

Jesus Walks on Water

(John 6:19-21)

Hello Dear Listeners;

Have you ever been out on a lake in a canoe or small boat when suddenly a wind storm came up? You had to paddle back to shore but it was really tough going because you're trying to go against the wind. You're not making much progress and it's starting to get dark. The waves are getting higher and higher and water is starting to come into the boat. The shoreline is getting hard to make out. You're starting to ask yourself whether you'll ever make it back to shore. Your situation is becoming desperate.

And then suddenly, you see a man coming towards you, walking on the waves. This freaks you out and you wonder whether you're seeing things. How is this possible? Who am I seeing out there on the stormy waters?

While you may never have experienced this, especially not the last part about a man walking towards you on the waves, the disciples of Jesus did. After Jesus had fed the five thousand, the disciples went back across the lake to Capernaum. Jesus remained on the mountain for a while.

As the disciples were making their way across the Sea of Galilee, a storm came up and they had to battle against the wind and waves but were not making much headway. They had been rowing for most of the night when, suddenly they see Jesus coming towards them, walking on the waves. They were terrified when they saw him. The disciples were terrified because they were encountering something which did not fit

with what they were familiar or comfortable with. They sensed that this was something outside of their own world. This causes fear for those who see this. They were encountering the supernatural.

We see this happening throughout the Bible. Whenever the spiritual world enters into the physical world, the people who are involved are never adequately prepared. They are caught completely off guard and they are afraid, deeply afraid. So it is also here, even though it is Jesus and the disciples would have wanted to see Jesus. Yet they are terrified, filled with great fear.

There is something else which always happens when God's people have an encounter with an angel or God's Son. The angel or the Lord himself always reassures the people that they do not need to be afraid. And so that happens now as well. The disciples hear these words from Jesus, "It is I; don't be afraid". They now know for sure that they are seeing Jesus, whom they longed for. It is he who is now approaching the boat. It is not a ghost or some hostile supernatural entity they don't know. Not at all! It is their Lord and Saviour!

There Jesus comes, walking on the water, as if it is nothing special, as if it is completely normal. He approaches the boat without any concerns. He is not panicking because of the wind and the waves. He is the Son of God, the wind and the waves obey him and are at his beck and call. At any moment, the lake can become as smooth as glass and the wind become calm. He only has to say the word.

There is something very significant about the first words which Jesus speaks. The NIV translates them as "It is I" but they can also be

translated more literally as “I am”. These simple words are very significant. Jesus is stating that he exists and that he exists always.

Jesus’ words echo the name of Yahweh, the name of God the Father, which was revealed to Moses at the burning bush. When Moses is to tell the Israelites the name of their God, then Moses is to say that his name is I AM WHO I AM. This name shows that God has his existence within himself. He is dependent upon no one else. He is eternal, without beginning and without end. “He is” in the fullest sense of the word.

This name also means that the Lord is faithful and that he will do what he says. The Lord God will fulfill the promises which he has made to his people. He will not let them down. God is always with his people.

The way in which Jesus appears to the disciples who were in distress and in great need tells us so much about the Lord. In our time, we may not receive a special physical revelation like the disciples did but the nearness of the Lord is no different for us. The Lord is always near to his children. He never abandons us or lets us fend for ourselves.

As we go through the storms of life and are buffeted about by the cares and troubles of this life, let us never forget that the Lord Jesus is with us. He is right by our side. We only need to remember him and turn to him. We only need to speak to him, call out to him for he is with us always.

We do need to acknowledge his presence and work with it in our lives. If we just ignore him and act as if he does not exist, then the time will come that he will pass by our boat and move on down the lake. We do need to reach out to him. Seek the Lord while he is near and he will answer you and encourage you with his presence and nearness.

Do not be afraid about anything for the Lord is near. The great I AM WHO I AM is with you. Therefore there is no reason to fear. It is as simple as that. At least that is how simple it should be. We make it much more complicated than it needs to be because of our sin and because of our weak faith. On this occasion, we read in Matthew, Jesus said to Peter who tried to walk on the water as well but then sank, “You of little faith, why did you doubt?” Why do we doubt that the Lord is with us, that he will take care of us and provide us with everything we need and much more besides? Why do we doubt? There is no good legitimate reason for us to doubt for the Lord is right with us. But as those who are sinful by nature, we find it hard to live by faith, to live by only trusting in God’s Word. It comes down to taking God at his Word and living by faith in all circumstances of life.

After the disciples saw Jesus on the waves, then we read in John 6:21, “Then they were willing to take him into the boat, and immediately the boat reached the shore where they were heading.” Did you hear that? Immediately the boat reached shore. As soon as Jesus was in the boat with them, the trip across the lake was suddenly all over and they were at their destination. The Lord guided them to safe haven and he did so immediately.

There is another significant detail in this account. Once they heard Jesus’ reassuring words, John writes that “they were willing to take him into the boat.” They were willing and ready to take him into the boat with them. Their hearts had been prepared to receive him and welcome him into their space. When they knew who they were dealing with out on the stormy lake, they received him willingly. Jesus does not force himself upon them and just get into their boat but they welcomed him in.

Do you also respond in faith to Jesus' call, to Jesus' words about himself as the only Saviour? When you hear his voice, do you answer him, repent of your sins and confess him as your Redeemer? Do you respond to his glory and majesty with reverence and awe and worship? Every single person needs to answer these questions for him or herself. It is our prayer that you will also desire to go to Jesus, believe his words, and enjoy his presence and his salvation. It is his Holy Spirit who can change our hearts and minds so that we respond to him with love and faith. Pray to the Lord for this gift of faith in Jesus Christ. Receive Jesus Christ and live out of the joy of his presence in your life. Keep your eyes fixed on Jesus Christ your Saviour and you will arrive safely at the heavenly haven. Amen, and thank you for tuning in.