

February 6, 2013

Jesus Walks on Water

Mark 6:45-51

LESSON FOCUS***"God is our refuge and strength, a very present help in trouble."*** Psalm 46:1

Jesus Walks on Water

Immediately Jesus made the disciples get into the boat and go on ahead of Him to the other side, while He dismissed the crowd. After He had dismissed them, He went up on a mountainside by Himself to pray. When evening came He was there alone but the boat was already a considerable distance from land, buffeted by the waves because the wind was against it. During the 4th watch of the night Jesus went out to them, walking on the lake. When the disciples saw Him walking on the lake they were terrified. "It's a ghost," they said, and cried out in fear. But Jesus immediately said to them, "Take courage. It is I. Don't be afraid." (*Matt 14:22-27*)

This story also appears also in *Mark 6:45-51* and *John 6:15-21* and as in the feeding of the 5000 lots of additional insight can be gained by comparing all three accounts. All agree that this event followed immediately on the heels of the miraculous feeding, and that the disciples set out across the lake without Jesus, while He went up the mountainside alone to pray.

Jesus came to that remote area to be alone with His disciples to grieve the death of John the Baptist and hear the reports of their recent missionary tour. But their presence was discovered and they were followed by a huge group of people (*Matt 14:13-14* & *Mark 6:30*). Putting aside His own needs, He ministered to the crowd, fed and dismissed them, and was now free to be alone. Perhaps sending the disciples out without Him was even an effort to divert the crowd and get some "face time" with His Father.

John the Baptist was a relative (*Luke 1:36*) and had just been beheaded by Herod as a favor to his wife (*Matt 14:1-12*), and the 12 had just completed their first assignment, spreading the Gospel throughout Israel. It was time to check in.

In *Matt 14:25* we are told that it was the 4th watch of the night (3-6 AM) and from John's account that the disciples had only covered about 3-3 1/2 miles (1/2; the distance across the lake) (*John 6:19*) yet they had been rowing since early evening. They were straining at the oars but not getting very far. In fact Mark tells us that Jesus was making better time walking than they were rowing and was about to pass them by when they saw Him (*Mark 6:48*) even though they had a head start of several hours.

Thinking He was a ghost they were terrified. But Jesus calmed them by identifying Himself. "Take courage. It is I. Don't be afraid." The words translated "It is I" in verse 27 can also be translated "I am", the same words spoken to Moses from the burning bush.

"Lord, if it's you," Peter replied, "Tell me to come to you on the water." "Come," He said. Then Peter got down out of the boat, walked on the water and came toward Jesus. But when he saw the wind he was afraid, and beginning to sink cried out, "Lord, save me." Immediately Jesus reached out His hand and caught him. "You of little faith," He said. "Why did you doubt?" And when they climbed into the boat

the wind died down. Then those who were in the boat worshipped Him, saying, "Truly, You are the Son of God." His mastery over the laws of nature had persuaded them. (*Matt 14:28-33*)

As the disciples had made very little progress rowing across the sea against the wind, Israel had made very little progress in their mandate to tell the world about God (*Isa. 43:10-13*). And as Peter was called out of the boat to walk on the water, the Church was called out of Israel to dwell in the world and spread the Gospel (*Matt 28:19-20*).

As long as Peter stayed focused on the Lord he was able to remain above the waves, empowered by his faith to perform a miracle and sustained by his closeness to the Lord. When he was distracted by the winds he began to sink and his life was in peril. As long as we stay focused on the Lord, we're able to remain above the ways of this world, empowered by our faith to perform miraculous works and sustained by our closeness to Him. When we're distracted by the winds of controversy and deceit, we begin sinking into the world's unbelieving ways and our spiritual life is in peril.

When Peter cried out, "Lord save me," the Lord was immediately at his side, reaching out to rescue him and bring him to safety. When we cry out, "Lord save me," the Lord is immediately at our side, reaching out to rescue us and bring us to safety. We are never beyond His reach.

WELCOME ACTIVITY

Jesus Walks on Water Puppet Craft

You'll need:

A large white paper plate – 1 per child

3 craft sticks per child

Small construction paper boat & sail per child

Glue

Scissors

Crayons

Cut 2 small ½ inch slits in the plate – the first one to hold the boat, the second one to hold Peter, who will fall into the water.

Children will color the bottom half of the paper plate to represent water, they will color over the slits. Children can glue a craft stick to the back of the sail boat and then draw faces on the other 2 craft sticks, one to represent Jesus, the other to represent Peter.

Have children use this puppets and story plate to help tell today's Bible story.

OPENING

Today's Bible story is about Peter, who was one of Jesus' disciples, and Jesus. We're going to use our puppets and paper plate story board to tell the story.

BIBLE STORY

Jesus Walks on Water Mark 6:45-51

Read from your Bible. Ask students to find it in a Bible too. Those that can read can follow along. Choose the passages you would like to read aloud. Use visuals to help tell the story.

"God is our refuge and strength, a very present help in trouble." Psalm 46:1

The disciples went into the boat while Jesus prayed. *(Place the boat through the slit on paper plate)*

It became windy, and the wind blew the boat away from the land. *(Move the boat back and forth in the water)*

In the morning, Jesus came out to the disciples by walking on the water. *(Move Jesus outside the plate, on top of the water)*

The disciples were scared, but Jesus said, "Don't be afraid,!"

Peter said, "Lord I want to come out to you and walk on the water too!" So Jesus said "Come!" *(Place Peter through the slit on the plate, in the water)*

When Peter got out of the boat, it became windy again! *(Move the boat back and forth in the water)*

Peter began to sink, and he called out to Jesus, "Lord, save me!" *(Push Peter down through the slit)*

Jesus reached out his hand to save Peter and asked him, "Why did you doubt?" *(Pull Peter up out of the slit)*

The disciples said to Jesus, "Truly, you are the Son of God!" *(Move Peter up and down happily)*

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Another Version of Jesus Walks on Water

Peter was one of Jesus' best friends. He traveled with Jesus and saw Him do many amazing things. Last week we learned how Jesus fed many, many people with one little boy's lunch. Peter was there when Jesus did this great miracle.

We are going to tell today's story from Peter's point of view.

After Jesus fed all the people, He asked the disciples (I'm one of those) to go ahead to the other side of the lake. So we began rowing the boat across the lake. Jesus told us that He would catch up with us later. He wanted to pray to God.

Suddenly, stormy winds began to blow our boat. Dark clouds began to roll in, and the waves began to grow. It was really hard to row the boat.

Then, all of a sudden, we saw something walking towards us. We were so scared! It looked like a ghost! We were afraid and not sure what to do.

Immediately, Jesus said, "Have courage, It's Me. Don't be afraid."

I couldn't believe my eyes. Jesus was walking on top of the water like it was land. Before I could think, I asked Jesus if I could walk out to Him on the water.

Jesus told me to come to Him, so I began walking on the water. I couldn't believe how the water was holding me up!

Then, I took my eyes off Jesus. I started looking around at the waves and felt the wind rush by. I got scared and I started to sink into the water. I knew that I would drown if Jesus didn't help me. I cried out to Jesus for help, and He reached out His hand and saved me.

Quickly we climbed into the boat. When we did, the stormy winds stopped. We were amazed at how the storm was immediately gone! We knew again that Jesus was God's Son.

Only He could make the weather change and walk on water! Then we all worshipped Jesus by telling Him how wonderful He was and how much we loved Him. We bowed down to Him and honored Him.

Just like Peter and the disciples, we can trust Jesus and worship Him.

GOD'S WORD IN MY HEART

Read this passage from your Bible. Ask students to locate it in a Bible too. Help them learn this verse.

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ACTIVE PLAY IDEA

Water Play

You'll Need

A large bin or tub filled ½ way with water – caution, the tub will be heavy!
(fill the tub with water from the janitor's closet, there is a floor sink in there to use)

Toy boats

Towels for under the play area

Let children play with the boats in the water, re-tell the story as the children are playing. You may want to set up more than one water play area so everyone can play at the same time.

SONG IDEAS

Song:

To the tune of "Row, Row, Row Your Boat"

**Row, row, row your boat,
Gently down the stream.
Jesus did not need a boat,
He walked upon the sea.**

CLOSING ACTIVITY

Gather children around you.

**Thank You, Jesus, for always being with us. Thank you for always hearing and answering our prayers.
In Jesus Name, Amen.**