

Doubt

“You of little faith, why did you doubt?”

Matthew 14:31

Doubt—The Greek word is *edistasas*. This is the verb *distazo* in the verb tense called aorist. The tense tells us that this was a single, completed action in the past. There are two Greek words for “doubt.” The other one is *dialogismos*. The difference between these is important. *Dialogismos* comes from words that we can identify. *Dia* means “through”, *logismos* comes from *logos* which means “word” (we get the English word “logic”). So, the definition is “through words” or “to debate through words” or “argument.” This form of doubt is the kind of doubt when you debate or negotiate. It is used in the New Testament for the idea of evil thoughts or argument. It usually has the sense of trying to justify your actions arguing with God about how “right” your sin really is.

But *distazo* comes from a different idea. The root of *distazo* is *duo*. It means “two”, just like our English cognate, “dual.” Here the idea is that you are stuck between two courses of action. There are two (*duo*, remember) pictures that help us see the meaning: a man standing at a crossroads, not knowing which way to go and a balance scale, equally weighted on each side, tipping back and forth. It means, “to hesitate, to waver, to be uncertain.” It is not argumentative or evil. There is no sin here. It is just being stuck in the middle. God help me, I don’t know which way to go!

Jesus comes across the rolling sea. The disciples are scared to death. Then Jesus calls to them. Peter steps out of the boat in response to Jesus’ call. He begins to walk as Jesus walked. But suddenly he realizes what he is doing. “Things can’t happen like this. I’m just human. I can’t do this.” As he sinks, he cries out for help. Jesus pulls him up and says, “Why did you hesitate? Why did you waver? You were doing great. You had your eyes on the goal, Me. Then you let the circumstances around you cause you to falter. Forget what you see. Look at me!”

I need to hear these words from Jesus today. I start out, my eyes fixed on His majesty, confident that His vital energy is flowing through me. Then I start looking at my circumstances. How will I survive? How can I ever get through this? As soon as this happens, I lose my concentration on God’s purpose for me. The waves of life overwhelm. Jesus reaches out his hand, pulls me up and says, “Why did you waver?” He is so kind and so strong. I should have just looked at Him and kept walking over my own sea.