

Doubt versus faith. Doesn't it seem a lot like this?

One day a man went walking in the woods. He wasn't paying attention to his surroundings. And this is how he walked right up to and off the edge of a sharp cliff. He was falling and falling and falling. Surely this was the end. Yet, somehow, the man managed to stick a handout and grab a branch. Thank God, but now what? He was in the middle of nowhere. There was no one around. The man started to yell, "Help! Help! Is anybody out there?" Soon a voice from the sky answered him, "Yes, I am here." The hiker says, "Who are you?" The voice says, "I am God." The hiker was so relieved, "Can you help me?" God says, "Yes, I can help you. Let go of the branch." The hiker hangs there for another minute and then yells, "Hey, uh, is there anybody else out there."

Oh he of little faith.

We are on week 3 of our sermon series, *And the Band Played On*. We are looking deeply into the prayer of St. Francis Assisi and the first line of his prayer that asks God to make him an instrument of peace. This week we look at how we move from doubt to faith. Where this is doubt, let me sow faith. *Flutes of Faith*.

The flute is an instrument that I really love to hear. It's a member of the woodwind family. I remember being surprised when I learned this, because none of the flutes I'd seen to that point were made of wood. Today it is more common to see that shiny instrument made out of either silver or nickel. If the lyre was old and the piccolo was young, the flute is prehistoric. Archeologists have discovered flutes at sites that date back 53,000 years. These ancient flutes were made of bones with wholes drilled into them.

Today the prevalent form of flute is called the Western concert flute. It consists of a long metal tube with an opening at the top of one end. Circular tone holes run down the rest of the length of the tube. Another surprise is the name of someone who plays the flute. They're not called

flutists. They are called flautists. This was a term that began to circulate after the release of the 1603 edition of the Oxford English Dictionary.

James Galway is a legendary flautist. This 85-year-old Irishman has been nicknamed, “The Man with the Golden Flute”. It is James Galway who will give us a taste of what a flute sounds like today.

[Play Video Here up to 1:27.](#)

In our passage today the time is between 3 and 6 am. It’s the fourth watch of the night. Jesus sees his disciples in distress and goes out to them by walking on the water. When the disciples see Jesus, they are afraid. They think they are seeing some kind of a ghost! Can you just hear their teeth chattering and their knees knocking? You can’t blame them.

Jesus offer’s words of assurance, saying; “Take heart, it is I; do not be afraid.” It is I. In Greek it reads ego eimi. This is the same word used back in Exodus when God introduced Himself to Moses as YHWH or I AM. Is Jesus saying He is God?

That’s exactly what Jesus was saying and exactly in the middle of the story. They are indeed the same majestic, awe-inspiring words that YHWH spoke to Moses in Exodus. They are the same words that Isaiah spoke to the people in chapter 43 when they were returning from exile. Do not fear, for I have redeemed you; I have summoned you by name; you are mine. When you pass through the waters, I will be with you. . . . For **I am** the LORD your God, the Holy One of Israel, your Savior.

Peter recognizes Jesus’ voice. But apparently he needs a bit more. Peter only sorta believed. Because his next words are “Lord, if it is you, command me to come to you on the water.” Jesus is not fazed by this and responds with one simple word. “Come.” What would you do? Would you step out of that boat?

That's exactly what Peter did. He got up and stepped out on faith. Like that, Peter was walking on the water. As long as he focused on the Lord he walked on top of the water. As soon as Peter turned his attention to the storm, he sank like a rock. Doesn't that sound so familiar? We step out in faith. Answering God's call for our lives, then the storms of life strike. Our children won't talk to us or we lose our job, or we just feel that no matter what we do, we can't get it right!

These are signs that we might have looked away from the Lord, that we might be on the verge of sinking like a rock – through our story today we are seeing how Jesus stays with us and lifts us up, no matter what is going on around us.

**Tell my call story.**

That was me jumping out of the boat. That was me saying yes. Now I've had plenty of times where I've felt like I was going down. Where, like Peter, I cried out. "Lord, save me!" Just as he did for Peter, the Lord reached out each time to take my hand.

Jumping out of the boat doesn't necessarily mean you all will become pastors. But I bet someone out there is being asked by God to take a leap of faith in some area of their lives. Just remember this. When you take that leap, that leap when you dare to follow as you are being led, that leap when you decide to go that extra mile, you don't go it alone. Jesus walks right beside us. And there might even be times when he reaches out to grab your hand and pull you back up.

When we jump out of the boat marvelous things can happen. Don't be afraid to fail. What if it worked? What if we discover new things about our world and ourselves. What if we could take these faith risks because we have a powerful Lord watching over us. What if we could trust because we have a forgiving God who cares for us. What if we could step out because we have a God who will do whatever is necessary to move us from doubt to faith.