When You Take Your Eyes Off Jesus You’re Sunk!
MATTHEW 14: 25-33

25 During the fourth watch of the night, 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 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.”

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Introduction

Early in the day Jesus had received word that his cousin, John the Baptist, had been executed by King Herod. Jesus tried to find a quiet place to grieve, but when the multitude found out where Jesus was they went to Him.

After spending the greater part of the day healing their sick, and evening rapidly approached, Jesus knew the people were hungry and needed food. It was at this point we read where Jesus miraculously fed the 5,000. When the time came to send the crowd away, Jesus told His disciples to get into a boat and sail to the other side of Galilee and He would meet up with them later.
After the disciples set sail, Jesus went back up on the mountainside by Himself to pray and in all likelihood, to grieve the loss of his cousin, John.

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As night fell, a powerful storm blew in over the Sea. Although Peter, Andrew, James and John were experienced professional fishermen who had sailed those waters thousands of times, they knew they were in grave danger.

The RAIN was pouring……..the WINDS were blowing fiercely….and the WAVES were pounding against the side of the boat.

By this time, the DISCIPLES were no longer concerned with making it to shore........they were just trying to stay alive!

It was now about 3:00 o’clock in the morning and as the disciples look out across the sea through the driving rain, they see what appears to be a ghost coming across the water toward them.

As the disciples grew more fearful and Jesus drew closer, Jesus identified Himself, “Take courage, it is I! Don’t be afraid.”

(verse 27)

Mark’s account of this same event, provides us with an interesting detail.

MARK 6:48 He saw the disciples straining at the oars, because the wind was against them. About the fourth watch of the night he went out to them, walking on the lake. (now listen carefully) He was about to pass by them by.

Some translations say, “He INTENDED to pass them by.”

Now that brings up an interesting question. Jesus saw His disciples were in grave danger. He knew they feared for their lives. WHY WOULD JESUS INTEND TO JUST PASS RIGHT BY THEM?

David Garland makes this interesting observation....
“By intending to pass by them, JESUS was revealing His Divine presence and power to His disciples. By His actions, Jesus was saying to His disciples: “Men, look at Me! Which is greater, the STORM around you or the SAVIOR before you?”

(pause.....let congregation think!)

Well, at this point, PETER blurts out, “Lord, if its you, tell me to come to you on the water.” (verse 28)

NOW DON’T MISS THIS........

One would think Peter would say, “LORD, if its You, please hurry up and get in the boat with us.” But that’s not what Peter said, is it?

He said, “LORD, if its You tell me to get out of the boat and come to You!”

POINT OF APPLICATION: How many times have you and I found ourselves in the midst of a terrible storm in life and cried out, “Lord get me out of this mess! Lord, get in the boat with me! “Lord, please make this storm go away!” When perhaps what JESUS really wanted most was for us to have enough FAITH to “step out of our boat of security” and completely TRUST in HIM!

Perhaps instead of crying out, “LORD PLEASE COME NEAR TO ME” we needed to cry out, “LORD, PLEASE HELP ME TO COME NEAR TO YOU!”

Well after the LORD told him to “COME”............Peter lifts one leg out over the side of the boat........then the other leg......and with his eyes FIXED ON JESUS........Peter takes one step......then another........then another.

I have always wondered what must have been going through Peter’s mind at that point. I wonder if he was thinking, “Wow, look at me guys, I’m really walking on water! This is incredible!”

Yes, it was incredible! In fact other than Christ Himself,
no one but Peter has ever walked on water. But then something happened.

VERSE 30  But when he saw the wind, he was afraid and beginning to sink, cried out, “LORD, SAVE ME!”

Notice Matthew says, “but when he saw the wind.” How many of you here have ever “seen the wind?” We have all seen “the effects” of the wind. We have seen tree limbs moving........we’ve seen leaves blowing across the yard........we’ve seen dust kicked up in the air........but we have never actually SEEN THE WIND have we?

When it says, “Peter saw the wind” it doesn’t mean he actually saw the wind, because that is impossible. What it means is “his imagination ran wild” or “his fears overcame him.”

The point is, WHEN PETER TOOK HIS EYES OFF JESUS, HE BEGAN TO SINK!

You see, as long as PETER kept his eyes fixed on Jesus Christ, he had FAITH, he had COURAGE, he had HOPE. But the moment he took his eyes off Jesus, he found himself drowning in fear and hopelessness.

Verse 31 says, Immediately, Jesus reached out His hand and caught him. “You of little faith,” He said. “Why did you doubt?”

Jesus didn’t say, “Peter, what in the world were thinking! You can’t walk on water!”

No, Jesus said, “You of little faith, why did you doubt?”

In other words, “Peter, you were doing so well, why did you take your eyes off of Me? Why did you stop trusting? Why did you let go of your faith?”
APPLICATION

Brothers and sisters, there is a very valuable LIFE LESSON for you and me to learn from Peter’s experience that night on the Sea of Galilee and that is:

Any time you and I take our eyes off Jesus, we’re sunk!

Perhaps you are going through a terrible life storm right now and you feel like you are way in over your head as though you are drowning in desperation and hopelessness. Perhaps you have tried everything you know to try and you have exhausted your resources and yet it seems your situation hasn’t gotten any better.

Let me ask you some SOUL-SEARCHING QUESTIONS:

(1) Is it possible the reason you have that “sinking” feeling because you are focusing more attention on your SITUATION than you are your SAVIOR?

(2) Is it possible the reason you have that “sinking” feeling because you have spent more time talking to PEOPLE about your problem than you have spent in PRAYER?

(3) If Jesus were here in the flesh at this very moment, would He say to you, “O you of strong faith?” Or would He say, “O you of little faith, why do you doubt?”

Brothers and sisters, any time you or I feel as though we are DROWNING IN A HOPELESS SITUATION that is a reminder that we need to get our eyes refocused on CHRIST.

-Instead of focusing on how BIG our problem is, we need to focus on how BIG OUR GOD is!

-Instead of focusing on how POWERLESS we feel, we need to focus on HOW POWERFUL OUR LORD IS!

-Instead of focusing on WHAT WE CAN’T DO, we need to focus on WHAT CHRIST CAN DO!
If Jesus could HEAL THE SICK.......and MAKE THE BLIND TO SEE....... and the DEAF TO HEAR........and THE LAME TO WALK.

If Jesus could CLEANSE LEPERS.......and DRIVE OUT DEMONS........ and MAKE THE DEAD TO LIVE AGAIN.

If Jesus could CALM THE SEA with three simple words, “Peace be still.”

Then why would you or I ever doubt that Jesus can help us through any of our life storms?

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Just as Peter became distracted by the wind and took his eyes off Jesus, there are many things in this world to distract you and me and cause us to lose our spiritual focus.

How Do You and I Keep Our Eyes Fixed on Jesus?
How Do We Maintain Our Spiritual Focus?

(A) First of all we need to look daily at the DEATH of CHRIST.

Hebrews 12:2,3 says, “Let us FIX OUR EYES ON JESUS, the Author and Perfector of our faith, Who for the joy set before Him endured the cross, scorning its shame, and sat down at the right hand of the throne of God.

Every day we need to reflect on what our lives would be if Jesus had not gone to the cross.
We would have NO FORGIVENESS.......NO SALVATION
NO HOPE and NO ETERNAL HOME.

If you and I would look daily at the DEATH OF CHRIST and what it means to each of us personally, it would
help us to KEEP OUR EYES FIXED ON JESUS.

(B) Secondly, we need to look daily at the EXAMPLE of Jesus as our standard for HOLY living.

Philippians 2:5-8  Your attitude should be the same as that of Christ Jesus: Who, being in very nature God, did not consider equality with God something to be grasped, but made Himself nothing, taking the very nature of a servant, being made in human likeness. And being found in appearance as a man, He humbled Himself and became obedient to death---even death on the cross.

Every day we need to think about the kind of life Jesus modeled for us: A life of SERVICE........a life of HUMILITY and a life of OBEDIENCE to God.

If you and I will seek to follow that example each and every day it will help us to KEEP OUR EYES FIXED ON JESUS.

(C) And thirdly, we need to look daily for the RETURN of Jesus.

Philippians 3:20, 21 But our citizenship is in heaven. And we eagerly await a Savior from there, the LORD JESUS CHRIST, who, by the power that enables Him to bring everything under His control, will transform our lowly bodies so that they will be like His glorious body.

It is so easy to get so caught up with the hectic pace of day to day living and to be so distracted by all the terrible things that are going on in the world around us that we seldom think about the glorious return of Christ.

Every day when we get out of bed we need to remind ourselves of this wonderful truth: JESUS MAY COME TODAY!

When we look daily at THE DEATH of JESUS
When we look daily at THE EXAMPLE OF JESUS
And when we look daily for THE RETURN OF JESUS.

It helps us to “Keep Our Eyes Fixed on Jesus” and keep walking by faith until that day when our faith is
made sight.

I want to leave you with this simple little life principle from the late Corrie Ten Boom:

*Look around and be distressed.*
*Look inside and be depressed.*
*Look at Jesus and be at rest.*

------Corrie Ten Boom