

Bible reading: Matthew 14:22-33

Lord, save me

THIS WEEK WE EXPLORE GOD WITH US IN STORMY TIMES.

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.



Raid your recycling bin for junk modelling materials and see who can make the most successful vessel that floats on water. Think together about ways to stay afloat in your faith while navigating life's ups and downs.

LISTEN



Watch or play 'Praise You In This Storm', Casting Crowns on *Voice of Truth*.

<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=0YUGwUgBvTU>

Reflect on the lyrics and consider: When/where does it take courage to be known as a Christian? Are you facing rough waters or stormy seas right now? How can faith help you?

Pray



The passage reminds us of refugees who have risked their lives on stormy seas in hope of a new life. Find out about the Lampedusa Cross. <https://www.britishmuseum.org/blog/lampedusa-cross>
A carpenter on the island of Lampedusa made crosses out of the remains of a boat full of refugees that was wrecked off the coast in 2013 – 311 lives were lost and 155 saved by the islanders. The crosses were given as symbols of rescue and hope of new life to the survivors. Pray for refugees the world over, and for those who reach out to help them.

Bible notes



In the beginning, there was watery chaos. God created space for life by dividing the water (Genesis 1:6-7). Controlling water is an attribute of God. When Jesus walks on water, and when he pulls Peter from the waves, he is doing what God does. This is the second in a series of stories that highlights Jesus as the one who shares

God's power. Following the feeding of the five thousand, Jesus chooses to be alone with God. It is easy to imagine that he needs space to process what happened. When he walks on water, it is just as clear a revelation of God's power within him as the sharing of the loaves and fishes. 'Don't be afraid!' he tells the disciples in words that echo the way angels greet humans; and he identifies himself with the words 'It is I', the name God gives to Moses at the burning bush (Exodus 3:14). This is Matthew's second story of boats at risk. The first (8:23-27) names Jesus' power to quieten the wind and the waves. Here, Matthew asks us to attend to the way Jesus shares his power with Peter, proving that this is accessible to others too. Peter's faith holds him for a while, then collapses as his fear wins out. Yet he still trusts Jesus enough to call out to him for help, recalling the psalmist's cry 'Save me, O God' (Psalm 69:1). Jesus stretches his hand out to him as God stretched out to help the Israelites in Egypt (Exodus 3:20), and he is safe. The first boat story ends with a question: What kind of man is this? (8:27). This story ends with greater confidence and knowledge. The disciples worship Jesus as the Son of God, recognising that he does what God does.

First impressions

- Are there situations in your life where you feel helpless?
- Can you recall stormy times when you have known God was with you?
- Are there steps you could take to trust God more in the face of your fears?



A prayer of adoration

Almighty God, you are found in the middle of our storms, calm and reassuring; the wind and waves do not overcome you. You are the voice that bids us step forth in faith, and the hand outstretched to save when we falter. We adore you for all that you are: our shelter, our safe haven, our anchor.
Amen.

REFLECT

Do you know the Morse code for 'help' or SOS? There is no universal agreement on what 'SOS' stands for, but we all know what the three letters mean. We hope never to have to use them, but everyone needs help sometimes. Can we send an SOS to God? Peter called out, 'Lord, save me!', and Jesus reached out and caught him as he sank. Write down your thoughts and fears and ask for God's help in stormy times.