



Walking On Water

A South Pacific Christian Ministries Bible Study

Written By: Pastor David Myrick

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Instructions

This study is designed to use questions and scriptures to enable believers to gain understanding of the topic. While it may be used for individual study, it is designed for a group setting. The Leader's Guide provides a group leader with additional information, scripture passages, and directional comments to enable and direct the discussion. The questions provided are designed to direct the discussion and enable participants to gain insight into the topic.

Group Leaders should read the summary and Leader's Guide prior to the meeting. It is also helpful if you read the scriptures and answer the questions in the Study Question section. The Study Question should be provided to participants in advance of the group meeting so that they have time to read the scriptures and answer the questions. During the group meeting follow the Leader's Guide, reading the scripture passages as they are presented, read or discuss the information presented. It is helpful to have members of the group read the scriptures out loud. Ask the questions in the order that they appear in the Leader's Guide. Keep in mind the recommended answer participants present their answers. Depending on the answers provided by the group, you may want to ask additional questions to help them see the recommend answer.

It should be noted that this and our other studies often reference scriptural symbolism. As with the parables that Jesus told, a scriptural symbolism represents a deeper truth found within a passage. In order for scriptural symbolism to be valid it must line up with scripture and be supported by scripture and conform to the character of God.

All scripture references found in this study are the King James version, unless otherwise noted. Do not use or allow the use of none scripture references during the discussion. In particular, so called lost books, the Apocrypha books or any other book or material not included in the Bible. While Apocrypha books are part of the Catholic bible, they are not included in the Protestant bible due to contradictions with other scriptures. If a scripture used by a group participant seems questionable, compare it to the King James and Amplified versions.

Also, in a group setting, do not allow anyone to dominate the discussion. If one member talks too much, it will hinder others. Don't allow group members to challenge directly the answers of other group members. Keep in mind that the answers presented in the Leader's Guide, are not the final or only acceptable answers. These answers serve as a guide to direct the discussion and impart insight.

If you are using this study for your personal study time, then read the summary, scripture referenced in the Study Question section and then answer the questions. Make sure that you read and study the scriptures used in the Study. After you have completed the Study Question section, then read the Leader's Guide and compare your answers to those in the Leader's Guide.

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About Us

South Pacific Christian Ministries is a Non-Denomination Missions Oriented Ministry that sprang out of a small tourist focused church in Kailua-Kona, Hawaii. After 16 years serving as the Senior Pastor the LORD redirected our steps from the little chapel by the sea to the small island communities of the South Pacific.

Our Vision is to bring the living water to the small islands of the South Pacific; a vision summed up in the Hawaiian phrase Ke Ola Wai, which means the living water. Ke Ola Wai encompassing our greatest spiritual and physical need, pure spiritual and physical water.

Our Mission is to meet the spiritual and physical needs of the people who live on the small islands of the South Pacific that can only be reached by boat. To bring the Gospel of Jesus Christ to their shores, assisting local Pastors, providing Bible Training for believers and conducting outreaches to draw in non-believers. To provide gravity fed, family sized, reverse osmosis water filters; emergency medical supplies; medical services; and disaster response training.

Summary

This study examines the event of Jesus and Peter walking on the water and Peter's response found in Matthew 14. It is important to understand nature of God's Word, the significance of Jesus' command to Peter, Peter's triumph and failure, and Jesus' response to Peter's failure. The event of Jesus and Peter walking on the water demonstrates the power of God's Word and His character for those who are willing to step out and trust in Him.



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Leaders Guide

One of the most significant acts of obedience and faith recorded in God's Word is Peter walking on the water at the command of Jesus. Ignoring his eventual failure, Peter responded to Jesus' command by doing something that was physically impossible; something his experience said could not be done. The entire event provides a great example to every believer showing what is possible when you act in faith at His Word.

To fully understand this event and what it means to the believer we need to start with an understanding of God's Word.

Isaiah 55:10-11

- 10 For as the rain cometh down, and the snow from heaven, and returneth not thither, but watereth the earth, and maketh it bring forth and bud, that it may give seed to the sower, and bread to the eater:
- 11 So shall my word be that goeth forth out of my mouth: it shall not return unto me void, but it shall accomplish that which I please, and it shall prosper in the thing whereto I sent it.

When God speaks His words have the ability accomplish their task, that is, what ever He spoke. If it is a command, then it performs the command. If it is a promise, then it fulfills the promise, causing what ever is necessary to come about in order for the promise to be fulfilled. If it defines something or someone, then that Word brings about the necessary change to fit the new description.

God's Word can not return void. It is impossible. His Word contains the power and authority to perform the assigned task. His Word can not be canceled out by circumstances, nature, man's unbelief or rejection.

Genesis 1:3 - 4

- 3 And God said, Let there be light: and there was light.
- 4 And God saw the light, that it was good: and God divided the light from the darkness.

God said, "let there be light and there was light". When He spoke his words went forth and created light and gave light the power and ability to overcome darkness. In fact, darkness is the absence of light and not the opposite. Darkness can not overcome even the smallest light which can fill a dark room. Darkness can not smother out light, regardless of how small that light is.

God's word contains the power, authority and everything necessary to accomplish their task. God's words are NOT empty, they change reality. It is important to understand that without the power and authority necessary, God's word could not bring about any change.

Genesis 1:14-18

- 14 And God said, Let there be lights in the firmament of the heaven to divide the day from the night; and let them be for signs, and for seasons, and for days, and years:
- 15 And let them be for lights in the firmament of the heaven to give light upon the earth: and it was so.
- 16 And God made two great lights; the greater light to rule the day, and the lesser light to rule the night: he made the stars also.
- 17 And God set them in the firmament of the heaven to give light upon the earth,
- 18 And to rule over the day and over the night, and to divide the light from the darkness: and God saw that it was good.



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When He created the sun, moon, stars and the other objects in space, He spoke them into being. He caused the light they gave off to be seen on the earth. In other words, when He created them, He also created the particles or beam of light that span the vast distances in space from those objects to the earth. His Word, "Let there be lights.." went forth and created what He declared to exist.

Again, God's words are not empty they contain the power and authority to change reality. Before He spoke, light did not exist. Before He spoke the sun, moon, planets and stars did not exist. Reality changed because of His word.

God's word is not limited by the laws of Physics, the laws of man or man's unbelief. He is not bound by time, distance or anything natural or of man. Nature and man bend to His will, not the other way around. God's word changes reality. God's word directs the choices of man and what nature does. His word rules supreme over His creation.

Matthew 14:22-23

- 22 And straightway Jesus constrained his disciples to get into a ship, and to go before him unto the other side, while he sent the multitudes away.
- 23 And when he had sent the multitudes away, he went up into a mountain apart to pray: and when the evening was come, he was there alone.

Jesus had spent the day ministering to a large group of people. As the day came to an end He told his disciples to get into a ship and go to the other side. He then sent the people home and went onto a mountain to pray for a time.

Homework Question

- 1) Why did Jesus send the disciples ahead?
 - Because He knew what was about to take place. Everything in God's Word has a purpose.
- 2) What was Jesus's command to His disciples?
 - Jesus commanded His disciples to go to the other side. (See Mat 14:22b)

Matthew 14:24-26

- 24 But the ship was now in the midst of the sea, tossed with waves: for the wind was contrary.
- 25 And in the fourth watch of the night Jesus went unto them, walking on the sea.
- 26 And when the disciples saw him walking on the sea, they were troubled, saying, It is a spirit; and they cried out for fear.

Now the sea the disciples were trying to cross was the Sea of Galilee. It is an inland sea known for sudden and violent storms. It is not uncommon for waves can top 10 feet high and for there to be very strong winds. The disciples were doing what Jesus told them to do and were being hindered by circumstances. Shortly after they began their journey across the sea the storm rose up and began tossing them about and hindering them.

Homework Question

- 3) What does the storm that the disciples encountered symbolize?
 - Hindering circumstances, emotions or forces that are contrary to what God has told us to do



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The forth watch referenced in Matthew 14:25 is between 3am and 6pm. It is this period of time that Jesus walks on the water to where the disciples were. At this point they have been struggling for hours. They are tired, wet and fearful. Several of the disciples knew those waters, having spent their lives fishing on it. They likely knew many who had lost their lives in similar circumstances. It is at this point that Jesus walks out to them on the water.

Homework Question

- 4) Why were the disciples afraid?
- It was night and they saw something or someone on the water.

It is understandable that the disciples were frightened by what they saw. They are in the middle of the sea of Galilee. It is dark and stormy. They have been struggling all night to cross the sea. They are fearful for their lives due to the fierceness of the storm. Suddenly they see something in the distance that appears to be a man walking on the water. Needless to say, fear rose up in their heart over this strange site.

Matthew 14:27

27 But straightway Jesus spake unto them, saying, Be of good cheer; it is I; be not afraid.

Note that Jesus begins speaking to them right away as soon as they have seen Him. He knew that they are afraid. He knew that their struggle had already filled them with fear. He knew that the sight of Him walking on the water would terrify them.

It is important that we always remember that the LORD knows what we are going through. He is also never surprised by the circumstances that come against us. Knowing what will occur He has already taken steps to get us through that circumstance. The LORD knows our needs before we ask and He has promised to answer our prayers.

Matthew 6:8

8 Be not ye therefore like unto them: for your Father knoweth what things ye have need of, before ye ask him.

Matthew 7:7

7 Ask, and it shall be given you; seek, and ye shall find; knock, and it shall be opened unto you:

Jesus knew what His disciples would face before He told them to go to the other side. He knew that the storm would come against them. He knew that He would walk out on the water to them to deliver them.

Matthew 14:28-29

28 And Peter answered him and said, Lord, if it be thou, bid me come unto thee on the water.

29 And he said, Come. And when Peter was come down out of the ship, he walked on the water, to go to Jesus.

Homework Question

- 5) Why did Peter say to Jesus, "if that is you, tell me to come to you on the water"?
- God clearly prompted Him to make that statement.



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Peter's request to Jesus does not make sense from a practical point of view. Certainly, not a request that you would expect someone to make in that circumstance. Jesus was doing something that Peter's experience said was impossible. Then again, Peter had already seen Jesus do many things that were impossible for man to do. There was nothing practical about his request, but God often prompts us to step out and do something that is not practical.

God prompted Peter to ask something that went beyond what he knew and understood. Peter, the fisherman, knew that you could not walk on water. Knowing this, Peter still asked, "Lord, if it be thou, bid me come unto thee on the water."

Homework Question

- 6) How is it that Peter could know that it was Jesus speaking and not some spirit trying to destroy them?
 - Peter knew Jesus's voice - "My sheep know my voice" - John 10:26-27
- 7) How do we learn to recognize His voice?
 - We spend time with talking with Him; not at Him. Through experience we learn the difference between His voice, our thoughts and the enemy. Also, through studying His Word we learn about His character and ways so that we can judge what we hear.

Matthew 14:28-29

- 28 And Peter answered him and said, Lord, if it be thou, bid me come unto thee on the water.
- 29 And he said, Come. And when Peter was come down out of the ship, he walked on the water, to go to Jesus.

Jesus spoke just one word, "Come". It was a command, not just an encouragement. Under his own power and authority Peter could not defy the laws of physics and walk on water. The Word of the LORD had no such limitations. That one word contained all of the power and authority necessary for Peter to walk on the water.

Homework Question

- 8) When Jesus said to Peter, "Come", what made Peter think that he could walk on water like Jesus?
 - Jesus said it and that was enough for Peter.

Peter stepped out of the boat onto the water in faith. He was able to defy gravity and the laws of physics by the Word of the LORD. His action were a direct result of his trust in Jesus. Faith comes through a trust in the LORD that He will do or enable you to do what He says.

Homework Questions

- 9) Is there a difference between experiential knowledge (knowledge gain through experience) and faith? If so what?
 - Experiential knowledge is based on things that you have done or seen.
Faith is based on what you accept as truth and believe which may be external to your experience or the natural realm.
- 10) Can experiential knowledge build our faith?
 - Experiential knowledge that is a direct result of an action performed by faith will build our faith. Asking God for a small thing and seeing His answer to our prayer helps us to step out and ask for greater things.



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Homework Questions

- 11) When God asks you to do something what comes with His command?
 - The necessary provision, power and ability to accomplish the task comes with the Word
- 12) What enabled Peter to walk on the water?
 - Jesus' command "Come".
- 13) As Peter walked towards Jesus what was going on?
 - Wind blew, the waves went up and down.
- A) As Peter gets out of the boat the wind is blowing against him and he can see the waves rising and falling. Did the circumstances that Peter found himself in have an effect - in the immediate?
 - No. His eyes were fixed on Jesus

Matthew 14:30

- 30 But when he saw the wind boisterous, he was afraid; and beginning to sink, he cried, saying, Lord, save me.

After stepping out of the boat and walking on the water Peter began to notice the wind. Many have speculated that because of the waves and blowing wind that Peter was unable to see Jesus causing him to then sink. That view erroneously assumes that Peter's ability to walk on the water came from seeing Jesus and not the power and authority contained in Jesus' command. The Word does not say that seeing Jesus Peter stepped out of the boat and walked on the water. It says that Jesus said "Come" and Peter then stepped out of the boat and began walking on the water.

Homework Question

- 14) Why did He begin to sink?
 - He accepted the reality of the circumstances or the power of Jesus.
- 15) What was Peter focused on when he stepped out of the boat?
 - Jesus and his command

When Peter received the Word of the LORD he had the ability to do that which the LORD had said. The Word, "Come" had the power and authority for Peter to do what Jesus said. It is only when Peter considers the wind that he fails. In other words, when he placed his focus on his circumstance instead of the Word of the LORD.

The word "saw" in Matthew 14, verse 30, is the Greek word "blepo", which means to see, take heed, regard. What Peter saw was not important. What Peter thought was. Peter looked at the wind. It is blowing hard, causing waves to rise against them. That is the same wind that was blowing a moment ago when Peter first stepped out of the boat. The only difference is that now he is walking on faith. He has stepped out in obedience to the LORD and is doing the impossible. That is not the time to consider the circumstances around you. Those circumstances have no power to stop what God is doing in you or through you. They are just circumstances, temporary events, without power and authority, unless you give it to them.

As soon as Peter regarded, or gave importance to, the circumstance around him he sank. The Word in which he placed his faith and trust in was no longer holding him up. Peter allowed something else to take the place of the Word of the LORD upon which he walked. Peter allowed a circumstance to speak into him. A circumstance that had risen up to hinder their efforts to obey the voice of the LORD. The circumstance was trying to stop Peter from obeying the voice of the LORD.



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Jesus did not say to Peter, "step out of the boat and swim." Jesus did not say, "Peter give it a try, maybe you will, maybe you wont." Jesus said one word, full of power and authority. Jesus said "Come."

Peter had a command of the LORD which gave him the power and authority to do what that the LORD word said. At first, Peter placed his faith in the Word of the LORD. Moments later he falters because he considered the circumstance around him and gave it more power than the Word of the LORD.

Peter defied nature, his experience and his circumstance when he stepped out of the boat and walked on the water at Jesus' command. He faltered only when he switched his faith to what nature, his experience and his current circumstance told him instead. As long as Peter trusted the Word of the LORD he was able to do the impossible.

Homework Question

- 16) What was Jesus' response when Peter started to sink and cried out for help?
- Jesus IMMEDIATELY lifted him up from the water and got him into the boat.

Matthew 14:30-33

- 31 And immediately Jesus stretched forth his hand, and caught him, and said unto him, O thou of little faith, wherefore didst thou doubt?
- 32 And when they were come into the ship, the wind ceased.
- 33 Then they that were in the ship came and worshipped him, saying, Of a truth thou art the Son of God. Jesus RESTORED PETER TO HIM after he had faltered in his faith, stumbled

When and how Jesus responded is one of the most important facts in this event. When Peter faith faltered, Jesus did not just stand back and watch him sink. He did not stand over Peter as he was sinking and chastize him for his lack of faith.

At Peter's cry Jesus immediately reached out His hand and caught Him. When Jesus spoke the command "Come" he was still in the distance from Peter. The moment Peter cried out Jesus was there by him to help. There was no wait. His cry for help was immediately answered. Jesus restored Peter to Him first. Once Peter was safe, then, and only then, did Jesus chastize him for his lack of faith.

Homework Question

- 17) What is God's response when you falter in your faith?
- When we step out in faith initially, then falter, God is there to help us learn and grow. He may correct us for our lack of faith, but will never leave us in harms way.

You might think that I'm not a Peter. I could never step out in faith like that. The truth is, you are more than what Peter was at that point in time. Peter was a disciple of Jesus, but he was still under the old covenant. Peter was just a man, like any other of his day. If Jesus Christ is your LORD and Savior then you are something much more than what Peter was at that time, because of the Work of the Cross.

Philippians 4:13

- 13 I can do all things through Christ which strengtheneth me.

The only limitations that we have is due to our unbelief. We can do anything that He has put on our hearts to do, because of His Word.



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John 14:12-14

- 12 Verily, verily, I say unto you, He that believeth on me, the works that I do shall he do also; and greater works than these shall he do; because I go unto my Father.
- 13 And whatsoever ye shall ask in my name, that will I do, that the Father may be glorified in the Son.
- 14 If ye shall ask any thing in my name, I will do it.

Jesus healed the sick, caused the blind to see, set the captives free, raised the dead, walked on water, calmed the storms and proclaimed God's Word for all who would hear. Because He said, if we believe, then we can do what He did and greater things, means just that. The degree in which you believe is the degree in which you will see the Word of the LORD functioning in your life. The degree in which you believe is the degree in which you will do the works that Jesus did and greater works.

Homework Question

- 18) Consider honestly what, if anything, is preventing you from doing what Jesus did?
(While this question can be used in a class discussion, it is meant for personal reflection.)



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Study Questions

Answer the following questions, using scripture to support your answers where appropriate. The goal is to gain understanding, not to adhere to short, pat answers. Don't limit yourself to the space on the page between questions. Write your answers on a separate sheet if necessary. Do not include answers based on the books that are not part of the Bible. The opinions of man and blending the works of man, in particular false books, will hinder your walk and understanding.

Read

Isaiah 55:10-11	Matthew 6:8
Genesis 1:3 - 4	Matthew 7:7
Genesis 1:14-18	Philippians 4:13
Matthew 14:22-33	John 14:12-14

Questions

- 1) Why did Jesus send the disciples ahead?
- 2) What was Jesus's command to His disciples?
- 3) What does the storm that the disciples encountered symbolize?
- 4) Why were the disciples afraid?
- 5) Why did Peter say to Jesus, "if that is you, tell me to come to you on the water"?
- 6) How is it that Peter could know that it was Jesus speaking and not some spirit trying to destroy them?
- 7) How do we learn to recognize His voice?
- 8) When Jesus said to Peter, "Come", what made Peter think that he could walk on water like Jesus?



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- 9) Is there a difference between experiential knowledge (knowledge gain through experience) and faith? If so what?

- 10) Can experiential knowledge build our faith?

- 11) When God asks you to do something what comes with His command?

- 12) What enabled Peter to walk on the water?

- 13) As Peter walked towards Jesus what was going on?
 - A) As Peter gets out of the boat the wind is blowing against him and he can see the waves rising and falling. Did the circumstances that Peter found himself in have an effect - in the immediate?

- 14) Why did He begin to sink?

- 15) What was Peter focused on when he stepped out of the boat?

- 16) What was Jesus' response when Peter started to sink and cried out for help?

- 17) What is God's response when you falter in your faith?

- 18) Consider honestly what, if anything, is preventing you from doing what Jesus did?