



# 51A ONLINE LITURGY - PENTECOST 10A

Testing the water

## Abstract

[Draw your reader in with an engaging abstract. It is typically a short summary of the document.]

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## 51A online 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.

<p><b>Pre-Service</b> I'll hold you forever (Do not fear) David MacGregor</p>
<p><b>Greeting</b> May the grace of our Lord Jesus Christ The Love of God and the fellowship of the Holy Spirit be with us all <b>and also with us</b></p>
<p><b>We Gather</b> 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,           for we know we are safe in God's presence.</p> <p>Let us come to our God now. Let us bow down and worship. Let us pray.</p> <p>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,</p>

<p>to clearly hear your word and be prepared to act on it. In Jesus' name. <b>Amen.</b></p>
<p><b>Hymn/song</b> Don't be Afraid – Bell</p>
<p><b>Welcome</b> 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.</p> <p>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.</p> <p><b>The important thing to notice is that Peter got out of the boat in the first place.</b></p> <p><i>Let us pray</i> 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 feel. Thank you, Lord. <b>Amen.</b></p>
<p><b>Readings</b> <i>Matthew 14:22–33</i> <sup>22</sup> Immediately Jesus made the disciples get into the boat and go on ahead of him to the other side, while he dismissed the crowd. <sup>23</sup> After he had dismissed them, he went up on a mountainside by himself to pray. Later that night, he was there alone, <sup>24</sup> and the boat was already a considerable distance from land, buffeted by the waves because the wind was against it. <sup>25</sup> Shortly before dawn Jesus went out to them, walking on the lake. <sup>26</sup> When the disciples saw him walking on the lake, they were terrified. "It's a ghost," they said, and cried out in fear. <sup>27</sup> But Jesus immediately said to them: "Take courage! It is I. Don't be afraid." <sup>28</sup> "Lord, if it's you," Peter replied, "tell me to come to you on the water." <sup>29</sup> "Come," he said. Then Peter got down out of the boat, walked on the water and came toward Jesus. <sup>30</sup> But when he saw the wind, he was afraid and, beginning to sink, cried out, "Lord, save me!" <sup>31</sup> Immediately Jesus reached out his hand and caught him. "You of little faith," he said, "why did you doubt?" <sup>32</sup> And when they climbed into the boat, the wind died down. <sup>33</sup> Then those who were in the boat worshiped him, saying, "Truly you are the Son of God." <sup>i</sup></p> <p><i>respond</i> For the word of the Lord <b>Thanks be to God</b></p>

**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.

**Words of Assurance**

Just as the disciples,  
     who were caught out on the lake in a storm,  
     experienced the salvation of Jesus  
     walking toward them,  
 so Christ holds out his hands to us,  
     ready to rescue us from any harm.

We are forgiven. Let us hold on to this promise.  
 Thanks be to God.

**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 \$US1,400<sup>ii</sup>

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 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.

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

### Prayers for all people

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

Lord, sometimes people who don't know you  
think we have the easy option.

If only...

When we're in the deep water of doubt, flailing about,  
nearly going under, can't see land on the horizon,  
We thank you, Lord, that you are our lifeboat,  
and will always rescue us and bring us back to you.

O Lord our God,  
you are worthy to be praised.  
You are the Son of God who walks on water,  
who mesmerises huge crowds with powerful words,  
but who also calms a frightened Peter –  
and you calm us and give us peace.

Thank you, Lord.

Lord God, we come before you to pray for all those people  
for whom taking risks is a way of life.

**Lord, reveal yourself to them and keep them safe.**

We pray for our health workers, paramedics, the police, the fire service  
all who daily face difficult situations  
as they seek to help to protect us and make our world a safer  
and more peaceful place.

**Lord, reveal yourself to them and keep them safe.**

We pray for people who work in troubled areas  
– the armed forces in war zones,  
those who bring humanitarian aid  
into areas of natural disaster, and many more.

**Lord, reveal yourself to them and keep them safe.**

We pray for people who take risks in your name, Lord Jesus  
– those who take your word where it is most needed  
– and for people who grapple with faith and doubt.

**Lord, reveal yourself to them and keep them safe.**

**Amen.**

### 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<sup>iii</sup>

### Hymn/song

Can we walk upon the water? Redman

### We are sent out

Peter only knew life as a fisherman.  
But he got out of the boat and followed you, Lord.

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>Keep us focused on your way, looking ahead and trusting you.</p> <p><b>Amen.</b></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>
<p><b>Benediction</b></p> <p>I'll hold you forever (Do not fear) David MacGregor</p>
<p><b>Thank you</b></p>

<sup>i</sup> [Revised Common Lectionary](#). (2009). Bellingham, WA: Faithlife.

<sup>ii</sup> "'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.

<sup>iii</sup> English Language Liturgical Consultation, 1988