



“Open Church – Open Bible”

Clabon Bogan Jr. – Interim Pastor



Sunday Church School

January 10, 2021

“Jesus Walks on Water” – John 6:15-21 (Matt. 14:22-33; Mark 6:45-51)

Golden Text: John 6:20

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“John 6:15-21”

¹⁵ Therefore when Jesus perceived that they were about to come and take Him by force to make Him king, He departed again to the mountain by Himself alone.

¹⁶ Now when evening came, His disciples went down to the sea,

¹⁷ got into the boat, and went over the sea toward Capernaum. And it was already dark, and Jesus had not come to them.

¹⁸ Then the sea arose because a great wind was blowing.

¹⁹ So when they had rowed about three or four miles, they saw Jesus walking on the sea and drawing near the boat; and they were afraid.

²⁰ But He said to them, "It is I; do not be afraid."

²¹ Then they willingly received Him into the boat, and immediately the boat was at the land where they were going.

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The book of Ecclesiastes is a fascinating study of how Solomon, the wisest man to ever live, tried to find meaning and satisfaction in life apart from God.

- It was his attempt to discover whether there was anything in life that would truly satisfy a person if God was left out of the equation.

Solomon limited his search for life’s meaning to data gained by the senses within the material universe alone.

- Reflected in the phrase “**under the sun,**” which occurs 29 times in the book.

He also show reliance on the power of human reason, stating seven times that he “**communed with my own heart.**”

In essence, the writer consciously ignored **special revelation** to find out if life holds any meaning apart from insights provided by God.

Given this framework, the book makes an important contribution, as it resonates with the emptiness we all feel when alienated from God

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It also demonstrates that apart from a **personal relationship** with God, life is meaningless indeed.

Throughout the book, Solomon repeatedly emphasizes the importance of enjoying what we are able to enjoy.

- “There is nothing better for a man, than that he should eat and drink, and that he should make his soul enjoy good in his labor (2:24).

By the time he reached his conclusion, however, he realized that **fearing and obeying God** is “the whole duty of man” (12:13).

TODAY’S AIM:

Facts: to understand the **principles that undergird** the narrative account of Jesus’ miraculous walk on water.

Principle: to be **people who focus on God’s work**, go in the direction He sends us, and rely on Jesus’ presence with us.

Application: to **build our character** through closer conformity to Jesus’ character as it is communicated to us in our passage for this week.

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LESSON OUTLINE

I. LEAVING WITHOUT JESUS —John 6:15-17

II. DESPERATELY NEEDING JESUS —John 6:18-19

III. GLADLY ACCEPTING JESUS —John 6:20-21

I. LEAVING WITHOUT JESUS —John 6:15-17

- John has just recorded the fourth testifying miracle from Jesus that he includes in this Gospel—the feeding of the five thousand men, plus women and children.
- The first three miracles illustrate how one is saved through the Word, by faith, and by grace.
- The last four signs in John’s Gospel illustrate the results of salvation and how it satisfies the inner needs of the heart:
 - **Feeding the 5,000** (6:1–14) —Salvation brings **satisfaction**
 - **Healing the blind man** (9:1–7) —Salvation brings **light**
 - **Raising Lazarus from the dead** (11:34–46) —Salvation brings **life**
 - **Stilling the storm** (6:15–21) —Salvation brings **peace**

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With the fourth miracle, Jesus had put Philip to the test by asking where He could get enough food to feed the multitude of people

- Philip objected that all the money they had would be insufficient to buy that much food (vs. 7).
- Then Peter reported there was a young lad there with his lunch and Jesus took the five barley loaves and two fish and fed the entire throng!

The response from some in that group was that Jesus was “that prophet that should come into the world” (V 14).

They were thinking of what God had told Moses about the future coming of the Messiah: “**I will raise them up a Prophet** from among their brethren, like unto thee, and will **put my words in his mouth**; and he shall speak unto them all that I shall command him. And it shall come to pass, that whosoever will not hearken unto my words which he shall speak in my name, I will require it of him” (Deut. 18:18-19).

The multitude thought the predicted prophet would be a political and military leader and would help them get out from under the domination of Rome.

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Their intention was to use the vast numbers gathered there to force Him to accept this kingship.

But there were two problems with their intentions:

- 1) Jesus had not come to be the military leader they imagined, and
- 2) What He had come to do was not meant to be accomplished at that particular time.

So, Jesus left and went up a nearby mountain alone, where the crowds would not follow Him.

The primary incident in this week’s lesson is another of Jesus encounter with water which is essential to life, for all living things need water to survive.:

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| 1. John Ch 1 Baptized in water | 5. John Ch 4 promised soul satisfying water |
| 2. John Ch 2 Turned water into wine | 6. John Ch 5 moving of the pool water |
| 3. John Ch 3 Spoke of being born of water | 7. John Ch 6 walking on the water |
| 4. John Ch 4 Met woman at well of water | |

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From the beginning of John 6, Jesus begins to concentrate on teaching His disciples rather than His more public ministry.

He had been accused of being demon-possessed and of using the power of Beelzebub (Matt. 12:24), and after the death of John the Baptist (Matt. 14:3-12), He focused more on helping the disciples comprehend His purpose and mission.

The incident that occurred here after the disciples left in the boat was one of very private instruction.

John identifies the time of day as evening and getting close to dark; and both Matthew and Mark say that Jesus sent the disciples on their way toward Bethsaida across the Sea of Galilee while He sent the multitudes away (Matt. 14:22; Mark 6:45).

- Whether or not He indicated that He would join them as soon as the crowds were dispersed, we are not told.

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After sending His disciples ahead and dispersing the crowd, Jesus went up on the mountain alone:

(1) to rest, which He came to this “desert place” on purpose to do before the miracle of the loaves, but could not for the multitude that followed Him (see Mk 6:31); and (2) “to pray” (Matt. 14:23; Mark 6:46). But from His mountain-top, thru the darkness of the night He watched the ship (Mark 6:48 “He saw them toiling in rowing”)

Jesus was about to reveal Himself to them in a new manifestation of His power over nature.

There had been no other boats present when the disciples sailed off (John 6:22), so they were at a loss how Jesus would join them again.

- They were about to witness the fifth miracle John includes in his Gospel.

II. DESPERATELY NEEDING JESUS —John 6:18-19

- It was not unusual for rough seas to rise rapidly on the Sea of Galilee – a small body of water is about seven hundred feet below sea level.

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- Such a windstorm arose as the disciples were making their way across the sea toward Capernaum.
- John describes it as “a great wind that blew,” meaning a violent wind
- In this life-threatening situation, the disciples desperately needed the Lord’s help – so He came walking toward them on the sea
- **Job 9:8** celebrates the distinguishing prerogative of God, “Who alone spreadeth out the heavens, and treadeth upon the waves of the sea”
- This is what Agur challenges as God’s unapproachable prerogative, to “gather the wind in His fists, and bind the waters in a garment (Prov. 30:4)

The disciples were currently separated from their Master and in a situation they could not control – so He came toward them

- **drawing nigh to the ship**—yet as though He “*would have passed by them,*” *Mark 6:48 (compare Luke 24:28; Gen 18:3–5; 32:24–26).*

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How like the church today: we are toiling against Satan’s storms, but our Lord is praying for us on the mount and one day will come to bring peace

- Salvation brings peace to the heart—peace with God (Rom. 5:1) and the peace of God (Phil. 4:4–7).

Traversing this life without the security of Christ will always increase anxiety, worry and fear.

Whatever fear the disciples might have been experiencing, it suddenly increased for having rowed “about twenty-five or thirty furlongs,” (3-4 miles) – they have a dilemma – they are in the midst of the sea (1/2 way)

III. GLADLY ACCEPTING JESUS —John 6:20-21

- Suddenly the disciples saw Jesus approaching, walking on top of the water.
- But when they saw Him, they became very afraid because they thought He was a ghost (Mark 6:49).

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- It is obvious that they were not expecting Jesus to get to them and help in their situation.
- Jesus came very early in the morning; for the sea that had impeded their movement was no obstacle to Christ
- Those men who were expecting death thought that one had come from the world of the dead -- They thought He was a ghost (*Pentecost, The Words and Works of Jesus Christ, Zondervan*).
- John emphasizes how Jesus calmed their fears once they realized it was Him
- Despite the fierceness of the storm all around them, they suddenly heard a voice above it: “It is I; be not afraid” (V. 20).
- Mark’s summary of what Jesus said contain three calming declarative statements
a. Be of good cheer b. It is I c. Be not afraid (Mark 6:50)

When we think of the storms of life that we encounter, we must realize that sometimes they have been caused by what we have done.

- Notice the ship miraculously arrived at its destination when Christ came on board



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“ADVANCE YOUR KNOWLEDGE”



1. What miracles had Jesus performed just prior to our text?
2. What intention of the crowd led Jesus to send His disciples away? Where did Jesus go after He sent His disciples away?
3. What sudden event caused hardship for the disciples? Where were the disciples when the storm suddenly got worse?
4. What did the disciples see while they were rowing against the wind? Why did this sight cause their fear to increase?
5. What word of encouragement did Jesus offer them? What did the disciples do as soon as they recognized Jesus?

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PRACTICAL LESSON POINTS:

1. We must focus on God’s work (John 6:15).
 - Like Jesus, we must not give in to public pressure but seek God’s will and submit to it (John 6:15).
2. We must go in God’s direction (John 6:16-19).
 - The Lord’s timing is always perfect. We can remember this when waiting on Him (vss. 16-17).
 - The difficulties we face in life will test us to see where we turn for help (vs. 18).
3. We must go in His presence (John 6:20-21)
 - We can look to Jesus for hope and courage as we face and endure the various trials that come our way (vss. 19-20).
 - Jesus is available to us through our trials, but we must turn to Him for help (vs. 21).

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