



# Table Talk

The Tenth Sunday after Pentecost, A

August 09, 2020

**Matthew 14:22-23**  
**“O you of little faith, why did you doubt it?” Vs. 31**



I can tell you why Peter doubted: The waves towered over him; the wind beat upon him; he could feel the hardness of his heart turning the rest of his body to stone; he feared he would sink like a rock beneath those chaotic waters and that would be the end of him. In his moment of extremis, he cried out to the only one who could save him, his Lord Jesus Christ.

Doubting Thomas holds a title for doubting. Peter, however, has more reason to hold a title. Perhaps, Peter the Denier, for he did deny his Lord three times during the night in which Jesus was betrayed (Lk. 22:34). Perhaps, Peter of Little Faith, for that is what Jesus names him as Peter sank beneath the waves. Perhaps, Peter the Confessor, for confessing Jesus’ identity as the “Son of the Living God” (Mt. 16:16). Or, perhaps, Peter the Rebuked, for the time Jesus called him Satan for hindering Jesus’ way to the cross (Mt. 16:23). Yet, despite such disparaging titles, Jesus names Peter “The Rock”—not just any old rock but the rock on which Jesus will build his church (Mt. 16:18).

Peter, a man of little faith and active doubt, stands with the other disciples (also of little faith and active doubt) as they

experience the “apostello”—the being “sent out” in order to call God’s people together as an “ekklesia”—the ones “called out” of the world. There, in such a gathering, the people of God receive exactly what Peter received while Jesus “reached out his hand and took hold of him” (vs. 31). When the wind ceased, those in the boat (including Peter) “worshiped” Jesus (vs. 32).

Receiving the gifts of Jesus—the forgiveness of sins, life, and salvation—is our worship. What we would give back—prayer, praise, and thanksgiving—is a minor and secondary thing. Our voices and hearts are tainted by our sin... the “little-ness” of our faith... and the greatness of our doubt. Yet, despite such brokenness, Jesus lavishes his gifts upon us, establishing his church generation after generation upon the same sort of “broken” rock that was Peter.

Table Talk: Discuss why Jesus builds his church on imperfect people.

Pray: Heavenly Father, grant me the one title I’ll bear for eternity: Child of God. Amen

Written by Rev. Timothy J. Swenson

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## Matthew 14:22-23 English Standard Version (ESV)

22 Immediately he made the disciples get into the boat and go before him to the other side, while he dismissed the crowds.

23 And after he had dismissed the crowds, he went up on the mountain by himself to pray. When evening came, he was there alone,

24 but the boat by this time was a long way from the land, beaten by the waves, for the wind was against them.

25 And in the fourth watch of the night he came to them, walking on the sea.

26 But when the disciples saw him walking on the sea, they were terrified, and said, "It is a ghost!" and they cried out in fear.

27 But immediately Jesus spoke to them, saying, "Take heart; it is I. Do not be afraid."

28 And Peter answered him, "Lord, if it is you, command me to come to you on the water."

29 He said, "Come." So Peter got out of the boat and walked on the water and came to Jesus.

30 But when he saw the wind, he was afraid, and beginning to sink he cried out, "Lord, save me."

31 Jesus immediately reached out his hand and took hold of him, saying to him, "O you of little faith, why did you doubt?"

32 And when they got into the boat, the wind ceased.

33 And those in the boat worshiped him, saying, "Truly you are the Son of God."



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