

Jesus Walks on Water

(John 6:16-21)

When Jesus walked on water He demonstrated His divine power over nature—the natural forces of gravity, the laws of physics, even the ability to move effortlessly through a driving wind on a raging sea. It's no surprise, therefore, that this miracle stands out among Jesus' many works. John included this event among his limited list of miraculous signs that prove Jesus to be the Son of God (compare John 20:30-31). In addition to performing an amazing miracle by walking on water, Jesus also demonstrated His loving care for His frightened and floundering disciples. From this incident we learn that we can trust Jesus no matter how stormy life becomes.

**We must learn to obey Jesus
in spite of life's uncertainties (6:16-17).**

Having met the needs of an extremely large crowd by feeding them with five loaves and two fish, Jesus sent the crowd and His disciples away. He then went away by Himself. He would reconnect with His disciples in yet another display of His miraculous power.

Jesus' disciples got into a boat to make their way to Capernaum (6:16-17a).

As evening approached at the end of a very busy day for Jesus and His disciples, the disciples made their way down the hillside to the shore of the Sea of Galilee. There they got into a boat and made their way toward Capernaum. Since several of Jesus' disciples were experienced fishermen, their journey on the water would have posed no threat. They had simply obeyed Jesus and began the journey without Him.

Jesus had not yet joined His disciples and darkness settled in on them (6:17b).

John notes that it became dark and Jesus had not caught up with His disciples. It's possible that the disciples waited for Jesus until the last minute, hoping that He would join them before they launched out on the water. Since it was now dark, they knew Jesus wouldn't join them. In spite of their uncertainty about Jesus' intentions, they obeyed Him and began their journey. We may not always know what Jesus has in store for us, but we must always obey Him without hesitation.

**We must learn to trust
Jesus in spite of life's risks (6:18).**

Like Jesus' disciples, we too face unforeseen risks in life. But we can trust Jesus to see us through life's most difficult challenges.

A great storm came over the sea, making sailing treacherous (16:18).

John simply states that after the disciples left shore a great storm developed over the Sea of Galilee. The wind blew and churned up the water to the degree that the disciples' lives were at risk. Such storms on the Sea of Galilee occasionally caught even the most seasoned fishermen off guard.

The disciples found themselves in great danger, at risk of losing their lives.

The disciples were in real danger of losing their lives. Only Jesus could intervene. When life throws storms in our path, we need to remember to look to Jesus first and foremost. He alone can help us weather the storms of life.

**We must learn to wonder at
Jesus in spite of life's fears (6:19-20).**

While His disciples were straining at the oars on a stormy sea, Jesus was already on His way to help. Even though Jesus' appearance produced fear, the disciples must have soon been overcome with a sense of wonder at Jesus' miraculous power.

As the disciples rowed against the storm they saw Jesus walking to them on the water (6:19a).

The disciples assumed that their only hope for survival on the stormy sea was to make shore. They rowed against the waves for a long time, covering about "twenty or thirty stadia," or about three or three and a half miles. This must have been backbreaking, exhausting work in such conditions. But the disciples had no choice. To stop rowing would mean certain death. Then Jesus appeared, walking on top of the stormy sea! He came close enough to the boat that the disciples could see Him clearly. Here was Jesus, walking to them on the water.

The disciples were afraid at the sight of Jesus walking on the water (6:19b).

When the disciples saw Jesus they were afraid. The sight of a man walking on the water would unsettle the most convinced believer. The unexpected and unusual presence of Jesus, coupled with the real danger of the storm and the exhaustion of rowing, produced understandable fear in the hearts of the disciples.

Jesus identified Himself and assured His disciples that they did not need to be afraid (6:20).

Jesus reassuringly identified Himself to His disciples, saying, “I am.” He then told them not to be afraid. There was no need to fear. Jesus had intervened. He was now present with His disciple and ready to rescue them from danger. He had walked to them on the water in order to bring them to safety. His powerful presence replaces fear with wonder.

**We must learn to receive Jesus
in spite of life’s alternatives (6:21).**

The disciples could have disregarded Jesus in that moment, writing off His appearance as a mere aberration. They could have insisted on solving the problem in their own strength and kept rowing. But they chose instead to receive Jesus, to welcome Him into the boat.

The disciples welcomed Jesus into the boat (6:21a).

John says that when Jesus approached the boat, walking on the water, the disciples “desired” to take Him on board. They were eager to welcome Jesus and the help that only He could provide. Too many people choose to face life on their own instead of receiving Jesus.

The boat immediately reached its destination safely (6:21b).

When Jesus entered the boat, everything changed. The disciples were no longer in danger. “Immediately” the boat reached shore, landing at the intended destination. Jesus miraculously went to His disciples by walking on the water. He miraculously rescued them from danger by bringing them quickly to shore. Jesus cares about our lives. He offers to meet our needs. He gave Himself to rescue us from our sins. We can trust Jesus no matter how stormy life becomes.