



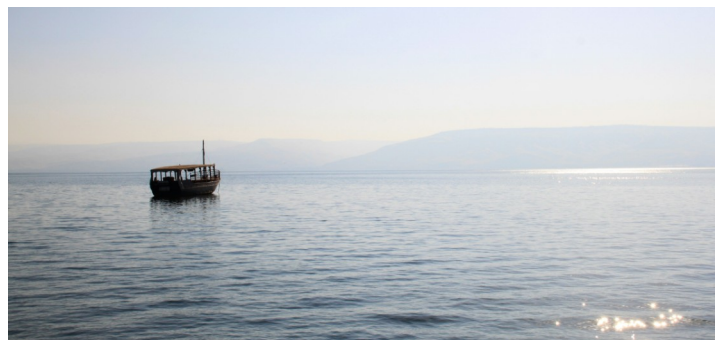
## ***THE WORD FOR TODAY***

### **Matthew's Gospel, Chapter 14, vv 22-33**

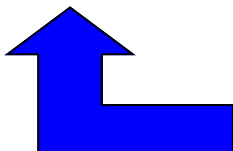
*A story based on the Sea of Galilee*

Jesus had been trying to get away to somewhere quiet where he could take in the news he had just received of the murder of John the Baptist, and take some time to grieve for his relative and friend. Having been followed by large crowds, however, he felt he had to help them. He healed the sick they had brought, and fed them all from the little quantity of food available. Now, again, he wanted to get away from the crowds and be alone.

His friends were about to experience something extraordinary.



Follow the words of this passage round the church, beginning on the north wall of this little building. We are using the New International Version of the Bible, which you can find on the internet under Bible Gateway, and the whole "Word for Today" is on the church website, which is [www.libertonkirk.net](http://www.libertonkirk.net) You can also find meditations and prayers on other Bible passages there in previous "Words for Today".



*Turn immediately left to find the first verses of the Bible passage on the bench*

***“Immediately Jesus made the disciples get into the boat and go on ahead of him to the other side, while he dismissed the crowd.***

**1**

***After he had dismissed them, he went up on a mountainside by himself to pray.”***

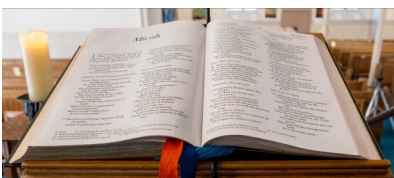
This is Jesus taking charge of the situation. He dispatches the disciples across the lake. He sends the crowds of people home. At last he has time to himself. Time to spend with God his Father to restore his strength after the shock of John’s death and after all his healing and feeding of the people. Jesus knew how important it was to keep close to his Father. He knew where his comfort and strength would come from. What an example he is to us in our daily lives!

Have you ever thought “How am I going to cope?” Jesus knew the best way to have that question answered was to spend time with God.



***Lord, thank you for the example of Jesus always before me.  
Teach me the value of communication with you, my Heavenly Father.  
Help me to make time for you every day.***

***(No. 2 is on the bench just round the corner of the church building you are looking at)***

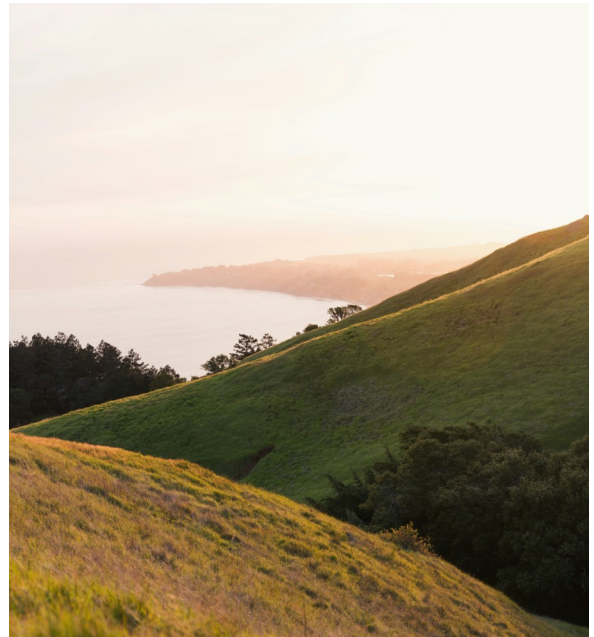


***THE WORD FOR TODAY***

*“ When evening came, he was there alone, but the boat was already a considerable distance from land, buffeted by the waves because the wind was against it. During the fourth watch of the night Jesus went out to them, walking on the lake.”*

**2**

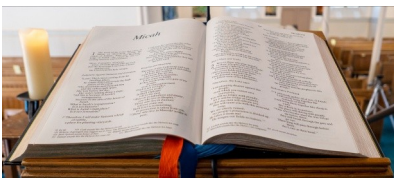
To me, these verses create a picture of God’s care for each one of us. Jesus is up on a mountainside but he can see the disciples’ little boat struggling on the lake, which was notorious for sudden changes of wind and weather. He goes out to help them and to be with them.



We can be sure that when we are struggling with life God will not leave us alone to struggle.

*Lord, thank you for watching over me and for your constant care.  
Help me to know that you are with me  
especially when life is difficult.*

*(No. 3 is further along this side of the church building)*

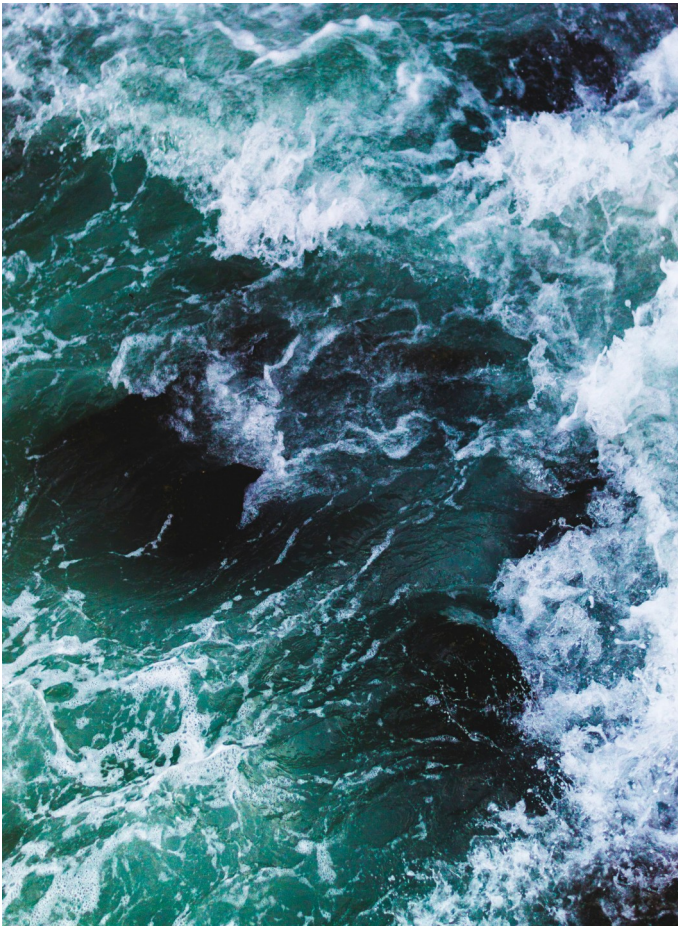


***THE WORD FOR TODAY***

***“When the disciples saw him walking on the lake, they were terrified. ‘It’s a ghost,’ they said, and cried out in fear.***

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

**3**



The word which stands out to me in these verses is “immediately”. Jesus doesn’t want his disciples terrified—he wants to reassure them.

The words “Don’t be afraid” are words which appear many times in the Bible. Here the disciples are encouraged to take courage and not be afraid because Jesus is with them.

As Christians we believe that he is with us always in spirit, providing comfort and reassurance and strength. What we have to do is trust.

***Lord, thank you that when your people cry out to you, you respond.  
Help me to trust in your constant presence.  
Lead me to seek your help when I am in distress.***

***(Walk along the back of the church and turn right to find No. 4 on the prayer bench)***



***THE WORD FOR TODAY***

***“Lord, if it’s you,’ Peter replied, ‘tell me to come to you on the water.’ ‘Come’ he said.”***

**4**



It’s not easy to trust that Jesus really is with us when we can’t see or recognise him. Even Peter, who knew Jesus well, but now faced an indistinct figure at night doing something amazing, wanted more. He was willing to take a risk to step out of the boat to be sure about Jesus, who he was and what he could do.

In the Try Praying Booklet the first prayer begins with “God, if you are there . . .” That wee booklet points us to the way to find out with more certainty about God, and that is to take time to get to know him through prayer and reading, and to be still before him so that he can make himself known.

***Lord, help me to draw closer to you each day.  
Give me the desire to set aside the time to be with you.  
Let me be willing to take risks for you.***

***(No. 5 is on the West side of the church before you come to the tower)***



***THE WORD FOR TODAY***

*“Then Peter got down out of the boat, walked on the water and came towards Jesus. But when he saw the wind, he was afraid and, beginning to sink, cried out, ‘Lord, save me!’”*

**5**

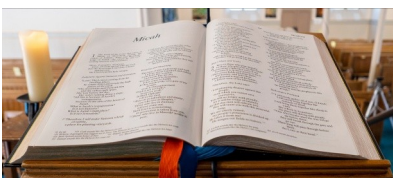


If you have heard this story before, I’m sure you will remember that Peter began to sink. But do you remember that before that he was walking on the water following Jesus’ invitation? He was walking towards Jesus on the water. So what happened? He took his eyes off Jesus and looked at the weather instead. He panicked because he knew that he was in a perilous situation and he forgot to trust in Jesus’ power.

Everything is possible when Jesus invites you to do it, but you do need to keep your focus on him.

*Lord, I stand in awe of your power.  
Help me to know that you can empower me to do amazing things  
if I keep you at the centre of my life.*

*(Walk towards the front of the church and find No. 6 near the cairn)*



***THE WORD FOR TODAY***

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

**6**

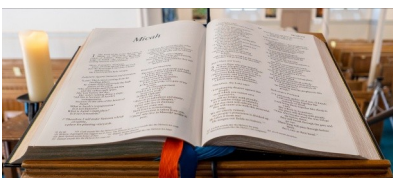


There’s that word again—*“immediately”*. Jesus does not leave Peter to struggle. Peter had temporarily forgotten that Jesus had the power to keep him safe—he’d let his feelings of fright overcome his faith.

It’s easy to do this if you are in trouble and out of your depth. It’s easy to forget that all the power rests with God and his son Jesus. We need to have faith.

***Lord, I believe in your almighty power.  
Deepen my faith so that I don’t forget it  
and I can’t be tempted away.  
Show me how to grow my faith and overcome my doubts.***

***(Walk to the front of the church and find No. 7 on one of the benches)***



***THE WORD FOR TODAY***

*“And when they had climbed into the boat, the wind died down. Then those who were in the boat worshipped him, saying, ‘ Truly you are the Son of God.’”*

**7**

The disciples in the boat had seen Jesus walking on the water and now have seen the storm die away in an instant as he steps into the boat. Even though they had seen him heal the sick and feed the hungry, this seems to bring home to them that somebody who has this authority over the elements must be the Son of God. And all they can do in response is worship him.



*Lord, open my eyes to your majesty.  
You are worthy of all my praise.  
Lord, I worship you.*

If anything you have read has prompted questions you would like to discuss, please contact John Young on 664 3067 or [jyoung@churchofscotland.org.uk](mailto:jyoung@churchofscotland.org.uk)



***THE WORD FOR TODAY***



## **PHOTOGRAPHIC CREDITS**

<b>Introduction</b>	<b>Silvain Bryson on Unsplash</b>
<b>Page 1</b>	<b>Brett Jordan on Unsplash</b>
<b>Page 2</b>	<b>Slav Romanov on Unsplash</b>
<b>Page 3</b>	<b>Oscar Keys on Unsplash</b>
<b>Page 4</b>	<b>Pixls-am on Unsplash</b>
<b>Page 5</b>	<b>Kyle Johnson on Unsplash</b>
<b>Page 6</b>	<b>Austin Kehmeier on Unsplash</b>
<b>Page 7</b>	<b>Jon Tyson on Unsplash</b>
<b>Bible image on all pages</b>	<b>Gary Ross</b>