but the realization that you can’t, but that He can and you are going to trust Him and obey Him.

If there are those amongst us who, I will give you a moment of silence, and you respond to God personally, and then after that moment of silence, I am going to ask you to stand if you are doing business with God, something fresh. And then I am going to pray for those who are standing - just a moment of silence.

And if you have made a response to Him in your heart and you know you need to take specific steps of obedience and acts of faith that you have never engaged in before, and you are saying,

“God has spoken to me,” would you stand to your feet, and I am going to pray for those who will be standing. Stand quietly to your feet.

Don't do it because somebody else does; this is between you and God.

Father, I thank You for all these folks who are on their feet here this afternoon. You know every one and You love every one of us. You know our histories. You know our struggles. You know the cries, “Lord, save me!”

You know the breaking down or weeping bitterly. You know all those experiences have been part of our lives. And I pray, Lord, that in Your love for us, that You will make Yourself so much more real and precious and central and powerful in our hearts and lives.

Not because we are looking for big things; we are looking in the ordinary spheres of life, as husbands, as wives, as parents, as neighbors, as workers that in the ordinary spheres of life, we'll be those who live in dependence on You and for every situation we can say, “Thank You. You are I AM, always present, always adequate, always available.”

Help us to trust You for that, we pray. And for the rest of us, thank You for those who know and love You and have lived in union with You for so many years. And for others of us who are struggling in areas of our Christian life and we are not at a point yet to really deal with those areas with You, we pray for them too that these last days of this tour will be rich days of allowing You to work in our hearts and draw us more deeply to Yourself.

So we commit each one to You with gratitude, in Jesus' Name, Amen.

Will you please be seated? I think Wendy is coming just to finish the afternoon.