

Aug 16	Rogan	Matt 14: 22-33	A little amount of faith
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In our reading, Peter steps out of the boat & walks toward Jesus. He's walking on water and sees the wind and becomes afraid and begins to sink. At that point he says "Lord, save me!"

"Lord, save me". How often do we cry out to God to rescue us? We see the storms of life, the big waves crashing around us, and we feel like we'll sink beneath the waves. The Waves and the storm will engulf us, and fear we'll drown under the enormous weight and power of the storm. Peter saw the wind, and "he was afraid". Sometimes it's how we experience life; it all gets too much, and we begin to sink beneath the water.

I went to Esher CoE primary school. I was still very young when the Bishop gave a talk to the whole school. I can't remember who he was, or what he looked like, but what he said stuck.

He said: "When we feel frightened, hold out our hand to Jesus". Sometime later, I remember being awake at night feeling frightened and recall my first spiritual experience. I held out my hand to Jesus, and I remember feeling a deep peace. I don't remember much else until I woke refreshed in the morning. That memory has been a vivid reminder of God's love for me.

In this story we remember that Jesus invited Peter to step out of the boat and walk on water. In Ps 139:13, David wrote "For you created my inmost being; you knit me together in my mother's womb. I praise you because I am fearfully and wonderfully made;" Jesus believed in Peter, just as Jesus believes in us. Paul wrote in Eph 2:10 "I am God's workmanship, created for good works".

I grew up in the seventies at a time of cheap package holidays. I was aged four or five and I went abroad for the first time. We went to Ibiza. It was the typical half-board arrangement in a hotel. There was a shallow pool where my dad helped me learn to swim for the first time. It felt amazing, I was swimming. My dad then took me to the big pool. My dad believed I could swim in the big pool, he could see something in me that I didn't see in myself, he believed I could swim in the big pool. Like Peter, when I realised, I was in the big pool, it all got too much for me, I was afraid, and I begin to sink. Fortunately, my dad, and not for the last time, fished me out.

A couple of months ago Sam was watching one of our HTS Service videos where we were singing. Sam felt like it was like listening to someone else, she couldn't quite believe we were the ones singing! Katherine and Jon saw something in us, encouraged us to take a step into the unknown. They had faith in us. As a result, we've done something we never imagined we'd ever do. It felt like it was someone else. If you hear lots of the mistakes – it's someone else :-)

In James Strock's book "Serve to Lead 2.0" he talks about focusing our energies on serving. He says "You must be prepared to undertake assignments and adopt roles far afield from your experience or comfort zone. You must be recognized as giving more of yourself than you ask of others."

We talk about needing to get out of our comfort zone to grow. But to what purpose? I think if we truly want to serve our God, then we are willing to step out of our comfort zone. I find that very humbling because I see my own short comings.

God created us with purpose and we're unique. There has never been and never will be someone exactly like you. When we look to serve God, we have to set our eyes, just as Peter did, on Jesus. If we do that, we can achieve amazing things. On the other hand, when we focus on our situation and our circumstances, the huge waves, and the storm, we become afraid and start to sink into the water.

Three things to takeaway:

- A gratitude for a person who believed in you
- A person you want to encourage
- If you focused on Jesus, and not the storm – what would you do right now?

1 Chronicles 22:13 As David said to Solomon, "Be Strong and courageous. Do not be afraid or discouraged."