

Matthew 14:31

Authorized King James Version (KJV)

And immediately Jesus stretched forth his hand, and caught him, and said unto him, O thou of little faith, wherefore didst thou doubt?

Analysis

Jesus' response to sinking Peter—"O thou of little faith, wherefore didst thou doubt?"—identifies the problem: not complete faithlessness but 'little faith' and doubt. Peter's initial faith enabled walking on water, but his focus shift from Jesus to circumstances caused sinking. The rhetorical 'wherefore didst thou doubt?' prompts self-examination. Jesus immediately caught him, showing that even 'little faith' receives divine rescue. This teaches that faith's object (Jesus) matters more than faith's strength.

Historical Context

Peter's water-walking (vv. 28-30) showed real faith—he left the boat's safety at Jesus' word. But seeing wind and waves (focusing on circumstances rather than Christ) produced doubt and sinking. Jesus' rebuke addressed the doubt, not the initial boldness. 'Little faith' suggests real but insufficient trust. The immediate rescue shows grace toward weak faith.

Related Passages

James 2:17 — Faith and works

Romans 1:17 — The righteous shall live by faith

Study Questions

1. When have you started well in faith but sank due to circumstantial focus?
2. How does Jesus' immediate rescue encourage you despite 'little faith'?

Interlinear Text

εὐθέως δὲ ὁ Ἰησοῦς ἐκτείνας τὴν χεῖρα
immediately **And** **Jesus** **stretched forth** **his hand**
G2112 G1161 G3588 G2424 G1614 G3588 G5495

ἐπελάβετο αὐτῷ καὶ λέγει αὐτῷ Ὁλιγόπιστε εἰς
and caught **him** **and** **said** **him** **O thou of little faith** **wherefore**
G1949 G846 G2532 G3004 G846 G3640 G1519

τί ἐδίστασας
G5101 **didst thou doubt**
G1365

Additional Cross-References

Psalms 138:7 (Parallel theme): Though I walk in the midst of trouble, thou wilt revive me: thou shalt stretch forth thine hand against the wrath of mine enemies, and thy right hand shall save me.

Matthew 8:26 (Faith): And he saith unto them, Why are ye fearful, O ye of little faith? Then he arose, and rebuked the winds and the sea; and there was a great calm.

Matthew 17:20 (Faith): And Jesus said unto them, Because of your unbelief: for verily I say unto you, If ye have faith as a grain of mustard seed, ye shall say unto this mountain, Remove hence to yonder place; and it shall remove; and nothing shall be impossible unto you.

Genesis 22:14 (Parallel theme): And Abraham called the name of that place Jehovah-jireh: as it is said to this day, In the mount of the LORD it shall be seen.

Isaiah 63:12 (Parallel theme): That led them by the right hand of Moses with his glorious arm, dividing the water before them, to make himself an everlasting name?

Acts 4:30 (References Jesus): By stretching forth thine hand to heal; and that signs and wonders may be done by the name of thy holy child Jesus.

Mark 1:31 (Parallel theme): And he came and took her by the hand, and lifted her up; and immediately the fever left her, and she ministered unto them.

Mark 5:41 (Parallel theme): And he took the damsel by the hand, and said unto her, Talitha cumi; which is, being interpreted, Damsel, I say unto thee, arise.

Matthew 16:8 (Faith): Which when Jesus perceived, he said unto them, O ye of little faith, why reason ye among yourselves, because ye have brought no bread?

Mark 1:41 (References Jesus): And Jesus, moved with compassion, put forth his hand, and touched him, and saith unto him, I will; be thou clean.