

JESUS WALKED ON WATER

Matthew 14:22-32; Mark 6:45-52; John 6:16-21

STRUCTURE

Key-persons: Jesus and Peter

Key-location: Lake Galilee

Key-repetitions:

- Jesus acted: Jesus insisted the disciples get into the boat (Mat 14:22); Jesus dismissed the crowd (Mat 14:22-23); Jesus climbed a mountainside (Mat 14:23); Jesus prayed (Mat 14:23); Jesus saw the disciples in the boat (Mk 6:48); Jesus walked on the water (Mk 14:25); Jesus told the disciples to take courage and don't be afraid (Mat 14:27); Jesus told Peter to come to him on the water (Mat 14:29); Jesus caught Peter (Mat 14:31); Jesus accused Peter of having little faith (Mat 14:31).
- Boat: Jesus insisted that his disciples get into the boat (Mat 14:22); the boat was thrown around by the waves (Mat 14:24); Peter got out of the boat (Mat 14:29); Peter and Jesus climbed into the boat (Mat 14:32); immediately the boat reached the shore (Jn 6:21); those in the boat worshiped Jesus (Mat 14:32).
- Storm: boat was knocked about by the waves (Mat 14:24); Peter saw the strong wind and waves (Mat 14:30); Peter and Jesus climbed into the boat and the wind died down (Mat 14:32).

Key-attitudes:

- Jesus' authority when he commanded.
- Disciples' despair in the storm.
- Disciples' terror when they saw Jesus walking on the water.
- Peter's courage to get out of the boat and walk on water.
- Peter's terror when he saw the wind and waves.
- Disciples' amazement when the wind died down and the boat immediately reached shore.

Initial-situation

In the beginning of the third year of his ministry, Jesus received news that King Herod had ordered John the Baptist to be killed. Jesus entered a boat with his disciples to go to a solitary place. The crowds followed, going around the lake on foot. Jesus performed the miracle of feeding 5,000 men.

Initial-problem:

After the miracle of feeding the 5,000 men, Jesus ordered his disciples to get into the boat and go on ahead of him to the other side.

Final-situation:

The disciples worshiped Jesus.

BIBLE STORY

After feeding 5,000 men, Jesus insisted that his twelve disciples get into the boat and go ahead of him to the other side of the lake, while Jesus dismissed the crowd. Jesus dismissed the crowd. Then, Jesus climbed a mountainside to pray by himself. Jesus was alone on the mountainside when evening came. The boat was far out in the lake, thrown around by the waves because the wind was against it. Jesus saw the disciples straining at the oars (Mat 14:22-23; Mk 6:45-48).

Somewhere between three and six o'clock in the morning, the disciples had only rowed three to three and a half miles. Jesus went out to them walking on the water. Jesus intended to pass by them, but the disciples saw Jesus walking on the water. The disciples were terrified and screamed out in fear, "It's a ghost!" (Mat 14:25-26; Mk 6:48; Jn 6:16-19).

Jesus immediately said to them, "Take courage! It is I. Don't be afraid."

Peter replied, "Lord, if it's really you, tell me to come to you on the water."

Jesus responded, "Come."

Peter got out of the boat and started walking on water toward Jesus. Peter saw the strong wind and the waves, and he was afraid. Peter started to sink and cried out, "Lord, save me!"

Immediately Jesus reached out his hand and caught Peter. Jesus said, "You have so little faith! Why did you doubt?" (Mat 14:27-31).

The two climbed into the boat, and the wind died down. Immediately the boat reached the shore where they were heading. Then those who were in the boat worshiped Jesus saying, "Truly you are the Son of God" (Mat 14:32-33; Jn 6:21).

GENERIC DIALOGUE QUESTIONS

1. What catches your attention in the story?
2. Is there anything in the story that is hard to understand?
3. Who are the main characters in the story?
4. What problems did the characters face?
5. How did the characters face their problems?
6. How have you faced similar problems?
7. Is there someone in the story who is similar to you or who is different from you?
8. What does the story tell about God?

SPECIFIC DISCUSSION QUESTIONS

1. What happened to the disciples while Jesus was praying by himself?
2. What reaction did the disciples have when they saw Jesus walking on the water?
3. What gave Peter courage to step out of the boat and walk on water?
4. What mistake did Peter make?
5. What was the disciples' reaction when the storm ceased and the boat arrived at their destination?
6. Name some of the storms in life that have filled you with terror.
7. What truths about Jesus make our fears unnecessary?

LIFE-LESSONS

1. **Jesus is aware when his followers are experiencing trouble.** Jesus saw that the disciples were in trouble as they strained at the oars (Mk 6:48).
2. **God does not seem real to the person who is afraid.** The disciples were afraid in the boat as it was tossed about by the storm. When they saw Jesus, they screamed out, "It's a ghost!" (Mat 14:25-26).
3. **The person who has faith in Jesus and who is certain of the Lord's presence has reasons not to be afraid.** The disciples struggled against a storm in a boat that was in danger of sinking. As they struggled, they saw Jesus walking on the water. They thought that he was a ghost. They screamed with fear. Jesus answered, "Take courage; it is I. Be not afraid!" (Mat 14:24-27).
4. **When the believer in Jesus is facing the despair of a storm, even a little faith is enough to give him courage to do the impossible.** The fear of the sinking boat in the angry sea gave Peter courage to do the impossible. He looked to Jesus as his only hope and stepped onto the water (Mat 14:28).
5. **The disciple will weaken if he removes his eyes from Jesus and focuses his attention on problems.** Peter was walking over the agitated water as though it were firm earth. When he felt the wind and saw the waves, he focused his attention on the storm and fear reappeared. Fear put an end to his faith and he began to sink (Mat 14:30).
6. **The person who has experienced Jesus' help, should worship him more than he ever did in the past.** When Jesus and Peter entered the boat, the wind calmed down, the storm ceased and the disciples worshiped Jesus. This was the first time they worshiped him. They didn't worship Jesus when he benefitted others with miracles; however, when they were rescued from calamity, they worshiped him (Mat 14:33).

LEARNING ACTIVITY

Small Sharing Groups:

The disciples were terrified when caught in a storm at sea. Their fear was unnecessary because Jesus is Master of Nature, and he has power over storms.

What makes you afraid? Also, what facts about God make your fear unnecessary?

Divide those present into small groups of three or four. Ask each person to share within their groups what makes them afraid. Then they are to mention facts about God that makes their fear unnecessary. Give them about seven minutes in their groups.