CALL TO ME — LORD, SAVE ME!

Matthew 14:22–33

STORM • STEP • SINK • SAVE

Central Truth: Faith does not mean we will never face storms or never become afraid. Faith means that in the middle of the storm, even when we are sinking, we know whom to call: Lord, save me!

Key Verse — Matthew 14:30: But when he saw the wind, he was afraid and, beginning to sink, cried out, Lord, save me!

INTRODUCTION — SOMETIMES THREE WORDS ARE ENOUGH

Good afternoon, church family. Greetings to you in the wonderful name of our Lord and Savior Jesus Christ. We are continuing our series CALL TO ME. Throughout this series, we have seen people calling to God from many different situations. Some called from pain. Some called for forgiveness. Some called because they did not know what to do. Some called because their faith was struggling. We have learned one truth again and again: God wants us to call to Him.

Today we come to one of the shortest prayers in the Bible. Peter does not have time to prepare beautiful words. He does not have time to explain his theology. He does not have time to kneel down and pray for thirty minutes. He is sinking. He needs Jesus. So he cries out three simple words: Lord, save me!

Sometimes life gives us time to pray long prayers. But sometimes all we can say is, Jesus, help me. Lord, save me. Lord, I need You. And church, the power is not in how long our prayer is. The power is in the One to whom we are praying.

Please turn with me to Matthew 14:22–33. Before Peter ever steps onto the water, notice where the disciples are. They are in a boat, in darkness, surrounded by wind and waves. But Jesus is coming toward them. That is where our story begins.

1. STORM — THEY WERE IN TROUBLE

Matthew 14:22–27

Verse 22 begins, Immediately Jesus made the disciples get into the boat and go on ahead of him to the other side. That detail is important. The disciples are not in this storm because they disobeyed Jesus. They are in this storm after doing what Jesus told them to do. Jesus sent them into the boat.

Sometimes we think, If I am following Jesus, everything should become easy. If I am obeying God, why am I experiencing trouble? But this passage teaches us that obedience does not guarantee a storm-free life. You can love Jesus and still experience trouble. You can obey Jesus and still face uncertainty. You can be exactly where Jesus told you to be and still encounter strong winds.

Jesus sends the disciples ahead, dismisses the crowd, and goes up on the mountain by Himself to pray. Meanwhile, verse 24 says the boat was a considerable distance from land, buffeted by the waves because the wind was against it. I love that phrase: the wind was against it. They are trying to move forward, but something keeps pushing against them.

Maybe somebody feels like that today. You are trying to move forward, but the wind seems against you. You are praying, but the situation is still difficult. You are trying to do the right thing, but something keeps pushing back. Maybe it is your family. Maybe finances. Maybe your future. Maybe a relationship. Maybe something you cannot control. You are tired of fighting the wind.

But here is something beautiful: while the disciples are struggling, Jesus knows exactly where they are. They may not see Jesus, but Jesus sees them. Their storm has not separated them from His attention.

Verse 25 says that shortly before dawn, Jesus went out to them, walking on the lake. The very thing frightening the disciples, the water is underneath the feet of Jesus. What is over their heads is under His feet.

When they see Him, they become even more afraid. They think He is a ghost. But Jesus immediately says, Take courage! It is I. Don't be afraid. Before Jesus changes their circumstances, He gives them His presence.

Church, sometimes we want Jesus first to say, I will stop the storm. But Jesus first says, It is I. In other words, I am here.

The greatest comfort in your storm is not always knowing when the storm will end. It is knowing who is with you in the storm.

2. STEP — PETER STEPPED TOWARD JESUS

Matthew 14:28–29

Peter responds, Lord, if it's you, tell me to come to you on the water. Jesus gives him one word: Come.

And Peter does something extraordinary. He gets down out of the boat, walks on the water, and comes toward Jesus.

We often remember Peter for sinking, but before criticizing Peter, remember this: Peter got out of the boat. The other disciples stayed inside. Peter heard the word of Jesus and acted upon it.

Peter did not step onto the water because he trusted the water. Water cannot hold him. Peter stepped because Jesus said, Come. His confidence was not supposed to be in the circumstances beneath his feet but in the word of Christ before him.

That is faith. Faith is not simply saying, I believe God can do something. Faith responds to what Jesus says.

But we need to be careful here. This passage does not mean we should make reckless decisions and expect God to support them. Peter did not jump out first and then ask Jesus to bless his idea. Jesus said, Come, and then Peter stepped. Biblical faith responds to the word of Christ.

There may be areas where Jesus is calling us to obey Him and we are afraid to take the step. Forgive somebody. Share the gospel. Serve. Give. Make peace. Leave a sinful habit. Trust Him with your future. The question is not, Does this feel comfortable? The question is, What has Jesus said?

Peter steps out, and for a moment he is doing what should be impossible. But the miracle is not really about Peter's ability. The miracle is about Jesus' authority.

Church, never become impressed with Peter and miss Jesus. Peter is walking only because Christ is there.

3. SINK — PETER LOOKED AT THE WIND

Matthew 14:30

Then everything changes in verse 30: But when he saw the wind, he was afraid and began to sink…

The wind was already there before Peter stepped out of the boat. The storm did not suddenly begin. What changed was Peter's attention.

At first, Jesus was before him. Then the wind became bigger in his eyes.

Isn't that often what happens to us? The problem may have been there yesterday, but suddenly it becomes all we can see. We begin thinking about it in the morning. We think about it during the day. We think about it before sleeping. Soon the storm becomes bigger in our minds than the Savior standing before us.

Peter was afraid. Scripture does not hide his weakness. This is the same Peter who had enough faith to leave the boat, and now he is afraid.

That should encourage us. A moment of strong faith does not mean we will never experience fear again. We can trust Jesus sincerely and still have moments when fear attacks us.

And Peter begins to sink.

Notice that Matthew says beginning to sink. Peter realizes immediately that he cannot save himself. He does not say, Let me try harder. He does not say, Maybe I can swim through this. He cries out.

Lord, save me!

That is the prayer.

Three words.

No introduction. No explanation. No beautiful religious language.

Lord, save me!

Church, there are moments when this may be the most honest prayer you can pray. Lord, my faith is weak. Save me. Lord, I am overwhelmed. Save me. Lord, I cannot fix this. Save me. Lord, I am sinking. Save me.

And spiritually, this is the cry every sinner needs. Sin is not something we can rescue ourselves from. Good works cannot save us. Religion cannot save us. Church attendance cannot save us. We need Someone outside of ourselves to rescue us.

Peter does not need advice from Jesus about swimming.

Peter needs Jesus to save him.

And so do we.

4. SAVE — JESUS REACHED OUT HIS HAND

Matthew 14:31–33

Verse 31 may be my favorite verse in this entire story: Immediately Jesus reached out his hand and caught him.

Notice the word immediately.

Peter cried, and Jesus reached.

Peter was sinking, but Jesus was close enough to catch him.

Peter's faith was weak, but Jesus' hand was strong.

Jesus does correct Peter: You of little faith, why did you doubt? Jesus does not ignore Peter's doubt. He wants Peter's faith to grow. But notice the order: Jesus catches him and then corrects him.

He does not stand there saying, Peter, improve your faith first, and then I will rescue you.

He reaches out.

What a picture of grace.

Peter's rescue depended ultimately not on how tightly Peter could hold Jesus, but on Jesus taking hold of Peter.

Then they climb into the boat, and the wind dies down. The disciples respond by worshiping Jesus and saying, Truly you are the Son of God.

That is where Matthew brings us. This story is not ultimately about teaching us how to walk on water. It reveals who Jesus is.

He has authority over the wind.

He has authority over the waves.

He comes to His people in their trouble.

He hears the cry of a sinking disciple.

He reaches out and saves.

And He receives their worship.

The destination of this story is not, Look what Peter did.

The destination is, Truly You are the Son of God.

And this takes us directly to the gospel. Every one of us has a greater problem than Peter's storm. Our greatest problem is sin. We cannot save ourselves from its guilt and judgment. But God did not leave us sinking. Jesus came to us. The Son of God entered our world, lived the righteous life we could not live, went to the cross, carried our sins, died in our place, was buried, and rose again.

The gospel is not primarily, Save yourself.

The gospel is: Jesus saves.

CONCLUSION — LORD, SAVE ME!

Church, look at the movement of this passage.

STORM — the disciples were struggling.

STEP — Peter responded to Jesus.

SINK — fear overwhelmed him.

SAVE — Jesus reached out His hand.

Maybe today you are somewhere in this story.

Maybe you are in the storm. You are wondering why life has become so difficult.

Maybe you are taking a step of obedience and you are afraid.

Maybe you feel like you are sinking. You started with faith, but now fear has taken over.

Wherever you are, the answer is the same

Look to Jesus. Call to Jesus.

You do not need impressive words.

Peter gives us three:

LORD, SAVE ME!

And notice again what happened: Immediately Jesus reached out his hand and caught him.

Your storm may be strong, but Jesus is stronger. Your faith may sometimes feel weak, but Jesus is faithful. Your circumstances may feel out of control, but they are not outside His authority.

So don't make Peter the hero of this passage.

Jesus is the Hero.

He is the One walking on the water.

He is the One speaking courage into frightened hearts.

He is the One calling Peter to come.

He is the One catching Peter when he sinks.

He is the One calming the wind.

He is the One receiving worship.

And He is still the One who saves.

So today, if you have never trusted Jesus, let your prayer become Peter's prayer: Lord, save me. Turn from your sin and put your faith in Jesus Christ.

And believer, if you are walking through a storm today, you can pray it too—not because you have lost your salvation, but because you need the Savior's help:

Lord, save me. Lord, help me. Lord, keep my eyes on You.

And when He carries us through, may our response be the response of the disciples:

Truly you are the Son of God. Amen.