Connect Study—Fix Your Focus

In 2012, Nik Wallenda walked across Niagara Falls on an 1,800-foot wire that was only 2 inches wide. When he was interviewed, he said, “it’s all about focus, concentration, and training.”

Faith is a focus issue. If you fix your focus on the right thing, your faith will stabilise. If you focus on the wrong thing, it may be fatal to your faith.

In the two famous Mattew 14 stories of Jesus feeding the five thousand and Peter walking on water, we learn that we need to:

1. Focus on His passion—Me vs Others

Matt 14:13 - “As soon as Jesus heard the news, he left in a boat to a remote area to be alone. But the crowds heard where he was headed and followed on foot from many towns. Jesus saw the huge crowd as he stepped from the boat, and he had compassion on them and healed their sick”. Jesus was tired and grieving, yet he proceeded to minister to the crowd. The key is compassion. Read Mk 6:34.

To fix our eyes on Jesus is to see what he sees. Read the following scriptures and try to identify Jesus’ mission and what he wants us to focus on.

Luke 19:10

Matt 27:42

John 20:21

1. Focus on his power—Problem vs Potential

Matt 14: 15-17 That evening the disciples came to him and said, “This is a remote place, and it’s already getting late. Send the crowds away so they can go to the villages and buy food for themselves.”

But Jesus said, “That isn’t necessary—you feed them.”

“But we have only five loaves of bread and two fish!” they answered.

There were potentially more than 10,000 people that needed to be fed. The disciples viewed the situation as a problem rather than a potential for a miracle.

The potential for miracle was realised because:

* The little boy gave what he had—we need to give what we have.
* Thanksgiving—Read Matt 14:19. Thanksgiving shifts our perspective and helps us focus on the greatness of God.

1. Focus on His presence and His promises—Fear vs Faith

Matt 14: 22 & 24 – “Immediately after this, Jesus insisted that the disciples get back into the boat and cross to the other side of the lake. But Jesus himself went up into the hills by himself to pray. Meanwhile, the disciples were in trouble far away from land, for a strong wind had risen and they were fighting heavy waves. “

The disciples were in a storm not because of rebellion or sin but because of their obedience to the instruction of Jesus. They were battling the storm for a long time. When Jesus came to them, they did not even recognise him.

Jesus said to them: “Take courage, I Am!” and then Peter called out to Jesus, “Lord, if it is really you, tell me to come to you, walking on water”. When Peter had his eyes on Jesus, he was walking on water, overcoming his situation. But when he started to focus on the waves, he sunk.

Doubt - “distazo” in Greek - is to waver in opinion, to hesitate, to be uncertain.

It is a figurative word that conveys a person standing at a fork in a road, uncertain as to which direction to choose. It also captures the idea of a scale teetering back and forth repeatedly because the items on both sides are of almost the same weight.

Discussion Questions:

1. One of the compassion-busters is the way we live. We are so busy, so wrapped up in our own lives that we have no time to minister to others. Do you relate to this statement? How can we build margins in our lives so that we have time for others?
2. What can we do as an individual and as a connect group to be more evangelistic?
3. What is a situation you are struggling right now? What can you be thankful for in that situation? (or share how thanksgiving helps shifts your perspective)
4. What is one promise that you are hanging on to and what does it mean by not looking at the waves in your situation?