



Links Players

Keeping The Right Focus

Shortly before dawn, Jesus went out to them, walking on the lake. When the disciples 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." "Lord, if it's you," Peter replied, "tell me to come to you on the water." "Come," he 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, cried out, "Lord, save me!" Immediately, Jesus reached out his hand and caught him. "You of little faith," he said, "why did you doubt?" (Matthew 14:25-31)

There are so many stories about Ben Hogan that sometimes it's challenging to determine what is factual and what is legend. I'm not sure about the following story, but I believe it's probably true from what I've read about the man.

Ben was to participate in an exhibition match at a club he had never played at, so the day before the match, he arranged a tee time and a caddy to help him navigate the course. During the practice round, they came to a dogleg Par 5, with a row of trees behind, where the fairway took a sharp turn to the right.

Ben looked out at the fairway and, staring straight ahead, asked the caddy where he should aim his tee shot. The caddy, realizing this was his moment to give advice to the world's premier golfer, proudly said, "Mr. Hogan, you see that row of five trees out there. I would aim your shot for the fourth one from the left." Without missing a beat and continuing to stare straight ahead, Hogan replied, "Which branch?"

Obviously, Ben was a big believer in the importance of focus, and that applies to our walk of faith as well. Jesus had just performed the miracle of feeding 5000 men with five loaves and two fish and went off alone to pray.

Meanwhile, the disciples got into a boat rowing across the Sea of Galilee. In the middle of the night, a storm unexpectedly came upon them, and suddenly, Jesus appeared, walking towards them on the water. The disciples were terrified, not only by the storm but also by the appearance of what they thought was a ghost.

But Peter said, "Lord, if it is you, command me to come to you on the water," to which Jesus replied, "Come." With that invitation, Peter jumped out of the boat onto the crashing waves and walked towards Jesus.

However, after a few steps, Peter's faith wavered. He looked around and saw the raging water beneath his feet, and immediately started to sink. This stark contrast between his initial faith and subsequent doubt is a powerful reminder for us to keep our focus on Jesus, especially in the midst of life's storms.

When the storms of life appear or when the world seems to be closing in on us, we need to fix our eyes on Jesus. There's no guarantee that the difficulties we're facing will go away, but we have the promise that Jesus is with us as we go through them, and that assurance gives us peace.

The author of Hebrews summed it up well: "Therefore, since we are surrounded by such a great cloud of witnesses, let us throw off everything that hinders and the sin that so easily entangles. And let us run with perseverance the race marked out for us, fixing our eyes on Jesus, the pioneer and perfecter of faith." (Hebrews 12:1-2).

Fix your eyes on Jesus, and you can be confident you are looking in the right place.

Prayer: Father, too often, we take our eyes off you and focus on everything around us. Help us to fix our eyes on you through constant prayer and daily reading of your Word. Amen

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John Bown

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