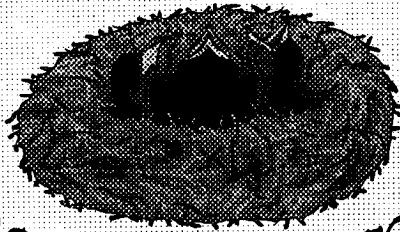
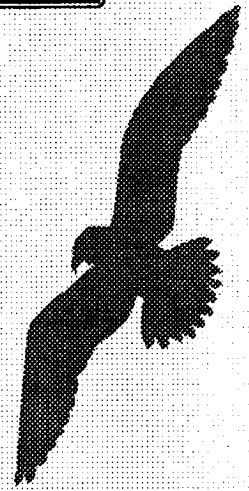


*'They shall
mount up...*

ON EAGLES' WINGS

*... with wings
as eagles."*

Isaiah 40:31



AERY NUGGETS

WALKING ON THE SEA

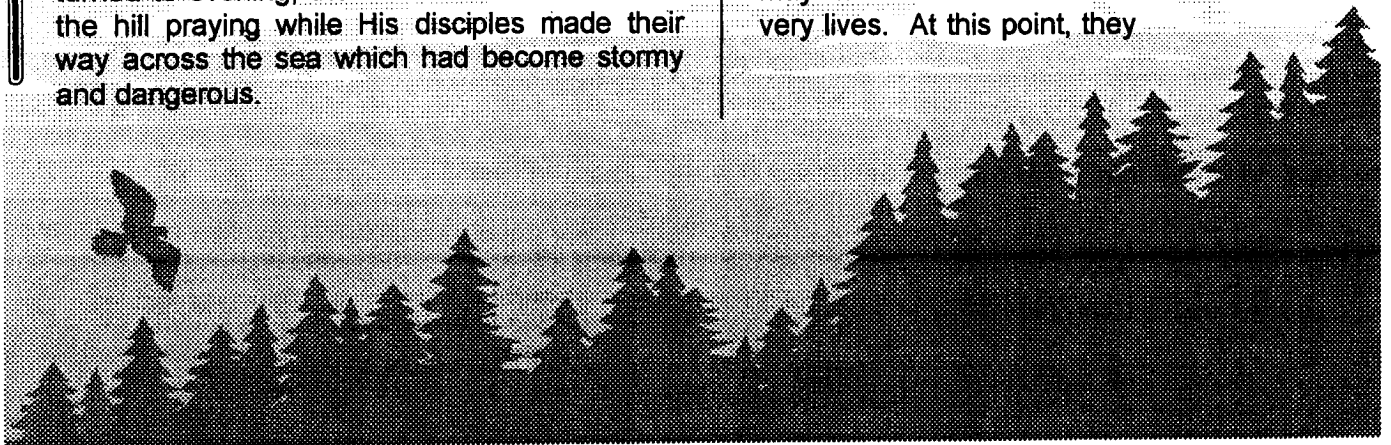
Steven J. Faulkner

Matthew 14:22-33

As we read these words, we find the Lord Jesus by the Sea of Galilee after He had spent the day in a desert place ministering to the multitude which had followed Him there. He had had compassion on the crowd and had been healing those who were sick, then He concluded the day by feeding the over 5000 men, women and children who were there with Him with only 5 loaves of bread and 2 fishes. Now, as He is about to disperse the crowd, we find the Lord Jesus directing His disciples to enter a ship and cross the sea ahead of Him. The disciples got in the ship as instructed and cast off, and the Lord sent the multitude away. At this point, the Lord went up onto a high hill by Himself to pray. As day turned to evening, the Lord was there alone on the hill praying while His disciples made their way across the sea which had become stormy and dangerous.

Actually, in looking at this picture, we Christians might think of our own situation as it exists today. Our Lord has gone above where He is *praying and interceding* for us, while we are here in the world, making our way through this life which is often like a dangerous, storm tossed sea. Yet, though He is above and we are here below, the Lord knows well our situation, and His eye is ever upon us. We read that in the fourth watch of the night while other men may have been sleeping, the Lord Jesus was quite aware of the danger His disciples were facing, and we find Him on His way to help them in their need.

What a terrifying experience this storm at sea must have been for the disciples. Have you ever been in a storm on a lake or at sea? I have been on a small lake by day when the wind has come up, and it can be quite frightening to say the least. The disciples, however, were on a very large lake, out of sight of land, and at night, when suddenly the wind became fierce. I can imagine that the wind and waves must have thrashed the ship about such that those on board, some of them experienced fishermen, may have feared for their very lives. At this point, they



saw a form walking toward them on the sea, and this must have multiplied the fear they were feeling! Even the best seaman in a boat would have had trouble on the sea, and no man that they knew could walk on water; what was this walking toward them? We should consider the situation before being too hard on the disciples for not recognizing that it was the Lord. But the tempest of this world cannot hinder the One whose voice called into existence all that is. He walks upon the boiling sea and through the lashing winds, and all the turbulence of this world is beneath His feet.

In fact, it was the Lord, coming to them in the midst of their trial. He knew that they didn't recognize Him or even expect Him in this circumstance. Do we always recognize the Lord in our trials? He is there for us just as surely, but do we see Him there in the midst of the turbulent sea? But the Lord knew their fear, and He sought to comfort them. He called out to them (verse 27), "*Be of good cheer, it is I; be not afraid.*" Can you imagine the *hope* that must have welled up within Peter as he heard the beautiful voice of his Lord? But we don't find Peter wanting to strike out on his own at this point: he called back to the Lord (verse 28) and said, "Lord, if it be thou, bid me come unto thee on the water." Here, I think the Lord was wanting to give Peter this opportunity to act on *faith*. He said, "*come.*" At that point, I think Peter showed *great faith*. That sea was at this point the most dangerous place on earth to jump into, but if the Lord Jesus told him to come, then this was the place to be and he need have *no fear*. It was not of his own design or in his own strength that he went, but being *called* by the Lord, and with his eye firmly fixed on Him, Peter was given the opportunity to *walk* on a tempestuous sea, a thing that would a few moments before have been thought totally impossible. Actually, what is impossible is for a Christian to walk safely and securely *through* this world *except* in the *will* and in the *strength* of the Lord.

At this point, however, Peter's focus on the Lord was distracted by the fury of the storm around him. Perhaps as he got further from the ship, he became uneasy with the sea boiling beneath his feet, or the wind whipping spray in his face, or perhaps he heard the sounds of the ship *behind* him being lashed about by the boisterous wind. In any case, he took his eyes *off* the Lord who was *before* him and began to focus on the waves around him. Suddenly, the wind and the waves became more real to him than the Lord who was before him. I can surely appreciate how this can happen! We as Christians are called to *walk by faith, not by sight* (Romans 1:17; 2 Cor.5:7); but sometimes our *physical* sight gets in the way of our *spiritual* sight, and we begin to fear what our eyes see rather than have *confidence*

in what the Lord *tells* us (see Hebrews 13:5; Matt.28:20; Romans 8:28,31).

Thankfully, Peter's faith had carried him close to the Lord, and in his danger, he cried out to the One who can really save ("And call upon me in the day of trouble; I will deliver thee, and thou shalt glorify me," Psalm 50:15). Peter called upon the name of Lord (which is what we should do in times of trouble), and the Lord, being only a *prayer* away, was right at hand to reach down with His strong arm to save. The Lord Jesus took Peter's outstretched hand and lifted him up out of the turbulent water, setting his feet on solid footing, even amidst what was yet an angry sea. Then, hand in hand with his Lord, Peter was led back to the ship. After entering the ship, the Lord calmed the storm, and all was once again safe. Those in the ship, overwhelmed with the obvious presence of the Son of God, *worshipped* Him.

What an *experience!* Have you ever been in some *desperate* or *hopeless* situation where you called upon the name of the Lord and where you were delivered in a way that seemed obvious as the hand of the Lord reaching out to you personally? If this has happened to you, you never forget it! It's like the Lord has reached out to you in your personal need and lifted you up. Such a thing *strengthens faith* and brings us to *worship*. Upon seeing the Lord in such a circumstance, does our heart not cry out with joy and praise, "*It is the Lord!*" ?

May God grant us to see the Lord even in the most terrifying storms of our lives. He is *there* with us, *leading* us faithfully onward as we walk *through* this turbulent world, and "He shall not suffer our foot to be moved" (Psalm 121:3). *Listening to His voice and keeping our eye firmly fixed on Him*, we can walk in safety upon the angry seas!

Hark! it is the Saviour calling,
"Little children follow Me!"
Jesus, keep our feet from falling—
Teach us how to follow Thee!
O do Thou who, meek and lowly,
Trod Thyself this vale of woe,
Make us Thine, and make us holy—
Guard and guide us as we go! (Anon)

"Casting all your care upon Him for He careth for you."
(1 Peter 5:7)

"And the peace of God which passeth all understanding shall keep your hearts and minds through Christ Jesus." (Phil.4:7)

For address correction or free new name addition,
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