

## **Step Out of the Boat**

Air Dates: October 3-7, 2022

### **Day One**

You are no doubt familiar with the time when Jesus walked on the waters of the Sea of Galilee, and Peter decided he wanted to join him. So Jesus invited him to step out of the boat and when Peter did that, he actually walked on water for a few steps, until he took his eyes off of Jesus.

Well, this week I want to talk about stepping out of the boat—being willing to take a step of faith in order to do what you believe God wants you to do. If you're willing to take a risk, as it were, to experience the new thing that God has for you, you'll have to step out of the safe boat and do something you've never done before, something you couldn't possibly do unless Jesus invited you and empowered you to do it.

So, the first challenge is to check it out and make sure this new idea or adventure is a God-thing. How do you know? Well, you pray about it a lot, you seek wisdom from godly people, and if it's from God it will be something that will help and bless others, not something to promote yourself. It will be one of the good works God ordained in advance for you to do, as we read in Ephesians 2:10. Once you are fairly confident that this idea or passion is from God, here are some things to consider—things I've learned along the way.

- God often gives us assignments that are outside of our gifting.

It's true that we all have individual gifts from God and God wants us to use those gifts to serve others. But in order to do the good works which were ordained in advance for you to do, you will sometimes be out on a limb, in territory that is not only new, but territory that doesn't fit.

Let me give you one personal example: My skills as a manager of people are not naturally good. But to do the good works God has called me to do, I've had to manage people in one capacity or another for many years. It came with the God-given job. So, what do you do when you have to do something outside your gifting? You seek help! It took me too long to figure this out, but finally I have enlisted the help of people who are very good at this—people who have done it and who can teach me things I need to know. What a difference that has made.

So, I just want you to know that the work God calls you to do will have parts that you aren't particularly good at, and parts you don't necessarily enjoy. Don't let that keep you from the good works God has for you to do. Don't miss the blessing that comes when you step out of the boat with Jesus.

### **Day Two**

I wonder if you've ever thought about what it must have felt like to Peter when he actually walked on water at Jesus' invitation? What an incredible experience—something no one had ever done before. But you know, he had to step out of the boat in order to do it.

I'm talking this week about stepping out of our boats, taking the risk that comes when we follow Jesus to do the good works he's called us to do. This step of faith will often take you outside your natural gifting, and you'll have to trust God to see you through.

Here's another thing I've learned about stepping out of the boat:

- You'll always feel inadequate, because the truth is, you'll always be inadequate.

I would remind you of what Paul wrote to the Corinthians:

*But God chose the foolish things of the world to shame the wise; God chose the weak things of the world to shame the strong. God chose the lowly things of this world and the despised things—and the things that are not—to nullify the things that are, so that no one may boast before him (1 Corinthians 1:27-29).*

Recognizing your inadequacies doesn't mean you are not called to do the job; it just means that God has chosen to use you and he will get the glory because in yourself, you can't do it. It wasn't long ago that I took on a new project that was totally out of my wheelhouse, as we say. On paper I was not qualified for the job, but I had no doubt that God wanted me to do it, so I just kept going, depending on him to teach me, to put people in my life who could help, etc. Stepping out of the boat usually takes you where you've never been before.

- God is always preparing us for what is ahead, even when we don't realize it.

Think of King David. Do you think that while he was tending sheep he ever thought that God had chosen him to be King of Israel? Not once, I'm sure. But that's where he became an expert with a slingshot; that's where he wrote music and words and learned to play an instrument. All of which God used mightily in his life then and to bless untold millions in the centuries since then.

I dare say if you look back on your own history, whatever you've learned, whatever you've experienced, whatever hardships or difficulties you've gone through, they have prepared you for something God is doing or is going to do with you. You may have never chosen that kind of education or preparation, but God knows how to turn even what others meant for evil into good for us.

Is God inviting you to step out of the boat? Don't miss the blessing that is yours when you do.

### Day Three

The Bible teaches us that as Christ-followers, we have to walk by faith not by sight. That means sometimes we have to take a risk, step out of the boat like Peter did, in order to walk where Jesus invites us. I'm talking about stepping out of our boats this week, and some things I've learned in my years of following Christ. Think about this:

- Obedience is more important to God than your comfort.

I believe that God sometimes withholds information from us and takes away our security blankets because he's teaching us the simple discipline of obeying. If you're trying to cross all your t's and dot all your i's before you step out of the boat, you'll probably be sitting there a long time! Sure, we need to do our due diligence and not foolishly charge ahead without making adequate plans. But seeing every turn in the road ahead just never happens with God. He shows us enough light for the next step.

The Bible says that the Word of God is a lamp for our feet and a light for our path. We don't walk blindly ahead, but we take it one step at a time, walking through the open doors even when we're not quite sure what's on the other side. Control freaks will have difficulty walking by faith, because it requires that you trust God all the way and relinquish the control into his hands. Psalm 91 is good for the faith walker—it says that God will cover us and his faithfulness will be our shield and defense. Quoting verse 9: "If you say, "The Lord is my refuge," and you make the Most High your dwelling, no harm will

overtake you, no disaster will come near your tent” (Psalm 91:9-10). When you step out of the boat, God has your back.

And consider this:

- Often God’s will is for us to make some decisions.

Making decisions is one way we grow and learn. So, there will be times when you simply will not have any great emotional confirmation or direction, but you will be faced with a decision that you must make, based on your knowledge of Scripture and the wisdom that God promises to give us.

That means, of course, that you are taking a risk—the risk that you could make the wrong decision. You could absolutely fall on your face. In fact, if you haven’t fallen on your face once or twice, my guess is, you haven’t done much! Asking God to give us clear, unmistakable signs—like Gideon of old—is not an act of faith. It is a sign that we really don’t want to walk by faith; it is evidence that we are controlled by our fears.

So, is God showing you that he wants you to step out of the boat? What’s keeping you from taking the next step?

## Day Four

Did you know that there is no “little” with God? I’m talking this week about stepping out of the boat to do what Jesus is inviting and asking you to do. It takes courageous faith and it can be a little risky, but it is the way to the abundant life that Jesus has for us.

However, I think lots of times we don’t take that step out of the boat because we keep thinking that God measures people and gifts and accomplishments like we do—by size, by quantity, by big versus small. And we decide that what we can do just doesn’t seem that big or important, compared to what others are doing. But God doesn’t use our measurement systems.

You remember the parable of the talents, where three guys were given different quantities—one ten talents, one five and one only one talent. The first two servants got busy and doubled their talents, but the guy with only one talent just sat down and did nothing. No doubt he figured that he couldn’t do much with only one talent anyway, so why bother? What difference would it make? But as Jesus tells that parable, it made a huge difference, and he was severely reprimanded by the Master. He could have done something with his one talent, but he just gave up.

Have you been disparaging the importance of your “one talent,” your gift, your ability, your opportunities? Have you been thinking that God is not involved in your “little” life?

Can I remind you of the boy with the small lunch? Jesus multiplied it more than he could have ever dreamed. What about the widow who gave her last penny? Not small to Jesus. Jesus said she gave more than the others. And those two people have been memorialized in Scripture for centuries.

You see, Jesus just measures differently than we do. If your excuse has been that you don’t have much to offer to the Lord, it simply won’t hold water. Jesus measures what you do with what you’ve been given—where you started and where you ended up—and he never compares you to anyone else.

Mother Teresa used to advise, “Don’t try to do great things for God. Do small things with great love.” There’s a passage in Zechariah 4 that says “Who dares despise the day of small things?” (Zechariah 4:10a). Maybe you’ve been despising or discounting what you see as a small thing that God wants you to do, and that’s why you haven’t stepped out of the boat. Can I encourage you to do that small thing

with great love for Jesus? To step out of your boat and experience the joy of walking on water as Jesus empowers you. You'll never regret it.

## Day Five

I want to encourage you to step out of the boat at the invitation of Jesus like Peter did, to do the good works he has for you to do. Could it be that you've been stuck in your boat and missing the joy of walking on the water with Jesus because of some fear or maybe laziness or just not wanting to rock your boat? If that's where you are, it's keeping you from knowing the incredible joy and fulfillment that comes when you simply obey Jesus and by trusting him, you do what God wants us to do.

You see, as a Christ-follower, you were created to do certain good works, as we read in Ephesians 2:10:

*For we are God's handiwork, created in Christ Jesus to do good works, which God prepared in advance for us to do.*

That is your mission in life, as established by God, and it is only when you are doing those good works that you are living in the completeness of who you are in Christ Jesus. Maybe you haven't stepped out of the boat because you haven't truly asked God to show you what good works he has for you to do. That's a good place to start—just pray for guidance, and if you're sincere about doing it, God will put a desire in your heart to do a good work.

Maybe you haven't stepped out of the boat because you simply haven't made time in your life to do those good works. Could it be that your life is so full of what you want to do, that you just can't fit God's calling into your schedule? I think of a person I knew who filled her life with lots of activity—fun things as well as career pursuits—so that there just was no time to put anything else in her life. She had just made her boat so comfortable that she didn't want to leave it. But she missed the blessing of walking on water with Jesus.

Maybe you stepped out of the boat once and then you started to sink, like Peter did, and so you just jumped back in the boat and now you're afraid you'll sink again. But failure is often part of our growing process, and God gives us lots of second chances. I don't think I could count the number of times God has had to rescue me and give me another opportunity to walk on the water with him. That's the kind of Lord we serve, and he's waiting to take your hand and show you the incomparable fulfillment that comes when you walk by faith and not by sight.

I just want to encourage you to keep your eyes on Jesus and follow his invitation to step out of the boat. I know it's scary, but you don't want to miss the indescribable joy of walking on the water with Jesus, doing what you could never do alone, and hearing him say "Well done."