

LESSON #2 - SINK OR SWIM OR....-MATTHEW 14: 22-32

COMING TO THE WATERS -The world says that we have to sink or swim. The story of Peter tells us that Christians, when they are empowered by the Lord, have another option - they can be **saved**. This lesson tells us that when we keep our eyes AND OUR TRUST on Jesus the impossible can happen.

THE PRAYER - Dear Lord, we may be strong physically, solid in our convictions and brave in our actions. Nevertheless, there are times when the strongest of us, the most solid and brave, can do nothing. We ask that You will empower us all through our lives, but especially during those moments of helplessness. Give us eyes of faith, to see that for You, nothing is impossible. We pray it in the Name of our Savior, Jesus. Amen.

PARCHED HEARTS - ILLUSTRATION - On July 4, 1952 a powerful swimmer, Florence Chadwick, tried to become the first woman to swim the twenty-one miles from Catalina Island to the California coast. When she was less than a half-mile from the finish, Chadwick had to be pulled from the water. She admitted that it wasn't the thought of sharks, or physical fatigue that had defeated her. It was the thick fog. She said, "If I could have seen land, I might have made it." Two months later, once again plagued by fog, Chadwick finished the swim. This time she kept a picture of the coast in her mind.

THOUGHT: Keeping the right image in her mind allowed Florence to do what many people felt was impossible. Today's lesson asks, is there any "right image" which could have helped Peter when he tried to walk to Jesus on the waters of the Sea of Galilee nearly 2,000 years ago? He was trying to do what no man has ever done. Try it a million times. You will sink a million times. Logic says you're in a situation where you can sink or swim. Logic says there's no other option. But God is not bound by logic. Take a look at the story and answer the questions.

SCRIPTURE SEARCH - HUMANKIND'S THIRST - The verses are taken from Matthew 14

In v. 24-25 - While Jesus was praying, where were the disciples?They were caught in a storm.

What are some of the reasons disciples might have been afraid? Storm/Darkness/Waves

In v. 26 - When Jesus came to them what did the disciples think?Thought they saw a ghost.

In v. 27 - What two things did Jesus tell the disciples to do? Take courage/don't be afraid.

NOW COMES THE IMPORTANT PART

In v. 28 - What does Peter ask?To come to Jesus on the water.

In v. 29 - What does Jesus say? "Come."

Did Jesus say, "Stay there, I'm coming? YES NO or, "Stay put, you'll sink?" YES NO

Why would Jesus encourage Peter?.....To let us know that God can do the impossible?

Did Jesus need Peter to come?..... YES NO

In v. 29 - Did Peter manage to walk on the water?Yes

In v. 30 - What happened to Peter?.....He saw the wind and began to sink.

In v. 30 - What did Peter ask while he was sinking?.....To be saved.

In v. 31 - What was the reason why Peter began to sink?..... Little faith.

These verses make our point. While human reason may tell us Peter was limited to two choices: sink or swim, the Lord has a third option: be saved. God often tells us to "Come ON the water". What He suggests is illogical and humanly impossible, but it works! Peter, by the power of God, managed to walk on the water. He was able to keep going as long as his trust in God remained firm. It was only when he went back to the old, "sink or swim" mentality that he started to go under.

2. SCRIPTURE SEARCH - DEEP DRINKING

If you look through the Bible, you will see an amazing number of occasions when God's people seemed to be in a "sink or swim" situation. When there was nothing more that human hands and mind could do,

**ISAIAH 55:1 "COME, ALL YOU WHO ARE THIRSTY, COME TO THE WATERS
GROUP BIBLE STUDIES - TEACHER'S PACKET - LUTHERAN HOUR MINISTRIES**

God provided a third option. God said they could "come on the water." Look at these passages and answer:

PASSAGE.....	MAN'S OPTION 1.....	MAN'S OPTION 2.....	GOD'S OPTION
Exodus 14: 9.....	Be killed by Pharaoh.....	Die in the desert.....	Exodus 14: 15-16
Exodus 17: 3-4.....	Die of thirst.....	Kill Moses.....	Exodus 17: 6
John 6: 5-11.....	Let people go hungry.....	Buy some food.....	Miraculously feed 5,000

Speaking by inspiration, Saint Paul summed up the Lord's innovative way of thinking when he wrote, in 2 Corinthians 12: 9: "My grace is sufficient for you, for my power is made perfect in weakness." Paul, with his thorn in the flesh, is a great example of God's might at work. Paul might have seen things as sink or swim, but God said, 'be saved, come on the water'. The Holy Spirit empowered the apostle to keep going: touring continents, establishing churches and changing the world's history. When Christians work with faith, keeping their eyes on the Savior, rather than on the wind and waves, they discover that life isn't a sink or swim situation. God can offer us a third alternative which empowers His people to accomplish the impossible. Let's look at these situations, and supply a Godly answer to man's sink or swim logic:

MAN'S SINK OR SWIM LOGIC SAYS:

GOD MIGHT REPLY:

EXAMPLE:

- * Luther is stuck in his guilt and sinI can use him to reform the church.
- * The eleven disciples were cowards, They're My disciples who will
hiding in an upper room die rather than deny Me.
- * Alcoholics can't stop drinking.....If I can give life to a thief on the cross, I can give
sobriety to the uncontrolled drinker.
- * The church can't balance its budgetI can use a widow's mites to change the world
- * We can't reach the world for Jesus..... If I can make Jericho's walls come tumbling down
I won't be defeated by distance, numbers or governments.

It is truly a wonderful thing that we have a God Who doesn't believe that life is sink or swim; it is one of the joys of Christianity that when we are ready to give up, God is just beginning to work. God's grace allows His people to 'be saved, coming to Him on the water.' He empowers them to do more, be more, accomplish more than they ever thought possible. When they keep their eyes on Jesus, the waves of impossibility and the winds of failure are no longer of consequence.

THOUGHT & ILLUSTRATION: - Years ago, when Walt Disney would present some unbelievable dream to his Board of Directors, he loved to watch their reaction. Without exception, they would gulp, blink, and stare at him in disbelief. But unless his entire Board resisted the idea, Disney usually didn't pursue it. That's right, Disney wanted a challenge that was big enough to occupy his time and energy. The Disney Corporation is a giant today because they tried the impossible. Now, our God is far bigger, more powerful and better equipped than Walt Disney - why should we dream small?

SHARING THE SAV(I)OR

Right now, you know some people who are sinking beneath the waves. List them, pray about them, and if appropriate, share with them (in a gentle way) how God might enable them to 'walk on the water':

PERSON:

HOW MIGHT GOD INVITE THEM TO "COME" TO HIM?

THANKS FOR THE WATERS - Dear Lord, our small minds are limited; our strength often fails. In such moments direct our eyes to the face of the Savior; allow us to see Your Divine plan and unlimited strength which can rescue us. When you bid us to "come" to you on the waters, eliminate our hesitation and let us walk. In Jesus' Name. Amen.