

How many of you have seen the movie *Indiana Jones and the Last Crusade*? Indy is searching for the Holy Grail. His quest leads him to a remote cave deep in the wilderness. To reach it, he has to pass a series of challenges to prove his worthiness. The first two test his bravery and his ingenuity ... but the last challenge tests his faith. Indy finds himself at the edge of a large chasm. It's about a hundred feet across and a thousand feet down. On the other side of the chasm is the doorway to the Holy Grail. The instructions say, *only in the leap from the lion's head will he prove his worth*. Indy needs only to have enough faith to take one small step ... but if he's wrong, that first step is a doozy.

For 40 years the Israelites wandered in the wilderness. Finally, the promised land lay before them. And yet, for some reason the people weren't exactly rushing in to set up camp. I'm guessing that the wilderness had become their boat, so to speak. It was their comfort zone. They knew God was there because he'd provided food and water every day for years. And since Moses, their spiritual leader, had died, they needed the security of their boat more than ever. Now, what lay ahead was nothing but the fulfillment of God's covenant with Abraham – but Joshua, the new guy in charge, was young and untested. Did he have enough faith to take that first step?

The advantage Joshua had over Indiana Jones was the voice of God ... no small source of encouragement. In that way, Joshua was a lot like Peter. Remember, Peter heard God calling him, too. *“Lord, if it is you,”* Peter said, *“tell me to come to you on the water.”* And Jesus said, *“Come.”* Then Peter got down out of the boat, walked on the

water and came towards Jesus. Peter experienced the complete thrill of trusting in Jesus and feeling God's power at work in him. All because he had enough faith to take one small step.

This part of the story is all about risk. It's all about putting aside the doubts and what-ifs and butterflies in your stomach, letting go of whatever it is that is keeping you safe and secure, and getting out of the boat. Now, I'm sure there are some of you who are thinking, "No thanks, God. My life is just fine the way it is. I'm just going to stay right here where it's nice and dry and comfy." And that's okay – for awhile. But aren't we created for more than that? Aren't we designed to grow, and change, and become more tomorrow than we were yesterday? It doesn't matter if you're old or young, if you're a lifelong believer or are just starting to get to know God: John Ortberg says that if you are going to experience God's power in your life, it isn't enough to stay in the boat. You have to get your feet wet.

Now, I've got some good news and some bad news about that. The good news is, when you actually commit to taking a risk of faith, you're really giving God a chance to work in you. You might surprise yourself with your courage. You could discover you really like something you've never tried before. There are a lot of great things that could happen when you decide to leave the boat of security you're in.

Of course, the bad news is, you'll never know what those things are until you're willing to take that small first step. Think about it: when you risk giving generously, you might discover that God will provide for you – but you have to get your feet wet first. When you risk having a hard conversation with someone, you that honesty might lead to a more genuine relationship – but you have to get your feet wet first. When you risk

signing up for something in Life at Zumbro, you might experience the joy of knowing you've made a difference for someone – but you have to get your feet wet first.

Most of us have an area that might be called our 'spiritual comfort zone.' That's where we feel most at ease in our faith. Let me just say that Lutherans aren't known for having particularly expansive spiritual comfort zones. We don't talk about what we believe, we rarely invite others to worship, and we heaven forbid we might have to pray out loud. Think about it: earlier this year we had an entire temple talk that was all about *sitting in a different pew at church*. People, this is not God's idea of a big risk! God's idea of big is Elijah on Mt. Carmel taking on 1700 of Jezebel's prophets. It's sending a boy armed with a few rocks and a child's toy take on the biggest, fiercest man alive. It's gathering a few crusts of bread and telling an Army brigade's worth of people to eat their fill. That's our God's idea of a big risk. And that same God made you and me. We were made to dream big dreams and do big things. That's why inside even the most timid of us, I think there's a little voice saying, "go for it." That voice pushes us to follow God's call, because we believe God is worth worshipping. We know God has our best interest at heart. We trust in God's strength, guidance and support. And we want to feel like there's something in our life that we could not do apart from God.

My daughter has an inspirational paperweight above her bedroom door. It reads *what would you attempt to do if you knew you would not fail?* It's a great question. It reminds us that our own confidence is often the only thing holding us back. Because while God doesn't guarantee success in all things, he does promise to be faithful. And if God is with you, you have nothing to be afraid of. So I ask you: Is there a challenge in your life right now that you're not ready to face? **Be strong and courageous.** A difficult

decision ahead? **Do not be afraid.** A problem you can't solve on your own? **Do not get discouraged.** Go on, get your feet wet. Take that first step. **The Lord your God will be with you wherever you go.**

Here's the thing: walking on water isn't about some good thing you will do. It's about some great thing God wants to do through you. But remember: God doesn't leave you to take those steps on your own. He didn't send the Israelites into the promised land without raising up a new leader in Joshua. He didn't tell Joshua to send him a postcard once he had things under control. Jesus didn't tell Peter to come to him from the safety of the shore, with firm ground under his own feet. Jesus was standing right out there with him, in the middle of the storm. When we're facing the edge of our spiritual comfort zone, we need to remember that Christ is out there beyond the boundary. He's holding out his hands to us, and saying, "Come."

Believe it or not, the biggest emotion involved in walking on water isn't fear. It isn't anxiety. It isn't worry. It's trust: trusting in the God who is saying, come. Trusting in God's plan. Trusting in yourself – that you are good enough, smart enough, strong enough, brave enough, resilient enough, faithful enough.

What are you doing right now that you could not do apart from God? If the answer is, *nothing*, then why in the world are you here? But if that very question stirs something in your heart, then you're ready to get out of the boat. You're ready to experience the complete thrill of trusting in Jesus and feeling God's power at work in you. So go for it. Jesus is calling you. All it takes to get your feet wet is one small step. Amen.