

**INTRODUCTION**

1. Please take God's Word and turn with me to John chapter 6.
2. We are looking this morning at verses 16-19.
3. Read John 6:16-19.
4. We come now to the 5<sup>th</sup> miracle in John's Gospel.
5. Immediately after the miracle of feeding 15-20 thousand people with barley loaves and fish, Jesus dismisses the crowds and instructs the disciples to go to Capernaum while He went back to the mountain to pray.
6. Verses 16-17 focuses on the disciples obeying Jesus' instructions.
7. After they got into a board, verse 17 says, "they started to cross the sea to Capernaum. It had already become dark, and Jesus had not yet come to them."
8. Something that was common on the Sea of Galilee were its sudden storms.
9. Because the Sea of Galilee lies about six hundred feet below sea level. Cool air from the south-eastern tablelands

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can rush in to displace the warm moist air over the lake, churning up the water in a violent squall.<sup>1</sup>

10. And that's exactly what happened according to verse 18: "The sea began to be stirred up because a strong wind was blowing."
11. Matthew 14:24 says the boat was "battered by the waves; for the winds were contrary."
12. Mark 6:48 says that Jesus saw "them straining at the oars, for the wind was against them."
13. The wind was so powerful that it blew the disciples' little boat off course, pushing it "a long distance from the land" (Matt. 14:24) toward "the middle of the sea" (Mark 6:47).
14. Despite being "battered by the waves" (Matt. 14:24), the disciples continued "straining at the oars" (Mark 6:48), desperately trying to reach the safety of the western shore.
15. (Even if their boat had been equipped with a sail, it would have done the disciples little good, since they were heading into the wind [Matt. 14:24].) But their progress was painfully slow.

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<sup>1</sup>D. A. Carson, *The Gospel According to John* (Leicester, England; Grand Rapids, Mich.: Inter-Varsity Press; W.B. Eerdmans, 1991). 275.

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16. The disciples had left for Capernaum sometime between 6:00 and 9:00 P.M. (John 6:16), and according to Matthew 14:25 and Mark 6:48 it was now the fourth watch of the night (3:00 to 6:00 A.M.).
17. During those long, dark, exhausting, stressful hours, they had rowed only about three or four miles.<sup>2</sup>
18. Verse 19 says suddenly “they saw Jesus walking on the sea and drawing near to the boat; and they were frightened.”
19. Both Matthew 14:26 and Mark 6:49 says they thought it was “a ghost.”
20. Mark 6:48 says that “He intended to pass by them...but immediately He spoke to them and said to them, ‘Take courage; it is I, do not be afraid’” (v.49).
21. As I was studying this passage, I was wondering why John left out the episode of the story where Peter asks if he could come to Jesus.
22. Only Matthew records this part of the story.
23. I was also wondering why John didn’t mention what Mark says in Mark 6:52, “For they had not gained any insight from the *incident of* the loaves, but their heart was hardened.”
24. Then it dawned on me.

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<sup>2</sup>John MacArthur, *The MacArthur New Testament Commentary : John 1-11* (Chicago: Moody Press, 2006). 232.

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25. This account in John's gospel is not about Peter or the disciples but about Jesus.
26. Remember John said in John 20:31, "But these have been written so that you may believe that Jesus is the Christ, the Son of God; and that believing you may have life in His name."
27. John is presenting reasons why you should believe in Jesus through these various accounts.
28. In the feeding of the 5000, what was the point of the story?
29. Jesus has the power to create.
30. When you see and understand the implications of that truth, you understand who He is.
31. In our present passage, the point is that Jesus has power over nature and time.
32. Again, when you understand that truth, you understand who He is.
33. The remainder of the story says in verse 21 that the disciples "were willing to receive Him into the boat, and immediately the boat was at the land to which they were going."
34. I don't want us to miss 2 powerful truths found in John's account of this 5<sup>th</sup> miracle.
35. The first truth is *Jesus has power over nature*.

**I. Jesus Has Power Over Nature (v.19)**

**A. He Walked On Water**

1. Besides Peter, do you know anyone else who has walked on water?

Matthew Henry says, “The power Christ has over the laws and customs of nature, to control and dispense with them at his pleasure. It is natural for heavy bodies to sink in water, but Christ walked *upon* the water as upon dry land, which was more than Moses’s dividing the water and walking *through* the water.”<sup>3</sup>

2. Even Peter’s ability to walk on water was at the permission of Jesus.
  - a) In Matthew’s account of this story, verses 28-29 says, “Peter said to Him, ‘Lord, if it is You, command me to come to You on the water.’<sup>29</sup> And He said, ‘Come!’ And Peter got out of the boat, and walked on the water and came toward Jesus.”

Peter could not have done this if it weren’t for Jesus giving him the ability or power to do this.

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<sup>3</sup>Matthew Henry, *Matthew Henry's Commentary on the Whole Bible : Complete and Unabridged in One Volume* (Peabody: Hendrickson, 1996, c1991). Jn 6:15.

The text also indicates that Peter believed he could do this.

b) Verses 30-31 says when he saw “the wind, he became frightened, and beginning to sink, he cried out, ‘Lord, save me!’ Immediately Jesus stretched out His hand and took hold of him, and said to him, ‘You of little faith, why did you doubt?’”

3. Jesus was able to walk on water because He is God

J.C. Ryal said, “He walked on them as easily as we walk on dry land. They bore Him as firmly as the pavement of the Temple, or the hills around Nazareth. That which is contrary to all natural reason was perfectly possible to Christ.

The Lord Jesus, we must remember, is not only the Lord, but the Maker of all creation.”<sup>4</sup>

As God He has control over nature and all things.

Remember what John said in chapter 1 of his gospel?

John 1:3, “All things came into being through Him, and apart from Him nothing came into being that has come into being.”

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<sup>4</sup> J.C. Ryal, The Gospel of John  
(<http://www.gracegems.org/Ryle/j06.htm>)

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Since He made everything, nothing is impossible for Him. Walking on water was no different than walking on dry ground.

This account also reminds us of what I said last time: Jesus' miracles were primarily for His disciples to increase their faith.

Especially since Mark 6:52 said "they had not gained any insight from the incident of the loaves, but their heart was hardened."

Because they misunderstood the real significance of that afternoon's miracle, they could not grasp Jesus' supernatural character as displayed in His power over the lake.<sup>5</sup>

So, Jesus' walk on the water to *them* would have solidified who He was.

Matthew seems to indicate that they got it. Matthew 14:33, "And those who were in the boat worshiped Him, saying, 'You are certainly God's Son!'"

Not only did Jesus walk on water but...

### B. He Calmed the Wind and Sea

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<sup>5</sup>John Jr MacArthur, *The MacArthur Study Bible*, electronic ed. (Nashville: Word Pub., 1997, c1997). Mk 6:52.

John doesn't mention this point but Matthew and Mark does.

1. Matthew says in Matthew 14:32, "When they got into the boat, the wind stopped."
2. Mark 6:51 says, "Then He got into the boat with them, and the wind stopped; and they were utterly astonished."
3. Luke 8:22-25 records another incident where the disciples were in the boat with Jesus and a He was asleep and a storm came on them.
4. Luke 8:23 describes it as a "fierce gale." Verse 24 says they woke up Jesus and said, "Master, Master, we are perishing! And He got up and rebuked the wind and the surging waves, and they stopped, and it became calm."
5. They said in verse 25, "Who then is this, that He commands even the winds and the water, and they obey Him?"

Scripture records other instances where Jesus demonstrated power over nature:

C. He Turned Water into Wine (John 2:6-11)

There were "six stone waterpots"

They were made of "stone" because this would make them "less liable to impurity" (Vincent) "unlike earthenware pots (Lev.11:33)" (MacArthur).



They contained “twenty or thirty gallons a each.”

That’s either 120 or 180 gallons of water. Certainly enough water to accommodate the guests of this wedding.

John makes it clear that the six stone waterpots were filled completely with *water*—nothing was added to it. What followed was truly a miracle.

William MacDonald says, “The Lord used the facilities that were available when He was about to perform a miracle. He allowed men to provide the waterpots, and to fill them with water, but then He did what no man could ever do—changed the water into wine! It was the servants and not the disciples who filled the vessels with water. In this way, the Lord avoided the possibility of any charge of trickery. Also, the waterpots were filled to the brim, so that no one could say that wine had been added to the water.

The miracle had now taken place. The Lord instructed the servants to draw some out from the vessels and take the contents to the master of the feast. From this it is clear that the miracle had been instantaneous. The water did not become wine over a period of time, but in a second or so. As someone put it poetically, ‘The unconscious waters saw their God and blushed’” (Believer’s Bible Commentary).

D. He Cursed a Fig Tree and it Withered (Mat.21:19)

Matthew 21:18-19, “Now in the morning, when He was returning to the city, He became hungry. <sup>19</sup> Seeing a lone fig tree by the road, He came to it and found nothing on it except leaves only; and He said\* to it, “No longer shall there ever be *any* fruit from you.” And at once the fig tree withered.”

E. He Brought Fish to the Disciples Nets (Luke 5:4-6)

1. Luke 5:4-6, “When He had finished speaking, He said to Simon, “Put out into the deep water and let down your nets for a catch.” <sup>5</sup> Simon answered and said, “Master, we worked hard all night and caught nothing, but I will do as You say *and* let down the nets.” <sup>6</sup> When they had done this, they enclosed a great quantity of fish, and their nets *began* to break.”

2. John 21:1-11

If you go back to the story in John 6, you learn that not only did Jesus have power over nature but...

## II. Jesus Has Power Over Time and Space (v.21)

The story of Christ’s walking on the water actually includes not one miracle, but four.

Not only did Jesus walk on the water, but so also did Peter (at least for a few moments).

Matthew and Mark record a third miracle.

When Jesus (along with a soaking wet and thoroughly chastened Peter) got into the boat, the wind immediately stopped (Matt. 14:32; Mark 6:51).

Finally, John records a fourth miracle: after Jesus got on board and calmed the storm, immediately the boat was at the land to which they were going.<sup>6</sup>

A. John is the Only One who Records this Event

This wording indicates that another miracle occurred besides walking on the water, i.e., the boat miraculously and instantly arrived at its precise destination as soon as Jesus stepped into the boat.<sup>7</sup> The boat being instantly at its destination has no exact Old Testament parallels, but the Spirit had sometimes carried prophets from one place to another almost instantly.<sup>8</sup>

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<sup>6</sup>John MacArthur, *The MacArthur New Testament Commentary : John 1-11* (Chicago: Moody Press, 2006). 233.

<sup>7</sup>John Jr MacArthur, *The MacArthur Study Bible*, electronic ed. (Nashville: Word Pub., 1997, c1997). Jn 6:21.

**Spirit.** When capitalized in this commentary, it refers to the Spirit of God, the Holy Spirit.

<sup>8</sup>Craig S. Keener and InterVarsity Press, *The IVP Bible Background Commentary : New Testament* (Downers Grove, Ill.: InterVarsity Press, 1993). Jn 6:21.

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1. Ezekiel said in Ezekiel 8:3, “He stretched out the form of a hand and caught me by a lock of my head; and the Spirit lifted me up between earth and heaven and brought me in the visions of God to Jerusalem, to the entrance of the north gate of the inner *court*, where the seat of the idol of jealousy, which provokes to jealousy, was *located*.”
2. After Elijah was caught up into a whirlwind into heaven, the sons of the prophets said to Elisha in 2 Kings 2:16, “Behold now, there are with your servants fifty strong men, please let them go and search for your master; perhaps the Spirit of the Lord has taken him up and cast him on some mountain or into some valley.’ And he said, ‘You shall not send.’”
3. In the NT, Acts 8:39 the Spirit seized Philip

After Philip baptized the Ethiopian eunuch, it says, “When they came up out of the water, the Spirit of the Lord snatched Philip away; and the eunuch no longer saw him, but went on his way rejoicing.”

### B. This Seems to Allude to Psalm 107:23-32

Especially verse 30 which says “He guided them to their desired haven.”

Verses 23-32 says, “Those who go down to the sea in ships, Who do business on great waters; <sup>24</sup> They have seen the works of the Lord, And His wonders in the

deep. <sup>25</sup> For He spoke and raised up a stormy wind,  
Which lifted up the waves of the sea. <sup>26</sup> They rose up to  
the heavens, they went down to the depths; Their soul  
melted away in *their* misery. <sup>27</sup> They reeled and  
staggered like a drunken man, And were at their wits'  
end. <sup>28</sup> Then they cried to the Lord in their trouble, And  
He brought them out of their distresses. <sup>29</sup> He caused  
the storm to be still, So that the waves of the sea were  
hushed. <sup>30</sup> Then they were glad because they were  
quiet, So He guided them to their desired haven. <sup>31</sup> Let  
them give thanks to the Lord for His lovingkindness,  
And for His wonders to the sons of men! <sup>32</sup> Let them  
extol Him also in the congregation of the people, And  
praise Him at the seat of the elders.”

Before we conclude this story, we need to see that  
compassionate side of Jesus here. Not only did He  
display such great power but also great care for the  
disciples' fears.

### **III. Jesus Has Compassion on Our Fears (vv.19-20)**

Verses 19-20 says that after they “saw Jesus walking on the  
sea and drawing near the boat; and they were frightened.  
But He said to them, ‘It is I; do not be afraid.’”

#### **A. Jesus is the Great Shepherd**

Just as He causes us to lie down in green pastures, He  
leads us beside still waters.

He said in John 10:27-28, “My sheep hear My voice,  
and I know them, and they follow Me; <sup>28</sup> and I give

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eternal life to them, and they will never perish; and no one will snatch them out of My hand.”

They were afraid when they saw Him walking on water but when they heard Him say, “It is I; do not be afraid,” they were “willing to receive Him.”

### **B. Jesus is Our Comforter**

He told the disciples later in John 14:18, “I will not leave you as orphans; I will come to you.”

Had He not already demonstrated that by coming to them while they battled the storms?

He said in John 14:27, “Peace I leave with you; My peace I give to you; not as the world gives do I give to you. Do not let your heart be troubled, nor let it be fearful.”

Even later in the apostle John’s life, after He had seen Him in a vision, Jesus said to him in Revelation 1:17-18, “Do not be afraid; I am the first and the last, and the living One; and I was dead, and behold, I am alive forevermore, and I have the keys of death and of Hades.”

## **CONCLUSION**

1. Jesus demonstrated in John’s gospel by walking on the water His power over nature.

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2. He also demonstrated His power over time and space by bringing the boat immediately to the shore.
3. As the all-powerful God who created all things, He even calmed the disciples' fears.
4. What about you?
5. He knows your trials.
6. He knows your suffering.
7. He sees you battling against the storms of this life and He comes to you and says, "Do not be afraid."
8. Hebrews 13:5 says, "I will never desert you, nor will I ever forsake you."
9. Do you feel alone in your struggles? Then come to Jesus.
10. He said in Matthew 11:28-30 <sup>28</sup> "Come to Me, all who are weary and heavy-laden, and I will give you rest. <sup>29</sup> "Take My yoke upon you and learn from Me, for I am gentle and humble in heart, and You will find rest for your souls. <sup>30</sup> "For My yoke is easy and My burden is light."
11. Surrender your life to Him now.
12. Let's pray.