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All words spoken by Jesus Christ are in **red text**.

(Hyperlinks are surrounded by parenthesis and are underlined.)

Words such as Lord, Savior, Master and Redeemer are used to describe the various aspects of who Jesus is. However, the word “teacher” is another word to describe Jesus because His instructions transcend all educators throughout time. The reason is because His instructions came from the Father. Jesus declared:

- “My teaching is not my own. It comes from the one who sent me. Anyone who chooses to do the will of God will find out whether my teaching comes from God or whether I speak on my own.” John 7:16-17
- “I do nothing on my own but speak just what the Father has taught me.” John 8:28
- “For I did not speak on my own, but the Father who sent me commanded me to say all that I have spoken. I know that his command leads to eternal life. So whatever I say is just what the Father has told me to say.” John 12:49-50

It is important to understand that everything Jesus said; everything Jesus did; and every person who interacted with Him had an instructional purpose and spiritual application for every believer. In addition, the lessons taught by Jesus were not intended for the mind alone. But rather, the lessons were comprised of spiritual revelations intended for the heart—because instructional information that reaches the heart has more transformative power than when it only enters into the mind.

The lesson title of “Walking on Water” is a metaphor that symbolizes stepping out in faith—even when faced with overwhelming challenges—which describes the miracle that occurred when Jesus and Peter walked on water.

“Immediately Jesus made His disciples get into the boat and go before Him to the other side, while He sent the multitudes away. And when He had sent the multitudes away, He went up on the mountain by Himself to pray. Now when evening came, He was alone there. But the boat was now in the middle of the sea, tossed by the waves, for the wind was contrary. Now in the fourth watch of the night Jesus went to them, walking on the sea. And when the disciples saw Him walking on the sea, they were troubled, saying, ‘It is a ghost!’ And they cried out for fear. But immediately Jesus spoke to them, saying, ‘Be of good cheer! It is I; do not be afraid.’ And Peter answered Him and said, ‘Lord, if it is You, command me to come to You on the water.’ So He said, ‘Come.’ And when Peter had come down out of the boat, he walked on the water to go to Jesus. But when he saw that the wind was boisterous, he was afraid; and beginning to sink he cried out, saying, ‘Lord, save me!’ And immediately Jesus stretched out His hand and caught him, and said to him, ‘O you of little faith, why did you doubt?’ And when they got into the boat, the wind ceased. Then those who were in the boat came and worshiped Him, saying, ‘Truly You are the Son of God.’” Matthew 14:22-33; (Mark 6:45-52) and (John 6:16-21)

This biblical account of what occurred when Jesus walked on water—and how His disciples responded—is an instructional event that is relevant to all of us. Therefore, let’s begin by reviewing the key facts. As you read, imagine you are on the boat with the disciples as you experience their emotions and wonderment.

1. After Jesus fed the 5,000 with 5 loaves of bread and 2 fish (Matthew 14:13-21), He directed His disciples to go before Him to the other side (of the body of water) by boat.
 - a. The body of water is the Sea of Galilee: a large freshwater lake in N.E. Israel.
 - b. The instructions from Jesus to “go before Him” means that He intended to join them later.
2. By the time they reached the middle of the Sea of Galilee, the wind was:
 - a. Contrary (opposing their intended direction).
 - b. Sufficiently strong to cause waves that tossed the boat.
 - c. Creating a condition that caused the disciples to fear for their safety.
3. It was dark and difficult to see.
 - a. Jesus began walking to them on the fourth watch (3 a.m. to 6 a.m. before sunrise and no light).
 - b. Initially the disciples were unable to recognize Jesus and thought He was a ghost.
 - A likely response, because what else could it be because humans are not able to walk on water!
 - They cried out in fear (likely intensified by the fear created by the wind and waves).

4. Jesus declared it was Him and told them to not be afraid.
5. Peter then asked Jesus to command him to also walk on the water, and Jesus said “Come.” What is interesting to note is that Peter:
 - a. Had an impetuous and inquisitive nature.
 - b. Trusted Jesus as he stepped off the boat and began to walk on the water towards Him.
 - c. Soon began to look at and consider the tumultuous conditions that surrounded him, lost buoyancy, and called to Jesus for help.
6. Jesus grabbed him and explained why was not able to walk on the water: a lack of faith and doubt.
7. The wind ceased when Jesus and Peter entered into the boat. The instructional event was completed.
8. They realized and declared He is the son of God, and worshiped Him.

Spiritual Relevance and Application

There are multiple lessons we can learn from what occurred during this miraculous event. For example:

- Jesus first instructed and then sent His disciples. We are also instructed and sent (the Great Commission).

“Go therefore and make disciples of all the nations, baptizing them in the name of the Father and of the Son and of the Holy Spirit, teaching them to observe all things that I have commanded you.” Matthew 28:19

As a follower of Jesus Christ—as we learn about Him and as we become closer to Him—the Holy Spirit will create a compelling desire to upwell from the depths of our heart, soul and spirit to share by teaching the (Gospel of Jesus Christ) to those who are lost in darkness and sin.

- Although they encountered fearful conditions, He soon arrived to help them through the storm and teach us a spiritual lesson.

We live in a world (a “boat”) that is often tossed about by the “wind and waves” of life—which at times can become overwhelming for those who seek to reach the lost. However, we are not alone because the Holy Spirit “has our back.” Even though we may perceive He seems distant, He patiently waits for us to realize that He is there and has all things under His control.

“I am with you always, even to the end of the age.” Matthew 28:20

“And I will pray the Father, and He will give you another Helper, that He may abide with you forever—the Spirit of truth, whom the world cannot receive, because it neither sees Him nor knows Him; but you know Him, for He dwells with you and will be in you. I will not leave you orphans; I will come to you.” John 14:16-18

“He is the One who goes before you. He will be with you, He will not leave you nor forsake you; do not fear nor be dismayed.” Deuteronomy 31:8

“Fear not, for I am with you; Be not dismayed, for I am your God. I will strengthen you, Yes, I will help you, I will uphold you with My righteous right hand.” Isaiah 41:10

“All things work together for good to those who love God, to those who are the called according to His purpose.” Romans 8:28

- It was dark and difficult to see.

The world is filled with sin and darkness. And any attempt on our own to mentally visualize and figure out what's going on and make sense of it all (based upon our limited human resources and capacities) is both futile and frustrating. For it is only when the "curtain is pulled back" by the Holy Spirit is when we are able to see the source of darkness battling against the source of light for the hearts of those who will respond.

"For we do not wrestle against flesh and blood, but against principalities, against powers, against the rulers of the darkness of this age, against spiritual hosts of wickedness in the heavenly places." Ephesians 6:12

"I am the light of the world. He who follows Me shall not walk in darkness, but have the light of life." John 8:12

- They did not recognize Him until He physically spoke to them.

Although it is difficult to describe, we know from the depths of our inner being when we "hear" God speaking to us. Our recognition of the source is validated because His words are encapsulated in truth, love, grace, and righteousness. For He speaks to us as we read scripture; as we pray; as we worship; as we listen to Bible teachings; as we fellowship with other Christians; and as we quiet ourselves on the inside.

"My sheep hear My voice, and I know them, and they follow Me." John 10:27

- When Peter saw Jesus he developed a desire to walk on water like Him.

Peter is one of the most relatable disciples of Jesus because of the core desires of his heart, his love for Jesus, and his misdirected behavior (which occurred prior to when the Holy Spirit descended upon the disciples). ([Acts 2](#)) Here is a short listing of Peter's shortcomings:

Peter rebuked Jesus when He foretold of His pending death and resurrection.	(Mat. 16:21-23)
After Jesus verbally declared it was He who was walking on the water, Peter said, "Lord, if it is You, command me to come to You on the water." Peter first acknowledge who He was. Then he challenged Jesus to verify Himself by commanding him to walk on the water.	(Mat. 14:28)
Peter rejected the instructional intent of Jesus when He attempted to wash his feet.	(John 13:1-17)
Peter declared he will never deny Jesus.	(Mat. 26:31-35)
Peter later denied Him 3 times.	(Mat. 26:69-75)

No one is perfect—including Peter, you and me. However, God is more interested in the desires of our heart than He is with our shortcomings.

It is important to note that Peter desired to perform a miracle similar to Jesus. For as we grow in Christ and as we are transformed by Him, we will experience a compelling desire to replicate various aspects of the ministry of Jesus. And like Peter, our stepping out (on the water in faith) sometimes involves varying degrees of risk—because although we may know why we are leaving the relative safety of our present condition (the boat), we often do not know all of the other particulars: how, when, what, and where. And in a similar manner when Peter stepped out from the boat and onto the water, we likewise will "step into the unknown" as we exercise our faith and obey His directions.

- Peter became overwhelmed by his surroundings.

There was a point of transition when Peter's faith in Jesus was overcome by doubt. This likely occurred when Peter turned His spiritual eyes away from Jesus, and focused his physical eyes upon his surroundings.

There is an inverse relationship between faith and doubt. As one increases, the other decreases. All who believe in Jesus will experience doubt at times because of the sinful nature of our flesh—especially during trials and tribulations—like Peter attempting to walk on water.

It is when we “let go” and stop trying to rely upon our limited capabilities...and trust God to fulfill His desires through us...is when things will begin to materialize. There is nothing we can do by our own vain self-directed efforts to further the gospel of Jesus Christ—for this is the work of the Holy Spirit.

“Not by might nor by power, but by My Spirit, says the Lord of hosts.” Zechariah 4:6

- Jesus saved Peter from sinking into the water and returned him to the safety of the boat.

Trials and tribulations at times can seem overwhelming as we visualize ourselves drowning in the depths of an uncontrollable situation. This is when we have one choice: prayerfully trust Him in that He will pull us out of our perceived demise. This is when we pray, “I trust you Lord, I TRUST you Lord, I TRUST YOU LORD!”

“Trust in the Lord with all your heart, and lean not on your own understanding; in all your ways acknowledge Him, and He shall direct your paths.” Proverbs 3:5-6

“My brethren, count it all joy when you fall into various trials, knowing that the testing of your faith produces patience.” James 1:2-4

“When you pass through the waters, I will be with you; and through the rivers, they shall not overflow you. When you walk through the fire, you shall not be burned, nor shall the flame scorch you.” Isaiah 43:2-3

“Fear not, for I am with you; be not dismayed, for I am your God. I will strengthen you, yes, I will help you, I will uphold you with My righteous right hand.” Isaiah 41:10

- Jesus caused the wind (and waves) to cease.

God had completed His intended spiritual instruction—for both the disciples and for us.

When we look back at past trials and tribulations, we can see how those “things” that seemed like monumental challenges lost their influence and/or disappeared. In addition, we can also see how these events changed us from within—by “surgically altering” various aspects of our sinful flesh—so that we can more effectively reflect who He is.



Although Peter demonstrated multiple flaws (like all of us), it was because of the desires of his heart, his love for Jesus, and the Father's revelatory influence upon him, that he was chosen by Jesus to be instrumental in establishing the early church. When Jesus asked the disciples, "Who do you say that I am." Peter responded, "You are the Christ, the Son of the living God." Jesus then said to Peter, "Blessed are you, Simon Bar-Jonah, for flesh and blood has not revealed this to you, but My Father who is in heaven. And I also say to you that you are Peter, and on this rock I will build My church, and the gates of Hades shall not prevail against it. And I will give you the keys of the kingdom of heaven, and whatever you bind on earth will be bound in heaven, and whatever you loose on earth will be loosed in heaven." Matthew 16:15-19

I pray this lesson has highlighted how God's grace and forgiveness looks beyond of our human frailties because of the desires of our heart to know Him, and our faith in His Son, Jesus. I also pray that you willingly step forward in faith to "walk on the water"—regardless of the present situation—when Jesus says "Come."

"Now to Him who is able to keep you from stumbling, and to present you faultless before the presence of His glory with exceeding joy, to God our Savior, who alone is wise, be glory and majesty, dominion and power, both now and forever." Jude 1:24-25

We serve a wonderful Savior.

All for His Glory,
Harold D. Thomas