

# “Cry Out For God”

Matthew 14: 22-31



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Pastor

I am not going to insult any of you today by offering God’s word with a theme that might be classified as various topics. No, today I am searching for God to help us through a time that is understatedly difficult. Today we need God’s attention.

Today, in our connectedness in this Body of Christ called St. Luke’s we are faced with a faith obstacle that seems to be so overwhelming. Less than 48 hours ago our world was shaken by the sudden death of James Nail.

We are all deeply saddened by this unanswerable tragedy and every fiber of our being goes out to his wife Debra and his children: Brittany,

Jared and Josh. I don’t have to tell you that this is a hard time. But, I also

know this is a defining time in our lives and I readily include myself. This is a moment when we have to make a decision. We either choose to loose, or at least allow damage, our faith by making any number of choices and then going it alone,

or we have to ask God to help us. In my deepest hurt this morning, in my deepest anger, in my deepest sorrow I still know that we have to cry out to God and ask for help. It’s only when we cry out to God, then and only then, can we even begin to continue this journey of faith that God calls us to:

## **Ephesians 4:5**

There is one body and one Spirit—just as you were called to one hope when you were called—one Lord, one faith, one baptism; one God and Father of all, who is over all and through all and in all.

You heard the story of Jesus walking on water and Peter’s failed attempt to do the same. Even though Jesus called Peter to walk out on the water, he never said it would be easy. Peter had the ability to cry out. But now he needed the humility to call out to God. He had the ability to step out on his greatest fears, but now he needed the humility to cry out to God. Even though Peter had confidence and courage, God reminded him that he needed more. At that moment, Peter realized that he needed help from God. We are at that point right now. Even though you may have been at this crossroad before, the choices have to be made again, again, and again to choose God. At that moment, Peter had a choice to make. Does he simply suck it up, hide his fears and sink? Or, does he surrender all, ask for help and be saved? In the midst of his greatest fears, Peter opted to do the latter. Peter opted to realize that in order to get closer to God, he needed to surrender everything to God and to ask God for ultimate help. Was Peter’s attempt to walk on water a failure? Was the question asked by Jesus intended to scold Peter? I see this lesson from several points of view and all speak to us today.

You see it is true that in some regards Peter did loose the challenge to walk on water. He started out looking straight at Jesus, being filled with all of the hope, promise, awe, wonder, and faith that is much like that which many of us have here today. He took that step out and was actually walking on the water! He was walking the walk and not just talking the talk so to speak. He was living the disciples dream, he was walking the ultimate faith and living according to the fullness and power of Jesus Christ, the Son of God! But then, something changed. Peter saw everything around him and got scared. I assure you the giant waves, the driving rain, the dangerous lightning and the clapping thunder were very, very real and very, very scary! Peter took his eyes off of Jesus and began to sink. Hear me church, I said something changed that caused Peter to sink and that change was in Peter, not Jesus!

**Hebrews 13:8**

Jesus Christ is the same yesterday and today and forever.

Jesus did not cause Peter to sink! But he did save him!

**Matthew 14:30**

30 But when he saw the wind, he was afraid and, beginning to sink, cried out, "Lord, save me!"

31 Immediately Jesus reached out his hand and caught him.

God wants to save us. God wants to be close to us. God wants to reveal himself to us but we have to cry out to him. We have to be desperate for God. Why is it though, that I have to be sinking before I cry out for him?

**Psalm 116:1**

1. I love the LORD, for he heard my voice; he heard my cry for mercy.

**Matthew 14:29, 30**

29. "Come," he said. Then Peter got down out of the boat, walked on the water and came toward Jesus. 30. But when he saw the wind, he was afraid and, beginning to sink, cried out, "Lord, save me!"

The wake up call for me is this: Peter was already being thrown about by the same winds and waves, before he stepped out on the water and yet there is no mention that he was afraid then. When he was in the company of the other disciples he was not afraid. But when he stepped out in faith, and had a great challenge before him, that same storm defeated him. Why is it that we always have to learn the hard way? Events happen around us all day, every day, that drastically affect people's lives, yet as long as our lives aren't affected we don't let it bother us too much. Church, we have to cry out for everyone, not just ourselves. I am crying out for the Nail family, I am crying out for the Thompson family, I am crying out for our children being inundated by the societal trash, I am crying out for my own family and extended family in need of healing and transformation, I am crying out because I need to get closer to God to find some understanding. I have to be intentional about walking in the shadow of the cross or I will lose focus and I will sink! Jesus saved Peter by grabbing his hand and pulling him up out of the water which was going to drown him. Jesus could have grabbed Peter's hand if Peter had not been reaching for Jesus. If Peter was trying to save himself by thrashing around, trying to swim for the boat, or anything else, Jesus couldn't have grabbed his hand. In order for God to catch me today I have to be intentional about reaching for him even though I feel like I am drowning.

**Psalm 116:8-11**

<sup>8</sup> I have set the LORD always before me.

Because he is at my right hand,

I will not be shaken.

<sup>9</sup> Therefore my heart is glad and my tongue rejoices;

my body also will rest secure,

<sup>10</sup> because you will not abandon me,

nor will you let your Holy One see decay.

<sup>11</sup> You have made known to me the path of life;

you will fill me with joy in your presence,

with eternal pleasures at your right hand.

There is no one in this room that hopes more than me, that no matter what happens in this life, that you will keep your faith. That you will walk by faith in path that God has set before you.

Hebrews 11:1

Now faith is being sure of what we hope for and certain of what we do not see.

I have no logic for what I saw or do in the name of Jesus Christ. I have no defining answers for anything that happens in this world. But I know this, as unjust as James' death seems, we have to cry out for God to save us, or we too will sink and drown.

Today, I am making a conscious, faithful, choice to honor God, and to honor the amazing faith of James Nail, by making the choice to cry out to God and ask him to come closer and save me. Jesus said in Mark 9:23, "Everything is possible for one who believes." I hope you will join me in my prayer today; this cry for myself and every person experiencing any obstacle of faith, quoting Mark 9:24, "I do believe; help me overcome my unbelief!"