Over the next few weeks we are going to look at some of the questions that Jesus asked. Now before we go too far, we need to understand something—a truth we are to keep I mind throughout this series and for our own edification: When you and I ask questions, we ask to gain information. When the Son of God asks questions, it is not for information but for our transformation. These questions are proposed for self-examination, a method to reflect on the why, or the what, or the who, or the how. In genesis 3:9, God calls to Adam and asks, “Where are you?” Of course, God knows where Adam is and what has happened. Adam needs to see where Adam is. The questions asked by God are aimed at awareness, again—for self-examination. He doesn’t ask a question because He needs to know but because the one He asks needs to know.

In our Gospel reading, we revisit one of the most well known passages of scripture, one of the many miracles of Jesus. Peter walks on water, he sinks, and Jesus rescues him. Then in verse 31, Jesus asks the question, “You of little faith, why did you doubt?” There are so many things for us to learn and apply based on this passage. The disciples have just witnessed Jesus feed five thousand with five loaves and two fish. They have walked with him, experiencing Him, but still, they doubt. After the miracle of loaves and fishes, Jesus sends the disciples off by boat; a storm arises. Listen, Family, I don’t believe for a moment that Jesus is unaware of this impending storm. In fact, a beautiful truth for us is that Jesus is always aware of every storm we ever face. He uses storms to teach us about Himself and ourselves. From the storms, we can embrace the intimacy and protection He provides. Yet, now, I need and want to say to you, Christian, that this biblical story affirms the truth that your doubt does not disqualify you as a disciple. In fact, you are in good company. But, Church, faith is a choice, not a feeling. Fear and uncertainty are deceptive. Matthew 14:26 tells us that the disciples thought Jesus, walking toward them on the water, was a ghost. The word here is “phantasma,” a term of Greek literature that means apparitions or spirit appearances. In the Old Testament, this same word means “deception.” In this context, we can understand that doubt and fear simply lie to our spirits. They cause our perception of our great God to be *less than*, to be discounted in power or sovereignty. And we know that’s not true. In the very next verse, Matthew 14:27, Jesus says, “It is I. Do Not be afraid.” Jesus’ response literally in the Greek is “ego eimi”; that is, *literally*, “I AM.” The same name is that which God used to introduce Himself to Moses. Here, Jesus teaches the disciples who He truly is: the I AM. He is not just a genie in a bottle, a magician or granter of wishes. I AM. He is the one who can command the molecules of water to allow a grown man to walk on them. He is the one who changes five fish and two loaves into supplies of a food truck for thousands. He is the God that knows, see, and enters our storms. He comforts with his response to the disciples’ fear: “Be still and know I AM.” Clearly, He says, I am here and I’m not going anywhere. We worship a God who revels himself to us and enters into life with us.

Understanding more and more about who He is, is what being a disciple is. And that learning should never stop. We know Peter began to sink when his eyes left Jesus. Learning from Peter’s example, we must, as Hebrews 12:2 directs, fix our eyes on Jesus, the author and perfecter of our faith. Fear and doubt are a tool of division orchestrated by the hand of the enemy, who uses them to divide you from your Jesus, from your faith (\*James 1:6-8). Satan uses doubt and rear to create a division among brothers and sisters in the faith. Peter believes he can walk to His Jesus, or he won’t get out of the boat. But clearly, Church, faith is at its very strongest when our eyes are fixed on Him. It isn’t that the storm is too big; it is that Peter’s view of Jesus is too small. Peter’s perception, his view, his understanding are too small. Jesus enters our storms and Jesus calms our storms. If we want to strengthen our faith, we must rely on the Sovereignty of the I AM. Listen, Family, we can not miss what goes on here when Jesus asks Peter the question, “Why did you doubt?” Even as Peter sinks in his doubt and his fear, Jesus reaches out with His grace-filled hand and recues Peter. Peter does not have to get it right in order for Jesus to rescue him. Peter cries out to Jesus in Matthew 14:30, “Lord, save me.” Notice that the storm still rages, the wind still blows, and the big waves still threaten. In a declaration of faith, Peter calls Jesus ***Lord***.

\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_

\*James 1:6-8

**6** But when you ask, you must believe and not doubt, because the one who doubts is like a wave of the sea, blown and tossed by the wind.

**7** That person should not expect to receive anything from the Lord.

**8** Such a person is double-minded and unstable in all they do.

In the easiest or most challenging times, then, Faith in Jesus is not about securing our comfort. It is about seeing that our Lord God is at hand. It is about taking hold of Jesus’ nail-scarred hand and trusting Him. Peter does not wait until the storm passes. He simply takes Jesus’ offered hand. There are always lessons to learn in the storms we face. Look at the response of the other disciples: Matthew 14:33 “Then those who were in the boat worshiped him, saying, ‘Truly you are the Son of God.’”

Theirs is the appropriate response to our storms: WORSHIP!

Do you doubt? Worship!

In your storm, Worship!

In uncertainty, Worship!

Faith is a choice. Choose wisely. Take hold of the grace-filled, sovereign hand of Jesus. Be comforted knowing He is Lord and He is with you in the storm.

PASSAGES IN SUPPORT OF THIS MESSAGE:

2 Timothy 3:14-17

14 But as for you, continue in what you have learned and have become convinced of, because you know those from whom you learned it, 15 and how from infancy you have known the Holy Scriptures, which are able to make you wise for salvation through faith in Christ Jesus. 16 All Scripture is God-breathed and is useful for teaching, rebuking, correcting and training in righteousness, 17 so that the servant of God may be thoroughly equipped for every good work.

Matthew 14:22-33

Jesus Walks on the Water

22 Immediately Jesus made the disciples get into the boat and go on ahead of him to the other side, while he dismissed the crowd. 23 After he had dismissed them, he went up on a mountainside by himself to pray. Later that night, he was there alone, 24 and the boat was already a considerable distance from land, buffeted by the waves because the wind was against it. 25 Shortly before dawn Jesus went out to them, walking on the lake. 26 When the disciples saw him walking on the lake, they were terrified. “It’s a ghost,” they said, and cried out in fear. 27 But Jesus immediately said to them: “Take courage! It is I. Don’t be afraid.” 28 “Lord, if it’s you,” Peter replied, “tell me to come to you on the water.” 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!” 31 Immediately Jesus reached out his hand and caught him. “You of little faith,” he said, “why did you doubt?” 32 And when they climbed into the boat, the wind died down. 33 Then those who were in the boat worshiped him, saying, “Truly you are the Son of God.”