

Jesus Walks on the Water – John 6:16-21

February 12, 2025, Sugar Land Baptist Church

Peter's account is only in Matthew 14

Matthew, Mark and John all have this following the feeding of the 5,000.

Jesus has withdrawn to the mountain alone just after the feeding of the 5,000.

- He does this because they (the crowd he fed) want to make Him king. ¹⁴ After the people saw the sign Jesus performed, they began to say, "Surely this is the Prophet who is to come into the world." ¹⁵ Jesus, knowing that they intended to come and make him king by force, withdrew again to a mountain by himself. Jesus was not the king they wanted Him to be. Rather than being served as a king, he serves food to the crowd. The public declaration as king takes place upon the cross – the Crucified King.
- They wanted a Savior who met their material needs.
- Jesus knows humanity – John 2:24-25 - But Jesus would not entrust himself to them, for he knew all people. ²⁵ He did not need any testimony about mankind, for he knew what was in each person.
- Jesus is beginning to be noticed by friends and foes. Now Jesus takes the opportunity to make himself known to his disciples.

16a. As the scene is set, we find out it is getting late. With "as evening came" in vs. 16 and "darkness had already come" in vs. 17. This adds to the conflict in the scene - the disciples' inability to recognize Jesus.

16b. His disciples went down to the sea. The Sea of Galilee. Just to give you some perspective, the pear-shaped lake is about 14 miles long from north to south, with a maximum width of 8 miles in the north, covering 64 square miles, so it is sizeable.

17a. Got into the boat. It is interesting that the disciples entered the boat in the first place at Jesus' command (Matthew). They would have to learn – as we do – that obedience is no guarantee of being spared adversity.

17b. John sets the scene for the reader. It was already dark, and Jesus had not come to them. We know that it was the fourth watch of the night – 3 am.

The Jews had the night divided into four watches.

- 1) The evening watch – 6pm-9pm – the time immediately following sunset.
- 2) The second watch – 9pm-12:00am – the midnight watch.

3) The third watch – 12am-3am – the cockcrow watch.

4) The fourth watch – 3am-6am – the morning watch.

18. **Then the sea arose because a great wind was blowing.** The conflict is introduced with the suddenness of the storm. Some storms are visible miles away and you can watch them coming to you. Others, especially here at night, sneak up on you. How long had they been rowing? How long did they have to endure the storm?

19b. **They saw Jesus walking on the sea and drawing near the boat;** What did the disciples see? How did they see Him in the dark? They recognized an epiphany – the sudden manifestation of a divine being.

From “the beginning” the Spirit of God was “hovering over the waters” (Genesis 1:2b). Here the Son of God was walking over the face of the waters. Job uses nearly identical language in Job 9:8: ***He alone stretches out the heavens; and treads on the waves of the sea.***

Vs. 19c. **and they were afraid.**

Why were they afraid? The storm?

Like Moses at the burning bush in Exodus 3:6, he was afraid and hid his face from God. The disciples were in the unquantifiable presence of God, and as with Moses it would be God who would speak first.

To some God is terrifying and yet when God is embraced there is no safer place.

Vs. 20 – **But he said to them, “It is I; do not be afraid.”**

Jesus did not make them wait and responded with the comforting assurance quickly.

Identification/prohibition. A reason that he identifies himself first before telling them don’t be afraid. Why?

Vs. 21a **Then they willingly received him into the boat.** Willingly – elective inclination, love. Jesus had calmed their fears.

Vs. 21b **And immediately the boat was at the land where they were going.** Was this another miracle or simply the conclusion of this chaotic scene?

John does not say that Jesus calmed the storm. Matthew and Mark tell us the wind ceased when He got into the boat.