



GROUPS LESSON | WEEK 5

Sermon: February 8, 2026

BE BOLD FOR THE KINGDOM: GET OUT OF THE BOAT (MATTHEW 14:22-33)

Faithful Christ-followers live boldly, trusting that Jesus will carry us over the waves.

HOOK

MAIN POINT: *Faithful Christ-followers live boldly, trusting that Jesus will carry us over the waves.*

On January 24, 1848, James W. Marshall struck gold in Coloma, California. In the seven years that followed, some 300,000 people traveled to California, motivated by the promise of wealth. Willing to leave behind the comforts of home to pioneer the untamed west, a great many found that the risk outweighed the reward.

An estimated 50,000 perished on the California Trail due to the harsh conditions and barren land. Others traveled by sea and faced shipwreck and disease. Most made it to the Golden State, only to be greeted by deadly mining accidents and unregulated property rights. The economy boomed, but the promise of individual wealth remained empty for most.

As Christians, we are called to leave behind comfort and live boldly. Unlike the gold rush travelers, being bold in our faith is not a risk, because Christ is our guarantee and his promises always come to fruition. We don't have to worry about the dangers of leaving our comfort zone, because Christ is always with us and the reward (salvation) is certain and far greater than any earthly wealth.

BOOK

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Talking Point 1: Followers of Jesus can have confidence because Christ is with us

Read: Matthew 14:22-27

The idea that “Christ is with us” might be an odd statement to make in a story where Jesus sends the disciples off on their own so he can go pray in isolation, but the disciples were never truly alone. When Jesus does come out to the boat, he does so in a supernatural way, one that would likely spook you and me. He walks on the water. The disciples cower in fear rather than consider it might be their Messiah. Jesus reassures them and tells them not to be afraid. This passage somewhat parallels another critical boat moment for the disciples:

Read: Matthew 8:23-27

This time Jesus is in the boat from the start, but the disciples still do not feel safe because he is asleep. Rather than calling, and trusting, on him to get them to safety, they frantically yell about their impending doom. Jesus has the power to create and destroy with his very words, and though the disciples had seen a great many miracles, they still doubted. Jesus attributes their fear to a lack of faith.

These two instances serve as a reminder that Christ is with us, even when we do not see him or do not expect him to be present. He dwells in us through his Spirit, who comforts, guides, and convicts us. His constant presence should serve as motivation for us to live boldly for him. The God who walks on water, and who calms the wind and the waves, is with us in our darkest moments.

Fear is contrary to faith. If we truly trust in the God that breathed the world into existence and sent his Son as our source for salvation, then we must live like it!

- Q: What fear prevents you from living boldly?
- Q: Who have you known that is a great example of confident Christian living? How do they represent Christ well?

Talking Point 2: Followers of Jesus are called to live beyond our comfort

Read: Matthew 14:28-30

- Q: Have you ever asked for something, received it, and immediately regretted it?

That’s where Peter finds himself. He wants proof that the “ghost” they see out on the water is Jesus, but he doesn’t understand the consequences of what he is asking for. Peter becomes the second man in history to walk on water, but the moment he recognizes the wind and the waves, he begins to lose faith, and he begins to sink. Jesus made it possible for Peter to walk on water, but Peter’s faith in Jesus is what was holding him up.

Peter’s faith is the great roller coaster ride of the Gospels. He makes a bold stand when he humbly follows Jesus after the fishing miracle, or when he gets out of the boat here, or when he confesses that Jesus is the Christ. Yet, he retreats in his faith when the wind and the waves appear, when he chooses sleep over prayer in the Garden of Gethsemane, and when accusers ask if he followed Jesus on the night before the crucifixion.

When Jesus tells Peter to step out of the boat, he is asking him to leave behind comfort and truly trust in the one who makes miracles happen. This is the same call that we receive daily

when our faith is tested. Are we willing to stand firm when tempted by anger, greed, pride, or lust? Are we willing to be bold when someone questions our beliefs? Are we willing to get uncomfortable for the sake of serving and giving to the Church?

It is a lot easier to stay in the boat. It's way more convenient to remain in isolation so that we don't have to answer questions about our beliefs, or to keep our faith private so that we don't have to give of our time, giftings, and finances towards a local church community. Comfort is dangerous for the Christian. Our contentment, our joy, comes in Christ, not in the comforts of this world. Comfort and convenience lead to complacency. We are called to sacrificial living instead.

- Q: How has comfort held you back in your faith?
- Q: In what ways can you relate to Peter's "roller coaster" ride of faith?

Talking Point 3: Followers of Jesus have an advocate when things begin to spiral

Read: Matthew 14:31-33

Though Peter's doubt causes him to sink, he speaks out in faith asking for Jesus to save him. Sometimes, even when we are acting in faith, it can feel like we are drowning. In every circumstance, Jesus is our anchor, our salvation. When we look back on the great testaments of faith throughout Scripture, there are many faithful figures that find themselves in less than desirable conditions but choose to rely on God in times of need.

- Q: What are some examples of Biblical figures relying on God when they come across a difficult circumstance?

An immediate story that might come to mind is that of Shadrach, Meshach, and Abednego from Daniel 3. These three men were seemingly punished for their righteousness, and instead of bending the knee (figuratively and literally) to comfort, they chose to die for the glory of God. In the midst of the fiery furnace, another man appeared, an Advocate to intercede on their behalf and save them from certain death.

Read: 1 John 2:1; Hebrews 7:25

- Q: What is an advocate? In what ways is Christ our advocate?

He stands in the gap for our sin. He provides us the Helper (the Holy Spirit). He reaches down and saves us when we are sinking. Having Christ as our advocate should spur us on in our willingness to step out faithfully for the Kingdom. Our confidence is in him. We need not fear when trials come our way but rather find joy (James 1:2-5) knowing that we have an advocate with us that can take any bad thing and use it for good, for his glory.

Lastly, we should be motivated to be bold in our faith because Jesus is not only our advocate, but also our Lord. When Jesus saved Peter and the wind ceased, everyone that witnessed it immediately worshipped him. This is the proper response to the great things that we have already seen God do. We worship God not only through song and prayer, but through living in Christlikeness. When we step out in faith and are willing to devote every corner of our life to making him known, we are honoring and glorifying him.

- Q: How have you seen Christ be an advocate in every circumstance in your life?
- Q: What is your response when you experience the grace of God in this way?



MAIN POINT: *Faithful Christ-followers live boldly, trusting that Jesus will carry us over the waves.*

As Midway embarks on Gaining Ground, it really is a leap of faith. Together as a church we need to be praying and contributing faithfully, expecting that God will move for the sake of his glory and his Kingdom.

Spend a few minutes discussing the practical applications of today's passage:

- Q: How does today's story from Matthew 14 connect to what we are doing with Gaining Ground?
- Q: What does it look like for you to step out in faith within your local church? (Think places to serve, time commitment, relationships, giving, etc.)
- Q: What does it look like for you to step out in faith outside of the local church? (How are you living publicly for Christ, evangelism, family discipleship, restoration of relationships, etc.)