

Life and Ministry of Jesus Christ

Jesus Walks on the Water

Last time...

- having heard the news of John's death, Jesus seeks to commune with His Father
- the 6 mission teams return and give Jesus a mission trip report...and need a rest
- another very busy day for Jesus and the 12...feeding 5000 with 5 loaves and 2 fishes

This time...Jesus walks on the water

We will be in John 6, Matt 14, and Mark 6

John 6

v14 Then those men...of a truth that prophet:

Those men...which men?

The 5000 that were fed by Jesus with 5 loaves and 2 fishes (v13)

Given the physical setting, they saw and heard all Jesus said and did...
a miracle of great magnitude

Note: The 12 would surely be excited too, right?

They would not be callous to or clueless regarding the miraculous works
of Jesus would they?

Being with Jesus, they have a whole new perspective on what is possible
and what is impossible, right?

Those men proclaim the truth about Jesus: He is in fact the Prophet foretold by
Moses all those centuries prior, the one who would speak the very words
of God...the words they will be held accountable for
Deut 18:15-19

And, according to Scripture, the Messiah, the Coming One, would also be the
King of Israel, even King of the whole world

So what else are they thinking and saying to each other?

v15 perceived...take Him by force to make Him a king:

“The 5000”

- passionately hating the oppression of the Roman thumb
(part of the times of the Gentiles foretold by the prophet Daniel)
- deeply longing for the coming of the Jewish Messiah to set them free
and restore the kingdom to Israel
- recognizing that Jesus is their Messiah King, having miraculous power
to defeat Rome
- are thinking, “Moses delivered our fathers from the cruel Egyptian
taskmasters, Jesus will deliver us from the cruel Roman
taskmasters!”

take matters into their own hands and are of the mind to take Jesus by force and
crown Him as the Jewish King

Are they really going to make Him King...by force?

Jesus, by the power of God Almighty, just multiplied by dividing 5 loaves
and 2 fishes and fed 5000*X people...among many other miracles
And they are going to impose their will on Him?

The people are not inspired by God...they are acting on impulse not inspiration
As such, they are confused/ignorant regarding the mission of the Messiah...

- considering “favorite verses” rather than the entire counsel of God
(Gen 22, Ps 22, Is 53, Dan 9:26)
- The Messiah will come to deliver His people from the cruel demonic
taskmasters...spiritual deliverance (Gen 3) vs political deliverance
- The Messiah is God’s Lamb...sin sacrifice

Their hopes for Jesus this day are false hopes

There will be no kingdom without the Cross

Their thoughts and rumblings are not lost on Jesus

He perceives their intentions, which are contrary to the will of His Father

God, not man, will set up His kingdom...His way and in His time,
not man’s way or man’s time

And there will be no kingdom without a Cross!

So what happens?

Jesus dismisses “those men” and goes to a mountain to be alone.

Why?

And what about the 12 disciples?

Details are provided in parallel passages

v16-17 disciples...sea...ship toward Capernaum:

The disciples, without Jesus, went back to their ship on the Sea of Galilee to head back toward Capernaum...

“toward”...in the direction of (west), not “to”

In v16, they got onboard at “even”, late afternoon

In v17, it is night...and Jesus has still not joined them

Implied by the timing: the disciples were doing what Jesus told them to do, but maybe reluctantly

It is as if they are “going”...but half-heartedly and very slowly while watching for Jesus to come to the shore to flag them down and join them

But the daylight is gone and it is now dark...Jesus is not going to join them

So they carry on, more earnestly now, no longer looking over their shoulder

And their more earnest obedience is met with...opposition

v18 sea arose...great wind:

A great northwest wind starts to blow, making heavy waves

Sails cannot be used so forward progress must be made by rowing

This scenario

- is a sailor’s worst nightmare: a great storm on the Sea at night
- should sound familiar (Mark 4:35-41, Luke 8:22-25)

Is this another attempted murder by the prince of the power of the air?

v19-20 furlongs...Jesus walking on the water...be not afraid:

The Sea of Galilee at the north end is about 6 miles wide

The disciples have rowed, fighting this great wind and the heavy waves, for 25-30 furlongs...3-4 miles

They are halfway or a little further than halfway

Then they see something amazing...something impossible!

Here comes Jesus, approaching them...walking on the water!

They freak out, they are afraid

But Jesus calms their fearful hearts with words of comfort

In the midst of the storms of life,

Fear and dis-courage are Satan’s *m.o.* ...ignore him

Comfort and en-courage are Jesus’ *m.o.* ...believe Him

v21 received...immediately the ship:

Comforted by the words and presence of the Lord, the disciples welcome Jesus onboard...and quickly/directly/shortly arrive at their destination

Again, the details surrounding that statement are in the parallel passages

But: If Jesus sends us somewhere, we will get there!

Matt 14

v22 constrained His disciples:

Jesus constrained/compelled/"ordered" His 12 disciples to get back in the ship and go back to the other side.

He wasn't asking, He was telling and He was not to be denied.

Code Blue!

Why such an urgent command?

John 6:15

It was needful for the 12 to leave ASAP

This mountain near Bethsaida is suddenly not a safe environment for His men, shepherds-in-training

He did not want His disciple's minds to be polluted with the Biblical confusion and false Messianic hopes of "those men"

They have their own misunderstandings regarding His mission, they don't need to be influenced by those who want to "force" Him to be king... contrary to the will of the Father

So He sent His disciples away...then He sent the multitude away

Had He not sent His 12 men away, the others most certainly would have refused to leave

v23 to pray...alone:

Why did the Lord send His disciples away...without Him?

Why did He not lead them to safety?

After He heard the difficult and painful news of the death of John the Baptist (v13), Jesus desired/needed to commune with His Father

He had come to this place near Bethsaida for that purpose...but it was not to be because of the multitude that followed

But now, He is getting the "alone time" with the Father He needs

He went to pray...to be strengthened, refreshed, even encouraged

If Jesus Christ needs time to pray in order to be strengthened and refreshed...how much more me and you?!

v24 tossed with waves...wind was contrary:

Meanwhile, after dark, His disciples are under attack by the wind and the waves
Another frightening journey on the Sea of Galilee for Jesus' men

The spiritual battle with the prince of the power of the air is raging

v25-27 fourth watch...It is a spirit and they cried out for fear...good cheer:

The fourth watch is 3am – 6am...which means the disciples have fought this
storm inch by inch for over 9 hours and have made it half way to their
destination

Jesus comes walking to them...on the water!

Note: Jesus was walking...not running

Jesus was calm...not alarmed by their circumstance

Who can walk on water?!

They have no practical experience, no point of reference for this sight...
or do they?

They are eyewitnesses to Jesus doing some AMAZING things!

Raising people from the dead

Calming this Sea and the storm on their way to Gadera (Mark 4)

Feeding 5000*X people with a poor boys lunch of 5 loaves 2 fishes

They do not recognize Jesus, they think they are seeing a ghost

So, they cry out in fear of the ghost

Jesus speaks to His disciples, identifying Himself and speaking words of comfort
and peace

Q: How could the disciples see Jesus at night, in the dark?

There is no mention of clouds in these accounts, only of wind

The time is close to Passover...full moon

He came in the 4th watch, between 3am and 6am...but when?

If closer to 3am, it would be very dark

If closer to 6am, dawn was approaching

Now, the part of the story only in Matthew's account, not in John's or Mark's

v28-31 Peter...bid me...Come...save me...little faith:

Peter

- known to speak and then think
- impulsive but courageous, a leader of men
not a coward (humbled by a maiden and denied the Lord),
a very brave man (Acts)
- recognizes the voice of the Lord he loves
- blurts out...doubt and presumption
 - doubt: Lord, if it be You
 - presumption: command me to walk on the water to You

Jesus says one word: “Come”

Peter

- gets out of the boat in the middle of a violent storm...
no small feat of strength or courage or faith
- walked on the water, making his way to Jesus...steps of faith

With his eyes on Jesus, the Lord of all circumstances, Peter actually walks on the water!

But when he took his eyes off Jesus and looked at his circumstances...

his faith evaporates and fear overwhelms him, probably paralyzing him.

Peter gets that “sinking feeling” so he did the only smart thing one can do when paralyzed by fear in overwhelming circumstances – he cried unto the Lord
And Jesus...saved him, catching Peter before he sank beneath the waves

The Lord’s role in Peter walking on the water:

- confront Peter’s doubt: Come
- confront Peter’s presumption: saved him
- rebuked Peter: his lack of faith that gave way to fear

And...how could Peter walk on water?

Only by the power of God being given to him by Jesus

ala Matt 10:1

NOT by his faith...for then Peter could/would boast

Peter received the power of God by faith, but it was the power of God that enabled him to walk on water, not his faith

v32-33 into the ship...the wind ceased...worshipped...Son of God:

Was the violent contrary wind another attempt by Satan to murder the disciples of Jesus?

Yes!

The instant Peter and Jesus were in the boat, the wind stopped and the sea calmed
Only Jesus Christ calms the storms of life, either above the storm or in the boat

Déjà vu all over again, right?

Last time: What manner of man is this that even the wind and sea obey Him?

This time: they worshipped Jesus, acknowledging that He is the Son of God

This is the disciples (including Judas) first such declaration as to the identity of Jesus...declaring His deity
And the calmed wind and sea serve as an “Amen!”

Note: only time “Son of God” appears in the Scriptures the disciples would have: Dan 3:25
(Ps 2, Prov 30:4)

v34-36 Gennesaret...hem of His garment:

With calm seas and no contrary wind, the disciples and Jesus quickly make it to their destination on the other side of the Sea of Galilee, to the plain of Gennesaret south of Capernaum and north of Tiberias

One of the towns on the plain of Gennesaret is Magdala
Jesus had ministry appointments in that region

When the people of the region learn that Jesus is there, they flock to Him like sheep to a shepherd

They seek to be healed by Him...they seek to merely touch the hem of His garment

Sound familiar?

The woman with the issue of blood had faith that Jesus was the Messiah and believed the Word of God that there was healing in the wings/hem of His garment; she touch His hem and was healed
And she bore testimony of the power of God and the truth of the Word of God

None who had faith to touch Jesus were disappointed!

Mark 6

v45-46 to pray:

It cannot be repeated too often:

- There will be no kingdom without the Cross
- prayer is a source of strength, refreshing, and encouragement.
If Jesus needed to pray, how much more so do you and I?!
Prayer is how we avail ourselves to the power of God

v47 midst of the sea...alone on the land:

The sheep are separated from their shepherd, they alone on the sea and He alone on the land

The disciples obeyed the Lord and they are alone...
2 situations of which the devil takes notice

v48 He saw them...would have passed by them:

Whether in the dark closer to 3am or in the early light closer to 6am, for Jesus to see His disciples struggling mightily 3-4 miles away...
Jesus has wonderful vision!

He sees with the eyes of God...
and He the Good Shepherd was watching over them
He is ALWAYS watching over us!

btw... Did the disciples give up because this has proven to be more difficult than expected?

Did the disciples surrender to the contrary wind by turning around, using the NW wind to go quickly and easily back to where they left Jesus?

No! They doggedly obeyed the Lord, in the face of fierce opposition

In this account we get the additional information that Jesus came walking on the water to His disciples...and would have kept walking

Why?

1. He knew what He would do, this was a test of their faith in Him
2. This would make for an unmistakable view of “the impossible”

v49-50 they all saw him and were troubled:

All 12 disciples

- were eyewitnesses of Jesus walking on the water
- thought they were seeing a ghost
- were troubled/terrified
- cried out

Had they not cried out, would Jesus have walked on by?

Why wonder...just cry out to Jesus and He will come!

And His words in that moment are words for every storm-tossed disciple!

v51-52 sore amazed...heart was hardened:

Jesus speaks, gets in the boat, and all is calm instantly!

The disciples are “sore amazed in themselves beyond measure”...

their minds are blown ala Mark 4:41 (when He was in the boat)

Their lives depended on the boat...Jesus was not dependent upon the boat!

Jesus can walk on water...no mere man can!

The wind and the seas obey Jesus...the creation obeying the Creator

They have seen much since their terrifying trip across the Sea to Gadera...

including Jesus feeding 5000*X people with 5 loaves and two fishes just yesterday

But they have already “forgotten” that miracle, in spite of its magnitude

They didn’t “connect” the miracle of walking on the water and the miracle of feeding the 5000...Jesus is the common denominator

They saw the miracles but did not “see” Him...

Then...Matt 14:33

v53-56 As recorded in Matthew’s account

We see that the shepherds-in-training need much more training

Their faith in Him needs work...they MUST learn the lesson of Who Jesus is

Jesus is pouring His heart in to them and His training of them increasingly focuses on

Who He is

Application/Lessons

1. There is no Kingdom of God without The Cross, the Wondrous Cross!

If I stop preaching The Cross...if I start preaching that The Cross is not needed...
you will be in an Emergency situation!
Jesus will urgently move you to safer ground...obey Him and flee there

2. We have an essential need for prayer...for strength, refreshing, encouragement

Pray to the Father, pray to Jesus our Good Shepherd Who is watching over us and
does know what He is going to do

3. Have unmovable faith in the midst of a stormy trial

Look for Jesus...He will come walking not running/panicked,
at the perfect time, not 9 hours late

Think on Jesus...Phil 4:6-9

Keep your eyes on Jesus...not life's storm

If get that sinking feeling, know Jesus has a hold of you

Invite Jesus into the boat!

How often does Jesus walk by us in the midst of a storm...and we never see Him,
never invite Him into the boat?

Perhaps we are experiencing this trial because

- we do not see Jesus walking by
- we will not invite Him in the boat with us..."we got this"
- we are toiling of our own strength
- the LORD is trying to get our attention but we are too focused on rowing

4. Expect the unexpected

Don't let our hearts get hardened (unbelief, doubt, pre-conceived ideas)

Don't put human limitations on the Lord God Almighty, Maker of heaven and earth

Don't put God in a box of our expectations of what the Lord should do, how, when

Don't let past experience define in our mind what God can/will do,

be open to and ready for whatever the Lord knows He will do

Q: What color are Yield signs?

Red and White, not Yellow...since 1971

Yellow: need not stop

Red: must stop

Q: The Monopoly man

- glasses
- monocle
- no glasses

As sheep, our minds are blinded by

- assumptions
- past experience (no man can walk on water, therefore...)
- pre-conceived ideas (Messiah is King...not Lamb)
- faulty memories
- our own limitations
- our expectations

that will lead us to false conclusions

Learn Who Jesus is...and that He does not work in a box