

Do Not Give Up

Many people have heard the story found in Matthew 14 of Jesus walking on water. Most probably also know how Jesus told Peter he too could step out onto the stormy waves.

It is unsettling to think of attempting to walk on water in perfect weather. But it would be far more frightening to attempt a walk on the Sea of Galilee with wind howling at gale force and massive waves crashing around you.

Peter did fine at first, then scripture says, he “saw the strong wind and the waves, he was terrified and began to sink.” (Matthew 14:30, NLT) What changed was Peter’s focus. The wind and waves were there before he stepped out of the boat, but Peter focused on Jesus. However, when his attention shifted from the Savior to the storm, he began sinking like a rock.

Peter’s faith may have been less than perfect, but he was the only one of the twelve to get out of the boat. He did something the rest of the disciples did not do, he walked on water with Jesus. Peter still failed, but his failure was not final. He learned from his mistake and immediately turned to Jesus for help.

Peter is far from the only famous person to persevere after failure. Jonas Salk gave the world a working polio vaccine, but few know about the 200 unsuccessful vaccines he developed before finding one that worked. When asked how it felt to fail 200 times he replied, “I never failed 200 times in my life, I was taught not to use the word ‘failure,’ I discovered 200 ways not to vaccinate for polio.”

Great Britain’s most famous prime minister, Sir Winston Churchill, guided England through the uncertain and perilous days of World War II. He once said, “Success is not final, failure is not fatal: It is the courage to continue that counts.”

The question is not whether you and I will make mistakes— we will. The important question is what we do when we fail. If Peter had given up on both Jesus and himself when he sank, we would likely not be reading his story today.

You may believe you cannot recover from your past, but God already knows how he wants to help you. Scripture is full of stories about people God used in remarkable ways after terrible failures.

Thomas Edison summed up failure this way, “Many of life’s failures are people who did not realize how close they were to success when they gave up.”

Consider these four important steps: First, do not give up. Second, seek God’s forgiveness when you fail. Third, ask yourself what you need to learn from your failure and finally, commit to following God wherever he leads.