



LC STUDY GUIDE

Stalled Series

The Passage: Matt. 14:22-33

April 25 – May 8

Intro: Today we look at a familiar scene – Jesus walking on the water and Peter's getting out of the boat and attempting to join him. For centuries, Christians have marveled at the supernatural moment of walking on water while also meditating on the faith implications for us as we consider the reaction of Peter and the other disciples. As we exercise our imaginations on how that windy night at sea may have looked, let us also consider the passage's central point – we can trust the person and power of Jesus at any time, including the storms of life. What we all need is the faith to step out and take steps.

Matthew 14:22-33

22 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."

O – What details or wordings do you find interesting in verses 22-25?

I – The text says Jesus "made" the disciples get into the boat. We can imagine they offered or even insisted to wait for him but he insisted. What reasons can we consider for Jesus wanting them to leave?

I – Some Biblical interpreters have suggested that this was yet another instance where the crowds wanted to anoint Jesus as their king and Jesus retreated for the sake of space and reflection. Regardless of what happened, Jesus desired time to be alone to pray. What can we glean about his prayer life?

O – Apparently Jesus prayed for quite some time, as the text says he approached them on the water "shortly before dawn." As an imaginative group exercise, pretend to either be Peter or one of the other disciples telling this story a few weeks later. Include the details of what you experienced, of what you saw and of how you felt.

I – Understandably, the disciples were terrified by the ghost walking on the water as their boat was battling the wind and waves. Jesus identified himself and told them not to be afraid. Peter decided to step out into the water with him. What can we learn from his initial faith, his limited faith, and what Jesus tells him?

A – Describe a time in life where you felt you were in a storm and exercised some degree of faith. Describe the moments when you were taking steps and the moments that felt like you were sinking. What did you gain and learn from that experience?

A – After Peter and Jesus got into the boat, the wind died down and all sat in amazement. It's clear Matthew is inviting his readers to trust the person and power of Jesus. As we enter into a time of prayer, in what storms and other moments in life can we step out in faith and join Jesus? Let's silently reflect on this and finish our time in prayer.

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- a. Please note that not all these questions are to be asked in a single meeting. Take some time to prayerfully discern what will serve your LC the best. Select and reword the questions that best fit your voice and your Life Community group.
 - b. Complement these questions with "process questions" (what else? what more? what do others think?)
 - c. When you ask questions, give people ample time to think and respond. Wait. Take your time; don't rush people but encourage participation. Avoid answering your own questions!
 - d. Application: Pace the study to conclude with difference-making application.
 - e. Secondary texts—use other texts sparingly, even if they are relevant. Such texts will push you into "teaching" rather than facilitating, causing people to feel distracted or de-powered.