

Sunday 19th April 2026
Called to Be... Trusting Matthew 14: 22-33

What is your biggest fear?

Fun Fact: Hippopoto-monstro-sesquipedaliophobia is ironically the fear of long words! Have fun trying to pronounce this!

This event happens after the feeding of the 5,000 (Matthew 14: 13-21, Mark 6:30-44, Luke 9:10-17 & John 6:1-14) and the disciples have just seen a miracle of provision. Yet, only hours later, they struggle with doubt and fear. Jesus sends the disciples ahead while He goes to pray alone. It is understood to be the fourth watch of the night (between 3am and 6am) – the darkest and most exhausting time. The boat is far from land and being battered by wind and waves. The disciples are experienced fishermen – yet still afraid of the storm.

Sent into the Storm (Read vs 22-24)

After the feeding of the 5000, Jesus goes up to the mountain to pray and sends His disciples ahead of Him and makes the disciples get into the boat, knowing they will encounter the storm.

1. Have you ever felt like God led you into a difficult situation? What impact did that have on your faith?
2. Does obedience always lead to comfort? Why? Why not?
3. How does this challenge the idea that following God should make life “easier”?

Compare with James 1: 2-4

- What does this passage say about the purpose of trials?

Misrecognising Jesus (Read vs 25-27)

When the storm hits, the disciples get scared and see Jesus on the water and mistake Him for a ghost!

4. Do you think fear causes us to misinterpret what God is doing?
5. Can you think of a time when something that felt negative, later turned out to be God's work?
6. What does Jesus' statement "It is I" (similar to "I Am") reveal about His identity?
7. How might knowing who Jesus is change how we respond to fear? Does it impact how we respond? Should it?

Compare with Exodus 3: 14

- What connection can you see between "I am" and Jesus' "It is I" statement in this passage?

Stepping out in Faith (Read vs 28-29)

Peter asks to come to Jesus. Most people think this is Peter questioning or asking Jesus to prove that it is him. On Sunday, we looked at this being Peter inviting himself to be involved.

8. What do you admire (or question) about Peter's response?
9. Why do you think Jesus simply says "Come" rather than explaining more?
10. What "boats" might people cling to today for security?
11. What might "Stepping Out" look like in your life?

Compare with Hebrews 11: 1

- How does this define what Peter is doing?

Losing Focus (Read vs 30)

Peter sees the wind and begins to sink.

12. What changed – Peter's circumstances? His focus? His reality?
13. What are some "winds" that distract or overwhelm your faith?
14. Is it easier to start in faith or sustain it? Why? Why not?
15. How can we practically keep our focus on Jesus in difficult situations?

Compare with Hebrews 12:1-2

- What does it mean to “fix our eyes on Jesus”?

The Hand that Saves (Read vs 31-33)

Jesus immediately reaches out.

16. What does the word “immediately” reveal about Jesus’ character?
17. Why do you think Jesus still challenges Peter (“you of little faith”) after saving him?
18. What does this teach us about failure in the Christian life?

Compare with Psalms 18: 16

- How does this image of God rescuing relate to Peter’s experience?

Called to Be ...

Over the next few weeks, through Peter’s life, we will be looking at the Salvation Army’s “Called to Be ...” series where we are invited to reflect on who God is shaping each of us to be. Peter’s calling in this moment was not to preach, lead, or perform – it was simply to trust Jesus enough to step out. Peter didn’t get a plan. He got one word “Come”. And that was enough. The question is:

Is Jesus’ voice enough for us?

Questions for Personal Reflection:

- Where in your life do you feel “in the boat” – safe but possibly held back?
- What fears tend to pull your focus to the wind instead of Jesus?
- What might God be asking you to trust Him with right now?
- Who can you support and encourage in their exploration of their calling?
- What is your calling? Do you need to speak to a leader about where you feel God is calling you?

In the Storm, You Are There

When the wind begins to whisper doubt, And the waves rise up in fear,
When the path ahead feels all but lost, Still, somehow, You are near.

When my footing fails, and I start to sink, And I cry out in despair,
I find not judgement in Your eyes – But an outstretched hand still there.

You don't always calm the raging sea, Or silence every cry,
But You walk on waves I cannot hold, And You never pass me by.

Through every storm that battles hard, Through every unknown land,
I'm not alone upon the waves – I'm held within Your hand.

So, call me out beyond the shore, Where faith must learn to be –
Not in the safety of the boat but walking close with Thee.

Anonymous

Optional Extra:

Another storm story: Matthew 8:23-27 (Jesus calms the storm)

In one story, Jesus calms the storm. In this story, Jesus meets them in it.

- What does this teach us about the different ways God works?
- Which experience do you find harder – to trust God to remove the storm or to walk with you in it?

Compare this moment with later in John 21: 15-19 (Peter Restored)

- How does Peter's failure here prepare him for future leadership?
- What does this say about how God uses imperfect people?