

A Night of Wonders

Mark 6:45 – 56

Proposition: The Lord allows us to face trials, and in His time, He comes to rescue. He often delays His rescue so we might learn to walk by faith.

Application: Prepare to meet the Lord by admitting your sin, believing that Jesus died for your sin and call on Him to be saved. If you are in a storm know that the Lord is interceding for you and will rescue you by His Spirit, His Word, and the ministry of His people. If you have come through a storm, come alongside those who are in a storm and bring them to the Lord.

The other day I came across a headline in a news article that said *Biologists Discover How to Walk on Water*. Intrigued I perused the article. It went on to say that a lizard found in the rainforests of Central America is known for its amazing skill to literally run on water. This critter is called the Jesus Lizard. To warm up its cold blood it basks on a tree branch which leaves the poor lizard exposed to predators like birds. When the Jesus Lizard hears a looming threat, it jumps off the branch and hits the water running to make a speedy escape.

Show Video: <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=leSN6WI1KwU>

For us to do what this lizard can do, we would have to run over 100 km/hr or reduce gravity by 90%. While a Jesus Lizard running on water is not supernatural, the One who did walk on water fashioned the Jesus Lizard and His power to perform miracles proves He is God.

The main theme of today's message is that the Lord allows us to face trials, and in His time, He comes to rescue. But He often delays His rescue so we might learn to walk by faith.

I. Wonders by Night (6:45 – 52)

Compelled to Leave (6:45): That morning the disciples went across the lake with Jesus and arrived on shore. Now it's the end of the day and Jesus asks them to go back to the other side. This request may have seemed strange to the twelve. Perhaps they thought *how is Jesus going to get across if we leave in the boat without Him?* Soon they will get their answer.

The word *made* could also be translated *compelled*. This suggests the 12 were reluctant to get in the boat. Sometimes it is hard to do the will of God. Just as the Lord had to compel His disciples, He often has to compel us to follow Him even when it does not make much sense.

Why did Jesus insist they go to the other side without Him? Because there was a movement among the crowd to make Jesus king. The people were thrilled about the miraculous supply of bread and fish and they were eager to make Him king. As King, Jesus could provide for their needs. As King He could rescue Israel from Roman rule (John 6:14, 15). Like the crowd, the disciples had messianic hopes. They might have rejoiced to see crowds seeking to enthrone Jesus as king. Especially Judas. To prevent the 12 from getting caught up in the frenzy of the crowd Jesus made them get into the boat and head to Bethsaida.

A second reason Jesus sent His disciples away is because He wanted to commune with His Father.

Commune with the Father (6:46, 47): Although Jesus was tired from a busy day, He did not let fatigue get in the way of His need to be alone with God. If Jesus needed to commune with the Lord to draw strength for His ministry, how much more do we need to withdraw from the busyness of the day and commune with the Lord? For what did Jesus pray? He likely prayed to discern His Father's will. Perhaps He prayed for the crowd He just dismissed. He may have prayed for His disciples. He prevailed in prayer or over six hours.

While Jesus was alone on land, His disciples were alone on the water about six kilometers from shore. This is a picture of Jesus and His church! Jesus is in heaven praying for us while we toil away on earth. We are in the midst of a storm while Jesus is in glory making intercession. We can never know this side of heaven what we owe to the intercessory ministry of Christ Jesus. He intercedes for us every hour of our lives so that our faith might be sustained (Heb 7:25; Luke 22:31, 32).

The Sea of Galilee is about 12 kilometers across. Because the head winds were so fierce, it took the disciples about 7.5 hours just to row six kilometers. The boat was only moving about 0.8 km/hr. To put it in context, the average walking speed for a fit young man is about 5.5 km/hr. For seven hours the 12 were battling the elements, putting all their effort into rowing their boat, and they could only reach a top speed of 0.8 km/hr.

While Jesus was on the mountain praying He saw the 12 at a distance. He saw their distress. Jesus may be out of our sight, we are never out of His.

Coming Up to the Disciples (6:48): It has been said *we are safer in a storm when in God's will than on the calm land outside of His will*. The disciples were in God's will when the storm came upon them. Jesus saw their distress and He soon acted. The disciples had no knowledge the Lord Jesus saw their struggle. Sometimes we are left to struggle in darkness without the sense of

God's presence. The Lord allows us to face trials, and in His time, He comes to rescue. He often delays His rescue so we might learn to walk by faith.

The stormy sea is a picture of life. We might be caught in a storm because we disobeyed the Lord. Other times the storm comes because we have obeyed the Lord. In our walk with the Lord, we face two types of storms. We face *storms of correction* as God disciplines us. We have an instance of this in the life of Jonah. Or we may face *storms of perfection*. The Lord uses *storms of perfection* to help us grow in faith. Obedience to the Lord does not exempt us from trouble. Walking with Jesus is not always smooth sailing (John 16:33). The faith that first prompted our obedience to the Lord must persist throughout our walk with the Lord.

Between three and six in the morning, Jesus appeared to the 12. He walked on water as though walking on pavement. He was not walking above water; His sandals were touching the surface of the water. Scripture teaches that only God can walk on water (Job 9:8, 10, 11). In this way Jesus was showing His disciples who He is.

While the 12 strained against the wind, Jesus wanted to pass ahead of them. Was Jesus planning to pass them by so He could greet them as they arrived on the other side? The sense of the passage is not that Jesus went beyond them rather that He passed before them so the disciples might see His glory and believe in Him (Ex 33:18 – 23; 1 Kings 19:11, 12). Instead of seeing the glory of God, the disciples thought they saw a ghost.

Jesus *sent* the 12 on this journey. Jesus *saw* their distress throughout the journey. Now Jesus comes to *save* them in the journey.

Crying Out (6:49, 50): People don't walk on water. What the disciples saw could not possibly be the Man Jesus. Instead, they thought they were seeing a ghost. At the time there was a local rumour going around that the last thing a sailor saw before drowning in the sea was a ghost on the water. Seeing a ghost was more frightful than fighting a storm. Although they did not discern Jesus' form they did discern His voice (John 10:4).

The Greek word behind the phrase *it is I* is *ego eimi* which is often translated *I AM*. *Take courage do not be afraid I AM*. I AM refers to the self-revelation of God. This was how the Lord made Himself known to Moses at the burning bush (Ex 3:13, 14).

In Matthew's Gospel, Peter got out of the boat and at Jesus' command walked on water to meet Him. Why was this not featured in Mark's Gospel? Mark wrote his Gospel in collaboration with Peter. It appears Peter did not want to focus on himself, he preferred to highlight the One walking on water not the ones sitting in the boat.

Calming the Storm (6:51, 52): Four wonders occurred that evening. Jesus walked on water. Peter walked on water. The storm was stilled. and immediately the boat arrived on the other side of the lake (John 6:20, 21). These four wonders prove Jesus is Lord.

A lack of faith kept the disciples from grasping the meaning of the miracles. Even though the disciples were hard of heart they were still entrusted with the mysteries of the kingdom.

II. Wonders by Day (6:53 – 56)

Christ Jesus Is Mighty to Save (6:53 – 56): Great things happen when Jesus shows up! News that Jesus arrived rang out into the regions nearby. Jesus was more popular as a Healer than as a Preacher. Many did not believe His message, but they were eager to benefit from His miracles. Those in the region *found hurting people and brought them to Jesus*. Every person who went to Jesus was not let down. No one comes to Lord in their need and leaves disappointed.

The woman with the issue of blood started the trend of touching the tassels of Jesus' garment. There was nothing magical about the fringes. It was all about faith in the One wearing the tassels. They were not healed by the touch, they were healed by the power of the Lord Jesus working through their faith in Him.

Conclusion

Our walk with the Lord is filled with blessings but it is also involves battles. We are in one of three places in life: We are either in a storm; coming out of a storm or going into a storm. Storms can be emotional, physical, mental, or spiritual. Storms may be raging at work or in the home. Storms may be public or private. The Lord Jesus is mindful of our battles. While we are facing life's storms, He is in heaven interceding for us. We can trust *His provision* as we witnessed Him multiply bread and fish. We can trust *His presence* as we saw Him walk on water. We can trust *His power* to lead us through the chaos and into the calm. One day the Lord Jesus shall come for us and bring us to our desired haven. Are you ready to meet the Lord? Every one of us will one day meet Him. We either meet the Lord in judgement or we meet Him in mercy. Is it your desire to meet the Lord of mercy? If so, this is what you must do. You must *admit* you are a sinner in need of a Saviour. You must *believe* the Lord Jesus died for your sin and rose again on the third day. Then you must *call* on Him and be saved.

If you are in the middle of a storm – whether it be a relational, or an emotional storm, whether a spiritual or physical storm, you may be in a storm because you are disobeying the Lord. If that is the case you need to repent of your disobedience and return to the Lord and the chaos will soon turn to calm. Perhaps you are in a storm because you are obeying the Lord. While you are in the storm Jesus is in glory making intercession for you. And He will send help through His Spirit,

through His Word and through the ministry of His people. Soon your storm will be stilled, and your faith made stronger.

If you have just come out of a storm, go and find someone who is in the middle of a storm and through your loving actions and your fervent prayers bring them to the Lord.