



Metro Calvary – Roseville CA
Richard Cimino
March 7, 2010

WALKING ON WATER

John 6:14-21

Related Topics: The Bread King; Using Jesus For Personal Gain; The Humility of Jesus; The Purpose of His First Coming; The Danger of Popularity; Saving the Disciples From the Influence of the Multitude; Sending the Disciples Into the Safety of the Storm; When Storms Are in the Will of God; Struggles in the Will of God; The Fourth Watch; Jesus Comes by Way of the Storm; Jesus Lord Over Nature

INTRODUCTION

This morning we pick up in John 6:14 with the response of the multitude to the miracle performed by Jesus in which he fed 20,000 people with five loaves and two fish.

Before we read from John 6, would you please write in the margins of your Bible Mark 6:45-51 and Matthew 14:22-33. We will reference those two accounts and use them much like an overlay to help us understand the event recorded in John 6.

***JOHN 6:14-21** When the people saw the sign that he had done, they said, "This is indeed the Prophet who is to come into the world!"¹⁵ Perceiving then that they were about to come and take him by force to make him king, Jesus withdrew again to the mountain by himself.¹⁶ When evening came, his disciples went down to the sea,¹⁷ got into a boat, and started across the sea to Capernaum. It was now dark, and Jesus had not yet come to them.¹⁸ The sea became rough because a strong wind was blowing.¹⁹ When they had rowed about three or four miles, they saw Jesus walking on the sea and coming near the boat, and they were frightened.²⁰ But he said to them, "It is I; do not be afraid."²¹ Then they were glad to take him into the boat, and immediately the boat was at the land to which they were going.*

There are FIVE main focal points in the account

- 1.) The Crowd: It's response and heart
- 2.) Jesus: His response to the Crowd and His Heart
- 3.) The Disciples: Jesus sees their greatest need and in the face of the Crowd
- 4.) The Storm and the Struggle: Jesus Interceding
- 5.) Jesus: Walking on Water

1) The Crowd: It's response and heart

John 6:14 When the people saw the sign that he had done, they said, "This is indeed the Prophet who is to come into the world!"

John is the only author who gives us the response of the crowd to the miracle. It is John's account that sets the backdrop for what Matthew and Mark record after the loaves and fish.

The Jews were waiting for the prophet Moses had promised to them. "The Lord your God will raise up for you a prophet like me from among you, from your brethren — him you shall heed" (**Deut. 18:15**). The way Jesus provided bread in the wilderness reminded those men of Moses in the wilderness, and his promise of a coming Prophet.

¹⁵Perceiving then that they were about to come and take him by force to make him king....

"Take by force" (one word in Greek) is a strong verb — Harpazō. It is often used with the connotation of physical force or violence. Look at how Matthew uses the same word

Matthew 11:12 *From the days of John the Baptist until now the kingdom of heaven has suffered violence, and the violent take it by force.*

The word could be rendered "to cause him to be king even if he didn't want to be."

WHY? Because they had seen what Jesus could do — He had healed them and fed them — and the thought in their minds was — *"This man has power — with His power He can feed us and free us — and like it or not He's our king!*

As warped as it seems — Even if they had to do it by force — they wanted to harness Jesus and His power to their dreams. The bottom line was this — They wanted to make use of Jesus for their ends.

Let's ask ourselves the question — Is there anything in our hearts that resembles theirs? Do we follow Jesus for what we can get out of Him? Do we want to see His power manifested to carry out our own agenda or do we want to see Him exercise His power to carry out His plans and wishes?

QUOTE: Barclay *That crowd of Jews would have followed Jesus at that moment because he was giving them what they wanted and they wished to use him for their own purposes. That attitude still lingers. We would like Christ's gifts without his Cross; we would like to use him instead of allowing him to use us.*

1.) **The Crowd: It's response and heart**

2) Jesus: His response to the Crowd and His Heart

¹⁵Perceiving then that they were about to come and take him by force to make him king, Jesus withdrew again to the mountain by himself.

When we read the Gospels we can't miss the fact that Jesus was never impressed by the great crowds. Remember back at the end of John 2

***John 2:23-25** Now when he was in Jerusalem at the Passover Feast, many believed in his name when they saw the signs that he was doing. ²⁴But Jesus on his part did not entrust himself to them, because he knew all people ²⁵and needed no one to bear witness about man, for he himself knew what was in man.*

He knew that their motives were not pure and that most of them followed Him in order to watch His miracles of healing.

CHECK THIS OUT — Though they wanted to be free of the rule of Rome, these people wanted a king and a kingdom just like Rome. “*Bread and circuses*” was Rome's formula for keeping the people happy. Rome set aside ninety-three days each year for public games at government expense. It was cheaper to entertain the crowds than to fight them or jail them. The movie *Gladiator* captured that bit of history. They really wanted a **BREAD**

KING.

The Bible gives to Jesus the title KING OF KINGS. Jesus never denied that He was King.

John 18:33; 36 So Pilate entered his headquarters again and called Jesus and said to him, "Are you the King of the Jews?" ³⁴Jesus answered, "Do you say this of your own accord, or did others say it to you about me?" ³⁶Jesus answered, "My kingdom is not of this world.

Jesus was more interested in being with His Father than being their BREAD KING!

Pride, ambition, high-mindedness are so common to the kingdoms of man! Few ever refuse greatness when it's offered! How many are continually seeking great things for themselves. Any mere man would be glad to be given title of king, even be forced to take the title. In the kingdoms of this world, those who want political power and title **promise** bread in exchange for praise and power and then fail to deliver. But you see, God did not become man to obtain power or recognition. He is the self-existent, eternal God who possesses glory and honor by His very nature — who by His very nature is omnipotent. He did not become man to be given power and title by man. The Bible says that Jesus came, *"not to be ministered unto, but, to minister and to give his life a ransom for many (Matt. 20:28)."* He did not promise bread for power and then not deliver. He graciously and miraculously gave bread, healed the sick, raised the dead, **served** the very world that rejected Him; and then **shed His blood** to redeem it. Jesus would not have a Crown or a Kingdom without **first serving** and **then redeeming** those who would be citizens in His Kingdom.

From His cradle to His grave He was *"clothed with humility"* (1 Pet. 5:5). He was born into poverty. He spent the first thirty years of His life in a carpenter's house at Nazareth. He was so poor that He had no place to call home — *"The foxes have holes, and the birds of the air their nests--but the Son of man has no where to lay his head"* (Matt. 8:20). When Jesus went on the Sea of Galilee, it was in a borrowed boat. When He rode into Jerusalem, it was on a borrowed donkey. When He was buried, it was in a borrowed tomb. "Though he was rich, yet for our sakes he became poor." (2 Cor. 8:9.)

Philippians 2:3-11 Do nothing from rivalry or conceit, but in humility count others more significant than yourselves. ⁴Let each of you look not only to his own

interests, but also to the interests of others. ⁵Have this mind among yourselves, which is yours in Christ Jesus, ⁶who, though he was in the form of God, did not count equality with God a thing to be grasped, ⁷but made himself nothing, taking the form of a servant, being born in the likeness of men. ⁸And being found in human form, he humbled himself by becoming obedient to the point of death, even death on a cross. ⁹Therefore God has highly exalted him and bestowed on him the name that is above every name, ¹⁰so that at the name of Jesus every knee should bow, in heaven and on earth and under the earth, ¹¹and every tongue confess that Jesus Christ is Lord, to the glory of God the Father.

THAT is the **response of Jesus** to the Crowd! THAT is the **heart of Jesus!**

Aren't you glad that the creator of the universe, the KING OF KINGS, and LORD OF LORDS is THAT humble?

APPLICATION: Because that is the heart of Jesus, humility and sacrificial service is the measure of our relationship to Him both individually and corporately!

- 1.) The Crowd: It's response and heart
- 2.) Jesus: His response to the Crowd and His Heart

3.) The Disciples: Jesus sees their greatest need in the face of the Crowd

¹⁶When evening came, his disciples went down to the sea, ¹⁷got into a boat, and started across the sea to Capernaum. It was now dark, and Jesus had not yet come to them. ¹⁸The sea became rough because a strong wind was blowing.

It is here that we want to overlay the record of Matthew and Mark

***Matthew 14:23** Immediately he made the disciples get into the boat and go before him to the other side, while he dismissed the crowds.*

***Mark 6:45 KJV** And straightway he constrained his disciples to get into the ship,*

We get the impression that these men didn't WANT to get into the boat.

We get the impression that they were opposed to the idea of getting into the boat. If there was no opposition, He would not have had to **CONSTRAIN** them — **MAKE** them — get into the boat. As we look at the response of the crowd I can't help but think that these men were about to be swept up in the tide of public opinion and thought that **THIS** was the moment for Jesus to step forward and embrace the role the people wanted to force on Him.

So, Jesus constrains them to get into the boat and make their way across the sea while He then stays on the shore to send away the people. Then Jesus goes up into a mountain and prays. In a moment, we will see that these men will be caught in a storm and fatigued from rowing.

Did Jesus know that a storm was coming? Absolutely. Then why did He deliberately send His friends into danger? Jesus was actually rescuing them from danger. The storm was the **SAFE** place to be!

As much as Jesus knew the crowd — He knew these men. He knew that the last place they should be was in the presence of this crowd where they could be swayed by their fanaticism.

As much as Jesus knew the crowd — He knew these men. He knew that they would be safer in the storm than they would on the land caught up in a wrong concept of who He was. Jesus realized how dangerous it was for them to see Him just as the One who would feed the multitudes and meet their physical need. You see, after Jesus was raised from dead and ascended into heaven, most of these men would be tortured and put to death. It would be a life of great difficulty.

Jesus sent these men into the storm because He knew how crucial it was for them (and is for us) to know that He was not merely the **BREAD KING** — He is also the God of the storm and the **KING** over all nature.

By the way, when the anti-Christ comes he will be put in power because he will seemingly have all the answers to man's physical needs. He'll come with great ability at the international negotiating table to bring peace to the world. He'll come with all the answers to man's physical problems.

I believe that there are a lot of men and women attending churches who instead of meeting Jesus Christ are being primed for the anti-Christ by a church culture that appeals to their comfort, their convenience and their

pride, rather than pointing them to Jesus and a genuine commitment to Him.

Christians who approach Jesus on the basis of what they can get tragically discover that when difficulty comes their life falls apart because they have built on sand.

- 1.) The Crowd: It's response and heart
- 2.) Jesus: His response to the Crowd and His Heart
- 3.) The Disciples: Jesus sees their greatest need in the face of the Crowd

4.) The Storm and the Struggle: Jesus Interceding

It was now dark, and Jesus had not yet come to them. ¹⁸The sea became rough because a strong wind was blowing.

*Mark 6:46-47 And after he had taken leave of them, he went up on the mountain to pray. ⁴⁷And when evening came, the boat was out on the sea, and he was alone on the land. ⁴⁸And he saw that they were making headway painfully (**KJV - toiling in rowing**), for the wind was against them. And about the fourth watch of the night he came to them, walking on the sea.*

FIRST — Notice where Jesus is while they are agonizing towards their destination. Jesus is on high.

SECOND — Notice what Jesus is doing from that high place. He is PRAYING for them and WATCHING them.

This is an AWESOME picture of how Jesus WATCHES us in our adversity and PRAYS for us in our struggles. The Bible tells us in **Hebrews 7:25** that Jesus is at this very moment seated at the right hand of the Father, and that He ever lives to make intercession for us.

As Passover is near, it would be nearly a full moon. But even on a well lit night Jesus is still at least 3 miles away from these men. The unaided eye would only see a spec on the lake. This is DIVINE vision.

THIRD — Notice the situation that Jesus sent them to.

¹⁸*The sea became rough because a strong wind was blowing*

Literally — “the lake (sea) was being stirred up, there was blowing a strong wind.” This condition is expressed in some languages as “there were many big waves” or “the waves had become large” or “the water was foaming.”

FOURTH — Notice their STRUGGLE. *Making headway painfully — toiling in rowing — for the wind was against them.* They were rowing against resistance! Think of working out a muscle group until you totally fatigued that muscle group. THAT is what the language is saying.

John tells us in **verse 16** that Jesus had sent them off around evening when the sun was going down. Mark tells us that Jesus came to them in the fourth watch. The Fourth Watch is a reference to the appointed times in which men would guard their cities. The Fourth Watch ended at 6 in the morning. These guys had been making headway painfully, toiling in rowing, for about eight or nine hours. I don't know about you, but I don't like to put together the words *Toiling* and *eight hours*.

Have you ever found yourself in a situation and you were *making headway painfully, toiling and toiling* and not getting anywhere *and the wind is contrary*. Then someone comes along and tells you it's because there's sin in your life.

DON'T MISS THIS — These men were in the midst of the sea because Jesus had sent them there. It was the place where they would be most benefited. It was the healthiest place for them to be. This wasn't His judgment. They were in the midst of a storm because they were in the midst of His will. They were fatigued, the wind was against them, because they had obeyed Jesus.

BY THE WAY — Peter, Andrew, James and John had grown up on this body of water. They had most certainly experienced ferocious storms on the Sea of Galilee. Then they became followers of Jesus. And guess what? Following Jesus did not give them immunity from storms. This is the second storm they have encountered since following Jesus. That first storm after following Jesus was in midday and Jesus was with them. Even then they thought they were going to die. Then Jesus stood up and rebuked the wind and the waves and immediately the lake became like glass. Great lesson! “Wow, as long as Jesus is in the boat we're all good!” This time it's at night and Jesus isn't in the boat! New Storm — New Lesson. Jesus was

prepping them for the time when He would no longer be physically with them; for the time He would be at the right hand of the Father watching and praying for them.

QUOTE: Alexander Maclaren — *Mark gives us one sweet touch when he tells us that Christ on the hillside there saw them toiling in rowing, but they did not see Him. No doubt they felt themselves deserted, and sent many a wistful glance of longing towards the shore where He was. Hard thoughts of Him may have been in some of their minds. ‘Master, carest Thou not?’ would be springing to some of their lips with more apparent reason than in the other storm on the lake. But His calm and loving gaze looked down pitying on all their fear and toil. The darkness did not hide from Him, nor His own security on the steadfast land make Him forget, nor his communion with the Father so absorb Him as to exclude thoughts of them.*

Somewhere in the Forth Watch the Father said, “Ok it’s time.” So somewhere in the fourth watch He comes walking.

- 1.) The Crowd: It’s response and heart
- 2.) Jesus: His response to the Crowd and His Heart
- 3.) The Disciples: Jesus sees their greatest need in the face of the Crowd
- 4.) The Storm and the Struggle: Jesus Interceding

5.) Jesus Walking On Water

¹⁹When they had rowed about three or four miles, they saw Jesus walking on the sea and coming near the boat, and they were frightened. ²⁰But he said to them, “It is I; do not be afraid.” ²¹Then they were glad to take him into the boat, and immediately the boat was at the land to which they were going.

FIRST — We see Jesus as powerful over all creation and the laws of physics that govern the physical universe.

Again, we are tethered to the prologue —

"All things were made by him; and without him was not anything made that was made."(John 1:3.)

It was just as easy for Jesus to walk on water as it was for Him to create water. It was just as easy for Jesus to suspend the laws of physics, as it was for Jesus to create them and impose them on His creation. Jesus is not bound by the laws of physics, He is above them!

QUOTE: J.C. Ryle — *These so-called "laws of nature" are neither immutable nor eternal. They had a beginning, and will one day have an end.*

QUOTE: Alexander Maclaren — *His will consolidated the yielding wave, or sustained His material body on the tossing surges... we have here a wonderful picture — which is true for all ages — of the mighty Christ, to whose gentle footfall the unquiet surges are as a marble pavement; and who draws near in the purposes of His love, unhindered by antagonism, and using even opposing forces as the path for His triumphant progress.*

Christians — Your Savior is Lord of waves and winds, of storms and tempests, and can come to you in the darkest hour, "walking upon the sea."

SECOND — The waves that fatigued and frightened the disciples (including the fishermen in the group) were the very things that brought Jesus to them. The storms that frighten and fatigue us, even threaten us, are the means by which Jesus comes to us in ways that we could never know in moments of ease.

QUOTE: Alexander Maclaren — *A more tender, a more gracious sense of His nearness to us is ever granted to us in the time of our darkness and our grief than is possible to us in the sunny hours of joy. It is always the stormy sea that Christ comes across, to draw near to us; and they who have never experienced the tempest have yet to learn the inmost sweetness of His presence. When it is night, and it is dark, at the hour which is the keystone of night's black arch, Christ comes to us, striding across the stormy waters. Sorrow brings Him near to us. Do you see that sorrow does not drive you away from Him!*

²¹Then they were glad to take him into the boat, and immediately the boat was at the land to which they were going.

Mark adds this interesting note —

Mark 6:48 *he came to them, walking on the sea. He meant to pass by them*

Why did He *act* as though He would pass them by? Because He wanted them to recognize Him, trust Him, and invite Him into the ship.

Matthew tells us (interesting that Mark doesn't) that something else happened BEFORE Jesus got into the boat. When Jesus said — *“Take heart; it is I. Do not be afraid.”* — that Peter said

Matthew 14:28-29 “Lord, if it is you, command me to come to you on the water.” He said, “Come.” So Peter got out of the boat and walked on the water and came to Jesus.

I love that. Jesus coming to them on water stirred Peter to get out of the boat and walk on water with Jesus.

²¹Then they were glad to take him into the boat, and immediately the boat was at the land to which they were going.

As soon as Jesus gets in the boat with you, you are where you want to be. Where you really want to be is in the boat with Jesus.