

The Miracle of Our Lord Walking on the Sea of Galilee

Matthew 14:22-36

Matthew 14:22-36 - *“Immediately Jesus made His disciples get into the boat and go before Him to the other side, while He sent the multitudes away. ²³ And when He had sent the multitudes away, He went up on the mountain by Himself to pray. Now when evening came, He was alone there. ²⁴ But the boat was now in the middle of the sea, tossed by the waves, for the wind was contrary.*

²⁵ Now in the fourth watch of the night Jesus went to them, walking on the sea. ²⁶ And when the disciples saw Him walking on the sea, they were troubled, saying, “It is a ghost!” And they cried out for fear. ²⁷ But immediately Jesus spoke to them, saying, “Be of good cheer! It is I; do not be afraid.” ²⁸ And Peter answered Him and said, “Lord, if it is You, command me to come to You on the water.” ²⁹ So He said, “Come.” And when Peter had come down out of the boat, he walked on the water to go to Jesus. ³⁰ But when he saw that the wind was boisterous, he was afraid, and beginning to sink he cried out, saying, “Lord, save me!” ³¹ And immediately Jesus stretched out His hand and caught him, and said to him, “O you of little faith, why did you doubt?” ³² And when they got into the boat, the wind ceased.

³³ Then those who were in the boat came and worshiped Him, saying, “Truly You are the Son of God.”

³⁴ When they had crossed over, they came to the land of Gennesaret. ³⁵ And when the men of that place recognized Him, they sent out into the entire surrounding region, brought to Him all who were sick, ³⁶ and begged Him that they might only touch the hem of His garment. And as many as touched it were made perfectly well.”

Background Notes

Did you ever walk on water? I once had the experience of hitting a golf ball that skipped across a pond - right up onto the green! Now suppose I told you that I followed the path of my golf ball and walked on water across the pond - would you believe me? It's true! I actually walked on water, but it was not a miracle. It was winter, and the pond was frozen!

Well, when our Lord and Peter walked on water, **it was a miracle!** The Sea of Galilee was not frozen! Nor (as many critics of the Bible have concluded) were they walking on a sandbar, and only **appeared** to be walking on the surface of the water. The miracle of our Lord walking on water is also recorded in the Gospels of Mark and John, but the miracle of Peter walking on the water is recorded only in Matthew. What an experience that must have been for Peter!

Did you know that theological liberals are willing to say that Jesus was “a good man,” but they deny His full deity, and they deny His miracles? These critics of the Bible say that the miracles of Jesus were invented by and created by the early Christians. They would admit that there probably was an event on the Sea of Galilee when the disciples were caught in a

storm and the Lord came to them - but in actuality, their boat was near the shore and the Lord only “appeared” to be walking on the water. They’d say He was actually on the shore, or He was walking on a sandbar, and Peter impulsively jumped out of the boat and joined Him on the sandbar. But, (according to the critics), early Christians exaggerated the tale of this event more and more over the years until it became accepted as a miracle, and by the time that the Bible was written this event was written down as a miracle. These critics say that the “real historical Jesus” did no miracles at all. They choose to believe and teach that the early Christians transformed the actual, historical Jesus into the miracle-working “Christ of faith” of the Bible!

We certainly do **not** believe the critics’ scenario! We believe that the biblical records are completely accurate. And we believe that the Lord - and Peter - really did walk on the waters of the Sea of Galilee. This was the supernatural power of God at work! **It was a miracle!**

Doctrinal Points

1. The Lord intercedes for us at the right hand of God.

“It is Christ who died, and furthermore is also risen, who is even at the right hand of God, who also makes intercession for us” (Romans 8:34). And “He is also able to save to the uttermost those who come to God through Him, since He always lives to make intercession for them...” (Hebrews 7:25).

So the truth that the Lord intercedes for us at the right hand of God is certainly taught in the Bible, but where do we find that truth in Matthew 14? It is taught in the actions of our Lord in verses 23-24, *“And when He had sent the multitudes away, He went up on the mountain by Himself to pray. Now when evening came, He was alone there. But the boat was now in the middle of the sea, tossed by the waves, for the wind was contrary.”*

All the miracles of our Lord have special meaning, and many of His actions do as well. Here we have a spiritual picture of our Lord’s present ministry. We are like the disciples, out on the stormy sea of life. The Lord is “on the mountain.” He’s in heaven, praying and making intercession for us. We strain at the oars because the winds and waves of this world are against us. At times it seems that the Lord is far away, and it may seem that He’s not aware of our struggles.

But **He is!** Listen to the parallel account: *“Then He saw them straining at rowing, for the wind was against them...” (Mark 6:48).* **He saw them!** He **knew** about their struggles, and He **cared**, and **He came to them!** In the same way, the Lord is aware of our struggles. He can come to us with His comforting presence in the midst of the storms of life, bringing peace and calm to our troubled lives. All of this is pictured here for us in our Lord’s actions.

Did you know that the Lord is praying for you? Even though you may be experiencing rough seas in your life right now, the Lord Jesus is at the right hand of God the Father, and He’s praying for you (Romans 8:34)!

2. The Lord calls us to walk by faith in the storms of life.

The spiritual picture continues with Peter walking on water. Many Christians have also seen a prophetic spiritual picture in this miracle: Peter represents the Church. The Church was called out of the “boat” of Judaism to walk by faith during this troubled present age, until the Lord returns and brings peace to this world.

Some Christians interpret this prophetic spiritual picture specifically in reference to the end times. In this interpretation, Peter would represent the small faithful remnant of believing Jews who will walk by faith during the violently troubled sea of the Tribulation period. They will return with the Lord when He sets up His peaceful millennial kingdom here on earth. At that time, the converted nation of Israel will worship Him, as pictured in verse 33: *“Then those who were in the boat came and worshiped Him, saying, “Truly You are the Son of God.”* At that time, when the Lord returns to set up His Kingdom, blessing and healing will go out to the whole world. This is pictured in the great time of blessing and healing at Gennesaret in verses 34-36: all who came to Him were healed.

So there is a lot of prophetic teaching in this miracle, especially as it is recorded in Matthew – the Gospel of the King and His Kingdom. However, there’s a personal lesson in this spiritual picture as well. The Lord not only comes to us in the storms of life - but He wants us to come to Him and walk by faith in the storms of life. Are you struggling in a storm in your life right now? Sickness? The death of a close friend or loved one? A broken relationship? Financial loss? Some other “storm”? The Lord calls us to walk with Him by faith in the storms of life!

Notice that it was important for Peter to keep his eyes on the Lord. When he looked at the wind and the waves, he began to sink. What a lesson for us! We’ve got to keep our eyes on the Lord - not on the storms of life that surround us. Hebrews 12:1-2 says, *“...let us lay aside every weight, and the sin which so easily ensnares us, and let us run with endurance the race that is set before us, looking to Jesus, the author and finisher of our faith...”*

Perhaps the Lord is calling you to take a step of faith into a new ministry, or a new area of Christian service. There may be some “risk” involved. After all, there are storms and rough waters out there! Most believers are like the other eleven disciples who stayed safely in the security of the boat. But the other eleven disciples never experienced what Peter experienced - the miracle of walking on water with the Lord!

Peter took the risk. He stepped out in faith and walked on water. He had to keep his eyes on the Lord, but he experienced the supernatural power of God at work in his life! We can experience this power, too - if we’re willing to walk by faith.

Have you ever experienced the supernatural power of God at work in your life? Let me share an experience from my own life. When I was a student at Rutgers University, I was a member of Intervarsity Christian Fellowship. Our IVCF chapter was planning to show some evangelistic films on campus, and in order to invite as many students as possible for the

showing of these films, we decided to send a representative to every fraternity, and give personal invitations to anyone who was interested. When I arrived at my designated frat house, somehow they had heard that “a Christian” was coming! Most of the guys were there to try to undermine the Bible and make fun of the Christian faith, and they started firing questions at me. I sure felt like Peter – vulnerable. out of the boat, in the waves, and facing the storm! I remember praying a quick silent prayer, “Lord, help me!” And He did! I experienced the Lord’s supernatural power giving me physical strength, and clarity of thought, and the ability to answer their questions. That experience was only possible because I was “out of the security of the Christian boat” and in the midst of the storm. And I had no choice – I **had** to keep my eyes on the Lord!

The Lord calls us to walk by faith in the storms of life.

Practical Application

Just say the three words: “Lord, save me!”

“But when he saw that the wind was boisterous, he was afraid; and beginning to sink he cried out, saying, “Lord, save me!” (v30).

Have you ever said those three words? If you’re not yet a believer in Jesus, realize that the Lord Jesus died on the cross to take the penalty for your sins. The price for your salvation has been paid. All you have to do is believe this, and you will receive the gift of salvation. Just say the three words: “Lord, save me!”

There’s an application here for Christians as well. Maybe you’re already a Christian, and right now you’re facing a major storm in your life. No one around you seems to understand the extent of your serious problems. What should you do? Turn to the Lord and trust Him. **He knows** what you’re facing, and **He cares** about you! (Read Hebrews 4:14-16.) He wants you to look to Him, call out to Him, and trust Him for help.

Just say the three words: “**Lord, save me!**”