



**There and Back Again
Jesus, Out Strolling on the Water
John 6:1 – 22**

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Anyone here ever worry?

The disciples did, but they tried not to show it. Like us, they wanted to be in control of events, but they were traveling with someone who, at times, seemed to go through life not too concerned about tomorrow. Jesus is teaching His disciples a simple concept, the hardest concept for any of us to learn and exercise.

Sweat not.

Matthew 6:34

“So then, do not worry about tomorrow, for tomorrow will worry about itself. Today has enough trouble of its own.” (NET 2nd ed.)

Those who are traveling with Jesus still have more to learn. So do we. John is going to provide us two prima facie pieces of evidence that will show us not only is Jesus God, but that He is also involved in caring for us. He wants us to grow in our knowledge of Him, just like He wanted for His disciples.

When we were last together, Jesus was having a heart to heart with the religious leadership at the Temple in Jerusalem.



Now we come to chapter 6, and some time has gone by. We do not know how long it has been since Jesus had the discussion with the leadership in the Temple.

We are studying the book of John. John wrote this book to demonstrate to the world that Jesus Christ is God. At times I may bring in information from the other gospels, but again, this is a study of John.

John does not tell us what has taken place, rather he is now moving to those proofs that Jesus has just told the Jewish leadership were indeed coming.

John 5:20

“For the Father loves the Son and shows Him all things that He Himself is doing; and the Father will show Him greater works than these, so that you will be amazed.” (NASB 2020)

Greater works are indeed coming which will add to the already overwhelming evidence of works. John is now going to present more evidence to add to the testimony that is already there.

John 5:36

“But the testimony I have is greater than the testimony of John; for the works which the Father has given Me to accomplish—the very works that I do—testify about Me, that the Father has sent Me.” (NASB 2020)

John is going to move to the next two items of interest on the evidence chart. Two more works to be done by Jesus once again showing that He is God. He is indeed the Messiah.

John 6:1–2

“After these things Jesus went away to the other side of the Sea of Galilee (or Tiberias). A large crowd was following Him, because they were watching the signs which He was performing on those who were sick.” (NASB 2020)

An unknown period of time has now gone by since the events in Jerusalem in chapter 5. Jesus has a base of operations in Capernaum on the north shore of Galilee.

John does not tell us how many miracles Jesus has been performing there, but we find out in the Greek that because of them, He has a following.

There is a succession of imperfect tenses here, denoting continuous action. The multitude “kept following” Jesus because they “continually saw” the signs that he “habitually did” on the sick. (Morris 1995, 302)

Everywhere Jesus goes, His actions are bad news for the health profession as He simply heals everyone He comes in contact with. Because of that, there is now a traveling fanbase going with Him who love seeing people healed. These hints they still have not put it all together yet as to who He is.

Everything Jesus does is designed to confront the enemy, and that draws crowds. They have not figured out yet that He is Messiah. Also, Jesus is interested in investing into the lives of the 12, plus some others who are truly disciples of His, and all of whom struggle with what they see, hear, and overall experience.

The disciples know that every single day with Jesus is an adventure. When did we stop living that way in our Christian walk? Are we expecting each day to be another manifestation of Jesus doing something through our life, or have we moved on? If we are walking in the Spirit, moving on is impossible. Where we should be is in the following three verses. They provide proof of life in Christ.

John 3:8

“The wind blows where it wishes, and you hear the sound of it, but you do not know where it is coming from and where it is going; so is everyone who has been born of the Spirit.” (NASB 2020)



Galatians 5:16

“But I say, walk by the Spirit, and you will not carry out the desire of the flesh.” (NASB 2020)

Romans 8:14–15

“For all who are being led by the Spirit of God, these are sons and daughters of God. For you have not received a spirit of slavery leading to fear again, but you have received a spirit of adoption as sons and daughters by which we cry out, “Abba! Father!”” (NASB 2020)

To those who are not walking in the Spirit, when the Lord moves and guides and directs, they scratch their heads and wonder what is going on here. But for those of us who are tuned in and walking in the Spirit, we get it. For the disciples, pre giving of the Holy Spirit, they are learning.

John 6:3–6

“But Jesus went up on the mountain, and there He sat with His disciples. Now the Passover, the feast of the Jews, was near. So Jesus, after raising His eyes and seeing that a large crowd was coming to Him, said to Philip, “Where are we to buy bread so that these people may eat?” But He was saying this only to test him, for He Himself knew what He intended to do.” (NASB 2020)

Jesus has apparently gone away from Capernaum which is relatively flat towards the east where there are hills along the lake. We really do not know the location for sure, but it is a different side than the northwest side He has been on to date.

He is interested in teaching His disciples, not in putting on a show. All of those who are now habitually following Him are in it for the floor show. Let's call them followers. Later in this chapter Jesus will thin the herd a bit with some “hard” to understand information. But He is allowing them to hang on right now for the lesson value it presents.

Jesus goes to the top of this “mountain” in order to sit down with His disciples. This is a larger group than just the 12. It would be those men and women who are now following and learning from Him who have chosen this to the exclusion of anything else. There are disciples per the term's common usage. The others are followers.

Jesus is placing Himself away from the followers and close to those who have committed themselves to Him. There is a difference.

We see a lot of this in the church today too. There are those who follow Jesus, as long as it is comfortable to do so. But that changes when difficulties come up. Things like the pandemic are things used to thin the herd differentiating between those who are disciples, and those who are followers.

Jesus sits down with His disciples. It is a pleasant early spring day; the grass is still green on the hillsides making sitting down in the grass comfortable. We are told Passover is near, which is in the spring. It has been almost a year since John 2:13.

The picture is this, Jesus, and His disciples are sitting at the top of this green hill and the “followers” have figured out where He is, and they are now making their way up the hill to see the next show. The followers are those who never really move from seeking what Jesus can do for them, to becoming a disciple, a servant seeking to do for Him. Jesus though always sees the group as a potential harvest field.

He sees them moving up the hill and it is a teaching moment. Why did He ask Philip the question? The context does not give us a clue to the answer. But He asks Philip, as He looks at all the people, “where can we find a caterer at this late date?”



Verse 6 gives us the reason why He asked Philip, to test Him. How far is Philip on the scale of trusting the Lord. How far is he on truly relying on everything from the Lord. Is he ready for a venture in faith or does he still see with his physical eyes only?

This may not be the same question that we get asked. I have learned that the Lord loves to go out of His way to take advantage of teaching moments in my life. I am sure He does the same in yours. What I hear is simple. "Do you trust me, Ken? Do you trust me to take care of this for you?" Since stepping out in faith to launch Calvary Chapel, I hear this multiple times every day.

What is it the Lord is asking you about? What venture in faith does He want you to step out in? It could simply be serving here at Calvary or stepping out in faith to trust Him in your finances and giving to the ministry here. It could even be as simple as Him challenging you to step out and share Jesus with someone else. A friend, family member or a neighbor. Are we ready to hear the question asked?

Jesus asked, and He already knew what He was going to do when He did ask, but He gave Philip the opportunity to be involved in the process. I love the Lord for doing that, He never needs to involve us in what He does, but He chooses to do so and helps us to learn in it.

Had Philip reached the point where he knew that God would provide for his every need? That was what the miracles were pointing to. Had he reached the point where he looked at those who were following and saw a potential harvest of souls?

I find myself to be a lot like Philip, I too would look at the numbers of people and then start thinking how much bread that would take so everyone gets a little and then apply that number to the current market price for bread. Practical. Practical to the point of missing what it was the Lord was teaching here, God is able.

Here is the thing, if Jesus really wanted to know how much bread to have purchased, He probably would have talked to the guy good with numbers, Matthew.

He didn't.

We need to be ready for that too. God calls us and then enables us to do what it is He calls us to do. We may see someone else with us who is much better qualified to do the task, but the Lord asked you, not them. The Lord asked Philip.

John 6:7-11

"Philip answered Him, "Two hundred denarii worth of bread is not enough for them, for each to receive just a little!" One of His disciples, Andrew, Simon Peter's brother, said to Him, "There is a boy here who has five barley loaves and two fish; but what are these for so many people?" Jesus said, "Have the people recline to eat." Now there was plenty of grass in the place. So the men reclined, about five thousand in number. Jesus then took the loaves, and after giving thanks He distributed them to those who were reclining; likewise also of the fish, as much as they wanted." (NASB 2020)

I learned a long time ago in business meetings, ask questions. Give those who you are mentoring the opportunity to answer, even if it is the wrong answer. It is how we learn.

I remember being a young brand-new Second Lieutenant in the USAF Security Forces and with no accrued leave, wound up being there when all the other officers were out. The General always had a base wide meeting each week and it was that day, so I went to the meeting, feeling very out of place since everyone else in the meeting were at least Majors or above.

The meeting went well, I was even invited to sit at the table since I was the Senior Security Forces officer present, and then the General asked a question of the group as a whole. All I remember about the



question is that it was based on opinion, not fact and the action he proposed to do was, well, dumb. So I listened as he went around the table and heard, "Great idea Sir," from everyone. Then it was my turn. I looked the General in the eye, swallowed hard, and said "Sir, that is the dumbest idea I have ever heard, Sir." The Colonel sitting next to me whispered "Good knowing you." That isn't what happened, it was a loaded question and he wanted someone to disagree, and he thanked me for doing so.

I learned a lot that day. No one was yelled at by the way either.

I have done the same thing in meetings in my never-ending quest to find honest feedback from those who report to me. You would think it would be easy, it isn't. Everyone wants to protect themselves, so they tend to say what they think the boss wants to hear.

Jesus though is teaching, always teaching. So, He goes for the loaded question.

Jesus wants to see how far His disciples have come. Are they getting it. He already knows, but they need to know.

Phillip goes practical. I think his answer reflected his knowledge of resources they had available and that the Lord would supply the money for us to buy the bread, but this will take some time. The number he gave was the equivalent to 200 days wages. He would need to finalize some numbers based on his preliminary assessment and then go into town.

Had Philip learned anything from what took place at Cana? If Jesus could turn water into the finest wine this side of Rome, then bread is really not an issue.

We get like that sometimes; we see the problem and focus on it to the exclusion of everything else. Philip is firmly in that square. Jesus has given him a task, he is focused on the problem at hand, meanwhile the solution is walking around in the crowd.

We forget to pray; we forget to talk to the Lord and ask what He is thinking of doing. We assume we know what He wants, and we assume we know exactly how He wants to do it. But then there is this.

Isaiah 55:8-9

““Indeed, my plans are not like your plans, and my deeds are not like your deeds,” says the LORD, “for just as the sky is higher than the earth, so my deeds are superior to your deeds and my plans superior to your plans.” (NET 2nd ed.)

The one thing I have learned, since saying yes to the Lord wanting a church, is asking Him how He wants that done. Yes, I put together a business and ministry plan, and did so after much prayer. Do I expect it to all happen per that plan? The Lord tends to have much better ideas and plans than I ever thought about having.

Andrew's answer allows for the Lord to operate.

Jesus wants to see how far His disciples have come. Are they getting it. Actually, He already knows, but they need to know.

John 6:9.

““There is a boy here who has five barley loaves and two fish; but what are these for so many people?”” (NASB 2020)

Andrew reports in and introduces a boy to Jesus that has some of the basic ingredients necessary for a fine catered middle eastern meal, the poor man's version. He has some barley bread and some fish.



Andrew does not know what the Lord wants to do, but usually eating requires food and he discovered someone who had their box lunch with them.

Was Andrew a bit further down the path than Philip? Possibly. Both were looking at what they had. They had also looked at the need which appeared insurmountable to them, and they had no idea how they could ever produce enough food to feed 5000 men and all of the women and children with them. There could have been well over 10,000 to 15,000 people there. Not all of them were well nourished because food insecurity was rather common at that time.

So back to the question Jesus asks us, “do you trust me?” How often do we look at our circumstances and then respond that what He is asking of us is simply not possible because of the lack of...

Who knows what the Lord wants to do? That is why when you step out in faith, life becomes an adventure. His disciples are about to experience that.

Jesus will turn the little that has been offered to Him, into more than enough for everyone. Unphased by how many are there, He asks that everyone sit down to eat.

As believers, we think pretty highly of ourselves from time to time. But the reality is very different. Paul pointed that out in his letter to the believers in Corinth

1 Corinthians 1:26–29

“Consider your own call, brothers and sisters: not many of you were wise by human standards, not many were powerful, not many were of noble birth. But God chose what is foolish in the world to shame the wise; God chose what is weak in the world to shame the strong; God chose what is low and despised in the world, things that are not, to abolish things that are, so that no one might boast in the presence of God.” (NRSVue)

We have very little to give Him, just us. Jesus is showing us that He can take the little we have, if we offer it all to Him, and do a mighty work with it.

John 6:11–12

“Jesus then took the loaves, and after giving thanks He distributed them to those who were reclining; likewise also of the fish, as much as they wanted. And when they had eaten their fill, He said to His disciples, “Gather up the leftover pieces so that nothing will be lost.”” (NASB 2020)

Jesus thanks the Father for the food, and then He begins distributing it out. Jesus is acting in the role of the head of the family in a typical Jewish home and is distributing the food out for everyone. We know that of those who sat to eat, there were at least 5000 men.

How much was it? The text tells us that they ate “as much as they wanted.” Jesus is showing that God is the God of more than enough. His supply is never ending. He can indeed take the little offered and turn it into a magnificent picnic, a banquet, on top of a hill overlooking the Sea of Galilee on a pleasant spring day. Those who were being cared for by the Lord, ate until they were stuffed.

Jesus took the five barley loaves and the two fish and fed somewhere between five to fifteen thousand people so that they were stuffed. Let me put some numbers around this for you. The barley loaves were probably hand sized, and the fish, small maybe only a 1/5 lb.

Let’s assume it takes 10 barley loaves to feed an adult and maybe 5 fish. If there were 7000 there, men, women and children, we are talking about at least 70,000 barley loaves and 35,000 lbs of fish.

And these are conservative numbers too. We are talking about a miracle that only Messiah could do.



“Little is much when God is in it. He wanted them to see that truth in a most dramatic demonstration.”
(Hughes 1999, 190)

And to prove it, John goes further. It was customary to pick up what is left over since food was tight in the Jewish home. Jesus has that done.

John 6:12–14

“And when they had eaten their fill, He said to His disciples, “Gather up the leftover pieces so that nothing will be lost.” So they gathered them up, and filled twelve baskets with pieces from the five barley loaves which were left over by those who had eaten. Therefore when the people saw the sign which He had performed, they said, “This is truly the Prophet who is to come into the world.”” (NASB 2020)

Twelve baskets of leftovers. And He started with just five loaves and two fish. Jesus has just fed them all just as the nation had been fed in the wilderness for 40 years with manna. All I am doing is connecting the dots, Passover is near, and food supplied by Messiah

The response of the followers, those who now have full tummies, is notable. Do they realize Jesus is Messiah? No. They do identify Him as the prophet promised by Moses who would be like Moses.

Deuteronomy 18:15

“The LORD your God will raise up for you a prophet like me from among you—from your fellow Israelites; you must listen to him.” (NET 2nd ed.)

They got it, they understood the manna and bread connection.

We get it too. How big is and insurmountable is the problem you are facing?

Have you run the numbers, just like Philip did and concluded there is more work to be done massaging the numbers to come up with a solution. Have you examined your resources, like Andrew, and concluded it is not enough?

Again, this is Jesus asking us. “Do you trust me?” He is the God of more than enough and He stands ready to do more, but there is that trust issue. We need to determine we do not have anything but the little we can offer, us. As we trust Him, then we see what He can do and as a result we give glory to Him, and not us or our abilities.

Isaiah 30:18

“And yet the LORD is waiting to be merciful to you. He is ready to take pity on you because he always does what is right. Happy are those who put their trust in the LORD.” (GNB)

Don’t miss out on the giant miracle that God wants to do in your life simply because you won’t trust Him with the situation.

The followers saw the miracle, concluded Jesus is possibly the prophet like Moses, and stopped there.

They still had this idea that it was Moses who made sure they had enough to eat and drink while in the wilderness, when it was God the entire time. They connected enough dots to realize they wanted this image they had created of Jesus to be on the throne.

John 6:15

“So Jesus, aware that they intended to come and take Him by force to make Him king, withdrew again to the mountain by Himself, alone.” (NASB 2020)



For one thing, the crowd was willing to support Jesus only so long as he gave them what they wanted. This means that their support was for selfish reasons. (Boice 2005, 453)

I read this and wonder, is that part of the issue today. Too many want a Jesus who gives what they want but stop when obedience comes up.

They were grateful for the meal. We will see as we continue in John, this group of followers will be confronted with truth from Jesus in the very near future, which will involve being faithful and obedient, and they will have a different idea then.

But Moses freed us from Egypt, Jesus can free us from Rome.

Jesus heads to a place further up in the Golan Heights to be by Himself with the Father. He needs recharging and knows only prayer can do that. Meanwhile He leaves it to His disciples to wrap things up and go to Capernaum, their base of operations.

Why did they leave Jesus behind? We are not told, but based on the text we can guess that Jesus may have said to them if I am not back by dark, head back. So they may have assumed He was walking around the lake back to Capernaum. They had no idea He knew a shortcut.

John 6:16–18

“Now when evening came, His disciples went down to the sea, and after getting into a boat, they started to cross the sea to Capernaum. It had already become dark, and Jesus had not yet come to them. In addition, the sea began getting rough, because a strong wind was blowing.” (NASB 2020)

We need to remember; Jesus is involved in spiritual warfare every day of His ministry. The enemy hates Jesus and because there are those who are disciples of His, he hates them to. Jesus is not with them, they are on the lake, so of course, time for a storm.

We need to be ready for this as well. The disciples have just been involved in a magnificent miracle of Jesus. God has seriously moved and perhaps some of the followers were now leaning towards being disciples as well. When will Satan attack? Before? Yes. After? Definitely? Why did Jesus go off and pray? Paul provided us some insight into this. One short sentence that we sometimes overlook.

1 Corinthians 10:12

“So let the one who thinks he is standing be careful that he does not fall.” (NET 2nd ed.)

When we are on a spiritual high, that is when Satan will do his best to get you to fall. His attack will be in your strength too, not your weakness. It will be where you truly believe you already have it all together with the Lord.

Many of the disciples are professional fishermen and are used to boats and they know this lake very well. They are smart enough to know not to go out there if the weather is bad or about to be bad. It starts getting a bit rough out there and this was unanticipated. But notice who shows up right when He is needed.

John 6:19–21

“Then, when they had rowed about twenty-five or thirty stadia, they saw Jesus walking on the sea and coming near the boat; and they were frightened. But He said to them, “It is I; do not be afraid.” So they were willing to take Him into the boat, and immediately the boat was at the land to which they were going.” (NASB 2020)

They are about 3 to 4 miles out in the lake. It is night, it is windy, the water is rough, unusually so as this is an attack from the enemy. And they notice something on the water.



They see Jesus out strolling on the water in the middle of the night. Not something you would expect to see, ever.

They had just been on the side of Galilee that was also well known for being the area of the Rephaim in the time of Moses. It was already a little spooky for them and now this.

They were doing what Jesus had asked them to, return to Capernaum. As they were about the business of doing what Jesus said, the enemy attacks and an unforeseen storm is on them as they are in the middle of the lake. Here is the thing, Jesus knows, and He has already headed out to them.

Jesus shows up right at their point of need and did so in an entirely unexpected way. Strolling out on the water.

Here they are, in the boat, with the 12 baskets, evidence of Jesus being God, they have followed His instructions, and now they are a bit stressed by the storm. And Jesus shows up, out on the water, and totally freaks them out. They are surprised as they were trying to do this without seeking God's help and Jesus, supernaturally I might add, shows up.

They hear the familiar voice telling them "It is I, don't be afraid."

Isn't that just like Jesus to do. He asks His disciples to do something. They are doing as He asked but they did not bother to stop and pray beforehand. That plow on out there and begin to have a bit of difficulty getting things done. Jesus knows the exact right time to show up.

He simply lets them know He is there. Now it is up to them, do we invite Him on board. Jesus did not force Himself into what they were doing. He shows up, says hi there, basically implying that if asked, He would be able to resolve the fix we have gotten ourselves into.

First, we see that He is wanting to know if we trust Him. Now He wants us to know that if we do, and we step out in faith to do what He has asked us to do, He is right there with us. We need to remember to talk with Him before we head out, but He also understands that we still try and do things in our own strength at times and use our own plans. Meanwhile He is walking alongside the boat wanting to know if we want Him to get in and help us do what He asked us to do but we thought we could do in our own strength.

They invite Jesus on board and the text tells us as soon as they do so, they are at their destination.

Another miracle.

Let me ask this question then, what kind of a storm are you finding yourself in today. Are you there because you stepped out in faith but decided to do it on your own or is the storm of your own making.

Jesus is right there walking next to you wanting to know if He can get on the boat to rescue you.

Here is the thing, we must invite Him to do so.
Do we trust Him in this?

As believers if we are in the fix because we tried to do ministry without Him, simply repent and trust Him to do what He said He would.

1 John 1:9

"If we confess our sins, he is faithful and just to forgive us our sins and to cleanse us from all unrighteousness." (ESV)



Proverbs 3:5–6.

“Trust in the LORD with all your heart, and do not lean on your own understanding. In all your ways acknowledge him, and he will make straight your paths.” (ESV)

If the issue is more basic, you don’t know Jesus and the problem, well help is needed. Just trust Him.

Romans 3:21–24

“But now God has shown us a way to be made right with him without keeping the requirements of the law, as was promised in the writings of Moses and the prophets long ago. We are made right with God by placing our faith in Jesus Christ. And this is true for everyone who believes, no matter who we are. For everyone has sinned; we all fall short of God’s glorious standard. Yet God, in his grace, freely makes us right in his sight. He did this through Christ Jesus when he freed us from the penalty for our sins.” (NLT)

Romans 10:9–13

“If you openly declare that Jesus is Lord and believe in your heart that God raised him from the dead, you will be saved. For it is by believing in your heart that you are made right with God, and it is by openly declaring your faith that you are saved. As the Scriptures tell us, “Anyone who trusts in him will never be disgraced.” Jew and Gentile are the same in this respect. They have the same Lord, who gives generously to all who call on him. For “Everyone who calls on the name of the LORD will be saved.”” (NLT)

ABC’s of Salvation

- A. Acknowledge that you are a sinner, tell Him that.
- B. Believe that Jesus died on the cross for our sin and that He rose from the dead.
- C. Confess that Jesus is Lord. Tell someone about what you have done.

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