

Encountering the Word

with Jeff Cavins

Nineteenth Sunday in Ordinary Time (A)

1 Kings 19:9a, 11–13a • Romans 9:1–5 • Matthew 14:22–33



Step Out of the Boat

One of the deepest desires of the Christian heart is to know when God is speaking. We long for certainty, to hear his voice clearly and unmistakably. Yet, Scripture reminds us that the Lord rarely speaks through dramatic displays. Elijah, waiting for God on the mountain, expected him in the mighty wind, the earthquake, or the fire. Instead, God revealed himself in a tiny whispering voice. The lesson is profound: God often speaks to us in stillness, in the quiet movements of thought and conscience, in gentle invitations toward love, reconciliation, and trust.



Peter on the Sea by Philipp Otto Runge

The Gospel places this truth in living color. The disciples, battered by waves in the middle of the night, are terrified as Jesus approaches them walking on water. Peter, unsure if it is really the Lord, cries out, “Lord, if it is you, command me to come to you on the water.” Jesus answers with one simple word: “Come” (Matthew 14:28–29). Peter steps out, trusting the whisper of Christ’s call, and for a moment walks on the water. Only when fear overtakes him does he begin to sink, and Jesus reaches out to save him, as he always does.

Peter’s courage teaches us something essential. It is not enough to hear God’s whisper; we must respond. The other disciples stayed in the safety of the boat. Only Peter, by stepping out, discovered for himself that it truly was the Lord. Faith grows when we risk obedience, when we dare to trust that the quiet call is real.

In our own lives, God’s voice rarely thunders. Instead, it often comes as a thought in prayer, a stirring during Mass, a call to forgive, or a nudge to step into service. The question is whether we will listen and obey. To hear the whisper is grace; to step out of the boat is faith. Together, they lead us to encounter the living Christ.

Living the Gospel

Take time this week for silence. Set aside a half hour in prayer, perhaps before the Blessed Sacrament, and ask the Lord to speak in the quiet. If you sense his prompting, whether to forgive, to encourage, or to serve, act on it. Like Peter, you will discover that the voice you heard was truly Christ calling you closer.

Dive Deeper

Scan this code to watch:



Or go to <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=qZv7TQieBR0>

Ponder and Pray

- » Elijah discovered God's voice not in wind, fire, or an earthquake, but in a whisper. In your own life, how do you cultivate silence and attentiveness to hear God's gentle voice? What practical changes in your daily routine could help you become more receptive?

- » Peter stepped out of the boat at Jesus' word, risking everything to test if it was truly the Lord. Where is Jesus asking you to step out of your comfort zone? Is there a specific area where you sense he is inviting you to trust him more fully?

- » When Peter took his eyes off Jesus, fear overwhelmed him and he began to sink. What fears, anxieties, or distractions most often keep your gaze fixed on the waves instead of on Christ? How might you bring these honestly to prayer and allow him to reach for you with his saving hand?

Make It Your Own

You and others in your household may use this space to write anything about today's Mass. It might be your view of Jeff Cavins's reflection, your priest's homily, or your answers to the questions on this page—anything to help you and your household get the most of today's Mass.

“Immediately Jesus stretched out his hand and caught him, and said to him, ‘O you of little faith, why did you doubt?’ After they got into the boat, the wind died down. Those who were in the boat did him homage, saying, ‘Truly, you are the Son of God.’”

—Matthew 14:31–33