

**Jesus Walks On Water**  
**Pastor Ty Blackburn**  
**John 6:16-21**  
**February 5, 2012**

Turn in your Bibles to John 6. We've come to a new story this morning. We looked last week at the miracle and sign that John pointed us to: The feeding of the 5,000. We noted that it was unique in that John chose something to talk about that all the other Gospels mention. Usually John's way of presenting the glory of Christ is to bring new material. We noted that he was the last of the Gospel-writers. Matthew, Mark, and Luke all predated John, most scholars believe by at least 20 years. Matthew and Mark were writing in the 40's, Luke was writing in the 60's, and John was writing in about 85. Some people think as late as 95 AD, so late in the first century. He's aware of the other Gospels. He sees what the Lord has done. The church has had time to copy and distribute those other Gospels. He's aware that those inspired portraits are out there. The Lord has left him living the longest of all the apostles. He was young man and a disciple, one of the youngest, possibly the youngest disciple. Now an old man, having walked with Christ all of these years, he gives us the blessing of that reflection.

The Lord is sovereign and every word of every Gospel is perfect. There is nothing lacking in Matthew, Mark, Luke, and John. There is nothing lacking in any of the books from Genesis to Revelation. But it's wondrous how the Spirit of God has taken different men, different circumstances, and superintended every detail of their lives so that what they would write would be, as 2 Timothy 3:16 says, all Scripture is God-breathed. So the Lord, through John, gives us the benefit of his theological reflection on the life and ministry of Jesus, and the circumstances he's encountering while walking with Christ. We've noted that he's writing to largely a Jewish focus. He's focusing on Jews who have not yet believed and some Jews who have believed, to undergird their faith. He's focusing on Jews and Jewish proselytes, and Gentiles who've become Jews who are familiar with the Old Testament. He's writing to them to explain something of why the Jews have rejected the Jewish Messiah. He presents in his Gospel, mostly new material. The Lord brings to mind his remembrance. The Spirit brings to mind certain instances that provide new backdrop for the glory of the Man, the God-Man, Jesus of Nazareth.

So, as we remember that, we look at the material, we look at how he has put it together. One of the things we've seen about the Gospel of John is that he's the

most selective of all the Gospel-writers. That is, he doesn't include nearly as many miracles as the others do. He knows Matthew, Mark, and Luke are out there and he chooses miracles more carefully. The Spirit of God is working but He uses the personality of the author. John He uses to write in some beautiful, elegant ways. In fact, the more I read this Gospel and study it, the more I marvel at that. Theologians have, through the centuries, talked about how deep and profound, yet how simple and accessible John's Gospel is at the same time. That which one of the church fathers said, "The Gospel of John is so shallow that a child can play in it, yet so deep that an elephant could swim at the same time." I think that's accurate. There is a glory about this particular Gospel. All of the Gospels share in the glory, I understand that, and when I'm preaching in Matthew, it will sound like Matthew is the best thing ever. Why? Because the Word of God is the best thing ever. Whatever passage you're in, you marvel at. There is a lot of reason to marvel at this passage. He includes for us the miracle of the feeding of the 5,000, which He includes in all four other Gospels. God includes that story in all four Gospels.

Why does John include that? I think the reason he includes that is because he is also, in his Gospel, doing something that is unique. He takes a miracle, and very often, not every one of them, not all of the seven signs, but most of them, there is an explanation of the significance of the sign. I'll give you an example. He feeds the 5,000 and then John alone, of the Gospel-writers, gives us the bread of life discourse which immediately follows the feeding of the 5,000. This gives you the theological purpose of why Jesus fed the 5,000. John gives that to us. Matthew, Mark, and Luke end the stories basically with the account of how many baskets they filled, and then they move on. Well John has that glorious discourse, and he does that in every chapter. For instance, He heals a man born blind in Chapter 9. In Chapter 8, he tells us about Jesus preaching and saying, "***I am the light of the world.***" Then He heals a man that was born blind. In fact, the 'I AM' sayings are so important in the Gospel of John.

We looked at the Old Testament passage, Exodus 6, and I mentioned to you Exodus 3, where the Lord is unveiling His glory through Moses to Israel. He's showing them the significance of His Name. His Name, the personal Name of God, Yahweh, means 'I am, that I am.' He is. It means He is the self-existent One. He depends on nothing. He is the One Who is eternally in the present. He is the One Who was, and is, and is to come. He alone is like that. No other being is like that. Every other being is dependent. One of our hymns says, "All that breathes draws life from Thee." We all borrow life from God because He is the One Who is life itself. He is. He is the 'I AM'.

John is really drawing on that imagery in this book because He uses the 'I AM' sayings. He alone, of the Gospel-writers, records for us the 'I AM' sayings of Jesus. In fact, there are seven significant, metaphorical 'I AM' sayings. Let me explain this. The 'I AM' sayings are key in the Gospel of John and there are two types: Metaphorical and absolute. The absolute sayings of Jesus are when He just says, "I am." Like when He said, "***Before Abraham was, I am.***" Now to understand that the Jews understood this, they really understood that. Do you know what they did when He said that? They picked up rocks to stone Him because they knew He was claiming to be the 'I AM'. Another absolute saying, one of the most glorious ones in the Book of John, in my opinion, is John 18:6, where Judas brings the temple guards to find Jesus and they say, "We're looking for Jesus." Here is this mass of guards with their spears and their swords, and Jesus says, "Ego eimi." "I am." The text says that this mass of guards, this mob of guards, takes a step back and falls on their faces. The astonishing thing is that they get up off of the ground and then go arrest Him. His glory shone out for a moment as the 'I AM'. Those are the absolute sayings and there are more of those. We're going to see that there is one in this text today.

Then there are the metaphorical statements where He's saying, "I am," and He's saying, "I am Yahweh," but He's talking about what that means through metaphor. There are seven metaphorical sayings in the Gospel of John. In fact, the seventh is in John 15:1. We'll count down. "***I am the true vine...*** He is the vine and we're the branches. We're nothing if we're not connected to the vine. John 14:6, the sixth one: "***I am the way, and the truth, and the life;***... He's the way, he's the path. Then in John 11:25: "***I am the resurrection and the life;***... John 10:11 and 14, twice He says: ... "***I am the good shepherd;***... John 10 also uses another metaphor: "***I am the door...***" The door of the sheep. The second is in John 8:12, I mentioned it a moment ago: "***I am the light of the world...*** And the first metaphorical statement of Jesus, using the 'I AM' formula is here in this passage, the broader passage, twice He says: "***I am the bread of life...*** John 6:35 and 48, and then in Verse 51 He says, "***I am the living bread...*** which is basically the same thing. "***I am the bread of life...*** three times.

Now that's the reason John includes this picture of the feeding of the 5,000. He ties those, 'I AM' statements. Think about when He says: "***I am the resurrection and the life...*** When does He say that? He's about to raise Lazarus from the dead. You see, the metaphor is graphically impressed on the hearers by the picture. That's his mode of operation. John is seeing this glorious presentation of Jesus. The Spirit has opened his eyes to see it and he's presenting it to us. His main agenda in this passage is to show them the miracle and then give them the message. I say all of

that because it's so important for us, if we're going to understand the scriptures, to carefully understand the intention of the author. The Spirit of God has superintended the author. Why did John say what he wants to say? One of the greatest problems we see in evangelicalism today is people don't interpret scripture properly. They come to a passage like Jesus walking on the water and they just start making up stuff. "I think that this represents this and this represents that." On what basis do you say that? That's a dangerous thing. I mean, Satan, one of his strategies is to use scripture out of context. So we need to understand it.

Now back to the issue of, "*I'm the bread of life...* He does the miracle and He wants to get to the point of, "*I'm the bread of life...* Why does He stop for a large parentheses that we're about to read? Why does John give us the picture of Jesus walking on the water? I say that because all four Gospels give us the feeding of the 5,000. Matthew and Mark also tell us about Jesus walking on the water, which happens that same night. It's clear when you read John and the other Gospels, that's when it happens, the next day in the AM.

Luke doesn't tell us about it though. Luke moves on because what the Lord is doing in him does not include this part, but John stops and spends time then on Jesus walking on the water. The question we are going to ask ourselves today is: What is his point? Remember he's selective, as all the Gospel-writers are. He's choosing to tell us only as he tells us in John 20:31, these signs and many others that Jesus does. So many so that if they were all written down, there would not be room for them. The books couldn't contain all that Jesus did. But these are written so that you may believe that Jesus is the Christ, the Son of the Living God. "I've written these by the Spirit of God so that you would know Who Jesus is." So why did he include this sign, the walking on the water, that's the question.

Now let's read the text and we'll continue to look at that. I want to start in Verse 14. Technically, Verses 16-21 is the paragraph we're going to be talking about, but I think 14 and 15 are very important. In fact, let me just go ahead and say why. When you read a passage of scripture, and you're looking at something that all four Gospel-writers talked about, it's helpful to look at the other Gospels. Not so you can fill in details so much, and that's somehow appropriate, but really it's better to say, "What did John leave out and what did he emphasize? What was he trying to say?" And what you have in Verses 14 and 15 is something that is also not in any of the other Gospels. John alone records for us the response of the people to His miracle of the feeding of the 5,000. Nobody else records that, and that is significant. Look at Verse 14:

*John 6:14-21 ~ Therefore when the people saw the sign (which is the feeding of the 5,000) which He had performed, they said, “This is truly the Prophet who is to come into the world.” 15 So Jesus, perceiving that they were intending to come and take Him by force to make Him king, withdrew again to the mountain by Himself alone. 16 Now when evening came, His disciples went down to the sea, 17 and after getting into a boat, they started to cross the sea to Capernaum. It had already become dark, and Jesus had not yet come to them. 18 The sea began to be stirred up because a strong wind was blowing. 19 Then, when they had rowed about three or four miles, they saw Jesus walking on the sea and drawing near to the boat; and they were frightened. 20 But He said to them, “It is I; do not be afraid.” 21 So they were willing to receive Him into the boat, and immediately the boat was at the land to which they were going.*

Let's pray together.

*Father, as we come to Your Word, we acknowledge again that we are not able and You alone are. If You don't reveal to us Your Truth, we will not know it. We ask that You, by Your Spirit, would open our hearts and our minds and change us. We pray in Jesus' Name, Amen.*

1) Consider the Context:

It's interesting, I said, that He gives us the context in a unique way. No other Gospel-writer tells us about the response of the people. Matthew and Mark tell us that Jesus sent the disciples on ahead and that Jesus dismissed the crowd, which in itself is something of a miracle when we understand what John tells us. They are intending to come make Him king, remember? I said last week that 5,000 men means 20,000 people probably. 20,000 are caught up, this mob is caught up in a frenzy of excitement and euphoria. “The king is here! The prophet who is to come into the world is here!” They're intending to take Him by force but Jesus does not let that happen. Matthew and Mark tell us that He withdrew again to the mountain by Himself alone to pray. John doesn't mention that point. What he seems to be emphasizing is the intention of the people and their response to Jesus.

I want to give you an overview before we get into the nuts and bolts of what I think the main point is. John doesn't tell us He went up on the mountain to pray, which of course He did, when we add Matthew and Mark in. The issue is He is separating Himself from the people. The people are caught up and want to make Him king and He withdraws from them. In the face of this great mob, He omnisciently

knows their heart. In Verse 15, *...perceiving that they were intending to come and take Him by force to make Him king...* He knows what they want to do. John often gives us glimpses into our Savior's omniscience. He knows all things, but He will not be dictated to. You're seeing sovereign freedom here. What you're seeing here is what the Bible really talks about, what the name Yahweh means. "I am Who I am. I will be Who I will be. Don't even think about trying to dictate to me. And if you come to Me, you need to come with your shoes off." The Lord is sovereign and so this is what's happening. John is emphasizing that the people are wanting to take Him and make Him what they want Him to be, but here John is revealing and opening up the veil for us to see the glory of Christ. Look at Jesus withstand in an omniscient way their intention, and then look at Him not further disclose Himself to them. He pulls back and He then selectively discloses His glory according to His sovereign freedom to whom He will. He discloses His glory to 12 men. He could have done it to 20,000.

Now this is where you step back and you say, "What about the way that we think? What would I have done if I could have been there?" The disciples were probably doing this. We know enough about Peter to speculate. They were probably caught up in the euphoria too. There is power to a mob mentality, isn't there? It's amazing what mobs will do. I think actually that's Biblical. That's what Genesis 11, the Tower of Babel, is all about. A mob can do some incredible wickedness and there becomes some spiritual power about it. That's why God said, "We've got to come down and do something about this." That's what's happening here. The people, in the euphoria, are caught up and want to make God do what they want Him to do. The disciples certainly were prone to have that same kind of earthly mindset. We talked last time about being concerned about external things, not internal things. We want to take God and make Him do what we want. "Save me the way I want to be saved." But He is Yahweh, He will save whom He wants to save, and He will save how He wants to save, and He will save from what He wants to save. That's what is happening here. The Lord is distancing Himself and the disciples are probably caught up in it. That's one of the reasons I think that He separates Himself from them too. "You guys need to go cool off and get your heads together. The best way for you to get your heads together and get perspective is to go out in the ocean and be trapped in the storm, and to fear for your life. Then I'll come reveal Myself to you."

So the Lord is going to show them His sovereign freedom, His glory. He discloses Himself to whom He wills. This is something that is really clear in the Bible and a lot of folks bristle at these kinds of things when we talk about God's sovereignty. It's part of our sin, let me just say that. We want our freedom, and the greatest

concern of man, because we are sin, and sin is exalting ourselves. What is the essence of sin? The desire to be God. Is that not what Satan said to Eve? “Hey, take the fruit, for the day you eat of it you will be like God.” We want to be the master of our fate and the captain of our soul. So man, even as believers, we fall into this. We want it our way. So often that’s why folks resist teaching on the sovereignty of God. There’s this desire to protect man’s sovereignty, as if that’s the be all and end all. But we are not, He is! When you look at the whole of Scripture, I’ll give you an example. When Jesus says this, think about the implications of this:

***Matthew 11:21 ~ “Woe to you, Chorazin! Woe to you, Bethsaida! For if the miracles had occurred in Tyre and Sidon which occurred in you, they would have repented long ago in sackcloth and ashes.***

I’m not sure if I’m getting that right. Tyre and Sidon and then also Sodom and Gomorrah. You remember that there are two passages where Jesus makes this statement. “Woe to you two cities, for if the miracles done in you had been done in these wicked cities, they would have repented long ago.” Here’s the question, why didn’t God do them in Tyre and Sidon? Why didn’t God do them in Sodom and Gomorrah? Because God chose not to. That’s it! If the miracles had been done in them, they would have repented, Jesus said. Did God forget? “I missed that opportunity!” No, the Lord is doing as He wills. The reality is, the Bible presents this, every human being deserves hell. We do not deserve a chance. We are by nature objects of wrath. We think we all deserve a chance. We think that we should have freedom. We do have a free will according to the Scripture, but our free will is bound by our nature. The Bible says there is no one who seeks God, not even one. There is no one who does good, not even one. Look at Romans 3:10-18. ***There is no fear of God before their eyes.*** The Lord, if He gave us what we deserved, if we really want what we deserve, everybody would be banished to hell.

He, in His grace, is revealing Himself, but He wants us to know all along that He will do it on His own terms, in His own time, and in His own way. That’s what is being communicated here in John because that is a part of Who he’s showing Jesus to be. He’s willing to give us a large parenthesis on the walking on water. He’s interrupting the bread of life which is telling us He’s everything we need, and that’s the glory of it. Jesus is everything we need. He satisfies the deepest longings of the heart. ***“I am the bread of life; he who comes to Me will not hunger, and he who believes in Me will never thirst,*** but will have life! And He says, ***“Whosoever will may come... Absolutely.*** There is still the mystery of God’s sovereignty here in this passage as well as throughout the Scripture.

Now, to understand this I want us to organize the rest of our thoughts around three points. Well, actually, I did the first one already. I'll tell you what we just did. To understand the significance of the walking on water, we first have to consider the context. So if you can find a space up above, write one, we did that.

## 2) Survey the Scene:

The Lord, through John, gives us the most vivid of all the Gospel accounts of this particular miracle. This is to be distinguished from another one we sometimes get mixed up in our minds and conflate things as we read the text. It happens to me and it happens to all of us. There's another miracle where Jesus calms the storm, but in that miracle He was asleep in the boat. It happened earlier than this miracle when you look at the synoptic Gospels Matthew and Mark which also tell this story. So the Lord is revealing His glory as Master of the seas a couple of different times. This is the second time the disciples had that unique revelation. They alone saw the first, and they alone see the second because the Lord focuses the spotlight. Here is the great crowd coming to Him. He has 20,000 people and He could go out and walk on water right then if He wanted to, but He chooses not to. He sends the crowds home and He shows His glory to the 12. I'm going to look at 3 questions under surveying the scene: When? Where? And How?

***When evening came...*** It's the night, the same night He fed the 5,000. What were we told earlier in this passage about this time? Remember, if you were here last week, we saw Jesus' feeding of the 5,000. John goes out of his way to tell us something the other Gospel-writers don't make as clear: That Jesus did this miracle when Passover was at hand. That's interesting when we also consider the fact that John makes a special note of the feasts throughout Jesus' ministry. He tells us about six, or discourses miracles at six different times. In Chapter 5 we saw an unnamed feast. The Feast of the Jews, when Jesus healed the man at the Pool of Bethesda. In Chapter 7, we're going to see Jesus talk about His glory at the Feast of the Tabernacles. Then in Chapter 10, the Feast of Dedication, Hanukkah. So there are three: One unnamed, one Feast of the Tabernacles, One Feast of Dedication, and there are three Passovers.

I think the Passover is very important to John. I mentioned last time, Chapter 2, Chapter 6, and Chapter 11 has three Passovers like three panels. Like a three-panel backdrop to see the glory of Christ. He wants us to see the 5,000 against that backdrop, and this miracle of walking on water against the backdrop of the Passover, because he's about to unveil one of his main themes which is the 'I AM'



sayings. Jesus is 'I AM'. That's John's message. You see that in Verse 20. I'm going to come back to this, but that's when it says, when they are frightened, He said to them: ***"It is I;..."*** In the Greek He says, "Ego eimi." "I am." That was also the characteristic way to say, ***"It is I;..."*** That is essentially what he was saying in John 18:6: "We're looking for Jesus." ***"It is I;..."*** It's confusing for us because He didn't really say, "It is I." He says, "I am." It just happens to mean that in context. So He says, in Verse 20, ***"It is I;..."*** "I am." This is the first absolute saying of Jesus recorded in the Gospel of John. Like in John 8:58, where He says: ***Before Abraham was, I am.***" In John 18:6, and a couple of other places in John 8, "I am."

We saw last time that Chapter 5 ends with a discussion of Moses and how Moses wrote about Jesus. But then back to Verse 14, material that's not anywhere else in the other Gospels. What was it that the people were saying? In fact, a better translation would be this, in Verse 14: ***Therefore when the people saw the sign which He had performed, they...*** were saying. That is the Greek imperfect tense. They had the aorist tense and they had the imperfect. We really have the same things. We don't call them that, but we say, for instance, "I went to the store." That's kind of an aorist tense. It means something that happened at a point in time. We describe an event which may have taken 20 minutes to get there, but I describe it as, "I went to the store." If I said, "I was going to the store," you see, that's the imperfect tense. It focuses on the action longer. He's saying, "The people were saying..." There was this continuous action in past time, an ongoing action in past time. That's the imperfect. "They were saying, 'This is truly the prophet who was to come into the world.'" Apparently the crowd is saying this back and forth. "This is truly the prophet who was to come into the world." What's significant about that is, "The prophet who is to come into the world," is the second Moses. In Deuteronomy 18:15, in Moses' prophecy on the very verge of his death, he says, "Listen, the Lord is going to raise up for you a prophet from among your own brothers. He's going to raise him up. Listen to him." And they knew that there was a Messiah figure that would be truly the Prophet. There were a lot of prophets that came, but there's going to be one Great Prophet, and they're saying, "This is the Great Prophet." So for the Jews reading this, all of this imagery about the Passover and the bread, what we're going to see is in the next section when Jesus runs into the crowd again, the crowd comes to Him, and they want to talk about the bread. They're trying to think of a tactful way to bring up, "Hey, we're hungry." They're missing the whole point, and they say, "Hey, what sign will You do to show us who You are?" How ridiculous. "Hey, you know what God did in the Exodus is He gave us manna from Heaven." They connected in their minds the feeding of the 5,000 with manna from Heaven. Jesus then says, "Yes, I am the True Bread out of

Heaven, which is where I was going all along. You happened to find the point of the miracle that I did, but your focus is all wrong. You just want more bread.”

So for the Jews, schooled in the Old Testament and in the feast, it's like us when somebody makes literal allusions. Sometimes you pick up on it clearly, and other times it's almost a subliminal effect that these things are foreshadowing in books. That's what's happening here. There's all of this mosaic exodus imagery that is piling up in the mind of the reader. All of this is preparing the stage for what? The winds are blowing, the waves are crashing, and they're frightened. "I AM." Even though it could also be read as, "It is I," there's that echo in the mind, saying, "Is that what is being said?"

Where? The Sea of Galilee. We saw that. He was careful to tell us that this was the Sea of Galilee or Tiberius. In the text over and over, it's the sea. He's walking on the sea. Not the water, but the sea. This Sea of Galilee is actually the lowest fresh water lake in the world. It's 700 feet below sea level, and the lowest lake in the world is the Dead Sea, but it's a salt water lake at the bottom of the Jordan River. It's pretty amazing that the Sea of Galilee is 700 feet below sea level. It's surrounded on three sides by mountains that in some places, are 3000 feet above sea level, so that you have almost 4000 feet difference between the water on the Sea of Galilee and the mountains. The sea is surrounded by hills and mountains. On the east is what you may have heard of in the news, the Golan Heights. That's the territory to the east of the Sea of Galilee. But one of the things about the geography of that, with the low water and the mountain terrain, is that storms can come up quickly, because the cool air coming off the mountains and hitting the warm air on the water, and so the latent heat capacity of water creates some tension and sometimes very violent storms. So they take off on their journey to go on over to Capernaum, and John tells us in Verse 17:

***John 6:17 ~ and after getting into a boat, they started to cross the sea to Capernaum...***

Now here again, the imperfect tense emphasizes certain verbs. They literally were crossing the sea to Capernaum. He wants us to see them on the journey. He could have said 'they crossed', but of course we know something's going to happen. I could say, "I went to the store yesterday, and then I came home." But if I said, "I was going to the store," what would you expect? You'd expect me to tell you something about what happened on the way. And that's why there is this imperfect tense. They were crossing the sea. And then in the imperfect tense: The sea began to be stirred up. The sea was being stirred up. It didn't just begin to be stirred, but it was an ongoing action. It was being stirred up because a strong wind was

blowing, and that's even the Greek present tense for blowing, which implies a continuous action. The wind is blowing, and blowing, and blowing, and the sea is being stirred up, and stirred up. The tenses are important here, and you can see this in certain Bible translations better than others. One of the reasons I read out of the New American Standard is because they're more faithful to represent this.

In Verse 19, something happens. The author goes to the present tense, but it's hard to read that in Greek, because we're talking about something that happened a long time ago. Even when John writes this, it's like 50 to 60-year-old action he's talking about. But it says:

***John 6:19-20 ~ Then, when they had rowed about three or four miles, they \*saw Jesus walking on the sea...***

Literally, in the Greek, it says, "They are seeing..." whereas the King James translates it as "They see..." So it's "you see" versus "they saw". They are seeing Jesus walking on the sea.

***...and drawing near to the boat; and they were frightened. 20 But He \*said to them,...***

All 4 Greek verbs are in the present. And what this is, is a case of dramatic present. It's helpful to notice things like this. If you have an NAS, you probably have a little star/asterisk symbol beside 'saw' and 'said'. The King James actually translates it as "they see Jesus walking..." but it helps because you're telling a story.

Let me give you an example. If I was telling you a story and I wanted the action to be more vivid – bear with me. Today's Super Bowl Sunday. I'm going to do a football thing. I don't usually talk about football, because I don't really care that much about it, and the Falcons aren't in it. But just to illustrate this, if we want something to be vivid, there's something we all naturally do. I'll show you. I'm going to tell you a story twice. It'll be pretty brief so you won't get too bored with it, especially if you don't care anything about football. Peyton Manning's brother Eli Manning is going to be quarterbacking today, and is a great quarterback in his own right. He's a Super Bowl winner and all that. But when Peyton Manning was in College at the University of Tennessee, he was quarterback for the Tennessee Volunteers. They were playing Georgia (I'm a Georgia fan) and I'm at the game. It's like 9 to 3 in the 3rd quarter. We're still in the game. They're a great team.

He's the Heisman Trophy winner that year. They have 4th down at the one foot line.

Now, here's the story, and watch me. I'm going to use the past tense, and then I'm going to come back and tell it again in the dramatic present, and it's going to be amazing the difference. You're going to just be blown away.

*They decided to go for it on the 4th down on the 1 foot line rather than kick a field goal. They want to sort of stick the knife in and just put Georgia out of the game. So on the 1 foot line, they called a quarterback sneak. Peyton Manning tried to jump over the line and he hit a wall. The defense stuffed him right there. Somehow he found himself still on his feet, and suddenly he ran out to the right and threw a touchdown pass.*

It was really frustrating. We stuffed him, and he gets on his feet and throws a touchdown pass. You were doing a quarterback sneak. Be faithful to what your intention was. Now, listen to this a little differently. I had used 9 verbs all in the past tense there. I'm still going to use the first three in the past tense, because I'm telling you something that happened 14 years ago.

*It was 4th down and goal from the 1. They decided to go for it. They called a quarterback sneak. Peyton Manning, the quarterback, is trying to jump over the line, and he hits a wall. The defense stuffs him right there. Somehow, he finds himself still on his feet behind the line, and suddenly there he is running out to the right and throwing a touchdown pass.*

Now, obviously I got a little louder too. That helps if you do that. But if I say 'he finds himself' instead of 'he found himself', and 'he throws' instead of 'he threw', you see it more. And what John is doing here is he's using the dramatic present. They're out there in the dark. Jesus has not come yet, and they were seeing Him. In fact, the word translated 'saw' really, I think, would be better translated 'beheld'. The earlier NAS used 'beheld'. It means to look at with wonder. There are different words for 'see' in Greek just like we have. The word 'see' and the word 'behold'. It's actually almost 'to see with wonder' or 'to marvel at'. The idea is they're out on the sea, they were making their way across, and then suddenly they're seeing Jesus, and they're not just seeing Him, but they're marvelling.

What do they see? He's walking on the water and He's drawing near to the boat. And then back to the past tense: They were terrified. They were frightened. It goes back to the past tense, because he doesn't want us so much to see their fear – he

does, but he wants us to see more of Jesus. He doesn't say 'they are being' frightened. No, look at Jesus. And then when it says, 'he said', the tense is 'but He says to them', in the present tense. He's saying to them. He's focusing our attention on what Jesus does and says.

One more thing I need to mention is, after I talked about when and where, one other thing he tells us about the when and where, one other tense he uses is the imperfect past or continual action. They were going. They were crossing. The sea was being stirred up. Then you have the Greek present. They are seeing. Jesus is walking. Jesus is drawing. He is saying. But then you have actually an interesting thing in Verse 17, when he says:

***John 6:17 ~ and after getting into a boat, they started to cross the sea to Capernaum.***

Then he kind of interrupts the flow, and says:

***It had already become dark, and Jesus had not yet come to them.***

That's important information. But he uses another tense which emphasizes really the past tense, the pluperfect. ***It had already become dark,...*** The idea is it's in past time duration and it's over. It had already become dark and in the same tense, Jesus had not come to them. John has so much wonderful imagery in his book, and I think here, he's drawing the picture of great darkness, and in the sentence structure, he wants you to look at how dark it was at the same time Jesus had not come. It's so dark because the Light of the world has not come. There they are and they're in this situation of great darkness. The sea is stirred up. A strong wind is blowing. They're trying to make it, and yet all this time they've been out on the sea, they've only made it half way. About three miles is all they've progressed. It's probably a 5 or 6 mile journey. They've got 2 or 3 miles to go, and then suddenly they see Jesus. They are seeing, they are beholding, and they are marvelling at Jesus.

So we surveyed the scene. After that, we considered the context, and now we want to marvel at or behold His majesty.

### 3) Behold His Majesty:

What John does in those Greek present tenses is he focuses first on what Jesus is doing, and then on what Jesus is saying. So the idea first is to see the majesty of

His works and then the majesty of His words, because John wants us to see Jesus against the backdrop of the Passover, against the backdrop of the bread, against the backdrop of Moses, the expectation of Him being the prophet, the people wanting to make Him king, Jesus sovereignly stepping back from that, and now He's disclosing His glory. He is walking on the water. They are marvelling at Him walking on the water. What an astonishing thing. In the other miracle, He was in the boat, and remember, He was asleep in a previous time on the Sea of Galilee. The disciples, fearing for their lives, say, "Hey, why don't You wake up? We need some help." And He says, "Oh ye of little faith." He says, "Peace be still!" and the waves calm. And they all say, "What manner of man is this, that even the wind and the waves obey Him?" Matthew, Mark, and Luke record that miracle. That's astonishing, but what's happening here is John's taken it to the next step. It's the next revelation. Not only does He speak, but He walks on the water.

I think what we have here in the imagery is, again, if you're steeped in your Old Testament as the Jews were, you understand that there is this imagery in the Old Testament of the sea being chaos. The sea is the place, the abode, of evil. The sea is that which is to be feared, and as you see here, the waves are being greatly aroused, raised up, and stirred up. It's overwhelming the disciples, but here comes Jesus walking on it. It's no problem for Him. That's because the Lord rides on the seas. His path is on the storm. There's nothing too hard for Yahweh. There's nothing too hard for Him. Evil is under His feet. And so that's what they're seeing. They thought He was a ghost. Mark doesn't want us to focus on this as much. He said, "I'm not concerned about why they were frightened. I want you to see that they were frightened, and then see what He did in response." But first of all, He's walking on water. Let's look at Psalm 29:3-4 and Psalm 29:10-11. Remember, when you see LORD in all caps, that's Yahweh. That's the way we translate the Hebrew Name of God: Yahweh.

**Psalm 29:3-4**

***The voice of the LORD is upon the waters;***

***The God of glory thunders,***

***The LORD is over many waters.***

***The voice of the LORD is powerful,***

***The voice of the LORD is majestic.***

**Psalm 29:10-11**

***The LORD sat as King at the flood;***

***Yes, the LORD sits as King forever.***

***The LORD will give strength to His people;***

***The LORD will bless His people with peace.***

The LORD sat as King at the flood. Think about that. What an amazing, chaotic, incredibly powerful, seemingly out of control event. I think that's why we have the Grand Canyon. We who believe in 6-day creation and believe that God created the world as He said in 6 days – that's the way we understand Genesis – the original audience would have never estimated that it was ages, and evolution just doesn't make sense anyway. I've got to resist the temptation to go back and deal with that issue. That's for another place and another time. Today, the idea is that the flood was so powerful that it cut the Grand Canyon in a moment. It's not that silly little river in the bottom of the Grand Canyon cutting that awesome canyon. It just takes a little bit of logic to figure that out. And Mount St. Helens which erupted in 1982 produced a miniature Grand Canyon in a matter of hours. Why? Because when it erupted, it displaced a lake, and the water rushed down, and the force of water was so great that it carved out a miniature of the Grand Canyon. Any scientist who was open minded and who really wanted to observe and deduce truth would say, "That is how the Grand Canyon happened." And that is how it happened, but they just don't want to believe. They're saying we are objective. Think about the kind of power that would create the Grand Canyon – water coming up from the depths, water coming down and rushing around.

God says, "The LORD sat as King." Jesus, there in John 6, is sitting as King forever on the waters. We get overwhelmed by these things, and the message here is don't worry. He is Lord. He is King. He rides on the sea.

He doesn't just walk on the water, but there's a second work that he does. John is careful to tell us about the second miracle in Verse 21:

***John 6:21 ~ So they were willing to receive Him into the boat, and immediately the boat was at the land to which they were going.***

'They were willing' is the imperfect again. They were wanting to receive Him into the boat. That's the aorist. So at that moment, He gets into the boat, and immediately the boat was at the land. That's aorist again. They wanted Him to come in. They're out there in the ocean. He's walking. It's all continuous. They want to receive Him into the boat. He gets into the boat, and immediately they're there. We're out in the middle of the Sea of Galilee, and now we're there. That's a miracle. How did that happen? It's because He is sovereign over time and space. I think a thoughtful Jew might have thought of Psalm 107. Verse 30 is the key Verse. This is a great passage on the power of the Word to deliver you from the

overwhelming forces of sin, and how you have to grow in grace. It's a great passage for Biblical counselling. God says He sent forth His word and healed them. They had been prisoners in misery.

*Psalm 107:23-30*

*23 Those who go down to the sea in ships,  
Who do business on great waters;  
24 They have seen the works of the Lord,  
And His wonders in the deep.  
25 For He spoke and raised up a stormy wind,  
Which lifted up the waves of the sea.  
26 They rose up to the heavens, they went down to the depths;  
Their soul melted away in their misery.  
27 They reeled and staggered like a drunken man,  
And were at their wits' end.  
28 Then they cried to the Lord in their trouble,  
And He brought them out of their distresses.  
29 He caused the storm to be still,  
So that the waves of the sea were hushed.  
30 Then they were glad because they were quiet,  
So He guided them to their desired haven.*

Immediately they were there. This is Yahweh in the boat. That's the message that John is showing them. Do you understand that this is the LORD who has gotten into the boat with them? So look at the majesty of His works. Only Yahweh can do that.

Now we have the majesty of His words. There are two statements here. "I am" and "Do not be afraid." This is His first ego eimi. He actually has one that you might consider in His discussion with the woman at the well, when she says, "I know that when the Messiah comes..." and He says, "It is I. I am he." That's an ego eimi there too. But this one is the first absolute one, and in the context, seems to be clear that with all that backdrop, He's saying to look at who He is: I AM. This is the majesty of His words: I am who I am. I will be who I will be. They wanted to take me and make Me king, and the Lord who sits enthroned laughed. He scoffs at them. You would dictate to Me? This is Yahweh. He will not be dictated to. And so He dismisses the crowd. They go their way and then He chooses His twelve and to disclose His glory to them. He has mercy on whom He has mercy, and He reveals His glory to whom He will reveal His glory.



So He then says, “It is I. I am. Do not be afraid. Do not go on fearing.” When you hear the Lord speaking, when you see the Lord’s glory, that is the one thing that erases fear. If you struggle with fear and anxiety, what do you need to see? You need to see His glory. We have reason to be afraid in this world. Honestly, if you really think about it, we’re so frail that all kinds of things could happen today. A plane could fall on this building right now and we could all be dead. It could just fall out of the sky. Anything could happen. You worry about flying on a plane? Well it’s dangerous to drive home. All kinds of things could happen to you and me. We are so frail and weak, and you can worry about that or you can focus not on who you are, but who He is. He’s I AM. He’s the One who delights to be the all sufficient One. That’s the message of “I AM the Bread of Life.” You are hungry? Come to Me, for I AM able to meet your needs. You’re thirsty? I’m the one who gives living water. Your life is short. You see the end of your life coming. Well, I AM the resurrection and the Life.” Everything that we need, He is, and He’s showing us that in such a beautiful portrait.

God has crafted the scene with the disciples in this deep darkness, in the turbulent seas, having themselves been caught up in the mob mentality, now fearing for their lives, seeing their frailty, and suddenly they get their eyes on Him and everything is okay. I love to remember that you and I are absolutely incapable of being killed until the day God says. It doesn’t matter if there are armies of people. Just look at Elisha. Armies surround Dothan and want to kill Elisha. Do you remember that? There’s Elisha with his servant, sleeping up on the rooftop. Elisha’s servant wakes up early to get the coffee going. “Hey boss, I’ve got bad news. The stuff you’ve been doing to the king of Syria, it’s finally caught up with us. You’ve been telling the king of Israel how to escape from him and he’s surrounded us.” And Elisha says, “Greater are those who are with us than those who are with them” The servant is thinking, “Dothan’s a small town and we’ve got nobody. What are you talking about? You haven’t woken up yet. Wake up! You’re dreaming.” And Elisha says, “Lord, open his eyes.” Then he sees Dothan there nestled in the mountains of Israel, a small town, with the armies of the Aramaeans, the Syrians, surrounding the city of Dothan. He had seen that with his natural eyes, but God opens his eyes and he sees that we’re not surrounded, but the Aramaeans are surrounded, because the mountains are filled with the Heavenly host. The angels of God are not Precious Moments figures. They are mighty warriors and they have surrounded the Aramaeans.

It doesn’t matter who you and I are. It didn’t matter who Elisha was. It matters who the Lord is. And when you are with the Lord, you and the Lord are the majority. You have nothing to fear. “For if He is for us, who’s against us?” Paul

says. They're saying, "We have no hope. We want to make things work our way." But how do you get with the Lord? You submit. You don't dictate. You and I must stop dictating. We're supposed to pray. Prayer is really more about us submitting. We take a request or burden and we lay it before Him and we say what? "Thy Kingdom come. Thy will be done." And when we do that, we're acknowledging Him to be the great I AM. We're submitted, and we're in a place where then He will reveal His glory, for the Lord looks to this one, the one who trembles at His Word. When you tremble before the Lord, He shows His glory. He unveils His glory, and then it doesn't matter what's going on around you. That's what John wants us to see. That's what he wanted the Jews he was writing to, to see is that Jesus is that sovereign Lord.

So if you come to Christ, and if you bow before Christ, you have the assurance that He is everything that you will ever need. And not only is He always going to be with you, but He's going to take you home. He who began a good work in you will complete it until the day of Christ Jesus. You feel like the storms are coming. "I don't know if I'm going to drown in this storm." Only if God wants you to. And if it is, it'll be for His glory, and then, like Paul said, you'll be with Him which is better by far. But there's nothing to fear when the Lord is in your view. May God help us to glory in Christ, and to see Him alone, and desire His glory, and to surrender to Him, and to receive Him on His terms, because He will reveal Himself on His terms and in His time. The neat thing is when you understand that, you realize that so often in the dark moments, the storms, it's just like that song we read, where the Lord sent the storm so that the storm could be a backdrop for His glory. And so what happens to you and me is we walk through life and we say, "Oh no, a storm!" And I know that every day I wake up and I want it to be sunny in my life. I want to sing zippity-do-da, but that's because we don't know what we ought to want. When the Lord brings darkness, the darkness is just a backdrop like Spurgeon said, for the diamond. The jeweller puts his most beautiful diamonds on a black cloth. When the black cloth is being spread, then just cling more closely to Jesus. I want to see You, Jesus. I want to know You. Show me that You're everything that I need. "Open wide your mouth and I will fill it." He is the Bread of Life.

Let's pray...

*Father, we praise and honor You. Lord, You are King. You are the King. You are great and greatly to be praised. Lord, what makes us marvel is that You take notice of us in a storm, that You have ordained the storm to draw us to Yourself, that You delight to invite people who are not, and who deserve nothing, to come to You and*

*find fullness. Let him who is thirsty come and drink. Let he who is hungry come and buy bread. We honor and glorify You. Father, we pray that You would help every person in this room to evaluate where we are before You, had we only heard about You with our ears but not seen You with our eyes. Have we become partakers of Christ? Open hearts, Lord. Do the work that only You can do by Your sovereign Spirit, and bring forth repentance and faith, and bring forth deeper repentance and deeper faith in those who already believe, so that You might be magnified and lifted up in people who are more and more satisfied with Your fullness. We pray this for the glory of Your Holy Name, and for the glory of Your Son, amen.*

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