

John 6:15-21

When Jesus saw that they were ready to force him to be their king, he slipped away into the hills by himself. ¹⁶That evening Jesus' disciples went down to the shore to wait for him. ¹⁷But as darkness fell and Jesus still hadn't come back, they got into the boat and headed across the lake toward Capernaum. ¹⁸Soon a gale swept down upon them, and the sea grew very rough. ¹⁹They had rowed three or four miles when suddenly they saw Jesus walking on the water toward the boat. They were terrified, ²⁰but he called out to them, "Don't be afraid. I am here!" ²¹Then they were eager to let him in the boat, and immediately they arrived at their destination!

Background

John's Gospel uses seven "Sign Miracles" to show the deity of Jesus. Two of these are in John 6: the feeding of the 5,000 and Jesus walking on water. In the first, Jesus miraculously fed thousands with a boy's small lunch, showing divine provision. The crowd was impressed but misguided. They wanted to make Him king, not because they recognized Him as the Savior and were ready to repent from their sins; rather, they wanted a leader who would overthrow the Roman occupation. So Jesus slipped away from the crowd.

As the disciples crossed the Sea of Galilee, a sudden storm arose. Due to the geographic situation of the Sea of Galilee, strong windstorms can build quite quickly. Jesus came to them, walking on the water. It was understandably frightening until they recognized who it was. When He entered the boat, they instantly reached their destination. This miraculous display of power again clearly revealed His deity.

Teaching Points

1. The Lord's comforting presence is not always immediate.

Psalm 23:4 reminds us that God offers comfort through life's darkest moments. However, His presence may not always be felt *immediately*. This truth is illustrated in the miracle of Jesus walking on water. From the other Gospel accounts we learn that while the disciples struggled in the windstorm, Jesus saw them from the mountain where He was praying. He didn't come to them until well after midnight. But He did come.

This mirrors our spiritual journey: Jesus, now in heaven, intercedes for us (Hebrews 7:25), while

we face the storms of life. He sees us, cares for us, and will come at the right time. His comforting presence, though sometimes seemingly delayed, is never absent.

2. The Lord's comforting presence is not always obvious.

When Jesus came to the disciples during the storm, they were frightened, thinking He was a ghost. But He reassured them, saying, *"Don't be afraid. I am here!"* (v20). This phrase uses the divine name "I AM," a direct claim to His deity (Exodus 3:14; John 8:58).

Spiritually, this shows that the Lord's comforting presence isn't always immediately recognized. He is with us, but we might not realize it in the moment. The Lord is always working behind the scenes, even when His presence isn't obvious.

Application

1. How well do you handle popularity?

When people tried to make Jesus king after the miracle, He slipped away, knowing it wasn't God's plan. Unlike many who might welcome fame, Jesus chose obedience over popularity. We, too, may unexpectedly find ourselves in the spotlight. In such moments, we must follow Jesus' example of stepping back to seek God's will rather than being swayed by recognition or success. Popularity brings temptation. The pull of pride, fame, and wealth is strong. Spend time alone with God to stay aligned with His purpose.

2. How well do you handle adversity?

The disciples struggled against strong winds and didn't recognize Jesus at first. But once they knew it was Jesus, they welcomed Him aboard. They felt peace and their faith grew. We should handle adversity the same way.

Many Christians struggle with hardship because they don't fully trust God or understand that their difficulties have a purpose. They try to face storms in their own strength, missing the peace Jesus offers. They believe in the Lord for salvation, but can't surrender their struggles to God. How well do *you* handle adversity?