



Water Walker

Key idea:

Jesus refuses the false expectations of the crowd, but reveals His true identity to His disciples by walking on the water, and confirms it through His healing power.

Key text:

Mark 6:45-56

Immediately Jesus made his disciples get into the boat and go on ahead of him to Bethsaida, while he dismissed the crowd. ⁴⁶ After leaving them, he went up on a mountainside to pray. ⁴⁷ When evening came, the boat was in the middle of the lake, and he was alone on land. ⁴⁸ He saw the disciples straining at the oars, because the wind was against them. About the fourth watch of the night he went out to them, walking on the lake. He was about to pass by them, ⁴⁹ but when they saw him walking on the lake, they thought he was a ghost. They cried out, ⁵⁰ because they all saw him and were terrified. Immediately he spoke to them and said, “Take courage! It is I. Don’t be afraid.” ⁵¹ Then he climbed into the boat with them, and the wind died down. They were completely amazed, ⁵² for they had not understood about the loaves; their hearts were hardened. ⁵³ When they had crossed over, they landed at Gennesaret and anchored there. ⁵⁴ As soon as they got out of the boat, people recognized Jesus. ⁵⁵ They ran throughout that whole region and carried the sick on mats to wherever they heard he was. ⁵⁶ And wherever he went — into villages, towns or countryside — they placed the sick in the marketplaces. They begged him to let them touch even the edge of his cloak, and all who touched him were healed.

Key points:

1. After the miracle of feeding the 5,000 Jesus immediately and forcefully has the disciples get into a boat and depart, dismisses the crowd, and goes to pray alone. From John 6:14-15 we learn that this was necessary because the crowd was wanting to force Jesus to become king.
2. Jesus walks on the water, not just to do another miracle, but to reveal His glory and identity to His disciples.
3. Why does Mark use the literary and verbal connections of “walking on the lake”, “passing by”, and I AM” rather than simply giving the statement that Jesus was revealing His Deity? What are the advantages of using these verbal connections with Job 9:8,11, Exodus 33:19-34:6, and 1 Kings 19:11?

4. Mark uses three verbal/literary connections to communicate Jesus' identity and glory as God in the flesh:
 - a. The phrase "walking on the lake" (Mark 6:48) is identical to the Greek version of Job 9:8, which identifies God as the One Who walks on the water,
 - b. The phrase "pass by" (Mark 6:48) is the same Greek word as in Exodus 33:19, 34:6, and 1 Kings 19:11 where God "passes by" Moses and Elijah to reveal His glory and identity.
 - c. The phrase "I AM" (Mark 6:50) is related to the Divine Name Yahweh which the Lord revealed to Moses in Exodus 3:14 and as He "passed by" in Exodus 34:6.
5. Mark concludes this story with two incidents that confirm Jesus' glory and identity as the True God in the flesh: when He gets in the boat the wind immediately ceases, and in the villages, everyone Who touches Him is healed.

Questions for discussion/application:

1. What part of Sunday's teaching stood out most to you? Why?
2. What surprised me most as we looked at this familiar story of Jesus walking on the water? Were there things that I had never noticed before?
3. Am I more tempted to try to bring about the Kingdom of God by altering Jesus' identity and glory in order to line up with our current moral climate or to attempt to use political means? Since both of these are radical compromises of the way of Jesus, how can I avoid giving in to my particular tendency?
4. In what ways is this story similar to Jesus calming the storm in Mark 4:35-41? In what ways is this story very distinct from that one?
6. Why does Mark use the literary and verbal connections of "walking on the lake", "passing by", and I AM" rather than simply giving the statement that Jesus was revealing His Deity? What are the advantages of using these verbal connections with Job 9:8,11, Exodus 33:19-34:6, and 1 Kings 19:11?
5. Mark records that when the disciples saw Jesus they thought He was a ghost and were terrified. Have I ever experienced having God work in my life in a way that was so unexpected that I misunderstood what He was doing, and perhaps even fought against it or was afraid of what God was doing?

6. Mark records that the disciples had not understood the miracle of feeding the 5,000 because their hearts were hard (see Mark 6:52). In fact, Jesus Himself points this out later in Mark 8:17. Why was that miracle so important for them to understand? Why does their inability to see how Jesus was feeding the people in the wilderness make it harder for them to recognize Him when He reveals Himself to them by walking on the water?
7. Once again when Jesus speaks to the disciples He tells them to not be afraid. Why is fear such a problem for humans? How does fear work against faith?
8. How would this story encourage the early readers, many of whom were suffering persecution for their faith? How does it help me as I seek to walk with Jesus in a culture that is not friendly to the Gospel and the Kingdom of God?
9. Who can I reach out to this week to share the Gospel or strengthen their faith?