March 2nd, 2014  Lessons from Snoopy & The Peanuts Gang
B.F.F. & Don’t forget to believe in yourself!!!!

Scripture Lesson: Isaiah 41:10 (Peter walking on water for a brief moment: Matthew 14:22-32)

Sermon Title: “Believe In Yourself”

Biblical Focus: So do not fear, for I am with you; do not be dismayed, for I am your God. I will strengthen you and help you; I will uphold you with my righteous right hand.

Scripture Lesson: Matthew 14:22-32 “Immediately Jesus made the disciples get into the boat and go on ahead of him to the other side, while he dismissed the crowd. After he had dismissed them, he went up on a mountainside by himself to pray. When evening came, he was there alone, but the boat was already a considerable distance from land, buffeted by the waves because the wind was against it.

During the fourth watch of the night Jesus went out to them, walking on the lake. When the disciples saw him walking on the lake, they were terrified. "It's a ghost," they said, and cried out in fear.

But Jesus immediately said to them: "Take courage! It is I. Don't be afraid." "Lord, if it's you," Peter replied, "tell me to come to you on the water." "Come," he said. Then Peter got down out of the boat, walked on the water and came toward Jesus. But when he saw the wind, he was afraid and, beginning to sink, cried out, "Lord, save me!"

Immediately Jesus reached out his hand and caught him. "You of little faith," he said, "why did you doubt?" And when they climbed into the boat, the wind died down. Then those who were in the boat worshiped him, saying, "Truly you are the Son of God."

Children’s Sermon: Sing the song: Tyler Talks Back

Traditional Sermon:

Hymn of Praise: # 117 O God, our help in ages past.
Prayer Hymn: # 349 Turn Your Eyes Upon Jesus
Hymn of Response: # 534 Be Still My Soul
Believe in Yourself: Snoopy is probably one of the most well known comic strip characters in the world. Of all the Peanuts Gang Characters, snoopy is probably the one with the strongest self esteem and is comfortable in his own skin.

1. He is liked by the whole gang & plays short stop on the team.
2. He belongs to Charlie Brown who feeds and waters him daily.
3. He plays saxophone, is Joe cool and is a great happy dancer!
4. He loves impersonating different animals. (A snake, a moose, a pelican and even Mickey Mouse.)
5. He has a vivid imagination: He pretends to be a WWI flying Ace flying on his dog house as he goes up against the infamous Red Baron as they fight in the air. He also thought he was an astronaut and was the first beagle to land on the moon.
6. With his typewriter Snoopy is a great author.

Snoopy and Charlie Brown are best friends. There is a bit of an opposite I the two in that Charlie Brown wants desperately to be accepted, and Snoopy has confidence oozing out of him all the time.
What does it take to have great confidence in Yourself?

Let me give you three confidence verses this morning.

1. Phil. 4:13 “I can do everything through him who gives me strength.” I call this verse the 10 finger prayer.

2. II Timothy 1:7 “For God did not give us a spirit of fear, but a spirit of power, of love and of self-discipline.” Why should we be fearful in life if God is on our side?

3. Hebrew 13:6 “So we say with confidence, "The Lord is my helper; I will not be afraid. What can man do to me?"

All three of these verses are connected to a person having a relationship with the Lord.

Illustration: Confidence: There is a story of a professor who stood before his class of 30 senior molecular biology students at Purdue University. Before passing out the final semester exam he said, "I have been privileged to be your instructor this semester, and I know how hard you have worked to prepare for this test. I also know most of you are off to medical school or graduate school this spring. I am well aware of how much pressure you are under to keep your grade point averages up.

Because I am confident that you know this material, I am prepared to offer an automatic grade of B to anyone who opts to skip taking the final exam." The relief was audible. A number of students jumped up from their desks, thanking the professor for the lifeline he had thrown them. "Any other takers?" he asked. "This is your last opportunity." One more student decided to accept the free B. The instructor then handed out the final exam, which consisted of two sentences. It read: "Congratulations, you have just received an A in this class. Keep believing in yourself." It was a just reward for the students who had worked hard and believed in themselves.
*We need to believe in our self.*

However we should not be “Over Confident.”

**Over Confidence:** It is good to have confidence, but let’s also be careful that we are not over confident. And let’s not partner that over confidence with pride, ignorance and stubbornness. That type of confidence can lead to sad consequences in our life.

**Over confidence.** There was a stuntman named Bobby Leach, who in July, 1911, he went over Niagara Falls in a specially designed steel drum and lived to tell about it. Although he suffered minor injuries, he survived because he recognized the tremendous dangers involved in the feat, and because he had done everything he could to protect himself from harm.

Several years after that incident, while walking down a city street in New Zealand, Bobby Leach slipped on an orange peeling, fell, and badly fractured his leg. He was taken to a hospital where he later died of complications from that fall. He received a greater injury walking down the street than he sustained in going over Niagara. He was not prepared for danger in what he assumed to be a safe situation.

**Peter The Disciple:**
In our New Testament scripture passage we look at the disciple named Peter. Now the disciple Peter was a bold and brave man. But he too had his insecurities.

1. **Quick to anger:** feeling threatened he cut off the ear of the servant of the high priest when Jesus was being arrested.
2. **He denied Christ three times** during Jesus arrest and trial.
3. He tried to **rebuke Jesus** once and the Lord told him, get behind me Satan. (Matthew 16:23)
Peter certainly had his issues just like we all do….but he also had an amazing faith and courage. He did something no one else on the planet has done other than Jesus Christ. **He Walked On Water.**

**Matthew 14:22-32**  
“Immediately Jesus made the disciples get into the boat and go on ahead of him to the other side, while he dismissed the crowd. 23 After he had dismissed them, he went up on a mountainside by himself to pray. When evening came, he was there alone, 24 but the boat was already a considerable distance from land, buffeted by the waves because the wind was against it.

MT 14:25 During the fourth watch of the night Jesus went out to them, walking on the lake. 26 When the disciples saw him walking on the lake, they were terrified. "It's a ghost," they said, and cried out in fear.

MT 14:27 But Jesus immediately said to them: "Take courage! It is I. Don't be afraid." MT 14:28 "Lord, if it's you," Peter replied, "tell me to come to you on the water." MT 14:29 "Come," he said. Then Peter got down out of the boat, walked on the water and came toward Jesus. 30 But when he saw the wind, he was afraid and, beginning to sink, cried out, "Lord, save me!"

MT 14:31 Immediately Jesus reached out his hand and caught him. "You of little faith," he said, "why did you doubt?" MT 14:32 And when they climbed into the boat, the wind died down. 33 Then those who were in the boat worshiped him, saying, "Truly you are the Son of God."

There are a couple of things I want to point out in this passage.

1. **The wind and waves:** The Mountains on either side of the sea of Galilee that Jesus went up to pray upon are the cause of quick storms and rough waves. There is a constant temperature difference between the top of the mountains and sea level. When the cold air from the mountains come swooping down upon the warm air on the water, it can cause violent storms.

2. **During the Fourth Watch of the Night** Jesus went out to them. Many have asked what it the fourth watch of the night. The Romans and Jewish people actually divided the night into four sections of three hours each, in order to break the time span that someone would stand guard into more reasonable periods. This is
the last watch of the night. In today's time, this would come from about 3am until day break.

3. Why did Jesus typically wait until the fourth watch of the night?

a. Perhaps to allow us to struggle through the night and find humility in ourselves when he comes to our aid.

b. Perhaps coming later rather than always earlier helps to build our faith. The disciples were so afraid when they saw Jesus walking on water that they saw a ghost. They cried out in fear.

c. I believe God lets us struggle so that we might see the reality of who He is. When we’ve struggled in life, and not quit that is when we grow. When we’ve struggled through the first watch of the night into the second watch of the night, and through the second watch of the night into the third watch of the night, through the third watch of the night into that watch of despair, the fourth watch; it’s when we’ve suffered the agony of loneliness and the agony of despair and the agony of facing our own helplessness and the agony of life’s futility, and the agony of the fact that life does not make sense-it’s then, when we struggle to believe, that we are granted the knowledge that God is with us and can bring us salvation, whatever we are going through at the time.

4. Jesus immediately tells them: Don’t be afraid.

5. I think only one disciple believed Jesus to not be afraid. Peter.

a. He didn’t hesitate a bit.

b. He didn’t ask Jesus how in the world he was walking on water?

c. He just asked Jesus…Can I do that too?

d. Why didn’t the other disciples want to walk on water?
e. Perhaps when we feel God is asking us to do something out of our comfort zone….we should not be afraid.

6. Peter had so much faith at that time that he actually was part of the miracle of walking on the water.

He is walking on Water!!!
the surrounding storms and waves. Then he begins to sink. Perhaps there is a lesson here for us today.

MT 14:29 "Come," he said. Then Peter got down out of the boat, walked on the water and came toward Jesus. 30 But when he saw the wind, he was afraid and, beginning to sink, cried out, "Lord, save me!"

How many times have we started a promise or project for the Lord and got our eyes off of God and things went south?

I think there is something to be said about keeping our eyes on God and not worrying about the storms and troubles around us.

Illustration: The story is told of two men crossing a rugged mountain range on horseback. As they came to a large and swift-flowing river, the older and more experienced man said to the younger, "As we get to the deepest and swiftest part, be sure not to look down and from side to side at the swirling water around you, it will only make you dizzy." "Listen to me," the older man continued sternly, "see that big rock on the other side? Keep your eyes focused on that rock!" "OK" said the younger man.

As the men then crossed, they quickly approached the swift and turbulent midstream waters. The horses began to panic, the spray of the icy waters splashed against the men’s faces. The young man got nervous and began to look on the waters swirling angrily around horse and rider. Becoming dizzy-headed, he began to struggle to remain on the saddle. The older man looked back, and noticing the young man struggling, hollered out, "Keep your eyes focused on the rock! Keep your eyes focused on the rock!" The young man, barely able to hear, desperately and with great difficulty focused his eyes on the rock. Soon his head began to clear, and in a few moments they were on the other side safe and sound.

Application: Life is filled with daily struggles in all shapes and sizes. We all experience difficulties and problems in life. Sometimes our problems are as nagging irritations and aggravations, sometimes they are much bigger and seek to overwhelm us. We experience sickness or disease, hardship, financial problems, legal problems, family problems.

Jesus is the ROCK of our salvation. • The Rock is a metaphor that pictures strength, and stability. • The Rock is unshakable. Keeping your
eyes on the rock of Christ does not mean you will not have difficulties in life. It means that when you do have difficulties in this life, Jesus will be there for you.

**Overcoming fear:** Here are four truths and scriptures to help you overcome fear, worry, anxiety, panic attacks and even help with depression.

1. **Trust in God:** *Prov. 3:5-6*  “Trust in the LORD with all your heart and lean not on your own understanding; **PR 3:6** in all your ways acknowledge him, and he will make your paths straight.”

2. **Confidence that God is on your side:** *Romans 8:31*  “What, then, shall we say in response to this? If God is for us, who can be against us?”

3. **Faith that God will never leave you:** *Romans 8:37-39*  “No, in all these things we are more than conquerors through him who loved us. **38** For I am convinced that neither death nor life, neither angels nor demons, neither the present nor the future, nor any powers, **39** neither height nor depth, nor anything else in all creation, will be able to separate us from the love of God that is in Christ Jesus our Lord.”

4. **Keep your eyes & heart on God.** *Hebrews 12:1-3*  “Therefore, since we are surrounded by such a great cloud of witnesses, let us throw off everything that hinders and the sin that so easily entangles, and let us run with perseverance the race marked out for us. **2** Let us fix our eyes on Jesus, the author and perfecter of our faith, who for the joy set before him endured the cross, scorning its shame, and sat down at the right hand of the throne of God. **3** Consider him who endured such opposition from sinful men, so that you will not grow weary and lose heart.”
The great 4 “P” of God:

1. God’s presence -- "I will never leave you" (Heb. 13:5)
2. God’s protection -- "I am your shield" (Gen. 15:1)
3. God’s power -- "I will strengthen you" (Isa. 41:10)
4. God’s provision -- "I will help you" (Isa. 41:10)

Folks have a faith in God and……believe in yourself.

Let’s pray, Heavenly father, that you may be our presence in a time of need, our protection in a time of desperation, our power when we are weak and our provision when we are in need. Give us courage and help us to have faith in you and believe in ourselves.

Words of Wisdom: Abraham Lincoln: “I do not boast that God is on my side. I humbly pray that I am on God's side.”

Benediction: Go out into the world in peace, be of good courage, hold fast to that which is good; render to no man evil for evil; support the weak, help the afflicted, love and serve the Lord, rejoicing in his presence as he goes with you always. Amen.
How to overcome fear:

1. Trust in God: Prov. 3:5-6
2. Confidence that God is on your side: Romans 8:31
3. Faith that God will never leave you: Romans 8:37-39

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