

Walking On The Water

Mark 6:45-52

45 And straightway he constrained his disciples to get into the ship, and to go to the other side before unto Bethsaida, while he sent away the people.

46 And when he had sent them away, he departed into a mountain to pray.

47 And when even was come, the ship was in the midst of the sea, and he alone on the land.

48 And he saw them toiling in rowing; for the wind was contrary unto them: and about the fourth watch of the night he cometh unto them, walking upon the sea, and would have passed by them.

49 But when they saw him walking upon the sea, they supposed it had been a spirit, and cried out:

50 For they all saw him, and were troubled. And immediately he talked with them, and saith unto them, Be of good cheer: it is I; be not afraid.

51 And he went up unto them into the ship; and the wind ceased: and they were sore amazed in themselves beyond measure, and wondered.

52 For they considered not the miracle of the loaves: for their heart was hardened.

This story occurs right after the miracle of loaves and fishes in all 3 gospels where it appears in John, Matthew, and Mark.

In it, Jesus feeds the crowd and the crowd, seeing the miracle, decides that Jesus is the Messiah so they try to grab him and set him up as the king.

As we studied before, Jesus had no interest in becoming an earthly king at this time, so he immediately sends his disciples away in a boat while he escapes to the mountain to pray.

Remember the story of Elijah in 1 Kings. In chapter 18 Elijah is calling fire down from heaven and ordering that all the prophets of Baal be put to the sword.

In chapter 19, however, Elijah is hiding in a cave. He is afraid of Jezebel. Elijah with the Power of God on him is a fierce fighter. But Elijah the man is not; he is as fearful and as human as any of us. God sends an angel to Elijah to bring him food and drink – to give him strength.

1 Kings 19:4-6

4 But he himself went a day's journey into the wilderness, and came and sat down under a juniper tree: and he requested for himself that he might die; and said, It is enough; now, O LORD, take away my life; for I am not better than my fathers.

5 And as he lay and slept under a juniper tree, behold, then an angel touched him, and said unto him, Arise and eat.

6 And he looked, and, behold, there was a cake baken on the coals, and a cruse of water at his head. And he did eat and drink, and laid him down again.

So we see that Jesus, being fully God and fully man at the same time, needs to do the same thing. After working a great miracle, he needs to recharge.

So Jesus goes into the mountain to pray alone. By doing so, Jesus gives all of us an example.

A few years ago I started getting up to pray before going to work.

At one point my sleep started to take priority over my prayers, so I would hit the snooze button a few times before finally getting up to pray. My wife commented that my prayers seemed to be getting shorter and shorter as the days went by.

I replied to her in a tongue-in-cheek way, "It doesn't take me long to give God is to-do list for the day."

Unfortunately for me, this statement was not far from the truth.

My prayers had taken on a habit of giving God his list of things to accomplish for me, when I should have been listening to him and getting his list for me.

God will give us the strength we need to accomplish His tasks. So if we want to get His strength, we need to take on his to-do list.

- Jesus is in the mountains getting the strength He needs for the next task.
- He sent the disciples on their way ahead of Him.
- At around 4:00 AM He comes walking on the water.

Remember that we have seen Jesus interacting with the waves before in

Luke 8:25

25 And he said unto them, Where is your faith? And they being afraid wondered, saying one to another, What manner of man is this! for he commandeth even the winds and water, and they obey him.

This ability to command the waters is a Messianic prophecy that occurs in:

Psalm 89:8-9

8 O LORD God of hosts, who is a strong LORD like unto thee? or to thy faithfulness round about thee?

9 Thou rulest the raging of the sea: when the waves thereof arise, thou stillest them.

The word LORD is all capitals in the KJV because the Hebrew word “Yah” is there in the original text. So Yahweh, the unspeakable name of God, is substituted with the word Adonai that means “Lord.”

Yahweh, the God of creation, is the one who controls the raging of the seas. So when the disciples ask, “what manner of man is this,” the scripture is pointing directly to Psalms 89.

Not only that, it is making an explicit statement that Jesus (Yah-shua) is the same as Yahweh; that Jesus is THE LORD in flesh. Notice the next verse of the Psalm.

Psalm 89:10-11

10 Thou hast broken Rahab in pieces, as one that is slain; thou hast scattered thine enemies with thy strong arm.

11 The heavens are thine, the earth also is thine: as for the world and the fulness thereof, thou hast founded them.

This verse is a little trickier to understand. Rahab is the embodiment of chaos – the exact opposite of order. This chaos, Rahab, appears first in the Bible in Genesis.

Genesis 1:2

2 And the earth was without form, and void; and darkness was upon the face of the deep. And the Spirit of God moved upon the face of the waters.

So the “waters” of Genesis 1:2 was called Rahab. It represented total chaos. Yahweh moves on the waters of chaos and starts separating it into orderly things.

He divides light from darkness, land from water, etc. The imagery, in fact, is that the Lord causes the earth to rise from the deep waters of chaos much like the belly of a pregnant woman.

So the Lord causes the earth to rise up from the waters of Rahab and by doing so, the Lord rises above and conquers chaos and disorder in the universe.

In this story, we have the waters in the midst of a storm. Jesus literally walks on the water.

Symbolically, however, He rises above the chaos of the situation. Since only Yahweh, the Creator in Genesis 1, can rise above the waters of creation, then Jesus must be the same as Yahweh.

Matthew 14:28-33

28 And Peter answered him and said, Lord, if it be thou, bid me come unto thee on the water.

29 And he said, Come. And when Peter was come down out of the ship, he walked on the water, to go to Jesus.

30 But when he saw the wind boisterous, he was afraid; and beginning to sink, he cried, saying, Lord, save me.

31 And immediately Jesus stretched forth his hand, and caught him, and said unto him, O thou of little faith, wherefore didst thou doubt?

32 And when they were come into the ship, the wind ceased.

33 Then they that were in the ship came and worshipped him, saying, Of a truth thou art the Son of God.

Only Matthew has the story of Peter getting into the boat. Peter is a good candidate because he is like many of us. There is no one who messed up more consistently than Peter.

Whether he was denying Jesus at his trial, or slicing off the ear of a Temple guard, you can count on Peter to do the wrong thing. Even Paul rebuked Peter for acting one way when he was alone, and another when there were Jews around.

In spite of Peter's actions, he was always willing to correct himself when he found he was in the wrong.

Peter serves as a good example for us in that regard. No matter how much we mess up, the Lord will always take us back if we are willing to give up our pride and repent.

Most of the disciples stayed in the boat. It is much easier to stay in the boat where it is safe. How many of us, when we see the Lord walking on the water have the forethought to ask him to ask us out into the water as well?

Do we rush headlong into the water thinking, "If he can do that, so can I"? Do we sit on the deck chair saying, "There is no way I could do that. In fact, he's crazy for doing it!"

Peter asks Jesus to call him out onto the water. In doing so, we see that God will give us the strength we need when we need it; even if it means that we will walk on the water.

So we see that we can have power over the chaos in our own lives if we need it. Like Peter, however, we can be distracted by the waves.

Rather than concentrating on Jesus and the power he gives us over the waves, we concentrate on the waves.

As soon as that happens, we sink into the sea of chaos. Jesus is there to pull us up again, but he is disappointed at our lack of trust.

How many of you have been distracted by the waves of chaos in your life? We want to do the work of the Lord, but we are distracted by the life around us.

We go to work where we have the job we perform, but we also have the politics of the workplace to contend with.

- We worry about making ourselves look good to our boss so that we can get more money.
- We worry about how we are going to make the next car payment.
- We worry about the traffic on the way to church.
- Will I have time to take a shower before church?
- Is my house clean enough to invite my neighbor over for a Bible study?

We want to do well, try to get out of the boat, but The Waves!

Ask the Lord to help you with the waves in your life. Have you been concentrating more on the waves than on the God who created them?

Are you sinking into the minutia of your life? Are you sitting in a rocking boat?

Mark 6:48:

48 And he saw them toiling in rowing; for the wind was contrary unto them: and about the fourth watch of the night he cometh unto them, walking upon the sea, and would have passed by them.

The Lord will leave you to wail against the wind and the sea in your life. But if you call out to Him and ask, He will bid you to come and lift you when you fall.