

Why are we afraid of failure?

I've failed.

You've failed.

We've all failed.

Whether it was a test, or you were cut from a team, or you didn't get the job you wanted; we've all failed.

Failure is a certainty in life. And along with failure comes fear. Fear of trying again. Fear of being humiliated. Fear of failing, again.

Fear keeps us from taking risks, from stepping into the unknown; fear cripples us. It may be the fear of judgment, the fear of not meeting expectations, the fear of losing something or someone or the fear of being made fun of; but the result is all the same.

Fear keeps us from making the BOLD impression that all of us should make in the world, in our community, in our church and in our families.

But I want you to hear something today about making a BOLD impression; the fear will never go away, as a matter of fact, the only way to make a BOLD impression is to step out in faith and realize we need to risk failure.

So today, we're going to see how *the best impression is a bold impression*.

One of Jesus disciples attempted to make a BOLD impression by taking a step of faith and in the process risked failure; well in a sense he failed, but that is getting ahead of the story.

It's late at night; Jesus' disciples (most of whom are fishermen) are on a boat being rocked by wind and waves. They had left Jesus on the opposite shore and had set out for the other side of the lake.

Watch what happens next: Matthew 14:25-27 <http://bible.us/111/mat.14.25-27.niv>

I think when Jesus put these disciples on the boat he knew what was going to transpire. I think that is why Jesus stayed behind to pray. Jesus knew that his fearful disciples were going to have an opportunity to learn something. I believe Jesus was praying for them to be BOLD.

So after praying, Jesus appears, walking on the water, in the midst of a storm no less. Now I want you to know that as I read this passage I realized something that I don't think I ever paid attention to in the past.

Look at this conversation: Matthew 14:28-29a <http://bible.us/111/mat.14.28-29.niv>

I think I've always missed the fact that it wasn't Jesus who challenged the disciples to get out of the boat. It was Peter, who BOLDLY, asked Jesus if he could walk on the water.

Peter was BOLD! He saw Jesus walking on the water. He had spent his entire life on the water and never before had he seen someone walk on the water. But Jesus was clearly walking on the water; and Peter wanted to do what Jesus did!

We often talk about Peter being a bold and impulsive disciple; often running ahead and finding himself in trouble. But I think Peter was just a guy who wanted to be like Jesus. He wanted to do what Jesus did. Peter wanted to make sure that his best impression was a BOLD impression, just as Jesus best impression was a BOLD impression.

And so when Jesus said, 'Come;' Peter got out of the boat. Peter got out of the boat and he walked on water!

Don't miss that, PETER WALKED ON THE WATER! Peter did what Jesus did. Jesus' BOLD impression on Peter led Peter to be BOLD and step out of the boat.

Sadly, I think we get too caught up in the fact that Peter sinks after getting out of the boat and the fact that no one else got out of the boat. Peter got out of the boat and walked on water!
Don't miss the miracle!

That leads me to ask you a question, "What BOLD impression have you made lately?"

What have you seen Jesus doing that made a BOLD impression on you; such an impression that you wanted to be BOLD enough to step out of the boat?

That's what I thought; most of you are still in the boat. It might be rocking in the wind and waves, but at least you feel safe in the boat. Fear has a way of turning us into 'boat-potatoes' and keeping us from making a BOLD impression for the kingdom of God.

Now let me be clear about something, fear is a good thing. After all, fear is what makes you run away from a lion. But if your fear paralyzes you you're lion food for sure!

Fear will never go away. Every time you get out of the boat you will be afraid. If you wait for the fear to disappear then you'll never get out of the boat and make a BOLD impression.

If I waited for my fear to disappear before we struck out in faith to build the addition to the church we would still be waiting! I'll be honest there are still days that I wonder if I really heard God leading us to get out of the comfort of our boat and walk on water. But then I look around and see the BOLD impression that that step of faith has had on so many lives and I rejoice that we were willing to get out of the boat.

Here is something else you can be certain of; when you get out of the boat and start to sink (because you will sink at times), Jesus will be there to extend his hand and keep you from going under. I don't think Peter was a failure when he started to sink. As a matter of fact, I think Jesus just reminded him that there is no failure that can place you beyond the loving care of the hand of God. (And Peter was going to need to remember that at several more points in his life!)

I like what Rick Warren tweeted recently, "Failure is not disqualification. Everybody fails." To which I would add that your failure is not a surprise to God. God knew that you would fail; but he still expects you to get out of the boat and make a BOLD impression!

Remember we're talking about Peter here. Peter, the guy who would deny Jesus. Peter failed; but Jesus still expected Peter to make a bold impression!

Peter's BOLDness certainly made an impression on the other disciples. After Peter and Jesus got back in the boat, it says that the disciples worshipped Jesus. They were probably pretty impressed with Peter after they thought about it- this dude just walked on the water!

But this wasn't the end of Peter's BOLD impressions. Following Jesus' resurrection, Peter and John were involved in healing a lame man. As a result they were brought before the very same men who had condemned Jesus to death. Do you think Peter was afraid? Sure. But his fear never held him back from making a BOLD impression!

Listen to what Acts 4:13 says about the reaction of these men who could have had Peter and John condemned to death. "When they saw the *boldness* ^(NLT) of Peter and John and realized that they were unschooled, ordinary men, they were astonished and they took note that these men had been with Jesus."

The BOLD impression that Jesus had made on Peter and the other disciples was making a BOLD impression on others. And I love the prayer of the disciples after Peter and John were released from custody and reunited with the other disciples. They prayed, "*Now, Lord, consider their threats and enable your servants to speak your word with great boldness.*" (4:29)

I can only pray that you and I will face our fears and be willing to step out of the boat. One of the things that Mark Batterson said in his book, *The Circle Maker*, was that prayers continue on forever. With that in mind could you and I, could Linglestown Life, be the servants who speak God's word with great *boldness*?

I think we are.

The only question is, "Are you willing to make a BOLD impression?"

"Are you willing to do something that scares you?"

"Are you willing to get out of the boat and risk failure knowing that Jesus will be there to reach out and keep you from sinking under the waves?"

Think about it for a moment! What have you seen Jesus do that scares you?

I hear people say all the time, "I couldn't do that, I couldn't..."

Some day you and I are going to stand before God and have to give account for the impression that God wanted us to make. God isn't going to want to hear, I was afraid that I might fail so I didn't get out of the boat.

Folks the world is waiting for disciples of Jesus to make a BOLD impression on the world!

I know that when the time comes that I have to stand before God I want to say what Jesus said in John 17:4, "I have brought you glory on earth by finishing the work you gave me to do."

God created each of us to make a BOLD impression, to change the world!

So while you are sitting there in the boat let me leave you with three questions to move you out of the boat.

Where do you see the greatest need around you?

How can you meet that need?

What's stopping you from doing it?

Stop letting fear keep you in the boat! Take the step of faith! After all, the best impression is a BOLD impression!