



■ † Ninth Sunday of St. Matthew

**“O thou of little faith,
wherefore didst thou doubt?”***

Preserve your first state of faith and hope

The Holy Apostle Peter, with the Lord’s permission, gets out of the ship and walks on the water; but then he succumbs to fear and begins to drown.

That he should decide to undertake such an extraordinary act, while placing his hope in the Lord, is nothing deserving reproach; for otherwise the Lord would not have allowed him to attempt such a thing.

The reprimand comes because he did not sustain his original state of soul. He had been filled with trust in the Lord’s ability to do anything, and this gave him the boldness to entrust himself to the waves.

Several steps were already made along this new path; it was only necessary for him to stand firmly in hope, beholding the Lord Who is near, and to walk on the waves by His power.

Instead, he gives himself over to human thoughts: “The wind is strong, the waves are great, the water is not firm.” This shakes and weakens his firmness of faith and hope. Because of this he breaks away from the Lord’s hands, and, left to the operation of the laws of nature, begins to drown.



The Lord then rebuked him: “O thou of little faith, wherefore didst thou doubt?” (St. Matthew 14: 31), showing in this way the cause of the danger that befell him.

This is a lesson for all those who undertake something, great or small, with the aim of pleasing the Lord.

Preserve your first state of faith and hope, from which a great virtue is born: patience in doing good, which serves as the basis for a God-pleasing life. As long as these dispositions are maintained, inspiration for labouring on the path begun does not leave us, and we take no notice of obstacles.

When such dispositions weaken, the soul is influenced by human reasoning about the means of preserving one's life and conducting one's affairs. But since such reasoning always proves to be powerless, fear enters the soul as to how to act. Hence the hesitation as to whether one should continue, and in the end one turns back.

This is how you should go about it: if you begin, keep it up; chase away troubling thoughts and be bold with hope in the Lord, Who is near.



(*) St. Theophan the Recluse, *Thoughts for Each Day of the Year According to the Daily Church Readings from the Word of God*.