

Camp St. Giles' Children's Homily  
June 27, 2010  
Matthew 14:22-33  
The Rev. Dr. Susan Kraus

Has anyone here ever learned to ride a bicycle? Raise your hands please.

Did a grown-up – maybe your Mom or Dad – teach you to ride?

Were you a little bit scared sometimes while you were learning?

Did you ever fall off your bike before you got good at riding it?

Then what did you do? Maybe you hurt yourself and cried? Or maybe you were embarrassed that you already had a lot of lessons but you still fell off? But here's a really important question – did you give up trying to learn or did you get back on the bike and try again? I bet most of you got back on your bike, tried again, and learned to ride better.

But even if you ride really well most of the time, do you still fall sometimes? Maybe when you try to go too fast, or the road is wet, or if you don't see something in the road ahead, like a stick or a stone, and your bike wheel hits it just the wrong way. Even really great bike riders can fall if the conditions are bad. When they fall, they get up and get back on their bikes and ride again. And they try to learn from their fall, not to make the same mistake next time.

Peter was one of Jesus' disciples. The word "disciple" means "student." People called Jesus "Rabbi," which means "teacher." So Jesus was Peter's teacher, and he was trying to teach Peter to trust him and to trust God. Peter had been with Jesus a long time and had learned a lot. But he still made mistakes.

In this morning's gospel story we hear about Jesus calling Peter to walk on the water toward him. Peter gets out of the boat and does fine, even though this is something new – he had never walked on the water before! But then Peter got scared and began to sink. It's like he fell off his bike. And he got more scared and called to Jesus, "Help me!" Then what happened?

Do you think Jesus thought to himself – "I'm just going to let him sink, because I've given him so many trusting lessons already, he should know by now how to trust me!"

No. Jesus is a Good Teacher! Right away he reached out his hand and caught Peter and helped him get back into the boat. The storm passed, and Jesus and his disciples were safe.

What about Peter? What do you think he did next? Do you think he gave up trying to trust Jesus and trust God? Or do you think he tried to learn to trust Jesus and trust God better?

From the Bible we know that Peter kept trying and learning. We know that after that day on the water, he still made mistakes. But Peter loved Jesus very much, and he trusted him all the rest of his life.

I hope we can all be good students of Jesus, too. When we make mistakes, I hope we can all tell God we are sorry and then get up and try again. Our Good Teacher Jesus has promised to help us, and I trust his promise, don't you? Amen.