

Setting The Scene:

Story: 1st trip to Panama

- Been at WRCC for about a month, on my first mission trip ever...
- We're headed out to the islands of Panama with Dan Crosley and our team
- Hop in a small wooden boat to cross the large bay of water
- As we got about half way across, there began a pretty engaged chatter between Dan & boat driver
- Suddenly (boom) the boat stops right in the middle of this bay
- More lively conversation happens, we press Dan a bit for info, what is he saying?!
- **(dramatic pause)... He says we need to get out of the boat** (come again?)
- Yes, we're stuck on a sandbar...ok ;-)
- Put your bags over your head and...and what? :-)

So I stepped out on faith to accept God's great adventure, allowed some fear to creep its way in, and now I'm literally STUCK in the middle of a large body of water in Panama and the **only way for me and the team to get UNSTUCK is to what?**
(pause) Get out of the boat!

The Apostle Peter found himself in a similar situation out on the water, **stuck between FAITH and FEAR**...we're going to be in **Matthew 14:22-32**

PRAY

(setup the Scripture....**Matthew 14:22-32**)

- Jesus' dear friend John had just been put to death by King Herod
- He's desperate to get away and find a quiet place to pray, so he hops in a boat for a remote area
- **But, the crowds love Jesus**...People are flocking to Jesus, they want to be around him, and they are tracking him down wherever He goes (around this lake)
- The disciples keep saying, just send them home
- But He doesn't, he has compassion on them & with a couple of fish & some loaves, He feeds the 5,000
- Jesus then sends his disciples across the lake, He goes to pray, & a storm begins to brew on the water
- (rough news, long day w/ the crowds, miracle meal, We find Jesus)

READ: let's begin in...

- **Matthew 14:**

- **v. 22-24** / “and they were fighting heavy waves”
 - **These guys know these waters, they’ve grown up on them**
 - They know where to find the fish, they know the size of the Sea (about 13 miles long & 7 miles wide, so not huge) ,and they certainly know that **nighttime is no time to be out on these waters, especially if a storm rolls up** (there are mountains surrounding the Sea of Galilee and as temperatures change & send winds rolling over the waters, things can get dangerously rocky)
 - A little surprising to find the disciples so far from shore, although we can presume **the wind has given them the inability to make headway**, not necessarily in imminent danger of sinking
 - **They know the boat, they know the area and what to do, but Jesus is not with them this time....it's not working**

- **v. 25-27** / “**don’t be afraid, take courage I am here**”
 - Around 3am-6am (4th watch of the night) in the early morning hours (they’ve been battling this storm for about 12 hours now for most of the night as Jesus has spent that same time in prayer (**there’s something we can learn here about our battles**))
 - And now they see what appears to be a ghost walking on the water, then Jesus speaks
 - The 3 Gospel writers (of Matthew, Mark, & Luke) go out of their way to eliminate the rationale that Jesus might have been walking on a hidden sandbar. Not likely to have impressed these fisherman. Because again, they know where all the sandbars are (so throw that out the window)
 - **Remember, this is not the first time Jesus has sent these guys into a storm**
 - (flip just a few pages back to...Matthew 8) Setup that scene from the last storm
 - **READ: Matthew 8:23-27** / “**even the wind & the waves obey Him**”
 - **So Jesus has now sent these guys into another storm...they are afraid...and this time Jesus is NOT in the BOAT with them.**
 - When it says don't be afraid in the Bible generally means someone is scared (pretty straightforward) ;-)
 - They still don't fully recognize him as He moves across the rocky waters
 - The disciples' FEAR is met by **the familiar voice of Jesus**

- **v.28-29** “**tell me to come to you walking on the water**”
 - V.28 Lord if it's really you tell me to come to you
 - So Jesus responds to Peter “yes, come” (ok, didn't see that coming ;-)
 - I love this about Peter, **he's willing to step out on the water without all the answers**, where were the other guys in the boat?

“Trust God from the bottom of your heart; don’t try to figure out everything on your own. Listen for God’s voice in everything you do, everywhere you go; he’s the one who will keep you on track” - Proverbs 3:5-6, The Message

- Peter was afraid but he was also willing to go, these other guys were dealing with fear too & maybe unwilling to face it
- **v.30-31 / “you have so little faith...why did you doubt me?”**
 - **We get a glimpse here in this moment of how difficult FEAR can be to overcome**
 - Peter had already overcome it once, but now it’s BACK AGAIN and he’s stuck out on that water.
 - Peter knew ALL TOO WELL about getting **STUCK** between **FAITH** and **FEAR**
 - THE GOOD NEWS: Jesus is still there WITH HIM to pick him back up, to save him. Interesting...Even while he’s sinking Peter turns (not to his friends in the boat), but He turns to Jesus for help
- **v.32-33 / “you really are the Son of God, they exclaimed”**
 - The disciples (now all back in the boat with Jesus) worshipped Him. Yet, it took another miracle to believe Him (**what’s it gonna take it!**)
 - **Why do we always seem to need another sign to step out on FAITH?**
 - **If it's really you?** We're always looking for a sign aren't we?
 - It’s easy for us to sit back and read this account and think
 - Why couldn’t they **see the signs all around them**, pointing to Jesus as God’s Son
 - They were surrounded by miracle after miracle, but it was **still difficult for them to have true FAITH in the midst of their FEARS**

FAITH AND FEAR are going to collide, whichever we choose to FIX OUR EYES ON will determine our NEXT STEP.

I have FAITH but I also have FEAR so what can we learn from this story? From Jesus?

#1 Faith is Fragile

- **Especially if we put our FAITH in the wrong things...maybe in our BOATS?**

- Peter left the boat to take a step of FAITH toward Jesus, the other disciples seemed to put their FAITH (at that point) in the BOAT.

- **First of all a few things about the BOATS in our lives:**

- **IIIUSTR:** I've had the unique opportunity to witness a lot of different events with boats over the years. Working at Red Bridge marina up on Mississinewa Reservoir. I've stepped on some huge cruisers, ate dinner on them. I've seen them explode right before my eyes, I've seen them come down the ramp a little too far, too fast, and sink right into the reservoir (sometimes with the vehicle pulling them too). I've been around them quite a bit.
- Those "BOATS" in our lives could be material possessions, \$, positions, experience, health, etc...)

- **They can make us feel very comfortable and convenient**

- It's easy to follow Jesus when things are going our way, when our BOAT is comfortable and convenient for us

- **They can give us a false sense of security**

- Are we really trusting in God or finding our security in other things? Sometimes we put too much trust in our BOATS (things, stuff we have)

- **And...They can sink (Boats can sink)**

- James 1 "your faith will be tested" like Peter's did (ye of little faith) on that water

- **Story:**

- Several years ago I had the opportunity to take a white water rafting trip with my men's Journey group. Never had been before. (Show picture)
 - We geared up with helmets, life jackets, paddles, etc...
 - **Our guide told us that at certain spots on the river we could jump out of the boat and drift down the river (I don't know it's pretty comfy in here ;-)**
 - I recall coming around the bend "ok you guys can get out if you want" float down a bit
 - I had a tinge of fear creep up in me, but I'm gonna do it anyway --- RESPONSE
 - Why not! I jumped in, my life vest zipped up around my neck, and water rushed into my face, gasping for air (FEAR was BACK AGAIN)
 - I was starting to be consumed by my surroundings and forgot about all the things I was told would protect me

Our FAITH can become FRAGILE if we put it in anything except Jesus Christ

#2 Faith isn't being CRAZY; it's being CALLED.

ILLUST:

- Many of us know how this goes, we say yes to the great adventure God has given us the opportunity to take (dropping our nets, jumping off the ladder, going against the grain)
- We're excited, full of hope, faithfully following Jesus, overcoming our FEARS
 - New job
 - Serving in a different way
 - Trying something new in our lives
 - Taking a risk
- And then, reality begins to set in...we forget that we have been called and we start to think... we might just be crazy? ;-)

STORY:

- Felt this back in 2011 when our family decided to take a risk and faithfully follow Jesus to become parents of a 4th child (adopted from the country of Ethiopia)
- We were excited for the new adventure, then FEAR starts to rear it's ugly head, did we do the right thing? Or did we just get a slice of bad pizza and made the wrong decision, we have no idea what we're doing

FEAR can be paralyzing, CONVINCING you to STOP taking steps of FAITH

- Even after we got there for our **1st visit to Ethiopia**, I remember arriving at the hotel (Unpack)
- Flash forward to our **Last Visit**, different hotel, this time with a little African boy laying right in the middle of us. FAITH and FEAR had collided once again.
- **WE WERE EXCITED & SCARED ALL AT THE SAME TIME WITH THIS DECISION WE HAD MADE (usually right where God wants you to be)**
(Reminds us our our complete dependency on Him)
- The Lord has a great adventure ALL OF US, if only we're willing to be obedient and follow His lead

- **SIDE NOTE: It may be small steps of FAITH that need to be taken first**
- **Question: What is God doing through your life right now?**
 - We need to be able to answer this question before we take another STEP of FAITH.

- **Why? IT'S VITAL TO RECOGNIZE GOD'S PRESENCE AND POWER AT WORK IN AND THROUGH OUR LIVES, RIGHT WHERE WE'RE AT RIGHT NOW!**

God hasn't told us to just do something CRAZY & call it FAITH, He's CALLED us to LIVE BY FAITH in our everyday lives. Faith isn't being CRAZY, it's being CALLED.

#3 Faith isn't the absence of FEAR.

- **Scroll through Hebrews 11** - Don't you think there was a little fear involved when God's people...
 - Stood at the foot of the Red Sea with Egyptians bearing down on them
 - Marched around the great walls of Jericho
 - Abraham agreed to leave everything he knew to go to a place he did not know
 - Or how about when he was about to sacrifice His Son Isaac?
 - **Of course! HAVING FAITH doesn't mean you won't be afraid or have some FEAR**
 - It just means you won't allow it to consume you, but that you'll be faithful despite the FEAR you are feeling
- Peter got out of the boat in the face of his FEAR, while the other disciples stayed in the boat
- The writer John Ortberg said it best...
"If you want to walk on water you've got to get out of the BOAT!"
- **What "BOAT" are you stuck in today?**
- What is it that you're afraid of today that's keeping you STUCK in that boat?
 - **You're not alone**, many have been in that same spot, but decided to get UNSTUCK by choosing FAITH & OBEDIENCE to Jesus Christ over FEAR.
- **I remember these words I heard from the Holy Spirit...Do you really trust me? Then stop wasting time and get out of the BOAT!**

TAKING IT HOME / WRAP UP / HOW DO WE GET UNSTUCK?

- **A little FAITH is still FAITH**

- Jesus tells us in the Bible...you only need faith the size of a tiny mustard seed to move mountains!
- **This LITTLE FAITH could have kept Peter afloat on that water** as he walked toward Jesus, but he looked down, **TOOK HIS EYES OFF JESUS**, saw the waves and let the FEAR splash back up into his face.

- **DON'T LOOK DOWN! FIX YOUR EYES ON JESUS, THE AUTHOR & PERFECTER OF OUR FAITH!**

- **FAITH AND FEAR are going to collide, whichever we choose to FIX OUR EYES ON will determine our NEXT STEP.**

- **Even a few small steps of FAITHFUL OBEDIENCE count**

- **READ: Joshua 3:5-17** “take a few steps into the water & wait” what?!
 - This passage is a great template of how to take your NEXT STEP of FAITH
 - Think there was some FEAR involved here?
 - Yet there is also immense FAITH, OBEDIENT FAITH to the instruction, guidance, & promises God had given them

- **WHY DID PETER GET OUT OF THE BOAT?! (ever thought about that?)**

- **Jesus never told Peter to get out of the BOAT, Peter wanted to, He wanted to be with Jesus**

- Those disciples in that BOAT, they were all afraid, even Peter. Yet Peter decided that He would rather be with Jesus in his FEAR than stay in the boat

- **When we decide to face our FEARS & step out on FAITH, we still won't always be able to see what's next**

- **READ: Psalm 77:16-20**

- **When we take a step of true FAITH, we aren't always gonna see what's next out there. But we can definitely KNOW WHO'S OUT THERE, as we get out of our boats, and step out on FAITH with Jesus.**

- **“FAITH is the confidence that what we hope for will actually happen; it gives us assurance about things we cannot see” THAT'S FAITH!**
(Hebrews 11:1)

INVITATION/RESPONSE:

- **Are you stuck between FAITH & FEAR today?**
- GOOD NEWS: Jesus is there with you :-)
- As Jesus calms the storm, saves Peter again, the disciples recognize him and declare with their mouths “truly you are the son of God”
- **Do you recognize Jesus today in the midst of whatever FEAR you're facing?**
- Maybe you've seen Jesus before, and even have a relationship with Jesus but you're having trouble seeing Him now in the midst of whatever storm you find yourself in?
- **He's still there for you, ready for you to call out by FAITH and meet Him on that water, to get UNSTUCK.**

Maybe you've been stuck here before, several times? And now, you're wrestling with some **FEAR FILLED** questions like we find in the Psalms...**AFRAID to START AGAIN?**

- Has the Lord rejected me forever?
- Will he never again be kind to me?
- Is his unfailing love gone forever?
- Have his promises permanently failed?
- Has he slammed the door on compassion?

If so I want to encourage you today to take a walk back through Peter's life again and see how many times Jesus is still there for him.

- Fighting w/ soldiers in the garden...still here
- Little faith on the waters...still here
- Disowns Jesus in the courtyard...still here
- Fishing with his friends one day...

- **READ: John 21:3-12 (Peter jumping out of the boat now!)**

Jesus is still there waiting to get you UNSTUCK again...Calling you out on the water.

Peter was willing to step out of the boat. Taking that next faithful step toward Jesus. What's your next step of FAITH need to be today?

- Forgiving someone; asking for Forgiveness from someone?
- Having a spiritual conversation with a friend or family member
- Becoming the person God has truly created you to be; not someone you would rather be
- Following a dream God has clearly laid on your heart

FAITH and FEAR are going to collide, whichever we choose to FIX OUR EYES ON will determine our NEXT STEP.

Pray you'll have the FAITH to jump out of that boat and step out on that water with Jesus.

INVITATION/RESPONSE OPPORTUNITY:

- HAVE EVERYONE BOW HEADS, CLOSE EYES
- IF YOU'RE HERE TODAY & YOU'RE STUCK BETWEEN FAITH & FEAR WITH SOME DECISION YOU HAVE BEFORE YOU, STRUGGLE YOU'RE DEALING WITH, NEW DIRECTION YOU'RE CONSIDERING
- WOULD YOU RAISE YOUR HAND SO I CAN PRAY WITH YOU TODAY

PRAY

**We know the right thing to do, but need the courage to do it.
Here's how you get unstuck - landing the plane**

Additional Material:

- What is it in our lives that we already know --- How do we need to RESPOND in FAITH
- "I'm afraid of what I might miss, but I'm going to be obedient and do it anyway

John Ortberg quotes

(Just like our team stuck on that sandbar in the middle of Panama bay, we had to get out to get going in the right direction again)

We hear a bit of fear in Peter's voice when he asked Jesus to command me to come to you (FEAR)

Peter was walking on water, he had taken the risk of faith, been obedient to the words of Jesus to step out and walk on water, but he did one thing he shouldn't have done

DON'T LOOK DOWN!

He saw the waves, he realized he was on the water in the middle of a storm, he felt the strong wind against his face, and he panicked, he was terrified

- (What was I thinking?!)

Abraham showed faithful obedience to God when he said yes to go to a place he did not know, and live by faith once he got there

- Hebrews 12:1-2
- Examine the various interactions of Peter w/ Jesus through Scripture
 - John 13:7
 - Feet washing moment, by doing this you will understand asa shama
 - Garden moment
 - Courtyard moment
 - John 21
 - Restoration breakfast moment (jumping out of boat now!)

We're in our Unstuck series and this weekend we're addressing the reality of getting stuck between our FAITH and our FEARS...

Closing thoughts:

- Peter cried out Save me Lord, he needed saving more than once, he got stuck between faith and fear often
- Are you stuck again? Where is fear keeping u from faith ?
- Jesus is listening today

Faith is simply a RESPONSE to a GOD we already know

- God has clearly called us to some steps of FAITH each day that we can choose to be FAITHFUL and OBEDIENT to follow
- **READ: Colossians 3:12-17 / Daily steps of FAITH**

ME - WE - GOD - YOU - WE