

Trinity 10 A

Having Faith in Christ Jesus, the Son of God, Without Doubt

Scriptures: 1 Kings 19:9-18; Psalm: 85:8-13; Romans 9:1-5; Matthew 14:22-36

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A true story. Two years ago, on a rainy and wet Sunday, when I drove from home to the train station, to pick up three passengers going to their local church in the west Melbourne area. My car followed the traffic behind a police car on the highway which climbed up to the Werribee Gorge State Park before the Pentland Hills. There are signs of “High-risk area police checking speed” on both sides of the highway because the overtaking lane can be slippery. Suddenly, my car started to slip to the right side of the highway, I cried out immediately, “O, Lord! Save me!” at the same time, my hands held onto the steering wheel, as I wanted to keep the car running straight. But my car was “fishtailing” in the overtaking lane surrounded by vehicles in front, behind, and on the left. I cried continually, “Lord! Lord! Lord! Save me!” With all my hope I commanded the car, “In the name of Jesus! Let you stop!” The car stopped “fishtailing” and slowed down. I drove it onto the emergency stop lane. The police officer, Justin, appeared behind a few cars with lights flashing, then stopped behind my car, and said to me, “No one car could survive that situation! You are lucky!” I said to him, “Praise God for saving me!” He repeated “You are lucky” three times as he noticed that I wore my clergy shirt on Sunday.

Having faith in Christ Jesus is not just an intellectual matter. It is in action in our daily life. Jesus teaches us to have faith in Him just as He did in Peter in today’s Gospel (Matthew 14:22-36).

In the story recorded in Matthew 14:22-36, we can see that the disciples struggled all night on the sea of Galilee in their boat. There was a big wind and waves. And their boat was without the Lord. In their hopeless stage, Peter surprisingly saw someone walking on the sea. After he made sure that it was the Lord Jesus walking on the sea, he asked the Lord to command him to come to meet Him on the water. O, what an amazing occasion for Peter to meet the Lord on the sea by walking on the water!

I don’t know what impetuous reason made Peter want to ask the Lord to walk and meet him on the water. Was it because he wanted to be with the Lord? Or did he want to experience, like the Lord, the feeling of walking on water?

The Lord said to Peter, “Come!” By the commandment of the Lord, Peter, a professional fisherman, for the first time in his life, had such an experience of walking on the sea!

How wonderful it could have been if Peter had only kept his eyes on Jesus and walked toward Him without looking elsewhere! But Peter saw the strong wind and waves and he became frightened and began to sink. However, importantly Peter cried out to the Lord, “Lord, save me!”

We should know that at that moment, between Peter and the Lord, there was a distance, but the Scripture tells us that the Lord Jesus immediately reached out his hand and caught Peter.

This dramatic incident on the Sea of Galilee revealed Peter's character more fully than others. Here we see Peter's impulsiveness - his tendency to act without thinking of what he was doing. He often failed and came to grief as a result of his impulsiveness. A great deal of failure in the Christian life is due to acting on impulse and emotional fervour without counting the cost. Peter, fortunately in the moment of his failure clutched at Jesus and held him firmly. Every time Peter fell, by the grace of God and through his faith, he rose again. His failures only made him trust in him more intently and love the Lord more deeply.

Dear brothers and sisters, The Lord Jesus calls us to come to Him. We come here, gathering in His Church, Holy Trinity Kew, as His body, the Church. And He will come to receive us into His heavenly Father's place. As we live in this world journeying toward Him, there will be storms and waves. Just as we watch the news of this world each day, there are wars, hatred between nations, plagues, famines, earthquakes, fires, floods, hypocrisies, and many dangerous situations as Matthew 24 and 25 remind us. Today we are gloriously reminded by the Scripture that faith in Jesus will keep us from sinking beneath the waves of the troubles of life.

Having faith in Jesus is not because we are good, but because He is the Son of our loving God. He told us what we needed to know and has given us an eternal promise that if we live for Him in the world faithfully and wait for His Return, He will call us. And He knew the many challenges we would face. Just as He knew the disciples' difficulties in the dark night with the strong wind and waves.

After His prayer on the mountain, He came toward their boat by walking on the sea in the early morning to bring light, hope, and peace to them. It was the greatest comfort when they saw the Lord walk toward them on the sea after all night battling on their boat with the waves and wind!

In our OT reading today, having faith in the Lord God Almighty is highlighted. The name of the Lord God appeared twelve times. Elijah had faith in the Lord, could stand in front of the Lord, hear the voices of the Lord, and follow the directions of the Lord. That was because he had a zealous heart for the Lord.

Today's second reading showed us that by having faith in Jesus, St Paul would like to die for his people, the Israelites, to believe that Jesus is their Messiah. That was because St Paul also had a zealous heart for the Lord.

Having faith in Jesus is not just in the past tense. Having faith in Jesus is letting our life live in the presence of the Lord whenever we are sleeping and waking up, walking and sitting, talking and thinking, rejoicing and suffering, worshiping and meditating, and gathering and departing. Having faith in Jesus means knowing that He is preparing a place for us in His Father's House. And when it is ready, He will call us "Come!" Have faith in Jesus and do not be afraid of the "waves" and "storms" of this fleeting world. The Lord Jesus will reach out His hands to take us with Him just as He did to Peter on the stormy sea and to me on the highway. The Lord keeps watch over us at all times, especially in our moments of danger, difficulty, and temptation.

Dear brothers and sisters, do you rely on the Lord for his strength and help? The Lord Jesus assures us that we have no need of fear if we trust in Him and in his great love for us. Let us have faith in Christ Jesus, the Son of God, without doubt, to live for Him. Shall we?

The Readings

First Reading: 1 Kings 19:9-18

9 At that place he came to a cave, and spent the night there. Then the word of the LORD came to him, saying, 'What are you doing here, Elijah?' 10 He answered, 'I have been very zealous for the LORD, the God of hosts; for the Israelites have forsaken your covenant, thrown down your altars, and killed your prophets with the sword. I alone am left, and they are seeking my life, to take it away.' 11 He said, 'Go out and stand on the mountain before the LORD, for the LORD is about to pass by.' Now there was a great wind, so strong that it was splitting mountains and breaking rocks in pieces before the LORD, but the LORD was not in the wind; and after the wind an earthquake, but the LORD was not in the earthquake; 12 and after the earthquake a fire, but the LORD was not in the fire; and after the fire a sound of sheer silence. 13 When Elijah heard it, he wrapped his face in his mantle and went out and stood at the entrance of the cave. Then there came a voice to him that said, 'What are you doing here, Elijah?' 14 He answered, 'I have been very zealous for the LORD, the God of hosts; for the Israelites have forsaken your covenant, thrown down your altars, and killed your prophets with the sword. I alone am left, and they are seeking my life, to take it away.' 15 Then the LORD said to him, 'Go, return on your way to the wilderness of Damascus; when you arrive, you shall anoint Hazael as king over Aram. 16 Also you shall anoint Jehu son of Nimshi as king over Israel; and you shall anoint Elisha son of Shaphat of Abel-meholah as prophet in your place. 17 Whoever escapes from the sword of Hazael, Jehu shall kill; and whoever escapes from the sword of Jehu, Elisha shall kill. 18 Yet I will leave seven thousand in Israel, all the knees that have not bowed to Baal, and every mouth that has not kissed him.'

Psalm : 85:8-13

8 I will hear what the Lord|God will|speak:
for he will speak peace to his people
to his faithful ones whose|hearts are|turned to|him.
9 Truly his salvation is near to|those that|fear him:
and his|glory • shall|dwell • in our|land.
10 Mercy and truth are|met to|gether:
righteousness and|peace have|kissed each|other;
11 Truth shall flourish|out of • the|earth:
and righteousness|shall look|down from|heaven.
12 The Lord will also give us|all • that is|good:
and our|land shall|yield its|plenty.
13 For righteousness shall|go be|fore him:

and tread the|path be|fore his|feet.

Second Reading

Romans 9:1-5

9 I am speaking the truth in Christ—I am not lying; my conscience confirms it by the Holy Spirit— 2 I have great sorrow and unceasing anguish in my heart. 3 For I could wish that I myself were accursed and cut off from Christ for the sake of my own people, my kindred according to the flesh. 4 They are Israelites, and to them belong the adoption, the glory, the covenants, the giving of the law, the worship, and the promises; 5 to them belong the patriarchs, and from them, according to the flesh, comes the Messiah, who is over all, God blessed for ever. Amen.

The Gospel Reading

Matthew 14:22-36

22 Immediately he made the disciples get into a boat and go on ahead to the other side, while he dismissed the crowds. 23 And after he had dismissed the crowds, he went up the mountain by himself to pray. When evening came, he was there alone, 24 but by this time the boat, battered by the waves, was far from the land, for the wind was against them. 25 And early in the morning he came walking toward them on the sea. 26 But when the disciples saw him walking on the sea, they were terrified, saying, “It is a ghost!” And they cried out in fear. 27 But immediately Jesus spoke to them and said, “Take heart, it is I; do not be afraid.”

28 Peter answered him, “Lord, if it is you, command me to come to you on the water.” 29 He said, “Come.” So Peter got out of the boat, started walking on the water, and came toward Jesus. 30 But when he noticed the strong wind, he became frightened, and, beginning to sink, he cried out, “Lord, save me!” 31 Jesus immediately reached out his hand and caught him, saying to him, “You of little faith, why did you doubt?” 32 When they got into the boat, the wind ceased. 33 And those in the boat worshiped him, saying, “Truly you are the Son of God.”

Jesus Heals the Sick in Gennesaret

34 When they had crossed over, they came to land at Gennesaret. 35 After the people of that place recognized him, they sent word to that whole surrounding region, and people brought all who were sick to him 36 and begged him that they might touch even the fringe of his cloak, and all who touched it were healed.