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Viewpoints

Observing events in our modern world from the viewpoint of our ascended Savior.

Avoiding Distraction - August 2, 2016

Know how to keep your focus on Jesus to prevent this human error.

[Online Version & Archive](#)

Last Saturday a hot air balloon crashed in Central Texas, killing all 16 souls on board. What caused this tragedy? The National Transportation Safety Board reports that it hit high-tension power lines. But what caused this fatal contact? Since the balloon and its equipment was recently inspected and found to be in good working order, there's speculation that the cause of the accident was human error. Perhaps the pilot was distracted just long enough?

What we don't know with certainty about the pilot, we do know about Peter, the disciple of Jesus. The Bible documents that time when the disciples were traveling in a boat that was buffeted by a strong headwind and dangerous waves. Because their progress was impeded, Jesus caught up to them by walking on the water. At first sight, the disciples were terrified and thought Jesus was a ghost. When Jesus identified himself, Peter made an abrupt 180-degree turn from terror to elation. And in that elation Peter asked Jesus to tell him to walk on the water, too. Jesus did. "Come," he said. So Peter got out of the boat and began to walk on the water. But then... "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" (Matthew 14:30-31).

What may have happened with the pilot of the balloon indeed happened with Peter: he was distracted. Peter's attention was diverted away from Jesus to the lethal wind and killer waves. His courage began to die and he began to sink.

After Jesus saved Peter from drowning, he said, "You of little faith, why did you doubt?" In other words, the Master Teacher wanted Peter to learn how important it is to fuel our faith in Jesus by keeping one's attention on Jesus. Peter's error was that he stifled his faith by diverting his attention to the wind and waves.

Even though I'm a heaven-bound believer in Jesus, because of the sinful flesh that I still lug around, my attention is easily and quickly diverted away from Jesus, just as it happened with Peter. Since you also lug around your sinful flesh, we have the same problem Peter did: we allow ourselves to become distracted.

So how do we keep our attention on Jesus, especially since we can't see him visibly standing in front of us? By learning his word from the Bible, and relearning it, again and again.

- By continually reviewing the law (that shows us our sins),

- and especially by reviewing the comforting gospel (good news) promises of forgiveness and of his abiding, powerful presence.

In fact, as soon as anyone adopts the attitude that he already knows enough, that attitude is human error. It needs correction quickly!

Thank God that he sent his one and only Son, Jesus, to be our patient and forgiving Savior. Just as he reached out and caught Peter with a forgiving grip, so too, with us. Which is in fact what motivates us to keep our attention on Jesus. †

You might also like the sermon that compliments this Viewpoint. [Click here for the 7/31/2016 “God Makes Us Alive” sermon \(available in audio and video formats\).](#)

Source Material (Links may become inactive over time.)

[NTSB says balloon hit power lines...](#) @ Chicago Tribune

[Texas Hot Air Balloon Likely Hit Power Lines Before Crash: Feds](#) @ NBC News

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Blessings to you and your loved ones, Pastor Mike Nitz

