

1 Kings 19:9-18

Matthew 14:22-33

Romans 10:5-15

“Steadfast love and faithfulness will meet;
righteousness and peace will kiss each other.”

AMEN!

(Sing!) “Well if I could walk on water

If I could find some way to prove

If I could walk on water,

would you believe in me?

My love is so true.”

The late Eddie Money’s song “Walk on Water”
came to mind during the reading of today’s
gospel lesson.

But that’s not the only one!

(Sing!) “Do you believe?

Walk on water

Do you believe?

Walk on water

Do you believe that you can win this fight tonight?"

Another song titled "Walk on Water"
this one by Thirty Seconds to Mars
struck me as relevant too.

What can I say?

The songs in my head come out
when I read the Bible.

Sure, you might say

"Pastor, that's low hanging fruit,
to connect Jesus' walking on water
to songs with the same title." :-)

And while that may be true, I'm really more
focused on the believe part of the songs and
the belief, faith, and trust part
in the scripture lessons.

(Ask Ben) What's the Greek word for faith,
trust, and belief is.

Yes! Pistis, is the Greek word that can be defined
as faith, trust, or believe.

A thread woven in our lessons. (Pause)

In 1 Kings we read the familiar account of
Elijah struggling to trust God's help and protection.

Elijah's in a jam.

Jezebel wants him killed, and he headed
to the hills for hiding.

And in that fear, Elijah encounters God. (Pause)

A story...

The doctor's words replayed in Maria's mind.

"There's nothing more we can do."

Like a scratch on a record...

"There's nothing more to do."

Maria sat by his side with fear and uncertainty.

The nights where the hardest -
the long silent hours of only the soft
sound of shallow breathing.

One evening, Maria opened the Bible to
the place where we read, in 1 Kings.

The part that says

“The Lord was not in the great wind;
the Lord was not in the earthquake,
the Lord was not in the fire.”

Yet, after all these, there was
the sound of “sheer silence.”

This was the time when Elijah felt the Lord’s presence.

In that quiet moment,
Maria felt the Lord’s presence, too.

An assurance that she wasn’t alone.

She still prayed for a miracle, but something
new had opened inside her.

That something was God’s “Yes,”
to the miracle for which she prayed;
it was a “Yes” to peace.

Peace to the man she loves and peace to her as well,
for his suffering was about to end,
and there’d be peace. (Pause)

Do you believe this? (Pause)

Then in Romans, we have an invitation from Paul
to proclaim the “word of faith.”

For Christians like us, that faith comes
from Jesus’ righteousness.

“Righteous” meaning that God’s will is done,
carried out, and fulfilled.

The words in Paul’s Letter to the Roman’s
carry great power.

Power that has been misused by
fundamentalists within our faith.

While Paul works to keep it simple for his readers,
people have used this text as a child
might use a hammer to clean a spot
on a mirror.

Paul’s speaking to people who are in fear of
not being loved and accepted by God.

He wants them to know simply that
confessing belief in Jesus with your lips and
by trusting with your heart that God
raised him from the dead... you’re saved!

This message is meant for Christians struggling,
not as a mission statement that supports
the condemnation our siblings of other faiths.

Our faith ought to take seriously God's power
to make all things right, and the faith of Jesus
is that source of liberation,
not just for us but for all creation. (Pause)

Do you have have faith in that? (Pause)

It's easy to say "Yes!"

I do it all the time!

It's a lot harder to step out of the boat,
walk in the chaos and danger,
but that's exactly what Peter did.

For a few steps, at least, he walked on water!

Let the witness of that be as weird as it sounds.

Put a pause on judging Peter
for taking his eye off of Jesus.

We've all heard that sermon.

Just let it be weird to think of Jesus

walking on water and
then Peter doing it, too.

Let his testimony of faith present itself.

When Peter let go of the boat and
took those couple of wobbly steps

like a child learning to walk
his face must have lit up and
Jesus' beckon, like that of a parent,
must have beamed with pleasant pride.

Then, just like a child learning to walk, Peter falls.

Don't we all stumble and trip?

The lesson for us is not why?

For today, the lesson is revealed in the
three words Peter said,
"Lord, save me." (Pause)

Think for a moment, if you will,
about a lesson in your life that has shaped,
or helped shape who you are.

How did that event change the way
you move through the world? (Pause)

You have it in mind?

Was it a time of trial?

The outcome may have been joyful,
but for a time there was probably fear, pain,
worry, and even a failure to believe
that God even cared about you.

It probably was not a time of ease.

Yet, we learn the lessons that shape our lives
in the crucible moments.

Times when our character is tested and
our integrity is shaped,
depending on our response.

These events either break us or
they transform us into something stronger,
more thoughtful, and more open,
or both. (Pause)

Let us hear the lesson of Peter to cry out,
“Lord, save me!”

And when it happens, and it always does happen,
it might not happen in the way

we might have hoped.

But when it happens we say this,

“Truly, you are the Son of God.”

AMEN!