

Broken

Have you ever been broken? Was there a time in your life that you realized that you could not do it alone? A time when God challenged you to do something that in that time and in that moment seemed impossible? We have all faced challenges. Times when we grew weary of the way our life was going. Time when we realized things had to change. Times when life and our burdens just seemed too heavy. Those times can come in challenges with our jobs, our marriages, our relationships, or personal challenges. We can be broken.

I woke up this morning thinking of Peter. Now we know that Peter faced the challenge of following Christ. How could he follow him when he had first went against his teaching when he pulled out his sword in the garden and then denied him three times. He had been broken. But those were not the times I was thinking of this morning. I was thinking of when Peter wanted to walk on water to Jesus. Peter was doing it! He took steps towards Jesus. Peter had this, but then he faltered, he grew frightened, he looked at Jesus, but his fear became greater than his trust and Jesus had to save him. Jesus and Peter went to the boat. He didn't get it! He was safer in that water with Jesus than he would ever be in that boat without Jesus. Remember the book, "If You Want To Walk On Water, You Have To Get Out Of The Boat?" Peter would learn this as he became the rock on which Jesus would build his church.

I have had times in my life when my faith faltered. When I was young and had no concept of faith and the one person in my life who I loved without doubt was gone, I prayed for death and was becoming weary of a God who would take so much and not give me this one thing I wanted. I doubted his very existence. I was broken. But then during my illness with polio I realized that as a voice whispered to me, "God wants you to live." God had passed me by for some reason and so I had to live as best I could and so with denial came my road to faith. I started with nothing and gained everything.

Peter had been a witness to the miracles performed by Jesus, to the faith expressed and lived by Christ and still he doubted that the same water on which Jesus walked would hold him up even with Jesus's hands reaching for him. What is God calling you to? How can I help? What is God calling Utica United Methodist Church to? What can we do to answer that call?

Matthew 14:25-31 During the fourth watch of the night, Jesus went out to them, walking on the lake. When they saw him walking on the lake, they were terrified. "It's a ghost" they said and cried out in fear. But Jesus immediately said to them, "Take courage, It is I. Don't be afraid." Peter said, Lord, if it's you" tell me to come to you on the water." "Come." Jesus said. Then Peter got down out of the boat, walked on the water, and came toward Jesus. But when he saw the wind, he was afraid, and beginning to sink, and cried out "Lord, save me!" Immediately Jesus reached out his hand and caught him, "You of little faith" he said, "Why did you doubt."

Lord Jesus, we thank you for this day, may we be worthy of it. Fill us Lord with kindness, love, and mercy in abundance as we go through our day and our lives every day. Be with those who are ill and those who grieve, may they feel your loving arms enfolding them. Be with our Pastor and bless his ministry, be with his family, grant them your loving hand in their lives. Give him your strength and love for each day. Be with our staff and leaders, may they feel your guidance and mercy. Be with those who are suffering the ravages of war in Ukraine, be with those in Haiti as they suffer the problems of no leadership and lawlessness. Be with those in Turkey and Syria who suffer the ravages of earthquakes. Be with those at Michigan State as they recover from the latest School shooting and be with the families of the victims, comfort them as they suffer a loss that can never be forgotten. Be with our country, may we be a kinder people who care for each other. Keep our schools and communities safe from those who would use weapons against others. May we be a country that helps each other, that sees kindness, that values people that feeds the hungry and clothes those without clothes, the place that welcomes the stranger, that sees the good in all people, that offers a hand up to those less fortunate. In Jesus name we pray. Amen

Grace Epperson