

# SS-John 6:15-21 - Jesus Walks on Water- 01/10/20

Intro: "We should always try to be people who focus on God's work, go in the direction He sends us, and rely on Jesus' presence with us."

## I LEAVING WITHOUT JESUS—John 6:15-17

### A Jesus decides to depart (John 6:15)

- a Recap**—John has just recorded the **4th testifying miracle** from Jesus that he includes in this Gospel—the **feeding of the 5,000 men, plus women and children**. Jesus had put Philip to the test by asking where He could get enough food to feed the multitude of people following Him. Philip objected that all the money they had would be insufficient to buy that much food (vs. 7). Then **Jesus took five barley loaves and two fish that happened to be on hand, and fed the entire throng!**
- b Response**—The response from some in that group was that Jesus was *“that prophet that should come into the world”* (vs. 14). They were **thinking of what God had told Moses about the future coming of the Messiah**: *“I will raise them up a Prophet from among their brethren, like unto thee, and will put my words in his mouth; and he shall speak unto them all that I shall command him. And it shall come to pass, that whosoever will not hearken unto my words which he shall speak in my name, I will require it of him”* (Deut. 18:18-19).
- c Reasoning**—The multitude **thought the predicted prophet would be a political and military leader** and would **help them get out from under the domination of Rome**. Therefore, they **began talking of making Jesus their king**, thinking He must be that prophesied ruler. Jesus realized He needed to get away from the crowd in order to prevent this. **Their intention was to use the vast numbers gathered there to force Him to accept this kingship.**
- d Retreat**—There were **two problems** with their intentions: Jesus had **not come to be the military leader they imagined**, and what He had come to do was **not meant to be accomplished at that particular time**. So **Jesus left and went up a nearby mountain alone**, where the crowds would not follow Him.

### B The disciples depart separately (John 6:16-17)

- a Testing**—“John probably included this incident for a number of reasons. It accounts for the return of Jesus and His disciples to the western shore of Galilee where Jesus gave the discourse on the Bread of Life.... **It is primarily further proof that Jesus was the Son of God as He claimed.** The disciples went from the thrill of great success to the agony of great danger. **The feeding of the 5,000 was a lesson, and Jesus' walking on the water was the test following the lesson**” (“Constable's Notes,” net.bible.org).
- b Timing**—John identifies **the time of day as evening and getting close to dark**. Both Matthew and Mark say that Jesus sent the disciples on their way **toward Bethsaida across the Sea of Galilee** while He sent the multitudes away (Matt. 14:22; Mark 6:45). Whether or not He indicated that He would join them as soon as the crowds were dispersed, we are not told. **What He did do was go up on the mountain to pray. Jesus was about to reveal Himself to them in a new manifestation of His power over nature.**
- c Teaching**—From the beginning of **John 6, Jesus begins to concentrate on teaching His disciples rather than His more public ministry**. He had been accused of being demon-possessed and of wielding the power of Beelzebub (Matt. 12:24), and after the death of John the Baptist (Matt. 14:3-12), **He appears to have focused more on helping the disciples comprehend His purpose and mission**. The incident that occurred here after the disciples left in the boat was one of **very private instruction**.
- d Testimony**—The ultimate **destination of the disciples was Capernaum, near Bethsaida of Galilee on the western shore of the Sea of Galilee**. As they proceeded in that direction, darkness fell and Jesus had not yet come to them. How they expected Him to arrive we are not told. There had been no other boats when they had left (John 6:22), so they were at a loss. **They were about to witness the fifth miracle John includes in his Gospel.**

## II DESPERATELY NEEDING JESUS—John 6:18-19

### A Towering waves (John 6:18)

- a Rough**—It was **not unusual for rough seas to rise up rapidly on the Sea of Galilee**. The small body of water is about seven hundred feet below sea level. The high hills and mountains of what is today known as the Golan Heights to the east of Galilee frequently engender **sudden, violent storms** when east winds meet the warmer air over the sea.
- b Risky**—Such a windstorm arose as the disciples were making their way across the sea toward Capernaum. **John describes it as “a great wind that blew,” meaning a violent wind; it was definitely no gentle breeze**. The result would have been **high, violent waves with the potential of sinking the boat. It was a life-threatening situation**. The disciples desperately needed the Lord's help!
- c Rescue**—“**Did Jesus know that a storm was coming? Of course**. Then why did He deliberately send His friends into danger? Quite the opposite is true: **He was rescuing them from greater danger, the danger of being swept along by a fanatical crowd**” (Wiersbe, The Bible Exposition Commentary, Victor). The **crowd's determination to force Jesus into being their king** was more threatening than we may realize. If adamantly resisted, they might have been ready to resort to violence to accomplish their purposes.
- d Related**—We **may relate this storm to the storms of life we all encounter**. Any situation that arises beyond our control with no apparent resolution becomes a life storm for us. **The disciples were currently separated from their Master and in a situation they could not control**. When we are in life's storms, we **often feel alone and forsaken by God**. As we focus on the circumstances around us, there may appear to be no solution or escape. The result is great fear in our hearts.

### B Terrible fear (John 6:19)

- a Situation**—Whatever **fear** the disciples might have been experiencing, it **suddenly increased**. They had rowed *“about five and twenty or thirty furlongs,”* which was somewhere **between 3-4 miles**. According to Matthew, they were **“now in the midst of the sea, tossed with waves”** (14:24), and it was now **“the fourth watch of the night”** (vs. 25). Mark adds that they were **“toiling in rowing; for the wind was contrary unto them”** (6:48). It was now between **3:00 A.M. and 6:00 A.M.**
- b Sent**—The **disciples had specifically been sent away on the sea by Jesus** and now found themselves in a threatening circumstance. Do we not sometimes find ourselves in frightening circumstances, even though we have been doing everything we can to be obedient to the Lord? **It is not always a matter of chastening when life becomes difficult. Sometimes God is testing us in order to help us grow spiritually**. We should always examine our hearts earnestly to see what He is doing.

c	<b>Suddenly</b> - <del>Suddenly</del> the disciples saw Jesus <b>approaching, walking on top of the water</b> . Mark indicates that <b>He appeared to be passing them by</b> (6:48) as if on His way to the farther shore. But when they saw Him, <b>they became very afraid because they thought He was a ghost</b> (vs. 49). It is obvious that they were not expecting Jesus to get to them and help in their situation. They were frantically involved in trying to accomplish what was needed for their safety. <b>John emphasizes how Jesus calmed their fears once they realized it was Him</b> (cf. 6:20).
d	<b>Storms</b> -When we think of the storms of life that we encounter, <b>we must realize that sometimes they have been caused by what we have done</b> . In those cases <b>we might need to make some things right in order to calm the storm</b> . Sometimes, however, they come about without our ever being at fault. Just as the disciples could not make progress against the wind, so we often seem stopped in our tracks from moving ahead in life. Jesus' appearance to the disciples reminds us that He is always aware of our needs.

### III GLADLY ACCEPTING JESUS—John 6:20-21

A	<b>Timely reassurance (John 6:20)</b>
a	<b>Expectation</b> -Jesus came very early in the morning. <i>“The sea that had impeded their movement was no obstacle to Christ, and all that they feared brought no fear to Him. Perhaps because of the fierceness of the storm or dimness of the light, they did not recognize Jesus. They thought He was a ghost. Those men who were <u>expecting death</u> thought that one had come from the world of the dead, perhaps to transport them to its recesses”</i> (Pentecost, The Words and Works of Jesus Christ, Zondervan).
b	<b>Encouragement</b> -In spite of the fierceness of the storm all around them, <b>they suddenly heard a voice above it: “It is I; be not afraid”</b> (vs. 20). Matthew and Mark give a larger quote, which was probably the complete statement of Jesus rather than the abbreviation John uses: <b>“Be of good cheer: it is I; be not afraid”</b> (Matt. 14:27; Mark 6:50). This encouragement from Jesus has <b>3-statements</b> .
c	<b>Exploration</b> -The 3-statements are worth individual consideration.
	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• <b>Care</b>-It is <b>difficult for us to be cheerful during life’s stormy times</b>, but it is <b>possible because we are in God’s constant care</b>. To the degree that we fully believe in God’s absolute and constant control of the circumstances of our lives, we are able to maintain a positive outlook. It behooves all of us to never stop endeavoring to grow closer in our walk with the Lord. This comes only through <b>consistent time in God’s Word, earnest prayer, and works of love and compassion in His name</b>.</li> <li>• <b>Character</b>-When Jesus identified Himself, <b>He was reassuring the disciples of His awareness of their situation and His willingness to help them during such a time</b>. When Peter wrote about suffering and persecution, he gave these encouraging words: <i>“Humble yourselves therefore under the mighty hand of God, that he may exalt you in due time: casting all your care upon him; for he careth for you”</i> (I Pet. 5:6-7). Even though to the disciples the situation seemed terrifying, <b>Jesus cared about them and comforted and helped them in their peril</b>.</li> <li>• <b>Courage</b>-They did not need to be afraid. That truth applies to us when we know Jesus as Saviour and Lord. There is nothing we go through without His knowledge and concern.</li> </ul>
d	<b>Ensured</b> -God gave His people this <b>timeless promise</b> : <i>“Fear not: for I have redeemed thee , I have called thee by thy name ; thou art mine. When thou passest through the waters, I will be with thee; and through the rivers, they shall not overflow thee: when thou walkest through the fire, thou shalt not be burned; neither shall the flame kindle upon thee”</i> (Isa. 43:1-2).
B	<b>Thankful reception (John 6:21)</b>
a	<b>Received</b> -As soon as <b>they recognized Him</b> , they <b>“willingly received him into the ship.”</b> Their willingness was no doubt accompanied by a great sense of relief and <b>joy because they knew He was now in control</b> . Matthew records the incident of Peter also walking on the water in connection with this event (14:28-31). <b>Both Matthew and Mark mention that the wind subsided immediately as Jesus boarded the boat. John reports that the boat immediately arrived at the shore.</b>
b	<b>Revealed</b> -The feeding of the five thousand prior to this miraculous appearance of Jesus revealed how <b>He can provide for people’s needs. This incident reveals that He also has authority over all natural laws and is the protector of those who trust in Him</b> . Testimony has been given of incidents when God steered storms away from people in answer to prayer. One such story involved a church choir giving an outdoor concert. They prayed earnestly when the clouds began to gather; then they saw the storm split and go around them on either side!
c	<b>Roll</b> -Regarding the miracle on the sea, William Hendriksen observes that it is <b>“really four miracles in one:</b>
	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• <b>Levitation</b>-a. <b>Jesus walks upon the sea</b> (without suspending the laws of gravity, he controls them in the interest of the kingdom);</li> <li>• <b>Invitation</b>-b. <b>He causes Peter to walk upon the sea</b> (but this story is not found in the Fourth Gospel);</li> <li>• <b>Domination</b>-c. <b>He reveals himself as master of the storm</b>, for when He enters the boat the storm ceases (not in John); and</li> <li>• <b>Transportation</b>-d. <b>He conquers even space, for when he enters the boat, it is on the shore all at once”</b> (New Testament Commentary: John, Baker).</li> </ul>
d	<b>Repeat</b> -It is also helpful to remember that <b>the miracle of walking on the water was never repeated</b> ; Jesus did it only once. This reminds us that <b>He did not do miracles for show but for what they can teach us about the nature of God and His love for us</b> .
e	<b>Reminder</b> -The fact that <b>Jesus walked on water is an encouraging reminder that He can arrive to help us in any situation</b> . <i>“Be careful for nothing; but in every thing by prayer and supplication with thanksgiving let your requests be made known unto God. And the peace of God, which passeth all understanding, shall keep your hearts and minds through Christ Jesus”</i> (Phil. 4:6-7).

**Conclusion:** "As Christians, we should try to be people who focus on God’s work, go in the direction He sends us, and rely on Jesus’ presence with us."