

## SHAKEN BY DISTRACTION

**Opening:** *What did Washington say When He Crossed the Delaware*, Lou Monte

<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=fk6OwaZXv4>

Don't Know Much about History – General Henry Knox

Sometimes the real story gets lost in the mix – going to take a closer look at the account of Peter walking on the Water ... Title of this morning's Message: **SHAKEN BY DISTRACTION**

**Text:** [Matthew 14:25-31](#)

[Matthew 14: 22-23](#) MSG

<sup>22-23</sup> As soon as the meal was finished, he insisted that the disciples get in the boat and go on ahead to the other side while he dismissed the people. With the crowd dispersed, he climbed the mountain so he could be by himself and pray. He stayed there alone, late into the night.

It had been a long draining day for both Jesus and the 12 – Jesus sends his 12 chosen disciples away into the boat they'd come in. Then he retreats up into the mountain for much needed down time and prayer.

**Jesus needed downtime.** (Even Jesus needed time alone)

After years of study and teaching - I've learned that everything is connected – what happens here is connected to what lead up to it.

Matthew gives us insight in the earlier part of chapter 14

Jesus had received bad news:

- His cousin, John the Baptist had been executed – beheaded by King Herod
- Not Herod's idea, he'd been outfoxed by his wife Herodias who put him in a no win situation forcing him to give into to her wish -off with his head
- Jesus tries to slip away un-noticed to mourn but no way (he was spotted and followed)
- Within hours his secluded getaway had thousands pressing to see him
- Same time feeds the 5 thousand with 5 loaves and 2 fishes
- As soon as the people were feed he dismissed them and his disciples

**Read again** [Matthew 14: 22-23](#) [24-26](#)

<sup>22-23</sup> As soon as the meal was finished, he insisted that the disciples get in the boat and go on ahead to the other side while he dismissed the people. With the crowd dispersed, he climbed the mountain so he could be by himself and pray. **He stayed there alone, late into the night.**

<sup>24-26</sup> Meanwhile, the boat was far out to sea when the wind came up against them and they were battered by the waves. At about four o'clock in the morning, Jesus came toward them walking on the water. They were scared out of their wits. "A ghost!" they said, crying out in terror.

About 8 hours later - the disciples are fighting gale force winds on the Sea of Galilee getting nowhere

James, John and Peter are professional fisherman who made their living on that Sea.

At 4 in the morning they're spent – physically and emotionally exhausted – no sleep – battling the elements

Put yourself in their shoes ... you can imagine some of the things going through their heads – *This is our reward for trying to help these people all day?*

**Their weariness is about to dissolve - about to get a scare worse than any fright night!**

Out there in the darkness and rough seas something is coming toward them

The closer it gets the more frightened they get – it looks like a man ... but no man can walk on water and its definitely coming toward them ... Someone yells, *it's a ghost!*

Jesus is always pictured walking on flat smooth water but that couldn't have been the case ...that sea was misbehaving - they saw him rising and falling with the movement of the waves – the Message says they were scared witless!

Jesus knows it ... quickly calls out to them

[Matthew 14: 27-31](#)

<sup>27</sup> But Jesus was quick to comfort them. "Courage, it's me. Don't be afraid." <sup>28</sup> Peter, suddenly bold, said, "Master, if it's really you, call me to come to you on the water."

Some people excellent at voice recognition ... Peter recognized Jesus voice but was taking no chances – and Jesus gives him the go ahead ...

<sup>29</sup> He said, "Come ahead."

## **Jesus words are reassuring and they come just in time ... isn't that the way God works?**

Jesus arrives ... no boat – no problem – why walk around the sea when you can walk on top of it?

In some ways I see our church here at Patchogue is in the disciples situation, we're in the boat together, struggling against the winds of change

- The sudden retirement of long time pastor Jerry Bonfiglio
- The changes brought on by our remodeling project
- The massive cultural changes things are now done
- The ongoing winds of family distress, finances and illness

We're battling the wind and wondering are we making headway or losing ground?

**I have news for you – good things are happening, your prayers are being heard by God. Last night in Nassau County a gathering called *Meet The Movement* happened ...**

Jesus calls to us ... **“Courage, it's me. Don't be afraid.”**

Peter showed amazing courage and faith.

“Master, if it's really you, call me to come to you on the water.”

**Personal:** Jen and I are praying each day for a specific family situation ... God sometimes interrupts my prayer while I praying with your name

Have you noticed how God tends to work in consistent patterns with you it's a way of putting his signature on things

He is doing it again with Jen. She has been opening her Bible, after morning prayer (to the same exact scripture in the Psalms.

The same place God had first given to her several years ago for the same situation.

But even when the Holy Spirit reassures us with His Word we ask ... Lord is that really you?

That's what Peter did

Nobody asks for hardships or fearful challenges .... We will avoid them whenever possible

Courage isn't the absence of fear it's the power to take action in the face of fear. If you weren't afraid you wouldn't need courage.

Psychologists hierarchies of fear – classify patients fears worst to least

- patients are asked to face their fears by visualizing themselves doing what they most fear
- Imagining themselves picking up spiders – handling snakes or standing up in front of hundreds of people
- The next step goes from imagination to actualization - letting the spider walk up your arm wrapping a snake around your neck ... gives you chills doesn't it?

Think about Peter did when Jesus said, *Come ahead*, Peter

Peter did something that no other Bible character ever did.

1. Moses lead the people through the Red Sea
2. Joshua through the Jordon River but they walked through it not on top of it like Peter.

Peter put his fears aside, even and at Jesus word defied the laws of nature – He did it walked on water ... just not for very long

**What went wrong?** Peter Lost his focus ... He was distracted by the storm

<sup>29-30</sup> Jumping out of the boat, Peter walked on the water to Jesus. But when he looked down at the waves churning beneath his feet, he lost his nerve and started to sink. He cried, "Master, save me!"

<sup>31</sup> Jesus didn't hesitate. He reached down and grabbed his hand. Then he said, "Faint-heart, what got into you?"

**Story:** *Where do you Run?* by Kay Arthur

Mart DeHaan of, *Daily Bread Ministries* writes:

*The realities of this life are demanding and distracting – we continually make choices about whether we will allow distractions to draw us away from what’s most important.*

Distractions of:

- Fear
- Despair
- Disappointment
- Stress

Your life matters in ways –you may not even be unaware of ...

**Personal:** Erin encounter with homeless man – afraid but empowered by two things Holy Spirit prompting and the published experience of her friend Maureen who posted, *Your name is Herbert* ... How she overcame fear when God whispered telling her to talk to a homeless man

[Hebrews 12:2](#) keeping our eyes on Jesus, the champion who initiates and perfects our faith.

Don't let fear distract or define your life matters God wants to use you to make a difference

Lets pray