

The disciples should have been suspicious when Jesus put them in boat, waved goodbye and said, "See you on the other shore." They push off, though, and before long, a storm threatens to capsize the boat. Jesus rescues them, but not much before dawn. He spent the entire night peacefully at prayer, while the disciples spent the entire night fighting the elements. This story teaches several things about how Jesus rescues us when we are in trouble. The first lesson is he may not be quick.

The second lesson is, when Jesus comes to the rescue, your first thought might be: things have gotten worse. The disciples think he is a ghost. He is walking on water all right, but the storm is still raging, and they are still in peril.

The third lesson is, when Jesus comes to the rescue, you might get a stupid idea. Peter, figuring he has nothing else to lose, wants to walk on water too. He seems to forget there's a storm going on. Maybe he should try this in fair weather sometime. But Peter says a great prayer: "Command me to come to you on the water." He at least knows where the power will lie.

The fourth lesson is, when Jesus comes to the rescue and you get a stupid idea, he may let you know it was a stupid idea. Peter succeeds for a while, but then he fails. Jesus takes his hand and asks, "O you of little faith, why did you doubt?" Peter is a man of little faith – not a man of perfect faith, but not a man of no faith either – a man of little faith.

The fifth lesson is Jesus comes to the rescue after we surrender. When Peter realizes he can't do it, Jesus enters the boat and the wind dies down. All the disciples call Jesus by a title that appears only a few times in the gospel: at the baptism of Jesus, at the transfiguration, when he asks, "Who do people say I am?" and when the centurion plunges a lance into the side of the crucified savior. The disciples there in the boat, at the dawn of a new day – they call Jesus the Son of God.

As individuals and as a church, we often find ourselves in our little boat on stormy waters wondering why did Jesus put us here? Why have our leaders failed? Why does the family have troubles? Why can't we pay our bills? Why can't I make good grades? Why can't we have rain? Why can't there be peace between Christians and Muslims?

What can we do? We can say the difficult prayer that Peter said: "Command me to come to you on the water." Jesus, make me do what is hard, what I must do if I am to know it is you. Make me do what is bold, what is charitable, what is generous; make me do what gives respect to others, what brings peace to the world; and make me do it in faith.

We will succeed for a while, and then fail. We cannot do it alone. But our faith does not have to be perfect. It can be little, and we will find rescue from Jesus the Son of God.