



51A BEAUFORT CLUSTER LITURGY - PENTECOST 10A

Testing the water

Abstract

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?"
Matthew 14:29-31

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51A Beaufort Cluster Liturgy - Pentecost 10A

Testing the water

SUNDAY, AUGUST 9, 2020 | PENTECOST 10A | PROPER 14 | YEAR A

Old Testament & Psalm, Option I

Old Testament Genesis 37:1–4, 12–28

Psalm Psalm 105:1–6, 16–22, 45b

or

Old Testament & Psalm, Option II

Old Testament 1 Kings 19:9–18

Psalm Psalm 85:8–13

New Testament Romans 10:5–15

Gospel Matthew 14:22–33

Jesus reveals a little more of his identity in dramatic fashion by walking on the water to where the twelve are battling a storm. Peter thinks he can do it too; but he needs to be rescued and learns a crucial lesson in trust.

This week's resources explore: grappling with faith and doubt; taking the risk.
Revised Common Lectionary. (2009). Bellingham, WA: Faithlife.

Pre-Service	I'll hold you forever (Do not fear) David MacGregor
Greeting	May the grace of our Lord Jesus Christ The Love of God and the fellowship of the Holy Spirit be with us all and also with us
We Gather	Jesus said: 'Take courage, it is I. Don't be afraid.' Our God is a powerful God, who does things way beyond our understanding. But we have no need to fear, because we know we are safe in God's presence. The Ancient of Days breathed life into this Land and her Peoples. From time beyond our reckoning the people And other people you may identify with have blessed this place through their care and concern for the area and its people. We pay our respects to their Elders and Leaders, pas, present, and emerging as we pray for all leaders in this community and pray for the future of their communities.

May we walk gently and respectfully on this Land,
 and remember our Minister in placement David Thompson, the leaders,
 As well as all those that care for the wellbeing
 of our church and the community beyond it.

Let us come to our God now.
 Let us bow down and worship.
 Let us pray.

Lord, sometimes life following you can be difficult.
 We find so many dilemmas and struggle so much,
 wishing it could be easier.
 We so want to trust you and see your plan for us.

Help us this morning to relax into your presence,
 to clearly hear your word and be prepared to act on it.
 In Jesus' name.

Amen.

Hymn/song

TIS #246 – "Christ is the world's light

Welcome

Today we are rocked by a disaster with us at its core.
 It affects our lives and how we think.
 It will affect our future.

But as Christians, we are asked to look beyond our own walls.
 Many have lost their lives in this pandemic
 Each one mourned by family and loved ones.

It Beirut, an explosion that had the magnitude we hadn't seen since world war 2
 Blew apart a city, it's people and has heralded a humanitarian disaster
 At least 158 have been killed including Isaac a 2 year old Australian boy
 And 5000 injured

At least 95 people have been killed by monsoon flooding in southern and western India,
 while hundreds of thousands have been evacuated from their homes.ⁱ

And all around us, even in this worship service
 We know of those suffering their own personal or health crises

Superficially, our text for today is about Jesus walking on water
 And Peter trying—and ultimately failing—to walk on water.
 But it's about so much more than that.

The most important thing to notice in this morning's Bible passage
 isn't that Jesus walked on water
 or that Peter took at least a few baby steps on the Sea of Galilee.

The important thing to notice is that Peter got out of the boat in the first place.

The important thing to notice is that we are also asked to get out of our own boat as well
 At the request of our master.

Let us pray

As we approach you today, Lord,
 we probably feel pretty much like Peter –
 full of bravado to begin with,
 but then just not quite so certain of ourselves.

We come to you, Jesus,
 trusting that even if we feel ourselves
 beginning to sink under the pressures that we face,
 we know you are still there holding us up.

Please reassure us that you won't let go,
 no matter how we think and feel.

Thank you, Lord.

Amen.

Readings*Matthew 14:22–33*

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." ⁱⁱ

respond

For the word of the Lord

Thanks be to God

We say Sorry

Lord God,
 We're sorry for the times we take our eyes off you,
 and seek to do things in our own strength.
 We're sorry for the times we doubt that
 you can keep us on the straight and narrow.
 We're sorry for the times we ask you for signs.

Lord, we pray that you will forgive
 our doubts and hesitations,
 show us your loving presence,
 especially when we most need it,
 and teach us to trust you always.

Amen.

Hymn/Song

Keeping my eyes on you – Mann

Response**Testing the water**

Matthew 14: :22–33

These days I wear whatever falls out of the wardrobe first,
rarely finding the opportunity to dress up.
But pre-COVID, I would wonder at the price that kids would pay for fashionable sneakers.

The most fashionable ones carried the name of famous athletes or others.

In 2019 two men, as a joke, designed the Jesus shoe.

They bought a pair of Nike Air Max 97's
and added little golden crucifixes hanging from the laces
and pockets of holy water from the Jordan River
that have been prayed over by a priest.

The designers wanted to ridicule the idea of shoe companies
selling ordinary shos at ridiculous prices.

And who is a bigger celebrity than Jesus?

Daniel Greenberg, one of the designers behind the “Jesus Shoes” said,

“We asked ourselves, ‘What would a shoe [collaboration] with Jesus look like?’

Obviously, it should let you walk on water.

The “Jesus Shoes” sells for \$US4,000. That’s inflation for you, originally it sold for \$US1,400ⁱⁱⁱ

Superficially, our text for today is about

Peter trying—and ultimately failing—to walk on water.

But it’s about so much more than that.

The most important thing to notice in this morning’s Bible passage
isn’t that Jesus walked on water

or that Peter took at least a few baby steps on the Sea of Galilee.

The important thing to notice is that Peter got out of the boat in the first place.

Peter trying to walk on water is a perfect image of what it means to become a follower of Christ.

It’s the perfect image of what it means to commit your life to him.

Notice that all the disciples were in the boat,

but only Peter took that step of faith to go to Jesus.

I’m really glad to see all of you watching this service.

But people come to church for a lot of different reasons,
not that we should judge anyone.

And I hope you experience the presence of God while you are here.

I hope you find what you’re looking for.

But just coming to church isn’t going to answer your questions
or heal your hurts or change your life.

Committing your life to serving Jesus, on the other hand,
will make a real difference in how you experience life.

Let’s see if we can learn what Peter learned as he tried to walk to Jesus on the water.

The first thing we can learn from Peter’s story

is to come to Jesus even if we’ve got unanswered questions.

If you are holding off on making that decision to follow Jesus
until you read that one article that answers all your questions about the life of faith,
then you will never get out of the boat.
It's never going to happen. Nobody has all the answers.

The first thing we can learn from Peter's story
is to come to Jesus even if we've got unanswered questions.

**The second thing we can learn from Peter's story is
to come to Jesus even if we're in the middle of a storm.**

Notice that this scene takes place in the middle of a storm.

Matthew says the boat was "buffeted by the waves
because the wind was against it."

It would be remarkable for Peter to try to walk on the waves
if the sea was calm that day,
but to do it in the middle of a storm is even more remarkable.

Life has its storms, doesn't it?

How do you respond to a storm?

The other eleven disciples took shelter in the boat.

Only Peter believed that it was better to brave the storm with Jesus
than to stay in the boat without him.

As we sit here today, my state is in disaster mode.

here I am in stage 3 lockdown,

an hour away, people are in stage 4 lockdown due to the COVID-19 pandemic.

We are in a storm right now.

It would be easy right now for us to close our front doors and shut the world out,
but as I hear from my Christian friends, I see the opposite.

They go out, they care for each other and the community around them
as much as is possible.

They are being church more than I have ever seen them.

Many of us wait to decide about how seriously we take the call to follow Jesus.

We'll make a decision about Jesus when things aren't so crazy.

But there will always be storms.

If Jesus really is the Son of God, if Jesus really is the way, the truth and the life,
then isn't the purpose of our life found in facing our storms with him?

That is what faith is all about.

Don't let the storms of life stand between you and Jesus.

**The next thing we can learn then from Peter's story
is to not let anything stand between ourselves and answering Jesus.**

Notice that Peter almost made it.

He took the first few baby steps of faith

and then he let fear and circumstances overwhelm him.

We can't stand in judgment of Peter.

how often do we do the same thing?
 We start to get out of the boat but then doubt intercedes
 or we're afraid of looking foolish or our busy schedule interferes.
 Imagine what the church would look like today,
 if Peter had made it all the way to Jesus?
 Imagine the experience of really trusting Jesus.
 Would he have ever denied Christ if he had completed that walk right then.

Think for a moment.
 What does Jesus have in store for you
 if you commit your whole life completely to him?
 What is holding you back?

My little granddaughter has no fear.
 when she is playing with us, she will often climb onto beds, chairs, even tables
 and launch herself into our arms.
 she has total trust and faith we will catch her.
 I want to be like my granddaughter.
 Not that any of you would consider catching me

Every great relationship is built on trust and love.
 And that's what God wants with us—a relationship.
 God is doing God's part.

He came in the flesh, in the person of Jesus Christ,
 to show us the quality of his life.
 Now it's time for us to do our part.

Every faith journey, no matter how stormy,
 begins with getting out of the boat and walking toward Jesus.
 Are you ready to take that step, even if it's a baby step like Peter's?
 because Jesus is waiting for you with outstretched arms.

Amen

Hymn/song

Oceans (Where feet may fail) - Hillsong

Offering

OFFERTORY SENTENCE

God is saving the world through
 the faithful actions of God's children.
 We are among them and the gifts we bring today
 bring salvation to many in need.

OFFERTORY PRAYER

Merciful and gracious God,
 we send these gifts into the world
 with your Spirit of love to be vessels of salvation.
 Let them land where they are most needed we pray.
 Amen.

Notices

The Inpatient Rehabilitation unit rang on Sunday afternoon,
with a bed for Kev for a fortnight.

The aim is to get him more balanced and mobile, to decrease falls.

So while he is in their care, I am going to Melbourne tomorrow,
To relieve my 3 x sisters from their caring role for my 92 year old mother.

My eldest sister is struggling to do Mum's evening care 7 days a week at present,
as my second eldest sister has Chronic Fatigue syndrome,
and a 40 minute drive each way, when it's her turn
to do Mum's evening care needs; my youngest sister has Rheumatoid arthritis
and her knee has "blown up", so my eldest sister
(who still works full time) is currently doing it all.

I will return on Monday, and go in to self isolation (except to pick Kev up) for 2 x weeks.
I've cancelled his home carers until the 24th,
to make sure that if I've been infected, they won't get it. (Only Kev would).

I have permission from Ballarat Police to go.

Kind regards. Sue.

P.S. If anyone has large ice cream container soft plastic lids,
could they leave any in my letter box in the next 3 months please.
My neighbour needs them for his tractor/paddock work as sighting markers!

Prayers for all people

Picture a lifeboat going out to a rescue in stormy seas.

Lifeboat missions for the family of Christ are varied

And we find them in unlikely places.

Here is an email I received from David Thompson this week.

Good evening Jim

I'm attaching a Prayer for Beirut which you might wish to include somehow on Sunday's service.

It came from the World Council of Churches newsletter.

The letter and prayer was written by Levon Kardashian,
A member of the Middle East National Conference,
the 12th, and till now the latest, national conference in the Uniting Church.

I was born, grew up and lived most of my life
about 1.5 Km away from the location of the explosion

Seeing the pictures of the destruction brought memories,
of much loved places that broke my heart.

My church, my school, the street I used to play on and the hospitals I went to when needed,
all destroyed.

I have not yet seen any pictures of my house.
My family and my friends are all in that area.

Below is a prayer for the situation in Beirut and the people who are in need of our prayers.

UnitingWorld has launched an appeal to help with the rebuilding of the city infrastructure.

The Middle East National Conference, is running a parallel appeal
to assist with the immediate needs of the people of Beirut.

I ask that you be generous in showing your love and care for the people of Beirut.

Prayer (full)

God of darkness and light,

Beirut waits in darkness longing for your light.

In the centre of darkness, rekindle hope.

As we pray for families to be reunited,

Let your Spirit be with us.

As we pray for the injured to be healed,

Let your Spirit be with us.

As we pray for those who have lost loved ones,

Let your Spirit be with us.

As we pray for homes to be rebuilt,

Let your Spirit be with us.

God of creation,

You create the Cedars of Lebanon

and give them their majesty to withstand all tribulations for your own pleasure.

You exalt them to represent eternity, strength, and endurance.

Yet we have cut them down and destroyed them for our own personal pleasures.

As we remember the Cedars of Lebanon,

we also remember the people of Lebanon in their diversity of cultures and faith.

We pray for your healing where there is injury,

We pray for your comfort where there is death,

We pray for your hope where there is despair,

We pray for your light where there is darkness,

We pray for your joy where there is sadness and

We pray for your love where this hatred.

God of Love,

Welcome into your arms the victims of the explosion in Beirut:

Those who have lost their homes,

those who have been injured

and those who have lost loved ones.

Comfort their families and all who grieve for them.

God of explosions and pollution,

Out of the depths we call to you;

in the face of incomprehensible anguish and sorrow,

we lift the cries of our distress

and implore you to show mercy upon those who are suffering

from the destruction of the explosion in Beirut and the ensuing chemical pollution.

Give protection and wisdom to emergency service personnel, doctors, nurses, hospitals,

and all those who assist in elevating the pain and suffering of those affected.

Encourage our generosity to those who suffer loss.

In your mercy restore your creation and heal our land.

We pray for those who have been injured in body, mind or spirit and ask you to heal them;

We pray

for those who are left homeless and wandering,
for those who breath the toxic air,
for those who are devastated,
and for families torn asunder and ask you to shelter them,

Strengthen the hands and hearts of those who assist in relief efforts

Grant us all firm resolve to stand with our neighbours who are in need,

to love them and to offer our generous support of them in this their time of trouble.

So, guide and bless your people,

that we may enjoy the fruits of the earth
and give you thanks with grateful hearts,

Father, we pray that you will bless us

with the gift of strength when endurance is needed,
for imagination and initiative when action is called for,
for wisdom in times of confusion,
for compassion for those who suffer,
for faith in Christ's saving action,
for hope when the situation seems desperate

and for charity in all things.^{iv}

Lord, sometimes people who don't know you

think we as Christian's have the easy option.

If only...

When we're in the deep water of doubt, flailing about,

Wondering where our mission is

which body of water we are being asked to walk on,

nearly going under, can't see land on the horizon,

we thank you, Lord, that you are in our lifeboat with us,

and will always rescue us and bring us back to you.

Amen

O Lord our God,

Lord's Prayer

Our Father in heaven, hallowed be your name.

Your kingdom come, your will be done
on earth as in heaven.

Give us today our daily bread.

Forgive us our sins

as we forgive those who sin against us.

Save us from the time of trial,

and deliver us from evil.

For the kingdom, the power,

and the glory are yours,

now and forever.

AMEN^v

Hymn/song
Jesus – Lover of my soul
We are sent out
<p>Peter only knew life as a fisherman. But he got out of the boat and followed you, Lord.</p> <p>Help us to hear your voice, get out of our boats and follow you. In the week ahead, may the world and its problems decrease as you increase in our lives.</p> <p>Keep us focused on your way, looking ahead and trusting you.</p> <p>Amen.</p> <p>May the Lord bless us and keep us May His face shine upon us and be gracious to us May he lift up His countenance upon us and give us peace</p>
Benediction
TIS #779 – “May the feet of God”
Thank you

ⁱ <https://www.bbc.com/news/world-asia-india-49306246>

ⁱⁱ [Revised Common Lectionary](#). (2009). Bellingham, WA: Faithlife.

ⁱⁱⁱ “‘Jesus shoes’ with holy water in the soles are selling for \$4,000” by Caitlin O’Kane, CBS News, October 11, 2019, <https://www.cbsnews.com/news/nike-air-max-97-jesus-shoes-filled-with-holy-water-selling-for-4000-2019-10-11/> © 2019 CBS Interactive Inc. All Rights Reserved.

^{iv} Levon Kardashian 4 Aug 2020, in <https://theoblogy.org.au/prayer-for-beirut/> reprinted in an email from the National Assembly headed UC National News - 7-13 August 2020 – 7 Aug 2020

^v English Language Liturgical Consultation, 1988