**Thesis:** Have you ever wrestled with faith and doubt? In Mark 9, a father comes to Jesus to heal his son possessed by a demon and says, *“But if you can do anything, take pity on us and help us.”* to which Jesus replied, *“‘If you can’? Everything is possible for one who believes.”* It’s then that the father cries out *“I do believe; help me overcome my unbelief!”* This sentiment is one shared by many followers of Jesus. We believe, but have moments where we need Jesus to help us in our unbelief. Luckily for us, we have a God who is patient with us and willing to help us out of our greatest battles with doubt.

**Introduction:** You’re listening to The Jesus Podcast, a year of stories showcasing the depth of Christ’s love and the glory of God’s truth. I’m \_\_\_\_ your host from Pray.com. Welcome back to another story of Christ’s miracles. Follow the podcast as we deep dive into a story of faith, doubt, and God’s rescue.

**Context:** Following the feeding of the 5,000, Jesus sends the disciples off to cross over the sea of Galilee to protect them from the crowds that sought to make Jesus their conquering king over Rome. This was always the tension Jesus would face in his ministry. Though some would doubt his claim to be the Messiah and others would receive him as the Son of God, there were still others who believed in Jesus as the Anointed One, but had envisioned in their minds what the Promised Savior of Israel would do for them and wanted to force him to take that role. Determining it was better for himself to stay and pray, Jesus leaves the disciples to take the trip alone. It wasn’t long before the disciples were caught up in a storm, common on the sea of Galilee as the cold winds from the steep hills collided with the warm waters that rose from thes surface of the water. Though several of the men on the boat were seasoned fishermen who were quite familiar with the waves of this sea, it’s evident that this storm has caused fear to grip even their hardened sea-faring hearts. But through it all, we see Jesus’ faithfulness to never depart from them.

**Message:** The story of Jesus walking on water can be found in Matthew 14, Mark 6, and John 6. It’s a captivating recollection of fear, faith, doubt, and love. The lessons we can learn from it are many. Perhaps as you read through the story, you relate to someone different. Maybe it’s the disciples at the beginning of the story, sailing on the sea of Galilee through a raging torrent of rain and pounding thunder.

Maybe you feel gripped with fear as the waves of your own personal trial seem daunting and an impossible obstacle to overcome. When our trials feel like this, we can often feel afraid that this is the trial we won’t be able to overcome, wondering where God is in the craziness. If we turn to our story, we see that though we might feel alone, Jesus never leaves us. Although he sent the disciples off on the boat on their own, he never left them. Never stopped watching. Never stopped caring. Jesus allowed them to face this trial to grow their faith and to prove to them that there would be nothing in this world they would face that he wouldn’t be able to overcome, even if they couldn’t themselves. Jesus wants us to know the same sense of comfort in our trials. While our minds race with fear, panic, or anxiety, find peace in the knowledge that Christ never departs from us. He’s always with us through his Spirit. He’s always watching us. Always listening for our cries of help. And he will always be there to rescue us, just as he did for the disciples. If you find yourself in a season of struggling, don’t give up. As they say, if God has called you to it, he will see you through it.

The apostle Paul wrote in *2 Corinthians 4:16 “Therefore we do not lose heart. Though outwardly we are wasting away, yet inwardly we are being renewed day by day. 17 For our light and momentary troubles are achieving for us an eternal glory that far outweighs them all. 18 So we fix our eyes not on what is seen, but on what is unseen, since what is seen is temporary, but what is unseen is eternal.”*

Though the disciples couldn’t see Jesus, they didn’t need to lose heart. God is often working in the unseen. The trials he allows us to go through are only momentary, just a small speck on the timeline of eternity.

Though their struggles seemed to be never ending, it wasn’t long before Jesus appeared to the disciples. At first, they think they’re seeing a ghost, floating across the enraged waters. But it wasn’t long before Jesus gave them the most powerful words he could speak: *“Take courage! It is I. Don’t be afraid.”* This was more than a platitude or an empty encouragement. The words “It is I” are actually only two words in the original Greek and are more accurately translated “I am”. When Jesus calls out to the disciples, it was more than a greeting of letting them know he was there. It was a statement defining who he was. He was telling them that the Great I Am was there with them in the middle of their fear. The same God who spoke through Moses' fears in the burning bush before freeing his people from slavery was here with the disciples, speaking through their fears before freeing them from their trial. In your fears, allow Jesus to speak those same words to your heart: “I am”. He was, is, and always will be the God of the universe who is always with you.

Once the disciples are aware that it’s Jesus, Peter excitedly calls out to the Lord. And in a bold act of faith, the fisherman asks Jesus to call him out to the waters. Maybe you identify with Peter in his faith, requesting Jesus to allow you to do the unthinkable. This type of faith is powerful. It stems from understanding that faith isn’t about knowing facts about God. It’s putting our complete trust in him to the point that we’re willing to take action. Faith isn’t a passive part of following Jesus. It leads us to be bold for his namesake. And it was this faith that allowed Peter to overlook his fear, set his eyes on Jesus, and ask to be by the Lord’s side as he manifested his power over their trial. The same faith that radiated in Peter on the sea is available to you and me. If we trust completely in Jesus through our trials, he will empower us to do the unthinkable and will give us triumph over our most formidable fears.

James the half-brother of Jesus, writes in *James 1:2 “Consider it pure joy, my brothers and sisters, whenever you face trials of many kinds, 3 because you know that the testing of your faith produces perseverance. 4 Let perseverance finish its work so that you may be mature and complete, not lacking anything.”*

Even though it may be difficult at first, God’s word tells us we can find joy in the way God tests our faith by allowing trials. It urges us to look to him for strength. It’s his way of maturing our faith.

Now, this doesn’t mean we’ll always be perfect. It definitely wasn’t the case for Peter. After he takes his first few steps, he’s quickly reminded of the crashing walls of water that surround him. And unfortunately, he takes his eyes of Jesus and doubt begins to fill his heart. It was this doubt that caused the disciples to be pulled down once again by his trial. Doubt is the enemy of faith. So how can we combat it? Well, looking at Peter’s example, we know it stems from taking our focus off of Jesus. When we stop emphasizing Jesus’ power in our life, we begin to think once again about our own limits as human beings. And sometimes, our trials seem bigger than what we can manage. But we shouldn’t let our humanity overshadow the limitless power of God. Sure, our trials may in fact be bigger than us, but they’ll never be bigger than our God. When doubt begins to sink in, and we begin to sink under the weight of our trials, it’s time to call out to Jesus once again.

This is exactly what Peter does. While just moments before he spoke out to the Lord with boldness to bring him out to the waters, his cries turn to desperation as he holds onto life. His passion turns to prayer. A short, but beautiful prayer: *“Lord, save me!”* When we feel ourselves drowning in life, this is all we need to cry out. We don’t need to beg, use big words, or reason with God. We just need to shout to him for help, believing that he’ll hear our words and come to our rescue. So while it’s best to not take your eyes off Jesus during your trials, know that if you do, Jesus is waiting to rekindle your faith the second you turn to him again.