



MAKING THE MOST OF YOUR OPPORTUNITY:

IT'S TIME TO WALK ON WATER!

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Matthew 14:22-33 NLT - 22 Immediately after this, Jesus insisted that his disciples get back into the boat and cross to the other side of the lake, while he sent the people home. 23 After sending them home, he went up into the hills by himself to pray. Night fell while he was there alone. 24 Meanwhile, the disciples were in trouble far away from land, for a strong wind had risen, and they were fighting heavy waves. 25 About three o'clock in the morning Jesus came toward them, walking on the water. 26 When the disciples saw him walking on the water, they were terrified. In their fear, they cried out, "It's a ghost!" 27 But Jesus spoke to them at once. "Don't be afraid," he said. "Take courage. I am here!" 28 Then Peter called to him, "Lord, if it's really you, tell me to come to you, walking on the water." 29 "Yes, come," Jesus said. So Peter went over the side of the boat and walked on the water toward Jesus. 30 But when he saw the strong wind and the waves, he was terrified and began to sink. "Save me, Lord!" he shouted. 31 Jesus immediately reached out and grabbed him. "You have so little faith," Jesus said. "Why did you doubt me?" 32 When they climbed back into the boat, the wind stopped. 33 Then the disciples worshiped him. "You really are the Son of God!" they exclaimed.

For the past three weeks, we have been ministering on making the most of your opportunity. We've come to realize that God provides numerous opportunities during our lifetime that aid us in fulfilling His purpose for our lives. We stated that in order to make the most of the opportunity presented to us, we must see the opportunity and then seize the opportunity.

Ephesians 5:16 AMP - 16 making the very most of your time [on earth, recognizing and taking advantage of each opportunity and using it with wisdom and diligence], because the days are [filled with] evil.

1. Recognize the opportunity - SEE THE OPPORTUNITY - discerning the circumstances presented by God for the fulfillment of His purpose in your life.

2. Take advantage of the opportunity - SEIZE THE OPPORTUNITY - acting upon circumstances presented by God for the fulfillment of His purpose in your life.

Opportunity - a set of circumstances that makes it possible to do something; a favorable combination of circumstances, time, and place.

The biblical definition of opportunity is the chance to do something at a suitable or favorable time. The Greek word for opportunity is "kairós", which means "the suitable time, the right moment".

In **Matthew 14**, we see Jesus and the disciples presented with and facing numerous opportunities that aligned themselves with the will of God and support and promote the fulfillment of God's purpose.



PHILIPPIANS 2:13 AMP - 13 For it is [not your strength, but it is] God who is effectively at work in you, both to will and to work [that is, strengthening, energizing, and creating in you the longing and the ability to fulfill your purpose] for His good pleasure.

It is God's will prompting you that creates a desire to do the work by His ability that fulfills the purpose of God for your life and ultimately pleases Him (because you've fulfilled His purpose).

The chapter begins with the beheading of John the Baptist, Jesus' cousin, by King Herod because of a promise he made his stepdaughter after she seductively and erotically danced before him in **Matthew 14:1-12**. To say the least, Jesus and his disciples were saddened and troubled over the beheading of John.

ALL OPPORTUNITIES PRESENTED TO US IN LIFE WILL NOT BE PLEASURABLE. OUR SPIRITUAL DEVELOPMENT AND MATURITY WILL GROW AS WE LEARN TO DEAL WITH THE GOOD, THE BAD, AND THE UGLY.

1. Trust God That It Will Work For Your Good

2. Seek God In Order To Learn From The Situation

3. Ask For Godly Wisdom In Order To Navigate Through Difficult Times

4. Encourage Yourself In The Lord

Jesus, upon hearing the news, sought to get Himself and His disciples away to a solitary place likely to process and to grieve concerning the situation. But how many of you have learned that the needs of others and the will of God often outweigh our own personal needs?

There may be times when you want solace due to the severity of a situation, but instead, you find yourself providing service to be the solution to the problem someone else is facing. And so, it is in **Matthew 14:13-21**. Even though Jesus and His disciples tried to get away to a remote hideaway, they could not escape the needs of the people.

Matthew 14:13-14 NLT - 13 As soon as Jesus heard the news, he left in a boat to a remote area to be alone. But the crowds heard where he was headed and followed on foot from many towns. 14 Jesus saw the huge crowd as he stepped from the boat, and he had compassion on them and healed their sick.

Doing the will of His Father was a greater priority than addressing His sadness and grief. Therefore, compassion (love taking action) arose on the inside of Him, and He healed those who were sick.

Matthew 14:22 NLT - 22 Immediately after this, Jesus insisted that his disciples get back into the boat and cross to the other side of the lake, while he sent the people home.

You may want to be available to serve your leader or someone in a time of sorrow, but sometimes what they need is time alone with God. Obedience is no guarantee of being spared from adversity.



Matthew 14:23 NLT - 23 After sending them home, he went up into the hills by himself to pray. Night fell while he was there alone.

Prayer was a priority in the life of Jesus, and He took every opportunity He could take advantage of, to pray. Being in the presence of the Father was a necessity at this time because on He could provide the comfort Jesus needed in order for Him to be able to comfort the disciples.

II Corinthians 1:3-4 NLT - 3 All praise to God, the Father of our Lord Jesus Christ. God is our merciful Father and the source of all comfort. **4** He comforts us in all our troubles so that we can comfort others. When they are troubled, we will be able to give them the same comfort God has given us.

Matthew 14:24-25 NLT - 24 Meanwhile, the disciples were in trouble far away from land, for a strong wind had risen, and they were fighting heavy waves. **25** About three o'clock in the morning Jesus came toward them, walking on the water.

God shows up not on our time but on time. God shows up on His time so that the opportunity presented can increase and maximize our faith. If you have to go through something unpleasant anyway, don't you want God to get the most out of the situation for your good? No doubt, due to the storm they were in, they were questioning their decision to obey and follow Jesus' command. If you don't follow God's directive to do what He tells you to do, you'll wish you had.

Matthew 14:26-27 NLT - 26 When the disciples saw him walking on the water, they were terrified. In their fear, they cried out, "It's a ghost!" **27** But Jesus spoke to them at once. "Don't be afraid," he said. "Take courage. I am here!"

Refuse to fear in times of adverse situations. Fear will cause you to discern what's going on around you improperly.

II Kings 6:17 NIV - 17 And Elisha prayed, "Open his eyes, Lord, so that he may see." Then the Lord opened the servant's eyes, and he looked and saw the hills full of horses and chariots of fire all around Elisha.

Take courage - to be resolute (firm determination, to be purposeful and unwavering in their decisions and actions) in difficult circumstances. I am here! - recognize God's abiding presence. Where His presence is, you will find His power and provision already present.

Matthew 14:27-29 NLT - 27 But Jesus spoke to them at once. "Don't be afraid," he said. "Take courage. I am here!" **28** Then Peter called to him, "Lord, if it's really you, tell me to come to you, walking on the water." **29** "Yes, come," Jesus said. So Peter went over the side of the boat and walked on the water toward Jesus.

What Jesus spoke to them all became a revelation to Peter and a call to seize an opportunity. Peter wanted to make sure he was hearing from Jesus before he stepped out of the boat and onto the water.



There's nothing wrong with getting confirmation from the Lord before you make a move. Peter realized that this was an extraordinary opportunity for a spiritual adventure and spiritual growth. Peter's request was specific and detailed. Peter put forth effort and took action to move on Jesus' command. Peter not only had to get out of the boat, but he had to let go of the boat and totally abandon himself to the command of Jesus to "Come."

Peter left his comfort zone in order to experience the opportunity to go where Jesus was. He realized that being with Jesus walking on the water was safer than being on a boat that was being pummeled and thrashed with a strong wind and waves, and with his fellow disciples who were filled with fear.

What is your boat?

1. Whatever represents safety and security apart from God.

Psalms 91:1-7 AMP - He who dwells in the shelter of the Most High will remain secure and rest in the shadow of the Almighty [whose power no enemy can withstand]. 2 I will say of the Lord, "He is my refuge and my fortress, my God, in whom I trust [with great confidence, and on whom I rely]!" 3 For He will save you from the trap of the fowler, and from the deadly pestilence. 4 He will cover you and completely protect you with His pinions, and under His wings you will find refuge; His faithfulness is a shield and a wall. 5 You will not be afraid of the terror of night, nor of the arrow that flies by day, 6 Nor of the pestilence that stalks in darkness, nor of the destruction (sudden death) that lays waste at noon. 7 A thousand may fall at your side and ten thousand at your right hand, but danger will not come near you.

Other things can be a resource, but we should not make them our source. God is our only source for safety and security. Anything else we make as our source is subject to fail or falter.

2. Whatever you put your trust in apart from God.

Proverbs 3:5-6 AMP - 5 Trust in and rely confidently on the Lord with all your heart and do not rely on your own insight or understanding. 6 In all your ways know and acknowledge and recognize Him, and He will make your paths straight and smooth [removing obstacles that block your way].

3. Whatever provides a comfort zone for you that keeps you from stepping out to where Jesus is.

Isaiah 41:10 NIV - "So do not fear, for I am with you; do not be dismayed, for I am your God. I will strengthen you and help you; I will uphold you with my righteous right hand."

God promises support, assistance, and strength, emphasizing that we need not fear or worry when venturing out from our comfort zone.

Philippians 4:13 NIV - "I can do all things through him who strengthens me."

God's strength within us and upon us will enable us to overcome any challenge we face as we step out beyond our comfort zones.

4. Whatever keeps you from developing as a disciple of Jesus Christ.



Matthew 16:24 NKJV - 24 Then Jesus said to His disciples, “If anyone wishes to follow Me [as My disciple], he must deny himself [set aside selfish interests], and take up his cross [expressing a willingness to endure whatever may come] and follow Me [believing in Me, conforming to My example in living and, if need be, suffering or perhaps dying because of faith in Me].

What you fear will tell you what your boat is, and whatever that fear is will be the thing you need to break free of in order to step out of the boat and take hold of the opportunity before you.

Matthew 14:30-31 NLT - 30 But when he saw the strong wind and the waves, he was terrified and began to sink. “Save me, Lord!” he shouted. 31 Jesus immediately reached out and grabbed him. “You have so little faith,” Jesus said. “Why did you doubt me?”

Once you seize your opportunity, the enemy will try to use the circumstances around you to sink you while you're experiencing your opportunity. Peter's focus shifted from the Savior to the storm. The wind and the waves were around Peter and did not affect him until he got into fear.

Contrary circumstances may be around you, but they will not affect you unless you allow fear to cause you to lose focus. "Saw the strong wind and the waves" - opposition will often arise as you reach for your opportunity. Peter began to sink, but had the faith, humility, and wisdom to call on Jesus.

Even though fear is there to sink you from achieving your opportunity, faith in God will be your assurance that you still come out on top of your opportunity.