

# Ministry of Grace

## Matthew 14

### Preface:

We learned a lot last week from the parables that Jesus taught about the Kingdom. But Jesus' teaching wasn't always with words. Sometimes he taught by example. Let's see what we can learn from Jesus and His disciples in the reality of life's situations.

### The Death of John the Baptist

#### **Matthew 14:1-12**

<sup>1</sup>At that time Herod the tetrarch heard about the fame of Jesus, <sup>2</sup>and he said to his servants, "This is John the Baptist. He has been raised from the dead; that is why these miraculous powers are at work in him." <sup>3</sup>For Herod had seized John and bound him and put him in prison for the sake of Herodias, his brother Philip's wife, <sup>4</sup>because John had been saying to him, "It is not lawful for you to have her." <sup>5</sup>And though he wanted to put him to death, he feared the people, because they held him to be a prophet. <sup>6</sup>But when Herod's birthday came, the daughter of Herodias danced before the company and pleased Herod, <sup>7</sup>so that he promised with an oath to give her whatever she might ask. <sup>8</sup>Prompted by her mother, she said, "Give me the head of John the Baptist here on a platter." <sup>9</sup>And the king was sorry, but because of his oaths and his guests he commanded it to be given. <sup>10</sup>He sent and had John beheaded in the prison, <sup>11</sup>and his head was brought on a platter and given to the girl, and she brought it to her mother. <sup>12</sup>And his disciples came and took the body and buried it, and they went and told Jesus.

**Mark 6:14-29** – <sup>14</sup>King Herod heard of it, for Jesus' name had become known. Some said, "John the Baptist has been raised from the dead. That is why these miraculous powers are at work in him." <sup>15</sup>But others said, "He is Elijah." And others said, "He is a prophet, like one of the prophets of old." <sup>16</sup>But when Herod heard of it, he said, "John, whom I beheaded, has been raised." <sup>17</sup>For it was Herod who had sent and seized John and bound him in prison for the sake of Herodias, his brother Philip's wife, because he had married her. <sup>18</sup>For John had been saying to Herod, "It is not lawful for you to have your brother's wife." <sup>19</sup>And Herodias had a grudge against him and wanted to put him to death. But she could not, <sup>20</sup>for Herod feared John, knowing that he was a righteous and holy man, and he kept him safe. When he heard him, he was greatly perplexed, and yet he heard him gladly. <sup>21</sup>But an opportunity came when Herod on his birthday gave a banquet for his nobles and military commanders and the leading men of Galilee. <sup>22</sup>For when Herodias's daughter came in and danced, she pleased Herod and his guests. And the king said to the girl, "Ask me for whatever you wish, and I will give it to you." <sup>23</sup>And he vowed to her, "Whatever you ask me, I will give you, up to half of my kingdom." <sup>24</sup>And she went out and said to her mother, "For what should I ask?" And she said, "The head of John the Baptist." <sup>25</sup>And she came in immediately with haste to the king and asked, saying, "I want you to give me at once the head of John the Baptist on a platter." <sup>26</sup>And the king was exceedingly sorry, but because of his oaths and his guests he did not want to break his word to her. <sup>27</sup>And immediately the king sent an executioner

with orders to bring John's head. He went and beheaded him in the prison <sup>28</sup>and brought his head on a platter and gave it to the girl, and the girl gave it to her mother. <sup>29</sup>When his disciples heard of it, they came and took his body and laid it in a tomb.

**Luke 9:7-9** –<sup>7</sup>Now Herod the tetrarch heard about all that was happening, and he was perplexed, because it was said by some that John had been raised from the dead, <sup>8</sup>by some that Elijah had appeared, and by others that one of the prophets of old had risen. <sup>9</sup>Herod said, "John I beheaded, but who is this about whom I hear such things?" And he sought to see him.

### **Notes:**

Who is this Herod the Tetrarch who had John the Baptist beheaded? In order to understand who he was we have to go back to the first Herod (called Herod the Great). For reference, see the family tree of Herod the Great. He was the son of Antipater, a descendant of Esau (Jacob's brother and the father of the Edomites). Herod the Great was made Governor of Galilee by Rome in 47 BC and he was made King of the Jews by Rome in 37 BC. This is the Herod who received the Magi and sent them to Bethlehem. He later tried to kill baby Jesus by having all the young boys in Bethlehem two years old and younger killed.

Herod the Great had somewhere between eight and ten wives and his sons included:

- **Phillip the Tetrarch** (married Salome, his grand-niece, the daughter of Herodias)
- **Herod Phillip** (the 1<sup>st</sup> husband of Herodias, his niece)
- **Herod Archelaus** who was Ethnark over Judea, Samaria, and Idumea (he was replaced by Pontius Pilate)
- **Herod Antipas** (also called **Herod the Tetrarch** in this chapter of Matthew) who was ruler of Galilee and Perea. Herod Antipas divorced his first wife and eloped with Herodias (his niece) while she was still married to Herod Phillip. Salome (only referred to as the daughter of Herodias in Scripture) was the daughter of Herod Phillip and Herodias. Herod Antipas later conducted one of the trials of Jesus because Pilot had sent Jesus to him (see **Luke 23:7-11**).

Herod Antipas despised John the Baptist because John condemned his marriage to his brother's wife. This Herod was a vicious person and had no qualms about having anyone killed who might challenge his kingship. He even had one of his wives and two of his own sons killed to protect his reign. He knew that the Jews considered John the Baptist to be a prophet, so instead of killing him, he imprisoned him in a fortress in the Perea wilderness, east of the Dead Sea. Herodias had an even stronger hatred for John the Baptist and is the one who orchestrated his beheading.

## **Jesus Feeds the Five Thousand**

### **Matthew 14:13-21**

<sup>13</sup>Now when Jesus heard this, he withdrew from there in a boat to a desolate place by himself. But when the crowds heard it, they followed him on foot from the towns. <sup>14</sup>When he went ashore he saw a great crowd, and he had compassion on them and healed their sick. <sup>15</sup>Now when it was evening, the disciples came to him and said, "This is a desolate place, and the day is now over; send the crowds away to go into the villages and buy food for themselves." <sup>16</sup>But Jesus said, "They need not go away; you give them something to eat." <sup>17</sup>They said to him, "We have only five loaves here and two fish." <sup>18</sup>And he said, "Bring them here to me." <sup>19</sup>Then he ordered the crowds to sit down on the grass, and taking the five loaves and the two fish, he looked up to heaven and said a blessing. Then he

**broke the loaves and gave them to the disciples, and the disciples gave them to the crowds.**  
**<sup>20</sup>And they all ate and were satisfied. And they took up twelve baskets full of the broken pieces left over. <sup>21</sup>And those who ate were about five thousand men, besides women and children.**

**Mark 6:30-44** – <sup>30</sup>The apostles returned to Jesus and told him all that they had done and taught.  
<sup>31</sup>And he said to them, "Come away by yourselves to a desolate place and rest a while." For many were coming and going, and they had no leisure even to eat. <sup>32</sup>And they went away in the boat to a desolate place by themselves. <sup>33</sup>Now many saw them going and recognized them, and they ran there on foot from all the towns and got there ahead of them. <sup>34</sup>When he went ashore he saw a great crowd, and he had compassion on them, because they were like sheep without a shepherd. And he began to teach them many things. <sup>35</sup>And when it grew late, his disciples came to him and said, "This is a desolate place, and the hour is now late. <sup>36</sup>Send them away to go into the surrounding countryside and villages and buy themselves something to eat." <sup>37</sup>But he answered them, "You give them something to eat." And they said to him, "Shall we go and buy two hundred denarii worth of bread and give it to them to eat?" <sup>38</sup>And he said to them, "How many loaves do you have? Go and see." And when they had found out, they said, "Five, and two fish." <sup>39</sup>Then he commanded them all to sit down in groups on the green grass. <sup>40</sup>So they sat down in groups, by hundreds and by fifties. <sup>41</sup>And taking the five loaves and the two fish he looked up to heaven and said a blessing and broke the loaves and gave them to the disciples to set before the people. And he divided the two fish among them all. <sup>42</sup>And they all ate and were satisfied. <sup>43</sup>And they took up twelve baskets full of broken pieces and of the fish. <sup>44</sup>And those who ate the loaves were five thousand men.

**Luke 9:10-17** – <sup>10</sup>On their return the apostles told him all that they had done. And he took them and withdrew apart to a town called Bethsaida. <sup>11</sup>When the crowds learned it, they followed him, and he welcomed them and spoke to them of the kingdom of God and cured those who had need of healing. <sup>12</sup>Now the day began to wear away, and the twelve came and said to him, "Send the crowd away to go into the surrounding villages and countryside to find lodging and get provisions, for we are here in a desolate place." <sup>13</sup>But he said to them, "You give them something to eat." They said, "We have no more than five loaves and two fish--unless we are to go and buy food for all these people." <sup>14</sup>For there were about five thousand men. And he said to his disciples, "Have them sit down in groups of about fifty each." <sup>15</sup>And they did so, and had them all sit down. <sup>16</sup>And taking the five loaves and the two fish, he looked up to heaven and said a blessing over them. Then he broke the loaves and gave them to the disciples to set before the crowd. <sup>17</sup>And they all ate and were satisfied. And what was left over was picked up, twelve baskets of broken pieces.

**John 6:1-15** – <sup>1</sup>After this Jesus went away to the other side of the Sea of Galilee, which is the Sea of Tiberias. <sup>2</sup>And a large crowd was following him, because they saw the signs that he was doing on the sick. <sup>3</sup>Jesus went up on the mountain, and there he sat down with his disciples. <sup>4</sup>Now the Passover, the feast of the Jews, was at hand. <sup>5</sup>Lifting up his eyes, then, and seeing that a large crowd was coming toward him, Jesus said to Philip, "Where are we to buy bread, so that these people may eat?" <sup>6</sup>He said this to test him, for he himself knew what he would do. <sup>7</sup>Philip answered him, "Two hundred denarii would not buy enough bread for each of them to get a little." <sup>8</sup>One of his disciples, Andrew, Simon Peter's brother, said to him, <sup>9</sup>"There is a boy here who has five barley loaves and two fish, but what are they for so many?" <sup>10</sup>Jesus said, "Have the people sit down." Now there was much grass in the place. So the men sat down, about five thousand in number. <sup>11</sup>Jesus then took the loaves, and when he had given thanks, he distributed them to those who were seated. So also the fish, as much as they wanted. <sup>12</sup>And when they had

eaten their fill, he told his disciples, "Gather up the leftover fragments, that nothing may be lost." <sup>13</sup>So they gathered them up and filled twelve baskets with fragments from the five barley loaves left by those who had eaten. <sup>14</sup>When the people saw the sign that he had done, they said, "This is indeed the Prophet who is to come into the world!" <sup>15</sup>Perceiving then that they were about to come and take him by force to make him king, Jesus withdrew again to the mountain by himself.

### **Notes:**

Having been rejected in His home town of Nazareth, Jesus and his disciples went in a boat to the other side of the Sea of Galilee. According to Luke's gospel, they went to Bethsaida which is on the northeast shore of the Sea. Matthew's gospel says that they went to a desolate place, so it was probably to the southeast of Bethsaida. Even though Jesus was tired and needing rest, He nonetheless welcomed the crowds that came from the surrounding towns. Then, according to [Mark 6:34](#), He healed the sick and began to teach them many things.

We know from verse 21 that there were about 5,000 men in the crowd. It is likely that there were in excess of 10,000 people in total when women and children are included. He very likely spent the entire day healing the sick and teaching. When evening came, his disciples urged Him to send the crowds into the neighboring villages to get some food. Jesus' response was, "Don't send them away, you give them some food."

Now, let us not be too harsh on the disciples. Most of the miracles that Jesus had performed up to this point were healing various diseases and other maladies as well as casting out demons. Once before, on the Sea of Galilee, Jesus had calmed the storm as they were on their way to the place where Jesus healed the Gadarene demoniac. The only other non-healing miracle that He had performed was His very first, changing the water into wine. The disciples were becoming very familiar with Jesus, but they still did not know their Messiah very well. They claimed to know who He was, though they were not yet to the point of trusting His omnipotence. So, instead of looking at His ability, they focused on their own inability. When Jesus asked them to minister, they declined because they didn't have enough faith to try.

Apparently Andrew had given it some thought because he had taken inventory of what food was available. According to [John 6:8-9](#), Andrew found 5 barley loaves and two fish that a young boy had with him. The word translated "boy" in John's gospel is *paidarion*, which indicates a young boy (probably under the age of 12). However, even Andrew was more focused on the problem than on his Messiah. He said, "But what are these for so many people?"

Let's look at this from the little boy's perspective for a minute. He was apparently the only one around who thought enough to pack a lunch before going out to see Jesus. Perhaps it was his mother who insisted on him packing a lunch, but I doubt it because she didn't have a lunch with her either. So when Andrew asked if anyone had any food to share, this little boy (who will forever be famous even though we don't know his name) was willing to give it up in order to help others. Incidentally, the word "baskets" refers to a small wicker basket used to carry a lunch in.

Taking the bread and the fish, Jesus gave thanks and then gave bread and fish to His disciples to distribute to the people. I wonder how soon the disciples realized something miraculous was happening. Did they realize it when they watched as the food was passed from person to person expecting the food to be exhausted after only a couple of people? Or did they not realize it until they were gathering up the scraps after feeding everyone, seeing how much more they had than they started with?

## Jesus Walks on the Water

### **Matthew 14:22-33**

<sup>22</sup>Immediately he made the disciples get into the boat and go before him to the other side, while he dismissed the crowds. <sup>23</sup>And after he had dismissed the crowds, he went up on the mountain by himself to pray. When evening came, he was there alone, <sup>24</sup>but the boat by this time was a long way from the land, beaten by the waves, for the wind was against them. <sup>25</sup>And in the fourth watch of the night he came to them, walking on the sea. <sup>26</sup>But when the disciples saw him walking on the sea, they were terrified, and said, "It is a ghost!" and they cried out in fear. <sup>27</sup>But immediately Jesus spoke to them, saying, "Take heart; it is I. Do not be afraid." <sup>28</sup>And Peter answered him, "Lord, if it is you, command me to come to you on the water." <sup>29</sup>He said, "Come." So Peter got out of the boat and walked on the water and came to Jesus. <sup>30</sup>But when he saw the wind, he was afraid, and beginning to sink he cried out, "Lord, save me." <sup>31</sup>Jesus immediately reached out his hand and took hold of him, saying to him, "O you of little faith, why did you doubt?" <sup>32</sup>And when they got into the boat, the wind ceased. <sup>33</sup>And those in the boat worshiped him, saying, "Truly you are the Son of God."

**Mark 6:45-52** – <sup>45</sup>Immediately he made his disciples get into the boat and go before him to the other side, to Bethsaida, while he dismissed the crowd. <sup>46</sup>And after he had taken leave of them, he went up on the mountain to pray. <sup>47</sup>And when evening came, the boat was out on the sea, and he was alone on the land. <sup>48</sup>And he saw that they were making headway painfully, for the wind was against them. And about the fourth watch of the night he came to them, walking on the sea. He meant to pass by them, <sup>49</sup>but when they saw him walking on the sea they thought it was a ghost, and cried out, <sup>50</sup>for they all saw him and were terrified. But immediately he spoke to them and said, "Take heart; it is I. Do not be afraid." <sup>51</sup>And he got into the boat with them, and the wind ceased. And they were utterly astounded, <sup>52</sup>for they did not understand about the loaves, but their hearts were hardened.

**John 6:16-21** – <sup>16</sup>When evening came, his disciples went down to the sea, <sup>17</sup>got into a boat, and started across the sea to Capernaum. It was now dark, and Jesus had not yet come to them. <sup>18</sup>The sea became rough because a strong wind was blowing. <sup>19</sup>When they had rowed about three or four miles, they saw Jesus walking on the sea and coming near the boat, and they were frightened. <sup>20</sup>But he said to them, "It is I; do not be afraid." <sup>21</sup>Then they were glad to take him into the boat, and immediately the boat was at the land to which they were going.

### **Notes:**

After Jesus fed the 5,000, the disciples got in their boat and headed back to Capernaum. Jesus remained behind to dismiss the crowd of people. After they had dispersed, He headed up into the hills to be alone and pray. Before the feeding of the 5,000, Jesus had attempted to get away from the crowds so that He could spend time in prayer. Unfortunately, the crowds had found Him and, instead of spending time alone with God the Father, He ended up ministering to the people. This was Jesus living a perfect example of *agapē* love, being more concerned for the needs of the object of His love than He was for His own needs.

While the disciples were in the boat trying to get to Capernaum, they were struggling because of the wind and the waves. Jesus went to their rescue and was able to overtake them around "the fourth watch of the night." This is an expression of time as the Romans reckoned it. They divided the night into four watches for military purposes. The first watch was from 6:00 PM to 9:00 PM. The second watch was from 9:00 PM to Midnight. The third watch was from Midnight

to 3:00 AM, and the fourth watch was from 3:00 AM to 6:00 AM. So, it was between 3:00 AM and 6:00 AM that Jesus caught up with the boat.

How did Jesus know they needed help? According to Mark's gospel, while He was praying, He saw that they were in distress:

And after he had taken leave of them, he went up on the mountain to pray. And when evening came, the boat was out on the sea, and he was alone on the land. And **he saw** that they were making headway painfully, for the wind was against them. And about the fourth watch of the night he came to them, walking on the sea ... (Mark 6:46-48)

This is a beautiful picture of a reality of the Christian life. While we are here on earth struggling with sin and the trials of life, Jesus sees us and knows the struggles we are going through. And – He is in heaven praying for us even while our enemy, the Devil, is in heaven accusing us day and night. In the book of Revelation, when Satan is finally cast out of heaven, this is what is said of him,

... for the accuser of our brothers has been thrown down, who accuses them day and night before our God. (Revelation 12:10b):

In God's courtroom, Satan is the prosecutor, constantly accusing us of sinful behavior and demanding the death penalty. But, Jesus is our defense attorney, always before the judge pleading our case,

Consequently, he is able to save to the uttermost those who draw near to God through him, since he always lives to make intercession for them. (Hebrews 7:25)

My little children, I am writing these things to you so that you may not sin. But if anyone does sin, we have an advocate with the Father, Jesus Christ the righteous. (1 John 2:1)

Jesus is always aware of what we are going through. In our times of difficulty, we need to reach out to Him. If we feel like He is not paying attention to our needs, we should remember what we learned two weeks ago:

We know that God does not listen to sinners, but if anyone is a worshiper of God **and does his will**, God listens to him. (John 9:31)

Meanwhile, back to the storm ... While the disciples struggled against the wind, they saw Jesus coming, but having never seen anyone walking on the water before, they thought they were seeing a ghost and they were afraid. Keep in mind that at least four of the disciples (Peter, Andrew, James, and John) were experienced fishermen and no doubt had experienced a windstorm like this before. What they weren't experienced at was seeing someone walking on the surface of the water in the middle of the storm. Verse 26 says that they were afraid. As a result, Jesus called out to them, "Have courage!" This is from the Greek word *tharseō*, which was the word Jesus commonly used to encourage others. Peter immediately recognized that it was Jesus and requested that Jesus command him to walk on the water to Jesus.

Jesus told him to come. So, he being the impetuous person that he was and not really thinking about what he was about to do, immediately got out of the boat and began walking on the water toward Jesus. Since they were in the middle of a wind storm, Peter felt the wind and saw the waves that it caused. Therefore, because the storm took his mind off of Jesus and the miracle that he was experiencing in the presence of Messiah, he suddenly became afraid. Fear is the enemy of faith. Because Peter became afraid, he began to sink in the water and immediately called for

Jesus to save him. Jesus reached out and grabbed Peter and immediately, they were in the boat and the wind had ceased.

## **Jesus Heals the Sick at Gennesaret**

### **Matthew 14:34-36**

<sup>34</sup>And when they had crossed over, they came to land at Gennesaret. <sup>35</sup>And when the men of that place recognized him, they sent around to all that region and brought to him all who were sick <sup>36</sup>and implored him that they might only touch the fringe of his garment. And as many as touched it were made well.

**Mark 6:53-56** – <sup>53</sup>When they had crossed over, they came to land at Gennesaret and moored to the shore. <sup>54</sup>And when they got out of the boat, the people immediately recognized him <sup>55</sup>and ran about the whole region and began to bring the sick people on their beds to wherever they heard he was. <sup>56</sup>And wherever he came, in villages, cities, or countryside, they laid the sick in the marketplaces and implored him that they might touch even the fringe of his garment. And as many as touched it were made well.

### **Notes:**

After coming back across the Sea of Galilee from Bethsaida, Jesus and the disciples did not immediately return to Capernaum. Instead, they continued on to Gennesaret. Here Jesus continued His healing ministry. Everyone who touched the fringe of his garment was instantly healed. So – what’s the significance of the people touching the fringe of Jesus’ garment? I think it is a testament to their faith. They were so convinced that Jesus would heal them if they touched his clothing that their faith was rewarded by them being healed.

### **So What?**

Along with the disciples, in this chapter of Matthew’s gospel, we have seen several new kinds of miracles from Jesus. Up to this point His miracles were mostly about healing people. These new miracles included the multiplying of the food to feed the 5,000, Jesus walking on the water, Jesus rescuing Peter as he was sinking, and immediately taking him into the boat. And – when they got into the boat, the wind quit blowing, immediately.

The disciples were just beginning to understand how powerful Jesus was. But, they still didn’t recognize their true relationship with Him. Consider this. When the crowd needed food, they didn’t even think to look to Jesus for help. They were so focused on their own inability that they didn’t even think of His miraculous ability. Instead of humbling themselves before Jesus and saying, “Lord, tell us what to do and we will obey,” they assumed they knew what to do and told Jesus what to do. They said, “Send the crowds away that they might purchase food for themselves.” The word translated “send” is in the imperative mood. In other words, they commanded Jesus to do it.

Are we really any different than the disciples? We often fail to see our relationship with God. We know He is our Savior and we want Him to be our servant, doing our will. Instead we should recognize that He is our **Lord** and we should be doing His will. Isn’t that just exactly what we so often do when we encounter a difficult situation in our lives? Instead of asking God to tell us what to do so that we can obey Him in faith, we give Him orders regarding what He needs to do to get us out of the difficult situation (that we have probably caused ourselves).

The disciples had failed to recognize that they could ask Jesus to feed the 5,000 and there is no indication that they prayed to Jesus while they were out in the storm. I mean, why would they? They were probably 4 or 5 miles away, and He couldn't hear them in the middle of a wind storm, so it wouldn't do any good to call out to Him. But, when He miraculously rescued them, they knew who He really was. Do you remember the previous time that Jesus calmed a storm? What was the disciples' reaction the first time?

And the men marveled, saying, "What sort of man is this, that even winds and sea obey him?" (Matthew 8:27)

Their reaction this time was different.

And those in the boat worshiped him, saying, "Truly you are the Son of God." (Matthew 14:33)

Clearly they are growing in their faith and in their knowledge of their Messiah. Initially, when the disciples encountered a difficult situation they gave Jesus orders (that's the way we pray sometimes, isn't it?). But – when they finally realized who was the master and who were the servants, they did as they were told in spite of the apparent impossibility of the situation.

Some people say that Christian faith is, "believing in spite of the evidence," but I submit to you that a better definition of faith is, "obeying in spite of the consequences."

Let me say that again,

"Faith is not just believing in spite of the evidence, faith is obeying in spite of the consequences."

Where is your faith today, my friends? I know it's stronger than it was eight months ago because I've seen your faith growth. When we started out this adventure together, you were all willing to learn, but you weren't yearning to learn. Previously, you were satisfied with your relationship with our Heavenly Father. But now you're not. You want your relationship to grow. You want to know Him better. You want to hear God speaking to you and you want to obey.

We've all got some storms coming in our lives. Some of us are in the midst of those storms right now. But, instead of giving up and cowering in fear, we can face them head-on knowing that our God is walking by our side. Remember, He said, "I will never leave you nor forsake you." And, when we look back and only see one set of footprints in the pathway, we know that it was during those difficult times that He was carrying us on His back. I know most of you are familiar with that poem "Footprints in the Sand," but let me read it to you anyway –

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### **Footprints in the Sand**

(Author unknown)

One night I dreamed a dream.  
As I was walking along the beach with my Lord.  
Across the dark sky flashed scenes from my life.  
For each scene, I noticed two sets of footprints in the sand,  
One belonging to me and one to my Lord.

After the last scene of my life flashed before me,  
I looked back at the footprints in the sand.  
I noticed that at many times along the path of my life,



especially at the very lowest and saddest times,  
there was only one set of footprints.

This really troubled me, so I asked the Lord about it.

"Lord, you said once I decided to follow you,

You'd walk with me all the way.

But I noticed that during the saddest and most troublesome times of my life,  
there was only one set of footprints.

I don't understand why, when I needed You the most, You would leave me."

He whispered, "My precious child, I love you and will never leave you

Never, ever, during your trials and testings.

When you saw only one set of footprints,

It was then that I carried you."

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One final word of encouragement for you. Remember, I quoted First John earlier:

My little children, I am writing these things to you so that you may not sin. But if anyone  
does sin, we have an advocate with the Father, Jesus Christ the righteous. (1 John 2:1)

Jesus is not our only advocate. The word translated "advocate" is *paraklētos*, which means "a  
comforter" or "an encourager." But it also is a reference to "a legal advisor who speaks in behalf  
of an accused person."

In John's gospel Jesus said,

If you love me, you will keep my commandments. And I will ask the Father, and he will  
give you another Helper, to be with you forever, (John 14:15-16)

This "Helper" is again the word *paraklētos*, which is a reference to the Holy Spirit of God. And –  
when we are so deep in distress that we don't even know what to pray – we are told in Romans:

Likewise the Spirit also helps in our weaknesses. For we do not know what we should  
pray for as we ought, but the Spirit Himself makes intercession for us with groanings  
which cannot be uttered. (Romans 8:26) [NKJV]

Yes, in this life we have trials and tribulations. But be encouraged, when we mess-up and are  
accused by our enemy, we have the world's best defense attorney. And when we are so low that  
we don't know what to do, we have the world's best prayer partner.

Let's pray.

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