

September 16, 2022

Here's Hope  
by Rev. Jerry Rea

### **Reaching Out!**

It is easy to get diverted. In a short second our eyes move from the savior to our troubles. We glance at problems and are captivated. The problem is clearly illustrated in the life of Peter. He steps out of the boat and begins his walk toward Jesus. Previously, he had asked Jesus if he could come. In Alabama lingo Jesus said "come on." So off Peter goes. For a brief second he walks. Yes, the Bible records that Peter (also) walked on water... for just a second! All the logical and scientific reasons it should not have happened did not matter. These things just don't happen... but they did. May I share a personal illustration? A number of years ago I had committed to changing churches. For those of you who have never had a pastor in the family, you may not realize the agony that goes with these decisions. I was traveling down the road (probably going too fast) and it dawned on me. A panic set in. I thought "What have I done?" I meditated and agonized over all the problems I'd committed myself to and the expectations that go with the role of a pastor. It dawned on me that I was not able to handle these roles and trials. "Panic" is a nice word for "fear." Like Peter, I was looking at (and meditating on) the vast sea of troubles that surrounded me. I took my eyes off Jesus, and my default setting (like so many human beings) shifted it to "figuring out" the answers to problems.

In Hebrews 12 we are admonished to run our race "looking unto Jesus," the author and finisher of our faith. I believe that means look at Jesus, but better it probably means focus on Jesus. Don't think so much about the race or the swirling world around you. Think first and foremost about Jesus. Run with patience it says. Run the race set before you (by the Father of course). Seeing Him and knowing Him will help you walk on the waters of the world. It's similar to looking down when you are on a long ladder. Looking down you think of the ground, not your task, nor the person up there with you (Jesus). It's natural to think of the ground. We're wired for self-preservation. Each day (in our quiet time) we reset our focus on Jesus. As we look at His Word, we're reminded we are not the first to struggle, to run the race and to even have doubts. Each day we listen to Christian radio, and we hear words of encouragement. Each day we experience what the Bible means when Jesus said "Come to me and I will give you *rest*." Each day a still small voice reminds us we are drifting away from His presence. Each day He feeds our hungry and thirsting souls. In all these things and in a hundred more, we refocus, reset and reconnect. Then we run, looking unto Jesus.

Let's go back now to Peter. He steps out, then looks away and begins to sink. Then a most precious thing happens. Jesus reaches out. Yes, the hand that would soon be nail scarred is outstretched to this very human apostle. Jesus catches him. Jesus saves him. He'll save you. You may today feel that you're sinking but look around. Quite possibly Jesus is somewhere close... reaching out!

He's near, He's reaching out!  
Jerry Rea