



Saturday, 8/8 at 4:00 | Sunday, 8/9 at 9:00

10th Sunday after Pentecost / 9th Sunday after Trinity – 2020

Introduction: Dear friends in Christ: Right now, where is your focus? *Hopefully on* ✨God, ✨His Word, and ✨His Son! HOWEVER, it's easy to focus on pain (*we feel it*), on fear (*it grips us*), and on uncertainty (*because we don't know the future*)!

The purpose of today's sermon is to get all of us to ✓focus on Jesus now and ✓remain focused on Him in our daily lives. In today's gospel reading, may the Holy Spirit use Peter's sinking incident to ➡lift us up and ➡refocus us on JESUS!

Before today's gospel reading, Jesus had heard about the beheading of John the Baptizer, so He withdrew to a desolate place. However, *when many followed Him*, He ✨had compassion on them, ✨healed their sick, and ✨fed thousands with only five loaves and two fish. THEN the Bible says...

1. **Jesus Focused on God, His Father:** ²² **Immediately [Jesus] made** [*strongly urged*] **the disciples get into the boat and go before him to the other side, while he**

dismissed the crowds. ²³ And after he had dismissed the crowds, he went up on the mountain by himself to pray.

- a. Earlier in [Matthew chapter 14](#), Jesus had been informed about John's death; therefore, *Jesus probably prayed* ♦for those who were mourning and ♦for strength (*according to His human nature*) to ♦complete His own ministry and ♦give His life to remove our sins!
- b. Even though Jesus faced arrest, beatings, and crucifixion, *He kept following God's plan for His life! How? Because He kept FOCUSING on God, His Father through the Scriptures and prayer!*

2. **The Disciples Focused on Wind, Waves, and a Ghost:** When evening came, [Jesus] was there alone [on the land], ²⁴ but the boat [with the disciples in it]... was a long way from the land, [being] beaten by the waves, for the wind was against [the disciples]. ²⁵ And in the fourth watch of the night [*between 3 AM and 6 AM*] [Jesus] came to [the disciples], walking on the sea. ²⁶ But when the disciples saw him walking on the sea, they were terrified, and said, "It is a ghost!" and they cried out in fear.

- a. Think about those disciples: ♦The Sea of Galilee is 8 miles wide and 13 miles long; ♦they had been going from one side to the other *for about 10 hours*: ♦during the night, ♦battling the wind and waves, and ♦being physically exhausted.
- b. The disciples were NOT focusing on Jesus; instead, *they were focusing on their immediate difficult circumstances!* Then, *seeing Jesus*

walking on the water, they 😞 assumed the worst and 😞 cried out in fear!

- c. What about us? Oftentimes we are ✓ busy, ✓ exhausted, and ✓ distracted. At such times, we tend to 😞 forget about Jesus, 😞 assume the worst, and 😞 become controlled by fear!

3. **Jesus Called His Disciples to Re-Focus:** ²⁷ **But immediately Jesus spoke to them, saying, “Take heart [Cheer up]; it is I. Do not be afraid.” // And why should they have taken Jesus’ advice, and stopped being afraid? Because ▶ they believed that Jesus is the Son of God and ▶ they had witnessed Him ☹ cast out demons, ☹ heal the sick, and ☹ raise the dead! Do YOU believe Jesus IS the Son of God? Do YOU believe He cast out demons, healed the sick, and raised the dead? If yes, then FOCUS ON JESUS and stop being afraid!**
4. **Peter Focused on Jesus:** ²⁸ **And Peter answered him, “Lord, if it is you, command me to come to you on the water.” ²⁹ [And] He said, “Come.” So Peter got out of the boat and walked on the water and came [toward] Jesus. // That is so extraordinary! Remember, there was 😞 darkness, 😞 wind, and 😞 waves, and yet Peter was so filled with courage – because He focused on Jesus! Therefore, he ➡ stepped out of the boat, ➡ stepped down on top of the water, and ➡ started walking toward Jesus! What is true? When our focus is firmly on Jesus, **NOTHING IS IMPOSSIBLE!****
5. **Peter Lost His Focus:** ³⁰ **But when [Peter] saw the wind, he was afraid, and beginning to sink he cried out, “Lord, save me.” ³¹ [And] Jesus immediately**

reached out his hand and took hold of him, saying to him, “[Man] of little faith, why did you doubt?”

- a. Can you imagine Peter: ▶Focused and walking; then ▶unfocused and sinking; then ▶Jesus taking Peter’s hand; and then ▶both of them walking on the water – side-by-side – back to the boat!
 - b. We want life to be smooth and steady, *but oftentimes it is up and down* – like a small boat on a choppy sea! Why? It’s NOT because of our circumstances, *but because we keep taking our focus off of Jesus!* Therefore, ▶let us repent, ▶let us change, and ▶let us put Him first in all things!
6. **The Disciples Focus was Corrected:** ³² **And when they got into the boat, the wind ceased.** ³³ **And those in the boat worshiped him, saying, “Truly you are the Son of God.”**
- a. That needs to be our constant remembrance: JESUS IS THE SON OF GOD, who ✓made me, ✓loves me, ✓has saved me, ✓is with me, ✓will help me in every circumstance, and ✓will finally bring me home to heaven!
 - b. We have a choice: We can choose to ☹do our own thing, ☹be ignorant of the Bible, and ☹live in fear **OR** we can 😊focus on Jesus, 😊grow up in God’s Word, and 😊have His peace in every circumstance!

Let Us Pray: Dear Holy Spirit, get ahold of us, set our focus on Jesus, keep us focused on Jesus, and never let us go!

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