

Chapter 11: Looking at the Waves

1. Introduction

- a. Text: Matthew 14:22–33
- b. Again, Jesus shows Himself to be God in this text. “It is a failure in some shape or form to realize what He is that accounts for all our troubles” (150).
- c. “The special thing here is the incident as it affects particularly the Apostle Peter” (150). He “starts off so well” but “ends up so badly” (150).
- d. The difference between Matthew 14 and Luke 8 is that, whereas Jesus was present all along for a sudden storm in one, here Jesus arrives during an already-present storm. The problem arises when He comes. “The trouble was entirely in Peter” (151).

2. “A number of important lessons” (151)

- a. “First and foremost I must call attention to what I am constrained to describe as the Peter mentality, or if you prefer it, the Peter temperament” (151).
 - i. “We all tend to fail ultimately at our strongest point” (151). For Peter, “He was enthusiastic and impulsive.... Energy is a great quality and the thing that generally comes with it is a capacity for decision” (151–52). But “it often leads to an unsteady Christian life,” something full of highs and lows (152).
 - ii. “This kind of person... tends to act without thinking” (152).
- b. Second, consider the text: “O thou of little faith, wherefore didst thou doubt?”
 - i. First, “we ourselves sometimes produce our own doubts” (153).
 - ii. Second, “doubts are not incompatible with faith” (154).
 - iii. Third, “if doubts again control us, it is an indication of weak faith” (154).
- c. “The antidote is—great faith” (155). Its characteristics:
 - i. “The first is this—it is a knowledge of the Lord Jesus Christ and His power, with a steady trust in that” (155). “The Christian faith begins and ends with the knowledge of the Lord” (155). Cf. John 8:31–32 ³¹ So Jesus said to the Jews who had believed him, “If you abide in my word, you are truly my disciples, ³² and you will know the truth, and the truth will set you free.” (ESV)
 - ii. Second, “refuse after-thoughts” (157). Don’t look at the waves.

iii. Third, faith “persists steadily in looking to Him and at Him” (158).

1. First, faith perseveres. Cf. Philippians 1:6 And I am sure of this, that he who began a good work in you will bring it to completion at the day of Jesus Christ. (ESV)
2. “Secondly, you and I can never doubt while we look at Him and are clear about Him” (158). E.g., the Israel and manna picture our constant need for Christ—every day and all the time.

3. Conclusion

- a. “A final word of consolation.... He will never let you sink” (159). Cf. Romans 8:38–39³⁸ For I am sure that neither death nor life, nor angels nor rulers, nor things present nor things to come, nor powers,³⁹ nor height nor depth, nor anything else in all creation, will be able to separate us from the love of God in Christ Jesus our Lord. (ESV)
- b. Yet better, “We will never need to cry out like that if we only keep on looking at Him” (159). Cf. Jude 24–25²⁴ Now to him who is able to keep you from stumbling and to present you blameless before the presence of his glory with great joy,²⁵ to the only God, our Savior, through Jesus Christ our Lord, be glory, majesty, dominion, and authority, before all time and now and forever. Amen. (ESV)

Chapter 12: The Spirit of Bondage

1. Introduction

- a. Text: Romans 8:15–17¹⁵ For you did not receive the spirit of slavery to fall back into fear, but you have received the Spirit of adoption as sons, by whom we cry, “Abba! Father!”¹⁶ The Spirit himself bears witness with our spirit that we are children of God,¹⁷ and if children, then heirs—heirs of God and fellow heirs with Christ, provided we suffer with him in order that we may also be glorified with him. (ESV)
- b. “For” explains how not to be in bondage but to how to overcome “the problem of living the Christian life, the problem, if you like, of dealing with sin” (164; cf. Rom 6–7).
- c. In turning from one law, Christians can make another. For them, “Holiness, and the cultivation of holiness and the spiritual life, is a whole-time occupation, and that you must devote yourself exclusively to it and have your rules, etc., to enable you to live it” (166). “Here the difficulty seems to be that of failing to realize that faith must be appropriated” (165).
- d. E.g., Col 2:16–23; 1 Tim 4:1–5.

2. Wrongs Fears

- a. “They regard God as a taskmaster, they regard Him as Someone who is constantly watching to discover faults and blemishes in them, and to punish them accordingly. Others think of God only as a stern Law-giver far away in the distance” (168).
 - b. They also have “a fear of the greatness of the task” that they have given themselves (168).
 - c. “They tend to be afraid in a wrong way of the power of the devil” (168). They fear him too much with “a craven fear” (168).
 - d. “Then they are equally afraid of the sin which is within themselves.... always mourning and never rejoicing at all” (169).
 - e. This “spirit of fear... is ultimately a fear of themselves and a fear of failure” (169).
3. The answer to such fear is “that we must realize the truth concerning the doctrine of the Holy Spirit and the indwelling of the Holy Spirit in the Christian” (169).
- a. First, “I am to walk through this world as He walked” (169) by “the power of the Holy Spirit that is within me” (170; see Rom 8:13). Cf. Philippians 2:13 ¹³ for it is God who works in you, both to will and to work for his good pleasure.
 - b. Second, “the presence of the Holy Spirit reminds us of our relationship to God” (172).
 - i. We desire to live the Christian life to please our Father and not fear the lashing of an angry judge.
 - ii. The Father loves us as He does Christ (John 17:23).
 - iii. We are heirs of God, joint-heirs with Christ, and not facing a lake of fire.
 - iv. “It is not a question of keeping to a standard, it is not a question of vainly striving to do something; it is a question of getting ready for the place where you are going” (174). Cf. 1 John 3:1–3; 5:4.
 1. 1 John 3:2–3 ² Beloved, we are God’s children now, and what we will be has not yet appeared; but we know that when he appears we shall be like him, because we shall see him as he is. ³ And everyone who thus hopes in him purifies himself as he is pure. (ESV)
 2. 1 John 5:4 ⁴ For everyone who has been born of God overcomes the world. And this is the victory that has overcome the world—our faith.