





If It Is You

Matthew 14:22-33

Mark 6:45-52

John 6:15-21

Life of Jesus: Miracles

This story happened the same day of the miracle of the loaves and fishes.

Jesus told his disciples to get into the ship and go to other side while he sent all the people away.

Jesus went up on the mountain to pray. Jesus knew that the people were going to try to take him by force and make him their king, so he went to the mountain by himself alone (John 6:15). Some scholars believe that the disciples might have also gotten caught up in this plan, which is why Jesus sent them away so quickly.

Think about this. The people have seen him do miracles, and on this day they saw him multiply the loaves and fishes. They want Jesus to be their leader, and it seems they had a plan to take him and try to make him be their king.

Jesus would have known this was not God's will, or God's plan. So he went off to be alone; he went to pray.

Meanwhile the disciples had gone down to the sea. It was now dark, and Jesus had not yet come to meet them. They were in the middle of the Sea of Galilee. This sea was not very wide where they were, so it should have taken them about two hours to get across. But the wind was so strong that they must have been rowing for a long time. By the time Jesus caught up with them, they were in the middle of the sea, and the ship was being tossed by the waves because it was so windy.

It was between 3:00 a.m. and 6:00 a.m., and Jesus was alone on the land. He saw the disciples struggling in rowing, and the wind blowing hard against them. They were very tired.

Jesus came to them walking on the sea.

The disciples saw him walking on the sea and they were very afraid. We are told they "cried out." They thought Jesus was a spirit, a ghost.

Discuss:

What does this mean to "cry out?" Did they yell?

Did they scream? It must have been very obvious that they were afraid.

What if you were there? What might you think?

They had never seen anyone walking on the water before. It is dark, the wind is blowing very strong, the waves are probably high from the wind.

And then there's a person walking on the water!

Jesus was going to walk right past them (Mark 6:48).

But it also says he was going to them (Matthew 14:25). So what does this mean?

It seems that Jesus was going that way not only to meet them, but to help them. He saw them struggling, and he walks on top of the very thing with which they are struggling. He was going to walk right past them; but they saw him, he heard them cry out.

He said, "It is I. Do not be afraid."

Matthew is the only gospel that records what Peter did. When Jesus says, "It is I. Do not be afraid," Peter responds, "Lord, if it is you, then command me to come to you on the water."



If It Is You

Discuss:

Think about what Peter said. He did not really give Jesus much of an option.

He said “if it’s you...” Was it Jesus? Yes.

If it’s you, then “command” me to come.

Was it Jesus? Yes.

Could Jesus respond any other way? Possibly.

But this was not a temptation to do something out of character. The last time we saw these words, “if you are the Son of God,” it was at the temptation in the wilderness by Satan. It seems that Jesus walked on the water in order to demonstrate his deity.

How did Jesus respond to Peter? He said, “Come.”

Peter came down out of the ship, and walked on the water to Jesus.

Discuss:

Can you imagine? He got out of the boat, and took a step, knowing that he would walk on TOP of the water.

The other disciples must have been watching in wonder, amazement. What would it be like if you were there? What if you were Peter? What if you were in the boat watching?

Peter is walking on water.

It took faith for him to step out of the boat and know that he would walk on TOP of the water.

Have you ever tried to walk on water? Did you get very far? It only takes a split second to realize that it is not going to work, and you are completely submerged in the water.

Peter walked on the water to go to Jesus. We do not know how far he walked, but he did it. Then Peter looked around. He looked at how strong the wind was blowing. He took his eyes off of Jesus, and began to look at his circumstances. He was not caught up in sin; he simply looked at what was natural. He looked at the things around him instead of keeping his eyes on Jesus.

He was already doing something that no one (other than Jesus) had ever done before.

But when he looked at the wind, he began to sink, and he cried, “Lord, save me!”

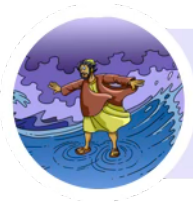
This in itself is incredible. People don’t begin to sink in the water. They just do. There is nothing in between, the minute you touch the water you go down. But this must have been spectacular to witness: to see someone suspended between the top and bottom of the water but not completely succumbed to it must have been astonishing.

As soon as Jesus saw that Peter began to sink, what did he do? He immediately reached out his hand and caught Peter.

Then he said, “O you of little faith, why did you doubt?”

This shows us several things.

Did Jesus let Peter sink and tell him to swim back to the boat on his own? No. He immediately caught Peter.



If It Is You

It shows us the character of Christ. As humans we sometimes think, your faith wasn't strong enough, you need to swim back to learn your lesson. Peter was a fisherman; he was probably a strong swimmer. But that is not the character of Jesus.

Did it take great faith for Peter to walk on the water? Apparently not. It only took little faith.

But what can counteract our faith? Doubt.

It was the doubt that caused him to begin to sink. It was because he looked at his circumstances and surroundings and took his focus off of Jesus.

The wind had nothing to do with walking on the water. It was a natural impossibility whether there was wind or not.

The reader is not told what happened next, but can wonder. If Jesus reached out to catch Peter, did Jesus and Peter walk on the water together to get back to the boat? Or do you think that he dragged Peter through the water and they had to pull Peter out of the water soaking wet into the boat?

As soon as Jesus and Peter got in the ship, the wind stopped.

It is interesting that the wind did not stop before they got back to the boat. But it seemed to all happen at once. The wind stopped, and the ship was immediately at the land where they were going (John 6:21)

Discuss:

Did they have to row? Did they have to make any effort to get to shore?

Did they have to navigate their way to get to their destination? It seems that the boat was caught away and no time passed before it was at the other shore. The disciples were completely and totally astonished, amazed, overwhelmed. Then they worshiped Jesus and said, "Truly You are the Son of God."

Their hearts were hardened (Mark 6:52).

They should not have been so surprised. They were not thinking of the things they had already seen. Just earlier that day they had seen Jesus take two fish and five loaves of bread and feed 5,000 men plus women and children. But they did not consider it; that means they did not focus on it. They did not meditate on it. They did not actually think about what really happened, or consider the unbelievable miracle that had taken place, *just that day*.

Would we be surprised?

God wants us to be expecting these things. It seems like a good thing to be amazed by his goodness, but could that mean that we have a hardened heart? God wants us to glorify Him, but to know who He is, and expect great things from him and not be surprised by his goodness or amazing works.

These were the disciples of Jesus. They were with him daily, and watched him perform many amazing miracles every day! If their hearts could be hardened, do not think that your heart couldn't be hardened also. Mark 6:52 seems to be giving us the cure for a hardened heart, and it would seem to be that we need to do the opposite of what the disciples did. If they did not consider these miracles, then we need to consider the glorious things of God. We need to think about and ponder the great things that he has done. When we focus on Jesus and his marvelous works, it helps us to be mindful of who he is and what he is capable of. Then we will see more of his miraculous works take place in our own lives.

Jesus in the Story



Jesus says, "It is I. Do not be afraid."

All three gospels, Matthew, Mark, and Luke use the same words.

The Greek words here translate to "I am."

These are the same words Jesus spoke when he was arrested and these are the words that God spoke many years before when Moses asked God his name. God responded, tell them I AM sent you (Exodus 3:14). So, by Jesus responding to the disciples in this way, he is making a statement of deity.

Many things that Jesus did have a "remez", which is a hint of something that goes back to the Old Testament. Oftentimes it was something that was being fulfilled in relation to the New Testament.

In this story, Jesus is bringing to life what is stated in Job 9:8:

"He alone spreads the heavens, and treads upon the waves of the sea."

The disciples most likely were familiar with this passage. They would have known that only God is able to walk upon the waves of the sea.

When Jesus said, "It is I," or, "I am," this would have confirmed to the disciples that HE was walking on the water, and he is "I AM."

Which is why they were completely astonished and said, "Truly you are the Son of God."

Lesson Questions & Memory Verses

13. Set Free!

Read Matthew 14:34-36; Mark 6:53-56

Jesus returned to this area later and the people had a different response:

1. Where did the people meet Jesus?
2. What did they bring to Jesus?
3. Who was healed?

Isaiah 61:1

The Spirit of the Lord God is upon me; because the Lord has anointed me to preach good tidings to the poor; he has sent me to proclaim liberty to the captives, and the opening of the prison to those who are bound...

14. Only Believe

Read Mark 5:27-34; Luke 8:44-48

1. Does this lady ask Jesus to heal her?
2. What happened to her when she touched Jesus?
3. What happened to Jesus when the lady touched him?
4. What did Jesus say made her well?

Malachi 4:2

But to you who fear my name the Sun of Righteousness shall arise with healing in his wings; and you shall go out and grow fat like stall fed calves.

15. What Do You Have?

1. Who doubted there would be enough?
2. What did the disciples want to tell the people?
3. What did Jesus do with the food after blessing it and giving thanks?
4. How much was left over?

Psalms 23:1-3

The Lord is my shepherd. I shall not want. He makes me to lie down in green pastures; he leads me beside the still waters. He restores my soul; he leads me in the paths of righteousness for his name's sake.

16. If It Is You

1. What did Peter say to Jesus?
2. What happened as soon as they stepped into the ship?
3. After seeing this, why were the disciples now convinced that Jesus was the Son of God?

Job 9:8, 10

He alone spreads out the heavens, and treads on the waves of the sea. He does great things past finding out, yes, wonders without number.



