

Sermon Title: **"FOCUSING OUR FAITH IN THE LORD!"**

Sermon Text: **Matthew 14: 22-32**

Introduction:

GOOD MORNING TO ALL! THANK YOU FOR JOINING US IN OUR WORSHIP SERVICE TODAY! AGAIN, I WOULD LIKE TO WELCOME ALL YOU WHO ARE JOINING US FOR THE FIRST TIME TODAY IN OUR SUNDAY SERVICE CELEBRATION. FOR YOUR INFORMATION, WE HAVE STARTED A NEW SERMON SERIES CALLED "COMBATTING COVID-19!" (OVERCOMING THE UNCERTAINTIES OF THE TIMES!).

WHEN I WAS PREPARING THIS MESSAGE, I REMEMBER THE TIME WHEN I WAS TEACHING DINNA HOW TO DRIVE. YES! YOU HEARD IT RIGHT! I AM THE ONE WHO TAUGHT MY WIFE, DINNA, HOW TO DRIVE BACK IN THE PHILIPPINES! MANY HUSBANDS CONSIDERED WHAT I DID AS A MAJOR FEAT. I REMEMBER ONE DAY WHEN WE WENT HOME COMING FROM LAS PINAS, WE DECIDED TO USE THE SOUTH EXPRESS WAY IN ALABANG & I TOLD DINNA TO DRIVE OUR 72' BETTLE CAR FOR PRACTICE. SHE JUST GOT HER DRIVER'S LICENSE SEVERAL WEEKS AGO. SHE AGREED. BUT AS WE WERE CRUISING ALONG THE HIGHWAY, ALL OF A SUDDEN, WE FOUND OUR BEETLE IN THE MIDDLE LANE & BIG PASSENGER BUSES WERE PASSING US BY FROM THE LEFT & FROM THE RIGHT. WHEN I SAW THIS, I REALIZED THAT DINNA MIGHT PANIC WHEN SHE FEELS THE PULL OF THESE BIG BUSES & SHE MIGHT SWERVE THE CAR EITHER TO THE LEFT OR TO THE RIGHT. SO, NERVOUSLY, I TOLD HER: (1) TO STAY ON HER LANE, (2) TO FOCUS HER EYES ON THE FRONT, & (3) TO STEADY HER HANDS ON THE STEERING WHEEL! NOW, THAT WAS THE LONGEST 15 MINUTES OR SO OF MY LIFE. THE GOOD THING WAS - DINNA LISTENED & OBEYED & PTL, WE ARE STILL HERE TODAY! WE SURVIVED!

THE MORAL OF THAT STORY IS THIS - DON'T LET YOUR WIFE WHO JUST LEARNED HOW TO DRIVE TO DRIVE IN THE HIGHWAY! NO! BUT MY POINT IN TELLING THIS STORY IS – HAVING FOCUS IS VERY VERY IMPORTANT IN LIFE! FOCUS MEANS "THE CENTER OR FOCAL POINT OF INTEREST OR ACTIVITY." YOU CAN NOT DRIVE YOUR CAR WITH YOUR EYES ALL OVER THE PLACE. YOU HAVE TO FOCUS YOUR EYES IN FRONT OF YOU ON THE ROAD. THAT'S WHY

USING YOUR PHONE, DOING YOUR MAKE UP, OR DOING OTHER STUFFS AND TAKING OFF YOUR EYES IN FRONT OF YOU WHILE DRIVING FOR A LONG TIME, IS VERY DANGEROUS THING. **THE PRINCIPLE IS THE SAME WITH OUR CHRISTIAN WALK WITH THE LORD OUR GOD ESPECIALLY SO WHEN WE ARE FACING A DIFFICULT CRISIS OR A PROBLEM OR A TRIAL IN LIFE. FROM OUR PASSAGE TODAY, WE WILL LEARN THAT WE CAN OVERCOME THE UNCERTAINTIES OF OUR TIMES BY FOCUSING OUR FAITH IN THE LORD!**

PLEASE JOIN ME AS WE COME TO THE LORD IN PRAYER...

NOW, LOOKING AT THE IMMEDIATE CONTEXT OF OUR STORY, THE LORD JESUS HAS JUST PERFORMED AN AMAZING MIRACLE OF FEEDING 5,000 PEOPLE! (vv. 13-21). AFTER THIS, ACCORDING TO THE GOSPEL OF JOHN (SEE John 6), SOME WANTED TO MAKE JESUS KING BY FORCE! SO, THIS WAS THE REASON HERE THE LORD IMMEDIATELY TOLD HIS DISCIPLES TO RIDE THE BOAT & MEET HIM ON THE OTHE SIDE OF THE LAKE, FOR HE WILL STAY FOR A WHILE TO PRAY IN THE MOUNTAIN & HE WILL MEET THEM ON THE OTHER SIDE OF THE LAKE.

“Immediately he made the disciples get into the boat and go ahead of him to the other side, while he dismissed the crowds. After dismissing the crowds, he went up on the mountain by himself to pray. Well into the night, he was there alone.” (vv. 22-23)

- **AND HERE IS WHERE OUR STORY BEGINS. THE LORD REJOINS HIS DISCIPLES IN THE BOAT BY DEMONSTRATING ANOTHER AWESOME MIRACLE – BY WALKING ON WATER...!**

A. THE LORD JESUS REJOINS HIS DISCIPLES BY WALKING ON WATER!

BUT THE DISCIPLES ACCORDING TO OUR TEXT MISTOOK JESUS TO BE A GHOST! AND THIS CREATED FEAR IN THEIR HEARTS & MINDS AND IT IS SAFE TO SAY THAT WHAT THEY SAW SHOCK THEM TO THE BONES! THEY WERE SO AFRAID THAT THEY “CRIED OUT IN FEAR!”

1) *The disciples **mistake** the Lord Jesus as a ghost!*

*Meanwhile, the boat was already some distance from land, battered by the waves, because the wind was against them. **Jesus came toward them walking on the sea very early in the morning. When the disciples saw him walking on the sea, they were terrified. "It's a ghost!" they said, and they cried out in fear.*** (vv. 24-26)

BUT THE LORD IMMEDIATELY **CALMS THEIR FEAR BY SHOWING THEM THAT HE IS NOT A GHOST BUT HE IS THEIR MESSIAH, THEIR TEACHER & LORD!**

2) *The Lord Jesus **calms** their fear by revealing Himself to them!*

*Immediately Jesus spoke to them. "**Have courage! It is I. Don't be afraid.**"* (v. 27)

NOW, THE NEXT THING THAT WE SEE IN THE STORY IS PETER, THE EVER IMPULSIVE DISCIPLE OF THE LORD, MAKING A SPECIAL REQUEST (ALL OF A SUDDEN I REMEMBER SHARON COMETA'S SONG "MR. DJ, CAN I MAKE A REQUEST").

B. PETER **REQUESTS THE LORD TO ENABLE HIM TO WALK ON WATER TOO!**

IN VERSES 28-29, PETER DARES TO ASK THE LORD TO ENABLE HIM TO WALK ON WATER ALSO! WOW! WHAT A BOLD FAITH OF PETER!

1) *Peter **dares** the Lord to make him to walk on water!*

*"**Lord, if it's you,**" Peter answered him, "**command me to come to you on the water.**"* (v. 28)

AND BEING A GENEROUS LORD, JESUS GRANTED HIS REQUEST & PETER WAS ABLE TO WALK ON WATER! IMAGINE WHAT WAS IN THE MIND OF PETER DURING THAT TIME! PARANG "CLOUD 9" SIGURO NO!

2) The Lord grants Peter's request to walk on water!

He said, "Come." And climbing out of the boat, Peter started walking on the water and came toward Jesus. (vv. 28-29)

BUT NOTE THAT PETER'S AWESOME EXPERIENCE WAS ONLY FOR A SHORT PERIOD OF TIME BECAUSE THE NEXT VERSE TELLS US THAT WHEN HE SAW THE STRONG WIND & THE WAVES BATTETING HIM, HE WAS AFRAID & BEGAN TO SINK! BUT...

C. THE LORD JESUS RESCUES PETER FROM SINKING INTO THE WATER!

IN VERSE 31, THE LORD JESUS IDENTIFIES FOR US THE TRUE REASON WHY PETER BEGAN TO SINK – HE DOUBTED THE PRESENCE & POWER OF THE LORD JESUS!

1) Peter doubts the presence & power of the Lord!

But when he saw the strength of the wind, he was afraid, and beginning to sink he cried out, "Lord, save me!" Immediately Jesus reached out his hand, caught hold of him, and said to him, "You of little faith, why did you doubt?" (vv. 30-31)

NOW, WHY? VERSE 30 SAYS, BECAUSE HIS EYES WERE FOCUSED NOT ON THE LORD JESUS ANYMORE BUT ON THE STRONG WINDS AROUND HIM!

REALIZING THAT HE WAS SLOWLY SINKING, PETER CALLS ON THE NAME OF THE LORD FOR HELP! AND OUR GRACIOUS LORD RESCUED HIM FROM SINKING & DROWNING!

2) The Lord Jesus delivers Peter from sinking!

Immediately Jesus reached out his hand, caught hold of him, and said to him, "You of little faith, why did you doubt?" When they got into the boat, the wind ceased. Then those in the boat worshiped him and said, "Truly you are the Son of God." (vv. 31-33)

TAKE NOTE THAT THIS IS NOT THE FIRST THAT THEY WITNESSED JESUS DID THIS MIRACLE OF CALMING THE STORM. THEY SAW THIS WHEN THEY ENCOUNTERED A STRONG STORM AS TOLD BY LUKE IN LUKE 8: 22-25. THAT TIME THEY WERE ONLY AMAZED AT HIS POWER BUT THIS TIME, OUR TEXT TELLS US THAT THEY “WORSHIP” HIM & AFFIRMED THAT HE IS INDEED WHO HE SAID HE IS – THE MESSIAH, THE SON OF GOD, WHO HIMSELF IS GOD BUT WHO BECAME FLESH, A MAN SO THAT HE CAN DIE & THROUGH HIS DEATH & RESURRECTION REDEEM US FROM OUR SINS AND HELL!

APPLICATIONS:

NOW, FROM OUR STORY TODAY, **WE LEARN THAT WE CAN OVERCOME THE UNCERTAINTIES OF OUR TIMES OR EVEN OUR OVERWHELMING CRISIS OR PROBLEM BY FOCUSING OUR FAITH ON OUR GOD – ON WHO HE IS & WHAT HE CAN DO IN OUR LIFE!**

- **TAKE NOTE THAT THE DISCIPLES HAS TAKEN OFF THEIR EYES OF FAITH OR THE FOCUS OF FAITH ON THE LORD JESUS & WHAT HE CAN DO FOR THEM. BUT RATHER THEY BEGAN FOCUSING IT ON OTHER THINGS. THEY INSTEAD FOCUS ON THE “GHOST” THAT THEY SAW! FOR PETER, HOWEVER, THE FOCUS OF HIS FAITH WAS TAKEN OFF FROM JESUS TO THE “WIND”! BUT WHEN PETER RE-FOCUS HIS FAITH ON THE LORD BY CALLING ON HIS NAME, HE WAS RESCUED BY THE LORD!**

I’M AFRAID MANY TODAY ARE FOCUSING MORE THEIR FAITH IN “COVID-19” RATHER THAN THE LORD! MANY TODAY ARE WORRYING RATHER THAN WORSHIPPING HIM! MANY TODAY ARE FOCUSING ON THE CRISIS RATHER THAN CHRIST! ARE YOU ONE OF THEM, MY FRIEND?

- **REMEMBER THAT YOU BECOME WHAT YOU WORSHIP! YOU BECOME THE FOCUS OF YOUR LIFE! (MOSES’ FACE SHINING AFTER STAYING 40 DAYS w/ HIS GOD! THAT WHY WE SAY TO THOSE WHO LOVES TO EARN MORE MORE MONEY! MUKHANG PERA KA NA! YOU BECOME THE FOCUS OF YOUR LIFE! THAT**

PRINCIPLE OR LAW IS THE SAME IN OUR SPIRITUAL LIFE. YOU BECOME THE FOCUS OF YOUR FAITH!

- **REMEMBER THAT WHERE YOU FOCUS YOUR FAITH IS WHERE YOU GET THE ENERGY OR THE POWER TO FIGHT & OVERCOME YOUR CRISIS/TRIAL/ PROBLEM!** IN OTHER WORDS, INSTEAD OF FOCUSING YOUR FAITH IN OUR CRISIS/PROBLEM/COVID-19, FOCUS OUR FAITH IN THE LORD & WHAT HE CAN DO FOR YOU! THEN & ONLY THEN, WILL YOU SEE HIS POWER & ENERGY ENABLING YOU TO “WALK ON WATER” MEANING, YOU WILL NOT ONLY SURVIVE YOUR CRISIS/PROBLEM, BUT WE WILL THRIVE IN SPITE OF IT! BUT IF THE FOCUS OF YOUR FAITH IS THE “GHOST” OR THE “WIND” OR THE CRISIS, THEN EXPECT TO SINK DEEPER & DEEPER & BE SUCKED BY ITS POWER JUST LIKE PETER WAS BEING SUCKED BY THE WATERS!

THEREFORE, THE QUESTION THIS MORNING IS THIS – WHAT IS THE FOCUS OF YOUR FAITH TODAY? WHERE ARE WE PLACING OUR TRUST/FAITH IN THIS TIME LOF CRISIS? I THINK THAT FOR MANY OF US, LIKE PETER WE STARTED RIGHT -OUR FAITH IS FOCUSED ON THE LORD. BUT SOMEHOW OUR FAITH IS NOW TAKEN OFF FROM THE LORD & IS NOW FOCUS ON OTHER THINGS. AS I’VE SAID LAST WEEK, THE LORD IS USING THIS CRISIS TO TEACH & EXPOSE TO US THE TEMPORARINESS & SHORTNESS OF OUR LIFE HERE ON EARTH & THE FULTILITY OF TRUSTING IN THE THINGS OF THIS EARTH.

THIS CRISIS IS SHOWING US THE WRONG FOCUS OF OUR FAITH OR TRUST! WHAT ARE THESE WRONG FOCUS OF OUR LIFE?

- 1) **SOME OF US ARE FOCUSING OUR FAITH/TRUST ON MONEY OR MATERIAL POSSESSIONS/PLEASURES!**

THIS COVID-19 CRISIS TEACHES US THAT MONEY OR MATERIAL POSSESSIONS ARE USELESS DURING THIS TIME! DID YOU KNOW HOW MUCH DOLLARS SOME RICH PEOPLE LOST DURING LAST TWO WEEKS? MILLIONS, BILLIONS OF DOLLARS!

2) SOME OF US ARE FOCUSING OUR FAITH/TRUST IN **POWER** IN LIFE!

SOME OF US ARE PINNING OUR HOPE IN THE **WHITE HOUSE** OR PRESIDENT TRUMP! SOME IN DOCTORS & SCIENTISTS! DID YOU KNOW THAT THIS COVID VIRUS HAS THE POWER TO TAKE DOWN ROYALTIES OR HEAD OF STATE/NATION? DID YOU KNOW HOW MANY DOCTORS & MEDICAL PERSONNEL IT HAS DOWN OR KILLED ALREADY. MONEY OR POWER IS USELESS WHEN FACE BY THIS KIND OF ENEMY!

3) SOME OF US FOCUSING THEIR FAITH/TRUST ON **OURSELVES** OR THEIR OWN **EFFORT**! THEY TRUST IN THEIR OWN WISDOM & INTELLECT & EFFORT!

MANY PEOPLE ACTUALLY DO THIS! THEY SAY THAT THEY BELIEVE IN THE LORD BUT THE TRUTH OF THE MATTER IS THAT THEY BELIEVE IN THEMSELVES OR WHAT THEY CAN DO FOR THEMSELVES! BUT WHOEVER YOU ARE YOU ARE NO MATCH TO COVID-19!

BUT WHAT DOES IT MEAN TO FOCUS OUR FAITH/TRUST IN THE LORD? WHAT DOES IT LOOKS LIKE IN THE PRACTICAL DAILY CHRISTIAN LIVING?

- FROM OUR STUDY TODAY, LET ME SHARE SEVERAL PRINCIPLES THAT I BELIEVE DEMONSTRATE WHAT “FOCUSING OUR FAITH IN THE LORD” MEANS. **LET ME JUST EMPHASIZE THAT THESE PRINCIPLES SHOULD BE CONTINUALLY & FAITHFULLY PURSUED BY BELIEVERS BECAUSE THERE IS NO TIME THAT WE ARE NOT BEING TEMPTED BY THE EVIL ONE OR BY SINFUL HEART TO REMOVE THE FOCUS OF OUR FAITH ON THE LORD INTO OTHER THINGS.** I THINK IS A CONSTANT TEMPTATION FOR BELIEVERS TO TURN AWAY OUR EYES OF FAITH FROM THE LORD. IN FACT, AT THIS VERY MOMENT SOME OF YOU ARE BEING TEMPTED BY THE SMELL OF FOOD THAT IS NOW BEING PREPARED ON THE TABLE. IN ANY CASE, MAY OUR GRACIOUS LORD IMPRESS & IMPRINT THESE PRINCIPLES IN OUR MINDS & HEARTS THAT WE WILL NOT STOP UNTIL WE

DIE OR THE LORD JESUS RETURNS OR WHICHEVER COME FIRST!

1) IT IS BELIEVING & REMEMBERING WHO THE LORD JESUS IS & WHAT HE CAN DO IN OUR LIFE!

NOTE THAT THE LORD JUST FED THE 5,000 PEOPLE IN OUR STORY. THINK ABOUT THIS - HOW MANY TIMES HAVE THEY SEEN JESUS MIRACULOUSLY HEALED PEOPLE? HOW MANY MIRACLES HAVE THEY ALREADY WITNESSED BY THIS TIME, AND YET THE DISCIPLES SEEMED TO HAVE FORGOTTEN IT ALL ALREADY! WE HAVE A TENDENCY TO FORGET SO REMEMBER WHO THE LORD IS & WHAT HE CAN DO!

SO, IN THIS STORY, JOHN ACTUALLY HAS REVEALED TO US WHO THE LORD JESUS WAS! HE IS THE LORD OF CREATION OR NATURE BY CONTROLLING THE WIND & CALMING THE SEA. THAT'S WHY THIS TIME THEY WERE NOT JUST AMAZED BUT AS WE READ, THEY WORSHIPED HIM & AFFIRMED HIM AS THE ONE OF GOD!

The disciples went and woke him, saying, "Master, Master, we're going to drown!" He got up and rebuked the wind and the raging waters; the storm subsided, and all was calm. 25 "Where is your faith?" he asked his disciples. In fear and amazement they asked one another, "Who is this? He commands even the winds and the water, and they obey him." (Lk. 8: 24-25)

JOHN SHOWED US THAT THE LORD IS THE MIRACLE WORKER, THE WAY-MAKER! REMEMBER PETER ASKING THE LORD TO ENABLE HIM TO WALK & THE LORD SAID "YES! YOU CAN!" AND INDEED, THE LORD MADE A WAY FOR PETER TO BE ABLE TO WALK ON WATER!

BUT WHO REALLY IS JESUS CHRIST & WHY MUST WE FOCUS OUR FAITH IN HIM? THE GOSPEL WRITER MATTHEW TELLS US THAT HE IS OUR EMMANUEL! THE GOD WHO IS WITH US! IN FACT, HE IS THE GOD WHO LIVES WITHIN US! THE WORD OF GOD CLEARLY TEACHES THAT WHEN A PERSON UNITES WITH JESUS BY PLACING HIS/HER FAITH OR TRUST IN HIM AS THE MESSIAH, THE

SON OF GOD, & CONFESS HIM AS SAVIOR & LORD, HE/SHE WILL BE SAVED! AND WHAT'S THE MEANING OF "SAVED"? IT MEANS ONE IS FORGIVEN OF HIS SINS, RECEIVES ETERNAL LIFE, & THE MOST IMPORTANT OF ALL ONE RECEIVES THE SPIRIT OF GOD, THE HOLY SPIRIT WHO IS THE SEAL OF OUR ETERNAL INHERITANCE IN CHRIST!

God sent his Son, born of a woman, born under the law, 5 to redeem those under the law, that we might receive adoption to sonship.[b] 6 Because you are his sons, God sent the Spirit of his Son into our hearts, the Spirit who calls out, "Abba,[c] Father." 7 So you are no longer a slave, but God's child; and since you are his child, God has made you also an heir. (Gal 4:4-7)

THIS MEANS WE HAVE NOW BECOME CHILDREN OF GOD THROUGH FAITH IN JESUS AND THIS IS THE REASON THE LORD PROMISED US "I WILL NEVER TO LEAVE NOR FORSAKE YOU!" (Heb. 13:5) & NOTHING NOW CAN SEPARATE US FROM THE LOVE OF THE FATHER! (Rom. 8: 37-39).

THE QUESTION NOW IS – HAVE YOU ALREADY RECEIVE THE SPIRIT OF GOD? HAVE YOU ALREADY PLACE YOUR TRUST OR FAITH IN JESUS AS YOUR SAVIOR & LORD? WHY NOT TODAY? CAN WE PAUSE FOR PRAYER?..

2) IT IS TRUSTING & NEVER DOUBTING THE PROMISE/WORD OF THE LORD!

REMEMBER WHAT THE LORD TOLD PETER, - "WHY DID YOU DOUBT?" NEVER, NEVER DOUBT THE PROMISE OR WORD OF THE LORD! REMEMBER ABRAHAM DOUBTING THE PROMISE OF THE LORD TO GIVE HIM A SON & MAKE HIM A GREAT NATION? HE DOUBTED & CAUSED THE EXISTENCE OF ISHMAELITES, ONE OF THE HOSTILE ENEMIES OF ISRAEL UNTIL TODAY - THE ARABS! MANY BELIEVERS TODAY ARE MISSING THE BLESSINGS OF GENEROUS GIVING BECAUSE OF DOUBT. WE ARE AFRAID THAT THE LORD WILL NOT DELIVER HIS PROMISE. BUT LIKE IN OUR STORY THE LORD IS CHALLENGING US TODAY! ONLY BELIEVE &

DO NOT DOUBT & YOU WILL SEE! YOU WILL SEE THE MIRACLE OF GOD IN YOUR LIFE!

THE LORD SAID, “HEAVEN & EARTH WILL PASS AWAY BUT MY WORD WILL NOT PASS AWAY, BUT MY WORDS WILL NEVER PASS AWAY!” (MATT. 24: 35). WE CAN FULLY RELY OR DEPEND ON THIS TRUTHFULNESS OF THIS BOOK! LET US BELIEVE THAT THE LORD STARTED IN YOUR LIFE HE WILL COMPLETE IT! (Phil. 1:6)

3) IT IS LIVING BY FAITH & NOT BY SIGHT! IT IS SEEING BEYOND THE MERE APPEARANCE OF THINGS IN THIS WORLD!

REMEMBER THAT NOT ALL WHO APPEARS TO BE “GHOST” ARE EVIL & IS MEANT TO HARM YOU! NOTE THAT THE DISCIPLES DID NOT FOCUS MORE CAREFULLY ON WHAT ARE SEEING. THEY DECIDED THAT WHAT THEY SAW WAS A “GHOST” BECAUSE THAT WAS WHAT THEY KNOW & EXPERIENCE BEFORE. SO, NOT ALL PROBLEM OR CRISIS OR TRIAL IS CAUSED BY THE DEVIL OR IS MEANT TO HARM US. THEY COULD HAVE KNOWN THAT THIS GHOST WAS JESUS IF ONLY THEY LOOK BEYOND THE APPEARANCE OF IT. ON THE OTHER HAND. WE ARE NOT TO COMMIT THE MISTAKE THAT ALL THAT APPEARS TO BE “GOOD” OR “BEAUTIFUL” IS THERE TO BRING YOU GOOD THINGS OR BLESSING! REMEMBER THAT SATAN DISGUISES HIMSELF AS AN ANGEL OF LIGHT BUT HIS GOAL IS TO HARM YOU & ME & SEPARATE US FROM OUR SAVIOR & LORD! (SEE 2 Cor. 11:14)

4) IT IS CALLING ON THE LORD’S NAME & EXPECTING OUR HELP WILL COME FROM THE LORD OUR GOD!

THE GOOD THING ABOUT PETER WHEN HE WAS SINKING WAS THAT HE KNOWS WHOM TO CALL FOR HELP. HE CRIED TO THE LORD CALLED ON HIS NAME & THE BIBLE TELLS US THAT HE WHO CALLS ON THE NAME OF THE LORD WILL BE SAVED! NOT JUST FROM OUR EARTHLY TROUBLE OR DANGER BUT MOST ESPECIALLY FROM ETERNAL DANGER! OUR TEXT SAYS THAT THE LORD REACHED OUT HIS HAND & CAUGHT PETER.

I REMEMBER THE PRAYER OF THE PSALMIST,

*"I lift my eyes toward the mountains. **Where will my help come from? My help comes from the Lord, the Maker of heaven and earth.** He will not allow your foot to slip; your Protector will not slumber. Indeed, the Protector of Israel does not slumber or sleep."
(Psalm 121: 1-4)*

CLOSING ILLUSTRATION & CHALLENGE:

I REMEMBER ONE EXPERIMENT IN SCIENCE IN MY ELEMENTARY OR HIGH SCHOOL, WHERE WE WERE TOLD TO BURN A PIECE OF USING A MAGNIFYING GLASS. AS YOU ALL KNOW, IN ORDER TO DO THIS, WE NEED TO THE LIGHT ENERGY/POWER OF THE SUN TO PASS THRU THE GLASS INTO THE PAPER. AND THE KEY TO ITS SUCCESS IS **THE STEADY FOCUS OF THE MAGNIFYING GLASS**; MEANING, WE HAVE TO STEADY OUR HAND HOLDING THE GLASS & AVOID SHAKING OR ANY MOVEMENTS BECAUSE IT WILL DISRUPT THE FULL ENERGY/POWER OF THE SUNLIGHT BEING **DIRECTED/FOCUSED** ON THE SAME SPOT. THE FOCUS OF THE ENERGY LIGHT MUST BE ON THE SAME SPOT ALL THE TIME OR YOU WILL FIND IT HARD TO BURN THE PAPER. I THINK THIS IS THE SAME WHEN WE ARE FACING ANY OVERWHELMING CRISIS OR PROBLEM IN OUR LIFE. OUR EYES OF FAITH HAVE TO **STAY FOCUS** ON THE LORD OUR GOD! AND TO STAY FOCUS, WE HAVE TO **STEADY OUR MINDS, OUR HEARTS, OUR SPIRITS** ON THE LORD OUR GOD FROM WHOM OUR HELP WILL COME!

THEREFORE, CHURCH, FRIENDS, STAY FOCUS YOUR EYES OF FAITH IN THE LORD OUR GOD! STEADY YOUR MINDS! STEADY YOUR HEARTS! STEADY YOUR SPIRITS! DO NOT WORRY OR STRUGGLE FOR IT WILL NOT HELP! BUT FOCUS YOUR EYES OF FAITH IN JESUS OUR LORD! AND IF YOU SISTER, BROTHER, WHOEVER YOU ARE, IF YOU FEEL THAT YOU ARE "SINKING" BECAUSE OF WHAT IS HAPPENING IN YOUR LIFE OR AROUND US TODAY, LIKE PETER, BY FAITH, EXTEND YOUR HAND TO OUR LORD JESUS & CALL ON HIM & SAY, "LORD, I NEED YOUR HELP! STEADY MY ANXIOUS HEART! STEADY MY ANXIOUS MIND & STEADY MY SPIRIT! TO YOU I LOOK FOR HELP & PLACE MY FULL TRUST & CONFIDENCE & HOPE! FROM YOU I EXPECT TO RECEIVE MY HELP

EVEN MY MIRACLE TODAY! THANK YOU LORD JESUS! IN YOUR NAME I PRAY ALL THESE THINGS. AMEN!"

CHURCH, FRIENDS, LET US LIFT OUR EYES ON THE HILLS! FOR OUR HELP WILL COME FROM THE LORD! LET US PRAY...

CLOSING PRAYER:

OUR HEAVENLY FATHER, FIRST OF ALL WE THANK YOU TODAY FOR YOUR SON, THE LORD JESUS WHOM YOU HAVE SENT & GIVEN TO US TO BE OUR SAVIOR! THROUG FAITH IN HIM, WE HAVE BECOMWE YOUR CHILDREN & THRU JESUS' NAME WE NOE HAVE ACCESS TO YOU & WE CAN NOW CALL YOU OUR FATHER & KNOW THAT YOU WILL NOT REJECT BUT HEAR OUR PRAYERS. FATHER GOD, THANK YOU FOR REMINDING US TODAY THAT YOU ARE OUR HELPER & PROTECTOR! YOU ARE A GOD WHO DOES NOT SLEEP OR SLUMBER YOU KNOW OUR SITUATION & YOU ARE IN CONTROL OF ALL THINGS. THANL YOU ALSO FOR REMINDING US THAT YOU ARE THE SOVEREIGN LORD OF CREATION OR NATURE, THE MIRACLE WORKER, THE WAY-MAKER!

TODAY, WE WANT TO REFOCUS OUR EYES OF FAITH ON YOU & WHAT YOU CAN DO IN OUR BEHALF. FATHER GOD, STEADY OUR WANDERING HEARTS, STEADY OUR WORRYING MINDS, STEADY OUR RESTLESS SPRITS! HOLY SPIRIT, RISE INSIDE US & REASSURE US OF YOUR PRESENCE IN OUR HEARTS. ASSURE US THAT YOU WILL NEVER LEAVE US NOR FORSAKE US ESP. DURING THIS TIME OF CRISIS. LORD, THANK YOU FOR SHOWING US TODAY THAT YOU ARE OUR EMMANUEL THE GOD WHO IS WITH US! LIKE THE DISCIPLES, YOU WERE WITH THEM ALONG IN THEIR CRISIS. YOU ARE WITH THEM IN THE CRISIS BUT THEY FAIL TO SEE HIM. THNK YOU THAT WE ARE NOT ALONE IN FACING THIS CRISIS OR ANY CRISIS THAT WILL COME OUR WAY. YES, LORD WE THANK YOU THAT WE ARE NOT ALONE ANYMORE IN THIS LIFE! YOU ARE WITH US IN TIMES OF ABUNDANCE AS WELL AS IN TIMES OF CRISIS!

FATHER GOD, TODAY ALSO WE CLAIM THE PROMISES OF YOUR WORD FOUND IN PSALM 121 WHO DECLARED,

“I lift my eyes toward the mountains. Where will my help come from? My help comes from the Lord, the Maker of heaven and earth. He will not allow your foot to slip; your Protector will not slumber. Indeed, the Protector of Israel does not slumber or sleep. The Lord protects you; the Lord is a shelter right by your side. The sun will not strike you by day or the moon by night. The Lord will protect you from all harm; he will protect your life. The Lord will protect your coming and going both now and forever.” (Psalm 121)

FATHER, I CLAIM THE TRUTHS & PROMISES OF THIS PSALM TO TO EVERY MEMBERS & ATTENDERS OF FBC & THEIR FAMILIES, AS WELL AS TO THOSE OUR FRIENDS WHO HAVE JOINED US THIS MORNING. MAY THE PROMISES OF THIS PSALM BE EXPERIENCE BY ALL, IN JESUS'. MOST PRECIOUS NAME I PRAY, AMEN!!!