

**GOSPEL OF JOHN**  
**THE IMPORTANCE OF CHRIST'S PRESENCE**  
**JOHN 6:15-21**

**Introduction**

After Jesus fed the 5000+, He was probably at the peak of His popularity. In fact, Jesus was so popular at this point that *John 6:15* says that some had in mind to take Him by force and make Him to become their king. I don't know exactly how they would have gone about to do that, but Jesus didn't stick around to find out! He sent them away and went up into a mountain to pray!

Understand that **Jesus didn't want to be king of the nation at this time, but He DID want to be king of these folks hearts and lives. He still does!**

To show how fickle people are, by the time this chapter is finished, Jesus' popularity is pretty much over. After Jesus gives His discourse about being the Bread come down from Heaven, pretty much no one, except the 12 disciples were left to follow Christ.

Popularity can be such a fleeting thing can't it! If you base your life on trying to be popular and stay popular, only one thing is guaranteed! You will be in for a roller coaster ride as you try to keep up with maintaining your popularity!

In our passage today, we find that Jesus had sent His Disciples back over the sea by ship toward Capernaum while He dispersed the multitude and then went up in the mountain alone to pray. We're going to focus on the Disciples.

Let's read the passage *John 6:15-21*.

Matthew's account of this includes some things that John's account does not. *Matthew 14:22-23* 22 *And straightway Jesus constrained his disciples to get into a ship, and to go before him unto the other side, while he sent the multitudes away.* 23 *And when he had sent the multitudes away, he went up into a mountain apart to pray: and when the evening was come, he was there alone.* (Mark's account also says that Jesus *constrained* them.)

Mark's account of this event indicates that the mindset of the Disciples after the feeding of the 5000 was not the best and that they quickly forgot about that miracle. *Mark 6:52* *For they considered not the miracle of the loaves: for their heart was hardened.*

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Now we see that **Jesus withdrew Himself from the multitudes and from His Disciples, not arbitrarily, but for a purpose.** Part of His purpose was to pray. But we can also see how His purpose was to teach His Disciples a lesson of great importance. That is what I want us to consider this morning: *The Importance Of Christ's Presence.*

**I. WE SEE THE NATURE OF STORMS AND TRIALS!**

**A. Sometimes Storms And Trials Can Come Upon Us Unexpectedly!**

I have read where the geographical location of the Sea of Galilee makes it a likely place for sudden storms.

Had there been a raging storm already taking place or even if there appeared to be a storm on the horizon, it is unlikely that the disciples would have entered into the ship and tried to set sail through it.

So the most likely scenario is that they set sail and then the storm suddenly came upon them and caught them off guard!

Life can be that same way. If we see the possibility of trouble, we try to avoid it as best we can, don't we. No sane person goes looking for trouble or difficulties in their lives, but sometimes these things will just come upon us and catch us off guard!

**B. When We Are Dealing With Unexpected Storms And Trials They Can Frustrate Us!**

The disciples were, no doubt, counting on the ship, the wind, and on their own abilities to get them across the sea. After all, there were a number of them that were strong, experienced fishermen who were acquainted with both this water, with boats, and with dealing with storms!

Yet, somehow this storm showed itself differently!

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According to Mark's account, **Jesus saw what was going on from where he was on the land.**

(Now, the disciples didn't know that Jesus could see them!)  
*Mark 6:47-48 47 And when even was come, the ship was in the midst of the sea, and he alone on the land. 48 And he saw them toiling in rowing; for the wind was contrary unto them:*

So, it was evening (getting dark), they were in the midst of the sea (PNR), it was stormy, the wind was contrary to them in such a way that they were at the mercy of the winds and the waves. They were doing the best they could, but they were toiling in their rowing and not really making any progress!

The winds that were normally useful in carrying them along were now contrary to them intensifying their predicament. And to their knowledge Jesus didn't know what He sent them into!

**That is a picture of frustration!** We all experience a certain level of that frustration when we find ourselves in the midst of a trial that we cannot control and it appears that Jesus is oblivious to what we are going through! **But He is not!**

**C. Jesus Knew What He Was Doing When He Sent Them Into The Storm!**

- 1. It was Jesus Who sent His Disciples into this storm!**
- 2. Remember, nothing ever takes the LORD by surprise... He knows our past, present, and future... He's omniscient!**
- 3. We need to understand that the LORD always sees and He is always in control... even when it might appear that He is not!**

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- 4. The Lord directed them into this for His purpose AND...for their benefit.**

*Romans 8:28 And we know that all things work together for good to them that love God, to them who are the called according to his purpose.*

- 5. Realize today that trials are NOT just God-directed for OTHERS but they are for US also!**

*WE SEE THE NATURE OF STORMS AND TRIALS!*

**II. WE SEE THE NATURE OF OUR SAVIOUR!**

- A. We Just Said That Jesus Is Omniscient!**  
**That means He was keenly aware of what His Disciples were going through!**

The disciples thought they were alone in the midst of this storm and that Jesus didn't have a clue as to what they were going through! But Jesus never lost sight of His Disciples!

*Mark 6:48 And he saw them toiling in rowing; for the wind was contrary unto them: and about the fourth watch of the night he cometh unto them, walking upon the sea, and would have passed by them.*

- B. Jesus Came To Them Right On Time!**  
Do you think it ever crossed the mind of the Disciples of wondering where Jesus was?  
*(e.g. Mary and Martha when Lazarus got sick and died.)*

One of the things about going through a trial is that we often feel as if we are all alone, but if we know Jesus as our Saviour, He is never far away!

- C. Jesus Came To Them At The Darkest Hour!**  
Both Matthew and Mark record that Jesus showed up around the fourth watch of the night...this was between 3am-6am.

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You ever heard the expression, "*It is always the darkest just before the dawn*".

The disciples were, no doubt, at their wits end! They had done all they knew to do! They were tired, they were frustrated, it was pitch black dark, and this storm continued to rage on with no help in sight!

What else could go wrong? Well their eyes were playing tricks on them! When Jesus came walking on the water to them, they thought He was a spirit (a ghost) and they cried out in fear!  
*(Matthew 14:26; Mark 6:49)*

**D. The Disciples Greatest Need Was Jesus!**

The world says, "*When you come to the end of your rope, tie a knot in it and hold on.*"

The world has it wrong, "*When we are at the end of our rope we need to let loose of the rope and reach out for the Savior!*"

At the darkest hour of the night Jesus made His presence known to His disciples...remember He was always nearby watching and caring...but then He chose to reveal Himself to them at their darkest hour!

His sudden appearance unsettled them! Jesus said to them, "*Be of good cheer; it is I; be not afraid.*"

**E. Jesus Came To Them With Comfort.**

Now understand that Jesus could have stopped the storm at any time. He didn't have to come to them to stop the storm.

Jesus came to them to bring them comfort and reassurance in the midst of the storm.

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*WE SEE THE NATURE OF STORMS AND TRIALS!*  
*WE SEE THE NATURE OF OUR SAVIOUR!*

**III. WE SEE THE NATURE OF CHRIST'S PRESENCE!**

**A. When His Presence Is Recognized It Removes All Fear!**  
*"Be of good cheer; it is I; be not afraid."*  
With those words all of their fears melted away.

David records that he rejoiced when he remembered God in the night watches.

*Psalm 63:5-6 "5 My soul shall be satisfied as with marrow and fatness; and my mouth shall praise thee with joyful lips: 6 When I remember thee upon my bed, and meditate on thee in the night watches."*

When we recognize the LORD's presence it melts away our fears in the midst of the storms of this life...remember **there is no guarantee that He will calm the storm, but He will be with us in the darkest hour and calm us! His presence can remove all fear!**

**B. Christ's Presence Is Never Forced! (Vs 21)**  
*"Then they willingly received Him into the ship..."*

The disciples didn't seem to be too concerned about the lack of His presence when the weather was fine, but when the storm came they willingly received Him!

That has to be one of the biggest understatements in the Bible!

The Lord promises that He will draw near to us if we draw near to Him!

*James 4:8 "Draw nigh to God, and he will draw nigh to you."*

But He will not force Himself upon us.

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**C. Christ's Presence Changes Everything! (Vs 21)**

Matthew and Mark tell us that as soon as Jesus stepped into the ship the storm stopped. John here tells us that immediately the ship was at land.

Remember where they were the last time we had a fix on their position? They were in the midst of the sea and in the midst of the storm!

Now everything changed because of the presence of Jesus! Both the ship and the storm had served their purpose...they helped teach the Disciples the importance of Christ's presence.

Our trials and difficulties will not end until God has fulfilled His purpose through them in our lives.

But listen, His presence can remove all fear, His presence is never forced, and His presence changes everything!

**Conclusion**

**Are you in the midst of a storm this morning?**

**Do you have Christ in your life to help you in and through your storms?**

First of all have you placed your faith in the finished work of Christ on Calvary? If not, the invitation is for you to come now and trust in Him. Only then can you know the blessings of His presence in your life.

If you do have Christ in your life, have you possibly taken Him for granted? Like the disciples, sometimes we can grow a bit indifferent toward Him and forget the importance of His presence?

But the storms of this life will show us just how much we really need His presence! Willingly reach out to Him today! Seek the Lord and His presence in the midst of your storms and it will make all the difference in the world!