

Sermons at All Saints Anglican Church of Luxembourg

Preached by Rev Alison Heal on Sunday 9th August 2026

Bible passage: Matthew 14:22-32

Jesus and disciples – exhausted

John the Baptist had been executed, and they'd retreated into the wilderness only to end up feeding 5000

Jesus made(!) the disciples get into the boat and set off

He went to refuel, to recentre, to refocus – to spend the night in prayer,

For Jesus, reality was with his Father - the clamour of the crowds, needs of the people, things he coped with because he went to refix his eyes on God, in the silence of the mountain.

Disciples exhausted from feeding hungry crowds, now even more wiped out, battling the elements to get their boat to shore.

And Jesus comes to them, walking on water.

Terrified! Ghost!

Jesus speaks to reassure them

One of the first differences from our T-shirt images we looked at during Time to Talk



... there Jesus is like Santa or Elf on the Shelf, always watching and maybe waiting to catch you out. Spooky.

What's Jesus doing here? Not spying from round a corner. Not pointing a finger.

Walking towards his tired, anxious friends.

Reassuring them the moment they cry out in fear.

Time for some recalibration of our image – to friend who comes to meet us, to reassure us, not a spying judge, however jokey.

Peter has one of his moments of impulsive insight:

“Lord, if it is you, command me to come to you on the water.”

Jesus said, “Come.”



Worth noting, Peter didn't leap first, then ask Jesus to bless his attempt. We're prone to that: Jesus, I want to do XYZ, please bless it. P asks first and wait for the command. Not as impulsive as he sounds.

Jesus said, “Come.”

So as Peter looked towards Jesus, he could do it, he could walk on the water as Jesus had commanded.

This is why thinking about how we picture Jesus. Having a clear picture of who you're walking towards helps. The picture will look different for different people. But an unhelpful picture, one picked up from parents, teachers or religious leaders who look on us with judgement or disappointment, will affect the picture we have of Jesus.

How much do you want to get out of the boat and walk on water towards a distant God who might not be all that interested in you, who might have better things to do?

Working on getting a realistic, loving picture of Jesus in our minds (not so much photo-realistic, more character-realistic based on the Bible) will help us to believe him when he tells us he loves us.

And he does love us. He loves you. He looks at you and says, “X, my daughter, I love you, Y, my son, I love you”. Those are the words, this is the image, we need to fix on when we're going through tough times.

Because Peter notices strong wind – becomes frightened – begins to sink.

Peter was already in very dangerous circumstances, but with his eyes on the friend who'd called him, he could handle the circumstances.

The moment he took his eyes off Jesus' love for him, the circumstances became overwhelming.

But Jesus' call, followed by Jesus' presence with him, were more powerful than the awful circumstances.

Take a moment to think about that in your life. The dangerous state of the world. Overwhelming situations with family which seem out of your control. Personal trials where no one seems to know or care.

The temptation is either oblivion (let's pretend this isn't going on) or an attempt to control the situation. Anxiety is described as a response to trying to control situations which are out of our control. Peter couldn't control those waves, or his buoyancy. You can't control wars and climate disasters. I can't control how someone else thinks of me. You can't control what your family members think or feel. So we get anxious, and we try to control. And we sink.

This is where developing the healthy image of Jesus comes in. In our uncontrollable situations, what is he calling us to do? What is he *not* calling us to do? What is he calling us to leave behind? Who is he calling us to walk towards?

The answers to those questions will vary depending on your situation, and the answers only come through prayer, and good conversations with trusted Christians – together we grow! But the one answer which is the same for each of us is to that final question:

Who is Jesus calling us to walk towards?

Take time to develop a good image of Jesus in your head. Not so much his features, more his character of love and his joy in being with you.

As you grow in understanding that the God of love calls you closer and closer, with Jesus and in the power of the Holy Spirit, you'll find that you're walking through the same wind and waves as before. But with your eyes fixed on him, and his hand reaching out to catch you, you share his strength as you walk through the storm.

We're going to use this remarkable image, by Mark Mabry, and a song, to reflect on that call to fix our eyes on Jesus in the storm.

<https://reflectionsofchrist.org/collections/walking-on-water/products/eyes-on-jesus>

Please remain seated and you can close your eyes, or look at the image and words, or sing, as you take some time to follow Jesus wherever he takes your heart and mind.

Song: Oceans (Where feet may fail) https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=dy9nwe9_xzw