

Steve Hill: Get Out of the Boat

It happened in Spain while holding a street crusade. For 10 days, we had been faithfully witnessing on the streets with a team of more than 100 young people. We had handed out more than 25,000 pieces of literature. Our drama team performed several times a day. They were awesome and incredible, yet no one responded to the gospel. Not one single person got saved in 10 days!

I had been on a total fast during that whole time. I was going for souls with all my heart. I was going after Spain. I was believing God for a breakthrough in one of the most difficult nations in the world to preach the gospel.

I was one frustrated person. In all my years of ministry, I had never been in a place where we labored so hard but saw absolutely no fruit. It was as if Jesus was on another planet and left me alone in Spain.

Do you think Jesus knew what was going on? Of course He did. He knew everything. He knew what I was facing. He could have come down in power the first day. I've seen Him do that before in crusades. But He didn't.

I'm convinced that Jesus *set me up* to take me to a place that I had never been before. Here's what happened. As we were holding a street crusade, the drama team had just performed, but the crowd remained absolutely stoic. I was at a loss. Frustrated, I stood before the crowd and did something totally uncharacteristic for me.

I dropped the microphone onto the pavement, looked up toward heaven and screamed aloud, "Jesus, where are You?" The crowd was spellbound as this maniac yelled in English to his God.

Then Jesus clearly spoke to me and said, "I am right over there." I looked across the crowd and saw a young man with his hand over his face. I walked through the crowd to him and asked him what was happening. He said, "I don't know, but I feel something. Somebody is touching me." I began to explain what conviction was and what it meant to be touched by Jesus.

I looked around and saw that the whole crowd was listening. At that moment, the Lord said to me, "Now, now!" I lifted up my voice and said, "Those of you who want to know Jesus Christ as your Savior, lift your hands." Hands went up all over the crowd. The presence of God fell. People began to weep and wail, repenting of their sins and getting saved.

Our team couldn't believe what was happening. Neither could I. For two weeks we had labored ceaselessly with no results. But in an instant, God stepped in and everything changed. I cried my eyes out because I was so scared. I had never experienced anything like this before in my life. I had entered territory I had never been in before.

There are times in our lives when God will set us up for an experience to take us where we've never been before. You see, being the creatures of habit that we are, it's so easy to get into a place where we begin to coast in life. We get into a routine. Things are going pretty good. We're in a comfort zone. And before we know it, we begin to stagnate.

So, the Lord comes along and creates situations to help us to grow and go beyond where we're at in our walk with Him.

The Word is full of instances where He orchestrated some incredible circumstances to take His people where they'd never been before. He does the same thing with us.

Consider the account of Peter walking on the water found in the 14th chapter of Matthew.

Jesus called Peter out of the boat, which was a place of

security, onto the waves into a place of complete trust. Peter's first few steps found a firm footing upon those waves, but then when he took his eyes off Jesus and placed them on the waves, he began to sink.

Thankfully Jesus was there with him in the midst of the waves. The same storm that threatened to take Peter under was the same storm Jesus was treading upon underneath His feet. You can trust that even when you feel alone or feel like a failure, He is there with you.

It was natural for Peter to start sinking as he walked on the water. Nobody can walk on water. When you begin to falter by doing what is natural, put your faith in Jesus, who lives in the supernatural, and He will take you where you have never been before.

Have you ever thought about it? You can't practice walking on water. You can't practice working a miracle. You can't practice getting people saved or even doing great things for God. You have to experience these places *in* God. Each time you step out into uncharted territory with Jesus, He's going to lead you into something fresh, a brand new place with Him.

That's what happened to me in Spain when I cried out in desperation, "Jesus, where are You?" And He answered, "I'm right over here, Steve. I want you to go somewhere you've never been before. You've labored and toiled and exhausted your strength with no results. Now come here, son, and watch how I can touch just one man and turn this whole crowd to Me." And He did.

Here's something important to remember: It's perfectly natural to have doubts. But Peter leaves us with the divine methodology of dealing with our doubts and fears. He didn't say, "Lord, bid me to walk on the water," Instead, he said, "Jesus, bid me to come to You." His focus was on the supernatural rather than the natural, and because of that,

Jesus took him someplace that he'd never been before.

Some get hung up on the part where Peter was sinking. But Peter sinking is the most irrelevant part of the whole story. Whenever I read the story of Peter walking on the water, I never see him sinking. I'm always blown away by the fact that he got out of the boat. Period.

The majority of Christians are content with looking at Jesus from the security of their own boat because they don't want to go where they have never been before.

My friend, God is not looking at your sinking. He's looking at your reaching out to Him. This is why you must learn to look at the whole picture of your life rather than your little stumblings. Quit beating yourself up because you fall. When you go through a struggle, the important thing is to get back up!

Remember, this same Peter who walked on the water was also the disciple who had the revelation that Christ was the Son of the living God. But soon after, he cursed and denied that he even knew the Lord. Then, days later, Jesus picked him to preach that great message on the Day of Pentecost.

When we look at a cross-section of Peter's life—the ups and downs, the signs and wonders, the depth of his falling and his struggles—when we think of the patriarchs and the great men of faith, Peter is always one of those at the top of our list. We think of him as a man of God.

My friend, heaven loves people who rise up in faith, step out of their comfort zones and say, "Jesus, take me somewhere I have never been before." And then, like Peter, they step out of the boat.

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