

Jesus Walks on Water
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Text: Mark 6:45-52 (see also Matt. 14:22-33; John 6:15-21)

Gospel of Mark: [Bibliography](#) or [Manuscripts and Greek Exegesis](#)

UBS 4th Edition Paragraph Topic: Walking on Water

Central Idea of Message: Jesus was far more than a miracle worker, he was God in flesh, the Savior of the world with full power and authority over the devil, demons, death, and even nature as demonstrated again and again.

Introduction: The twelve had just returned from their first mission trips. They were excited, to say the least, and they had reported all the things which they had done and taught. But before they could fully recuperate from their trip and debrief Jesus, thousands of people had followed them to Jesus, and Jesus had miraculously fed over 5,000 by multiplying the initial resources of five loaves and two fish; and, there had been twelve baskets filled by the disciples with leftovers! This was the adventure of a lifetime! What was next? Well, Jesus walking on water!

I. The Twelve Are Sent Away (vv. 45-46)

- A. Jesus made his disciples get into the boat (v. 45)
 - 1. Probably the same boat they had all used earlier in the day to cross the Sea of Galilee
 - 2. Jesus was sending them ahead of him to the other side of the sea to Bethsaida [house of fishing] of Galilee (John 6:17; 12:21)
 - 3. Jesus knew that the twelve needed to rest, which they had tried to get but had been swarmed
 - 4. Jesus lingered to send away the enthusiastic crowd
 - a) Which was ready to seize the opportunity and make Jesus King (cf. John 6:14-15)
 - b) Mark doesn't record this response of the crowd to the miraculous feeding, but John does
- B. Jesus bid farewell to the disciples and retreated to a nearby mountain to pray (v. 46)
 - 1. Jesus retreating to pray suggests the crisis situation of the pressures on him from the crowds

2. Jesus refused to be forced into becoming another mere earthly king because the crowd's idea of a king was primarily nationalistic and political
3. Frenzied popularity prompted by miracles was not the goal of Jesus
4. **This verse illustrates, once again, that Jesus was not in the least bit pressured into anything by popular culture, which, in fact, would have pushed him out of God's will and not into God's will**
5. Jesus would not submerge his individuality in the crowds (cf. Luccock 743)
6. What did he pray?
 - a) For God's will to be done always in his life?
 - b) That the twelve be empowered from on high with faith, courage, and boldness?
 - c) That the twelve would fully recognize his identity as the Son of God?

II. **The Twelve Are Astonished (vv. 47-52)**

- A. Evening came and the boat was in the midst of the sea (v. 47)
 1. Sea of Galilee
 2. The disciples were in the boat
 3. Jesus was now alone on the land
- B. Jesus saw the disciples rowing (v. 48)
 1. At the fourth watch of the night, that's between 3:00 A.M. and 6:00 A.M., Mark says that Jesus saw the twelve straining at the oars
 - a) The wind was strongly against them
 - b) Jesus is the one who had sent the twelve out on the lake in the dark
 - (1) The lake is seven miles wide and they had barely made it halfway in 8-9 hours of rowing
 - (2) **Our extremities are Jesus' opportunities**
 - (3) There will be no storms in heaven!
 2. It appears to me that a supernatural ability to see is at work here because Jesus had no night vision device and no binoculars, or perhaps there was a full moon which helped some
 3. Jesus came toward them walking upon the seawater
 - a) According to the preposition "upon," his sandals were making actual contact with the water
 - b) He walked on the water like you and I walked on this floor when we entered this building!

4. Did he intend to walk right on by as he headed to Bethsaida, where they were supposed to meet?
 - a) No, although they might have thought this
 - b) He was getting beside them so they could all see him
- C. A ghost (v. 49)?
 1. All twelve disciples saw him walking on the water
 2. This was no hallucination or subjective vision
 3. They thought they were seeing a ghost [had been watching too many sci-fi and horror movies!]
 4. They cried out in fear!
 - a) **When circumstances were bleak it seems that the apostles' fear rose and their faith fell**
 - b) **Fear and lack of faith in God commonly go together**
- D. Frightened (v. 50)
 1. All saw him and were frightened out of their wits!
 2. But he spoke to them and said, "Take courage; it is I, do not be afraid"
 - a) "I, I am" or "I am he"
 - b) Suggestive of the covenant name of God
 - (1) As expressed to Moses (Exod. 3:14)
 - (2) As expressed to Isaiah (Isa. 43:10)
 3. Interestingly, Mark, who is likely narrating based on Peter's information, never mentions Peter walking on the water!
 - a) Did Peter not tell Mark out of humility, or was it out of embarrassment?
 - b) Did Mark not include this in order to keep the spotlight on Jesus?
- E. In the boat (v. 51)
 1. He climbed into the boat with them
 2. The wind stopped
 3. The twelve were greatly astonished - again
 4. John says that they immediately arrived at the shore (John 6:21), which indicates that another miracle had occurred by covering the remaining distance at sea instantly when they had rowed 8-9 hours and only made it halfway
- F. No perception (v. 52)
 1. The disciples had gained no insight into the true identity of Jesus as the Son of God from the multiplication of the loaves and fish
 2. Their hearts were hardened
 - a) How the disciples could have hearts that were still described as "hard" after seeing so

many miracles with their own eyes seems inexplicable to us, except only to say their "insight" was woefully "defective" (cf. Plummer 177)

- b) They still did not see God in Jesus reconciling the world to himself
- c) Instead, they likely saw only a miracle-working prophet like Moses or Elijah
- d) The miracle of Jesus walking on water and calming the sea once again was another lesson on his deity in their continuing education
- e) **"Sin has darkened human understanding, twisted human motives, crippled human will, distorted human emotions" (Richards, *Teacher's Commentary*, 614)**

Conclusion: Principles.

(1) Frenzied popularity prompted by miracles was not the goal of Jesus, likewise, we should recognize that people are fickle enough to passionately despise the very ones they once passionately adored, because earthly popularity is usually based on "what have you done for me lately?"

(2) Popularity, popular culture, and crowd thinking, more often than not, push us away from God's will rather than toward God's will.

(3) Asking Christ to take away our fears and replace them with Christian courage is something we should all do regularly.

(4) Some people today live with a distaste for the miraculous, in that they are already biased to the point of discounting the possibility of God working a miracle.

(5) Just because Christ is for us doesn't mean the wind and waves won't be against us, in fact, it usually means they will.

(6) Jesus was far more than a miracle worker, he was God in flesh, the Savior of the world with full power and authority over the devil, demons, death, and even nature as demonstrated repeatedly.

(7) Frequently, it is our own stubbornness which keeps us from understanding more fully the things of God.

(8) What will it take to persuade you that God exists, that creation of the universe is his doing and is the greatest miracle of all, that Jesus fed over five thousand people with five loaves and two fish, that he walked on water, and that he has risen from the dead and can raise you too?