



## **IHL Devotionals 2024-25: Game 3**

### **Bible story: Jesus walks on water**

*The phrase “walking on water” is used as a synonym for performing a miracle. Today we’re going to learn where it comes from.*

#### **What happens in this story?**

Last week, we were in the Old Testament reading from Jonah. This week, we’re in the New Testament. Several of the gospels mention this story; we’ll read from Matthew 14.

If you read this book on your own, be prepared: Matthew 14 is a wild chapter. John the Baptist gets beheaded, Jesus performs the miracle of the fishes and loaves, then He walks on water, then He heals the sick. It’s jam packed. You’re getting your money’s worth here.

All of those stories are connected. The Bible says when Jesus heard what happened to John the Baptist, he withdrew by boat privately to a solitary place. Crowds followed him. As evening approached, Jesus and the disciples discussed sending the people away so they could eat before it was too dark to travel. All they could muster up was five loaves of bread and two fish, but Jesus said “bring them to me.” They broke them up and 5,000 men (so, over 10,000 people counting women and children) all ate and there were 12 baskets of food left over. That’s where we pick up scripture.

Matthew 14:22 NIV: Immediately Jesus made the disciples get into the boat and go on ahead of him to the other side, while he dismissed the crowd. 23 After he had dismissed them, he went up on a mountainside by himself to pray. Later that night, he was there alone, 24 and the boat was already a considerable distance from land, buffeted by the waves because the wind was against it. 25 Shortly before dawn Jesus went out to them, walking on the lake. 26 When the disciples saw him walking on the lake, they were terrified. “It’s a ghost,” they said, and cried out in fear.

27 But Jesus immediately said to them: “Take courage! It is I. Don’t be afraid.”

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

29 “Come,” he said. Then Peter got down out of the boat, walked on the water and came toward Jesus. 30 But when he saw the wind, he was afraid and, beginning to sink, cried out, “Lord, save me!”

31 Immediately Jesus reached out his hand and caught him. “You of little faith,” he said, “why did you doubt?”

32 And when they climbed into the boat, the wind died down. 33 Then those who were in the boat worshiped him, saying, “Truly you are the Son of God.”

34 When they had crossed over, they landed at Gennesaret. 35 And when the men of that place recognized Jesus, they sent word to all the surrounding country. People brought all their sick to him 36 and begged him to let the sick just touch the edge of his cloak, and all who touched it were healed.

Matthew, Mark and John all recorded the story of Jesus walking on water in their own way. John emphasizes how rough the water was. Mark recalls their amazement that the wind died down as soon as Jesus entered the boat. Matthew is the only one who mentions Peter went to join him on the water. All three include the quote, “It is I. Don’t be afraid.”

### Takeaways

Walking on water was a miraculous act in a chapter full of them. But the deeper lesson is about faith. When a test of faith comes, there may not be time to review your notes and talk it over. Your faith is either ready or it isn’t.

- Peter started to sink when fear overtook faith.
- If you’re called by God, nothing else matters.
- Two weeks in a row, we’re seeing that God can turn up anywhere, any time, any place. In the belly of a fish at the bottom of the ocean, or walking out to the middle of a sea.

### Questions

1. The visual of Peter taking part in the miracle of walking on water for a short time is striking. Jesus said one word, “come,” and he came. He was actually doing it! That took amazing (if brief) faith. I wonder how far he got. Where were Peter’s eyes when he was above water?
2. After Peter begins to sink, Jesus says, “You of little faith, why did you doubt?” Ouch! Imagine getting rebuked by Jesus himself. Was there a time in your life when you saw faith rewarded and felt bad for having doubt?
3. What do you do when you start ‘sinking’? What did Peter do?
4. Imagine being nervous for a big game. If Sidney Crosby walked in the locker room and put his bag down and said, “don’t worry boys, it’s me, we got this,” I think we’d all relax and feel confident. In this chapter, Jesus basically says the same thing: “Take courage! It is I. Don’t be afraid.” Does that encouragement from the Lord feel like enough for your life? Why or why not?

### Closing and prayer requests

**Additional resources:** This story is found in Matthew 14:26, Mark 6:45, and John 6:19

Podcast: <https://www.thegospelcoalition.org/sermon/how-jesus-instructs-us-in-second-storm/>