

SEEING JESUS IN JOHN

WEEK ELEVEN: JESUS WALKS ON WATER

READING

16 That evening Jesus' disciples went down to the shore to wait for him. 17 But as darkness fell and Jesus still hadn't come back, they got into the boat and headed across the lake toward Capernaum. 18 Soon a gale swept down upon them, and the sea grew very rough. 19 They had rowed three or four miles when suddenly they saw Jesus walking on the water toward the boat. They were terrified, 20 but he called out to them, "Don't be afraid. I am here!" 21 Then they were eager to let him in the boat, and immediately they arrived at their destination! John 6 (NLT)

TEACHING

The disciples had just seen Jesus feed thousands of people with five loaves and two fish. I am sure they thought that miracle was the most amazing thing Jesus could do. They were wrong. That same night, they saw something that was even more incredible: Jesus walking toward them on the waters of the Sea of Galilee in the middle of a storm. So, why did Jesus walk on the water? Did he do it to scare or amaze his disciples? Was it just a cool trick? Was he showing off? Of course not. There are two main reasons why Jesus walked on the water.

- 1) He did it as a powerful and visible demonstration of his power over nature. The sea represented the unknown and the uncontrollable. No mortal person could control the sea. In the Old Testament it is clear that only God rules over the seas (Ps. 89:9). But in this story, we are reminded that Jesus is king and he reigns over the world he created.
- 2) Jesus wanted his disciples to fear him more than they fear even a dangerous storm in the middle of the night. As terrified as they were in the storm, they were even more terrified when they saw Jesus walking on the water. They realized that real power—power greater than any storm—was found in Jesus.

Yes, Jesus comes to take away our fears, but he doesn't just remove them...he replaces them with a healthy fear, reverence and awe for himself. The "good fear" of Jesus can free you and me from all the "bad fears" that want to keep us from living free.

RESPONSE

OPENING QUESTION(S):

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- What is something that scares you? Why?

TODDLERS/PRE-K:

- In this story, who was in the boat on the stormy sea?
- Who walked on the water?

CHILDREN:

- What was happening in this story before Jesus showed up?
- What is one reason that Jesus walked on the water?
- How does this story show us Jesus' power?

TEENAGERS:

- What is one reason that Jesus walked on the water?
- Can you think of any reasons other than the two given in the teaching?
- How does fear keep people from living free? How can a fear of God free us?

ADULTS:

- What fears are holding you back from living free?
- How can you use spiritual disciplines to help you grow in your fear of the Lord?

PRAYER

God,

Thank you for sending Jesus to show us your power over nature. Thank you for creating all things, sustaining all things and one day making all things new! Help me to be honest about my fears. Help me to talk to my family and friends about those fears. But most of all, help me to bring my fears to you. Thank you that your Holy Spirit helps me to see Jesus in all his power and strength so that I can rightly fear him and not live in fear of other things. Remind me that Jesus reigns and rules over all. Thank you, God. In Jesus' name, Amen.

NEXT LEVEL (ADDITIONAL OPTIONAL TEACHING)

Two miracles actually take place in this story. In verse 21 it reads, "Then they were eager to let him in the boat, and immediately they arrived at their destination!" Commentators claim that this boat trip was at least 5-6 miles long. According to verse 19 they had only rowed 3-4 miles that evening. So, when Jesus got into the boat they were still at least one mile away from the shore. But they "immediately" arrived there. At the risk of allegorizing this story, it might be worth noticing that Jesus has a way of finding us in our fears, revealing himself so that we respond with eagerness to "let him in the boat," and then at times he supernaturally moves us forward to where we need to be. This is hardly the point of this text, but it's must be considered that this additional miracle reveals something about the nature and ways of God.