

The Signs in John's Gospel

Week 5: Jesus walks on water

WELCOME

Spend time relaxing and sharing together.

WORSHIP

Worship suggestion: Worshipping through the storms of life. Read Psalm 34 and then use it to life praise to the Lord.

WORD

Read John 6.16-25

In our previous session we studied the feeding of the five thousand. At the end of the account John tells us, “Jesus, knowing that they intended to come and make him king by force, withdrew again to a mountain by himself.” (John 6.15). The accounts in Matthew and Mark (see Matthew 14.22-23a and Mark 6.45-46) tell us that Jesus immediately made the disciples get into the boat and go on ahead of him while he remained to dismiss the crowd. Then Jesus went up on a mountainside by himself to pray.

1. Why do you think Jesus wanted to be alone to pray?

Jesus told the disciples to get in the boat and go ahead of him. When Jesus tells us to do something, it might be reasonable to expect that it will go smoothly. This is clearly not the case here, even when we are being obedient. Jesus doesn't always shield us from the storms, and sometimes lets them go on far beyond our ability to endure.

2. Why do you think that is? It may be helpful to read 2 Corinthians 1.8-11



3. Have you ever experienced this in your journey with Jesus?

As they're making their way across the lake, a ferocious storm blew up and the waters became rough. Due to the topology of the surrounding hillsides these sudden and severe storms were common on the Sea of Galilee when the winds blew in certain directions.

4. How did the disciples react when they saw Jesus approaching the boat, walking on the water? Also refer to Mark 6.47-50 and Matthew 14.25-26 for further detail.
5. What does Jesus say to them (v20)? In the last session we looked at how John wants us to make connections between the miracle of the feeding of the five thousand some of the events in the Book of Exodus. Do Jesus' words remind us of a connection to Exodus?

The Sea of Galilee is about 13 miles long and 8 miles wide. The disciples had been rowing through most of the night when they saw Jesus and had only gone three or four miles, which gives us an idea of the ferocity of the storm and tells us that they were still far from their destination.

6. What happens as soon as Jesus gets in the boat (v21)? What does this tell us?

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7. What else happened when Jesus got into the boat as recorded in Mark 6.51?
8. Why were the crowd surprise to find Jesus in Capernaum and what might it have led them to believe upon reflection? (vv22-25).

One of the hard lessons that Israelites had to learn when Moses led them through the wilderness was that their God was not at their beck and call. Out of love for them, he chose to make them his own people, so that they would be the nation through whom his love and purposes would be made known to the world.

9. How does Jesus make the same point to the crowds in verses 36-40? See also Deuteronomy 7.7-11.

WHAT NEXT?

The miracle of walking on water can also be seen as a metaphor for the storms of life, which may come when we least expect them. As we struggle to make our way through the storm it can be frightening, and we may feel alone. But if we listen through the noise of the wind and waves, we may hear the voice of the Lord saying, "It is I; don't be afraid." And If we are ready to invite Jesus on board we may just come through the storm sooner than we expected.

How is everyone as we continue in lockdown?

Are there any particular storms that people are in that they would like to share?

Growth Group Notes

Spring 2021



Prayer Ministry and Intercession

Pray into what had been shared.

Pray more generally for storms that are impacting the world at this time.

For personal reflection

An extract from Nicky Gumbel's Bible in one year

A one-year-old boy shattered his back falling down a flight of stairs. He spent his childhood and youth in and out of hospital. Gavin Read, the former Bishop of Maidstone, interviewed him in church. The boy remarked, 'God is fair.' Gavin asked, 'How old are you?' 'Seventeen,' the boy replied. 'How many years have you spent in hospital?' The boy answered, 'Thirteen years.' Gavin asked, 'Do you think that is fair?' He replied, 'God has got all of eternity to make it up to me.'

We live in a world of instant gratification that has almost entirely lost its eternal perspective. The New Testament is full of wonderful promises about the future: all creation will be restored. Jesus will return to establish 'a new heaven and a new earth' (Revelation 21:1). There will be no more crying, for there will be no more pain and suffering. Our frail, decaying mortal bodies will be changed for a body like that of Jesus' glorious resurrected body.

Suffering is not part of God's original created order (see Genesis 1-2). There was no suffering in the world before rebellion against God. There will be no suffering when God creates a new heaven and a new earth (Revelation 21:3-4). Suffering is, therefore, an alien intrusion into God's world.

This, of course, is not a complete answer to the question 'Why does God allow suffering?'