

Jesus Walks on Water

Mark 6:45-56

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Introduction

Mark's goal is to show that Jesus is the Son of God, and he does it by allowing Jesus to show it Himself. He records different things that Jesus does: He heals, He casts out demons, He raises people from the dead. Mark shows the power and majesty of Christ Jesus on earth.

Last week, we studied the feeding of the five thousand. Mark says that these were the men. Matthew adds that there were women and children, so we can safely say that there were probably 25,000 to 30,000 people that day. This is the miracle that all four gospels record because this is the only miracle that has impacted so many people at the same time. It is the miracle that shows His power and creation. He made five breads and two fish into enough food to feed 25,000 or 30,000 people plus 12 leftover for the Twelve. He made the exact amount of food that each individual would be filled (gorged into belt loosening satisfaction!).

Because the crowd was satisfied, they wanted Jesus to be their king because He would give them free food. They were very enthusiastic about it. Jesus was having none of that. His mission is not to be the king on earth, but to die on the cross to be the sacrifice and save people from their sins. He will come a second time and be the King of kings and rule with an iron rod. The next day, the people came looking for Jesus, and He said that they were looking for Him because they wanted free breakfast. He says, "I didn't come to feed your bodies, I came to be the bread for your souls. And if you eat of this bread, you will never hunger." They are not interested in His words. They are more interested in Him leading rebellion against Rome. John 6:66 states that many of His disciples left Him.

Jesus then asks the Twelve, "Do you want to leave as well?" He asks because the disciples had kingdom aspirations as everybody did in Israel. They have argued amongst themselves who would sit at Jesus' right and left hand. Did they expect that Jesus would overthrow the rulers and even Rome? They would ask Jesus after His resurrection, "Will You at this time bring the Kingdom to us?" And Jesus had to say, "It's not for you to know when that's going to happen, but it's not now." They had the same interests. They had basically become subject to the same messianic aspirations that existed in the thinking of all the people in Israel: that the Messiah would come, be a military leader to overthrow their enemies and set up a theocratic state. He would fulfill all the promises to Abraham and David in those covenants, and they would flourish as a nation under the full blessing of God.

Jesus basically asks, "You have the same hope, do you wish to go away as well?" Peter then answers for the Twelve, "Where would we go? We believe you are the Holy One of God. You have the words of life!" Here's the question: what had convinced the disciples that Jesus is the Holy One of God?

Was it the miracle of the feeding of the thousands that convinced them?

Mark 6:52 *for they had not understood about the loaves; their hearts were hardened.*

The Twelve had not gained any insight from the incident of the loaves and their hearts were hardened. They did not gain anything out of that. They didn't connect the dots at all. They watched Jesus create food out of nothing—bread from grain that never grew and fish that were dead and had never lived and never swam—enough to feed thousands and thousands of people. That was not enough. They did not learn anything from it. They are brain dead. The crowd saw that and wanted Jesus as king. What made the difference?

Well what made the difference is the text that we have before us this morning.

Mark 6:45-56

45 *Immediately Jesus made His disciples get into the boat and go on ahead of Him to Bethsaida, while He dismissed the crowd.*

46 *After leaving them, He went up on a mountainside to pray.*

47 *When evening came, the boat was in the middle of the lake, and He was alone on land.*

48 *He saw the disciples straining at the oars, because the wind was against them. About the fourth watch of the night He went out to them, walking on the lake. He was about to pass by them,*

49 *but when they saw Him walking on the lake, they thought He was a ghost. They cried out,*

50 *because they all saw Him and were terrified. Immediately He spoke to them and said, "Take courage! It is I. Don't be afraid."*

51 Then He climbed into the boat with them, and the wind died down. They were completely amazed,
52 for they had not understood about the loaves; their hearts were hardened.
53 When they had crossed over, they landed at Gennesaret and anchored there.
54 As soon as they got out of the boat, people recognized Jesus.
55 They ran throughout that whole region and carried the sick on mats to wherever they heard He was.
56 And wherever He went—into villages, towns or countryside—they placed the sick in the marketplaces. They begged Him to let them touch even the edge of His cloak, and all who touched Him were healed.

I. Jesus' Prayer With the Father

45 Immediately Jesus made His disciples get into the boat and go on ahead of Him to Bethsaida, while He dismissed the crowd.

- Why immediately?
 - To get the disciples away from the crowd
 - They were weak and susceptible to the crowd's rebellion and zeal
- Jesus made His disciples
 - Literally—to force, to demand
 - They didn't have a choice
 - It was His will
- To Bethsaida

John 6:17 where they got into a boat and set off across the lake for Capernaum. By now it was dark, and Jesus had not yet joined them.

- John says to Capernaum
- They were to bypass Bethsaida and go in direction of Capernaum
- Distance of four miles
- He dismissed the crowd
 - They probably stayed outdoors around the area
 - Remember—they wanted Jesus as King

46 After leaving them, He went up on a mountainside to pray.

- He prayed
 - For who?
 - The Twelve
 - He is the Great High Priest!

Luke 22:31-32

31 Simon, Simon, Satan has asked to sift you as wheat.

32 But I have prayed for you, Simon, that your faith may not fail. And when you have turned back, strengthen your brothers.

John 17:12 While I was with them, I protected them and kept them safe by that name You gave Me. None has been lost except the one doomed to destruction so that Scripture would be fulfilled.

Note: He prayed to the Father for them. He wanted them to know who He is: His nature and His person. He prays for their saving faith He prays for their protection.

The reason is that the Kingdom of God at this point is in the boat. This will be a very dangerous moment and the ones who would be future rulers couldn't control the boat. These men are in a dire situation. Their rescue is essential and so is their complete devotion to Him. Future hope for the gospel preaching depends on their survival and it depends on their faith. MacArthur, John. Gospel of Mark, pg 196.

II. Jesus' Protection for the Twelve

47 When evening came, the boat was in the middle of the lake, and He was alone on land.

- Evening came
 - Between 6 pm to 9 pm
- Boat in the middle of the lake
 - They were far from land (**Matthew 14:24**)
 - John says that they are about 3 to 4 miles from land (**6:19**)
 - How did they get so far?
 - **John 6:18**—the winds were gusting and waves high
 - **Matthew 14:24** winds opposing them
- He was alone on land
 - He was praying on land
 - Disciples were in trouble

48 *He saw the disciples straining at the oars, because the wind was against them. About the fourth watch of the night He went out to them, walking on the lake. He was about to pass by them,*

- He saw them
 - How did He see them in the darkness, with disciples 4 miles from shore and Him on the mountain (however far from shore)?
 - Omniscience
 - He sees His own!
- Fourth watch of the night
 - Roman reckoning of time (1st watch = 6 pm to 9 pm; 2nd watch = 9 pm to midnight; 3rd watch = midnight to 3 am; fourth watch = 3 am to 6 am)
 - If so, then disciples straining at the oars for about 9 hours!
- He went out to them, walking on the lake
- He was about to pass by them
 - He was to leave them alone?
 - No, He desired to come alongside them and protect them

49 *but when they saw Him walking on the lake, they thought He was a ghost. They cried out,*
50 *because they all saw Him and were terrified. Immediately He spoke to them and said, "Take courage! It is I. Don't be afraid."*

- They cried out
 - They thought He was a ghost
 - Human beings do not walk on water...much less water sloshing in high waves
 - They were terrified and screamed
- Immediately
 - He takes the time to assure them
- Take courage, don't be afraid
- It is I
 - I am

Exodus 3:14 *God said to Moses, "I am who I am. This is what you are to say to the Israelites: 'I AM has sent me to you.'"*

Note: At this point, Matthew includes Peter's account. For some reason Mark does not mention him at all.

51 *Then He climbed into the boat with them, and the wind died down. They were completely amazed,*
52 *for they had not understood about the loaves; their hearts were hardened.*

- They had no understanding who Jesus was until this night
 - Jesus walked on water
 - Peter had walked on water
 - Jesus comes in and storm stills
 - They are overwhelmed (completely amazed!)
 - Prior to these events, they did not understand who Jesus was

- Profound change

Matthew 14:33 *Then those who were in the boat worshiped Him, saying, "Truly You are the Son of God."*

- How?
- Jesus prayed for them
- Father revealed Himself to them

Matthew 16:16-17 *Simon Peter answered, "You are the Christ, the Son of the living God." ¹⁷ Jesus replied, "Blessed are you, Simon son of Jonah, for this was not revealed to you by man, but by My Father in heaven."*

John 6:44-45 *No one can come to Me unless the Father who sent Me draws him, and I will raise him up at the last day. ⁴⁵ It is written in the Prophets: 'They will all be taught by God.' Everyone who listens to the Father and learns from Him comes to Me.*

John 6:68-69 *Simon Peter answered Him, "Lord, to whom shall we go? You have the words of eternal life. ⁶⁹ We believe and know that You are the Holy One of God."*

III. Jesus' Provision for the Sick

53 *When they had crossed over, they landed at Gennesaret and anchored there.*

- They had crossed over

John 6:21 *Then they were willing to take Him into the boat, and immediately the boat reached the shore where they were heading.*

- Gennesaret
 - Near Capernaum
 - Plain, 3 miles by 1 mile—fertile place where they grow much things
 - Lord wanted them there

54 *As soon as they got out of the boat, people recognized Jesus.*

55 *They ran throughout that whole region and carried the sick on mats to wherever they heard He was.*

56 *And wherever He went—into villages, towns or countryside—they placed the sick in the marketplaces. They begged Him to let them touch even the edge of His cloak, and all who touched Him were healed.*

- They walk from Gennesaret to Capernaum (where He preached Bread of Life sermon (John 6))
- People from all over came to experience His healing
- They even touched His cloak! (Reminds us of the woman with bleeding!)
- They were healed—common grace our compassionate Lord!

Application

Eternal Security! He cares for His own. He watches and makes sure that we are protected and saved! What a wonderful Savior we have!