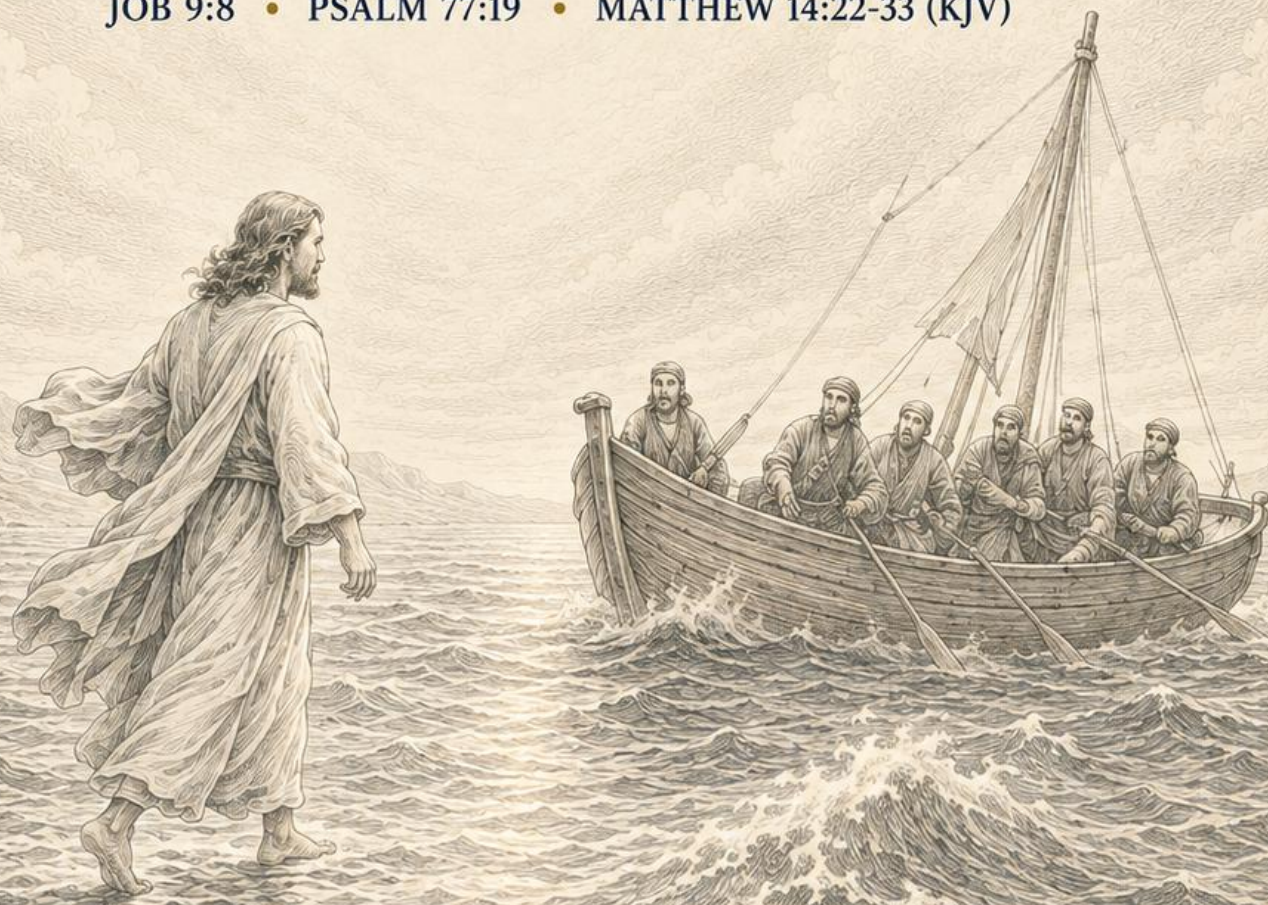


REASON TOGETHER CHURCH
REASON TOGETHER STUDY

THE GOD WHO WALKS UPON THE WATER

*WAS JESUS WALKING ON WATER
TO REVEAL THAT HE IS GOD?*

JOB 9:8 • PSALM 77:19 • MATTHEW 14:22-33 (KJV)



Dr. Thomas W. Hawksley
Pastor & Teacher

www.ReasonTogether.Church

Aloha.

Welcome to Reason Together Church.

Whether this is your first time with us or you have been part of this family from the beginning, we are grateful that God has brought you here today.

If you are visiting, please understand that this is a place where sincere questions are welcome.

You do not have to pretend that you already understand everything.

You do not have to be afraid of asking a difficult question.

Our invitation is simple.

Bring your questions.

Open your Bible.

Let us Reason Together the Word of God.

We also want to recognize any honored guests who may be with us today.

Thank you for sharing this time with our church family.

After the service, please join us in the Reason Together Cafe for a cup of coffee and conversation.

The coffee is free, and so are the refills on the conversation.

Our Keiki Kids Center is also available for families who need it.

If this is your first visit, we have a very simple guest card.

We ask only for your first name and an email address so we can thank you for coming and let you know what is happening here.

Let us pray.

Heavenly Father,

Thank You for bringing us together today.

Thank You for giving us Your Word and for inviting us to search it carefully.

Open our eyes to see Jesus more clearly.

Open our minds to understand what the Scriptures reveal.

Open our hearts so that we do not merely admire a miracle while missing the identity of the One who performed it.

Be near to every person who has entered this room carrying fear, exhaustion, uncertainty or grief.

Help those who feel as though they have been rowing against a contrary wind for a very long time.

Remind them that even when they cannot see You, they are not beyond Your sight.

If anyone listening has never personally trusted Jesus Christ for salvation, use Your Word to draw that person to the Savior today.

We ask all of this in the precious name of Jesus.

Amen.

Our primary Scripture reading comes from Mark chapter 6, beginning with verse 45.

The King James Bible says:

"And straightway he constrained his disciples to get into the ship, and to go to the other side before unto Bethsaida, while he sent away the people.

"And when he had sent them away, he departed into a mountain to pray.

"And when even was come, the ship was in the midst of the sea, and he alone on the land.

"And he saw them toiling in rowing; for the wind was contrary unto them: and about the fourth watch of the night he cometh unto them, walking upon the sea, and would have passed by them.

"But when they saw him walking upon the sea, they supposed it had been a spirit, and cried out:

"For they all saw him, and were troubled. And immediately he talked with them, and saith unto them, Be of good cheer: it is I; be not afraid.

"And he went up unto them into the ship; and the wind ceased: and they were sore amazed in themselves beyond measure, and wondered.

"For they considered not the miracle of the loaves: for their heart was hardened."

Before we begin our study, let me briefly mention giving.

We do not pass an offering plate at Reason Together Church.

If you are visiting, you are never expected to give.

If you are a member of another church, we encourage you to support your home church.

For those who consider this your church home and feel led by God to participate, there is a giving box available in the back.

Giving should never be the result of embarrassment, pressure or manipulation.

The Bible teaches that God loves a cheerful giver.

Now that we have taken care of the family information, let us settle in, open our Bibles and turn our attention to one of the most familiar miracles Jesus ever performed.

At least, we think it is familiar.

Because once we begin comparing the Gospel accounts with Job, Psalms, Exodus and Isaiah, we may discover that this story has been telling us something much greater than most of us ever realized.

When most people hear the words "Jesus walked on water," they immediately think about Peter.

We remember Peter stepping out of the boat.

We remember him looking at the wind.

We remember him becoming afraid and beginning to sink.

We have heard sermons telling us to keep our eyes on Jesus.

We have heard sermons encouraging us to get out of the boat.

There is truth in some of those applications.

But there is something we should notice before we make Peter the center of the story.

Mark does not mention Peter walking on the water.

John does not mention Peter walking on the water.

Only Matthew includes that part of the event.

That does not mean Peter is unimportant.

It means Peter was probably never intended to become the main point.

Perhaps the greatest question is not, "Why did Peter sink?"

Perhaps the greatest question is, "Why did Jesus walk upon the sea?"

And Mark gives us an even stranger question.

Why did Jesus intend to pass by the disciples?

Mark says that Jesus came to them, but also says He "would have passed by them."

How can both statements be true?

If He came to rescue them, why would He walk past them?

Was He ignoring them?

Was He testing them?

Was He pretending not to notice them?

Or is Mark using language that his readers were expected to recognize from somewhere else in the Bible?

Today we are going to reason through the evidence together.

And by the time we finish, I believe we will see that this miracle is not mainly about Peter getting out of the boat.

It is about God getting into it.

To understand what happened on the water, we need to begin with what happened on the land.

Jesus had just fed five thousand men, besides women and children, with five loaves and two fishes.

The multitude ate until they were satisfied.

The disciples collected twelve baskets of leftovers.

The crowd had witnessed power unlike anything they had ever seen.

John chapter 6 tells us how they responded.

Verse 15 says:

"When Jesus therefore perceived that they would come and take him by force, to make him a king, he departed again into a mountain himself alone."

They wanted a king who could keep providing food.

They wanted a king who could improve their immediate circumstances.

They wanted a king who might overthrow Rome.

They saw His power, but they misunderstood His purpose.

They wanted the benefits of Jesus without surrendering to the identity and mission of Jesus.

They were prepared to crown Him, but only if they could decide what kind of king He would be.

Jesus refused that crown.

He sent the people away.

He constrained His disciples to enter the ship.

Then He went up into the mountain to pray.

The crowd wanted to make Him an earthly king because He could provide bread.

The disciples were about to discover that He was the divine King who ruled the sea.

The crowd wanted to decide what kind of king Jesus should be.

Upon the water, Jesus would reveal what kind of King He already was.

Matthew and Mark both say Jesus constrained the disciples to enter the ship.

That word matters.

They were not on the sea because they had disobeyed Him.

They were there because He had told them to go.

And while they were doing what Jesus commanded, the wind became contrary.

We sometimes make a dangerous assumption.

We assume that if we are obeying God, every door will open easily.

We assume that if the wind becomes contrary, we must have traveled in the wrong direction.

But Jonah encountered a storm because he was running from God.

The disciples encountered a storm while they were obeying God.

Circumstances alone cannot tell us whether we are inside or outside the will of God.

The proper question is not, "Is this journey easy?"

The proper question is, "Did Jesus tell me to go?"

A contrary wind does not necessarily mean we are traveling in the wrong direction.

The disciples rowed for hours.

John says they had traveled about twenty-five or thirty furlongs, approximately three to four miles.

It was dark.

They were tired.

The wind opposed every movement of the oars.

Mark says they were "toiling in rowing."

The language describes painful, exhausting effort.

They were experienced fishermen, but experience was not enough.

They had a boat, but the boat was not enough.

They had one another, but their combined strength was not enough.

And Jesus was not visibly with them.

Then Mark gives us one quiet sentence filled with hope.

"And he saw them toiling in rowing."

They could not see Jesus.

But Jesus could see them.

They may have felt alone.

They were not unseen.

His apparent absence was not ignorance.

His delay was not indifference.

Their struggle remained within His sight.

Some of you understand what it means to row against a contrary wind.

You have prayed, worked, waited and tried again.

You may wonder whether God sees the effort or knows how tired you have become.

This passage does not promise that every storm will end when we want it to end.

But it does tell us that the disciples were never outside the sight of Jesus.

The One who sent them saw them.

The One who saw them came to them.

What prevented the disciples from reaching Jesus could not prevent Jesus from reaching the disciples.

Mark says Jesus came during the fourth watch of the night.

That was approximately between three and six in the morning.

Jesus did not arrive before they became tired.

He came after they had discovered that their own strength could not carry them across.

And He came in a manner no one in the boat expected.

He came walking upon the sea.

We usually stop there and marvel at the miracle.

But a reader familiar with the Old Testament should hear something more.

Job chapter 9, verse 8 says this about God:

"Which alone spreadeth out the heavens, and treadeth upon the waves of the sea."

Listen carefully to the word "alone."

Job does not merely say God is capable of walking upon the waves.

Job places this action among the unique works of God.

God alone spreads out the heavens.

God alone governs His creation.

God alone treads upon the waves of the sea.

Now listen again to Mark:

"He cometh unto them, walking upon the sea."

The action Job assigns to God alone is performed by Jesus.

But the connection becomes even more remarkable three verses later.

Job 9:11 says:

"Lo, he goeth by me, and I see him not: he passeth on also, but I perceive him not."

Place Job and Mark beside one another.

Job describes God treading upon the waves.

Mark describes Jesus walking upon the sea.

Job describes God passing by.

Mark says Jesus would have passed by them.

Job describes the observer failing to perceive Him.

Mark says the disciples failed to recognize Jesus and thought He was a spirit.

Walking upon the sea.

Passing by.

Not being perceived.

The correspondence is too important to ignore.

We should not say that Job consciously predicted every detail of a future night on the Sea of Galilee.

Job did not write, "The Messiah will walk upon the water."

This is not a direct predictive prophecy in the same form as the prophecy that the Messiah would be born in Bethlehem.

Job provides something more like a divine identifier.

He describes what God alone does.

Jesus then steps into that Biblical description and does it.

The disciples did not merely see a man doing something impossible.

They saw Jesus doing what Scripture said God alone does.

Psalm 77 strengthens the connection.

Verse 16 says:

"The waters saw thee, O God, the waters saw thee; they were afraid: the depths also were troubled."

Verse 19 says:

"Thy way is in the sea, and thy path in the great waters, and thy footsteps are not known."

The sea does not threaten God.

The waters fear Him.

He does not need a road built across the sea.

The sea itself becomes His pathway.

Isaiah 43:16 says:

"Thus saith the LORD, which maketh a way in the sea, and a path in the mighty waters."

Think about Moses at the Red Sea.

Moses could walk through the sea only after God divided it.

Moses needed the water moved out of his way.

Jesus did not need the water moved.

Moses walked upon dry ground through a path God created.

Jesus walked upon the undivided water as its Lord.

Jesus is not merely acting like another Moses.

He is doing what the God of Moses does.

Jesus did not merely walk through the sea as Moses did.

He walked upon it as its Lord.

Now we are ready to return to the strange sentence in Mark.

Jesus "would have passed by them."

At first, that sounds as though He intended to ignore them.

But Mark has already told us that Jesus saw them struggling.

He did not fail to notice them.

And the Old Testament uses the language of "passing by" in a very important way.

In Exodus chapter 33, Moses made an extraordinary request.

He said to God:

"I beseech thee, shew me thy glory."

God answered in verse 19:

"I will make all my goodness pass before thee, and I will proclaim the name of the LORD before thee."

Then God placed Moses in the cleft of the rock.

Exodus 33:22 says:

"And it shall come to pass, while my glory passeth by, that I will put thee in a cleft of the rock, and will cover thee with my hand while I pass by."

In Exodus 34, the LORD descended, passed before Moses and proclaimed His name.

Moses responded by bowing his head and worshipping.

Elijah later experienced similar language.

First Kings 19:11 says:

"And, behold, the LORD passed by."

In the Old Testament, God passing by can describe a revelation of divine glory.

So when Mark says Jesus intended to pass by the disciples, he is not describing indifference.

He is describing revelation.

Jesus was not passing by because He did not care.

He was passing by because He wanted them to see His glory.

Notice the sequence in Exodus.

God passed before Moses.

God revealed His glory.

God proclaimed His name.

Moses worshipped.

Now notice the sequence in the Gospel.

Jesus passed before the disciples.

Jesus revealed divine authority.

Jesus proclaimed His identity.

The disciples worshipped.

What did Jesus say when they cried out in fear?

"Be of good cheer: it is I; be not afraid."

The Greek words translated "it is I" are ego eimi.

They can be translated, "I am."

We should be careful here.

Those two Greek words can sometimes function as ordinary self-identification.

We should not claim that every person who ever said ego eimi was claiming to be God.

The importance comes from the setting.

Jesus is walking where the Old Testament says God alone walks.

He is passing by as God passed before Moses.

When God passed before Moses, God proclaimed His name.

Now Jesus passes before the disciples and says, "I am."

He commands them not to fear.

He stills the wind.

He saves Peter.

He receives worship.

The words do not stand alone.

The action and the words interpret one another.

Jesus does what God does, in the setting where God reveals His glory, and speaks the words of divine self-identification.

This becomes even clearer when we turn to Isaiah chapter 43.

I believe Isaiah 43 is one of the great keys to understanding the entire event.

Listen to verses 1 and 2:

"Fear not: for I have redeemed thee, I have called thee by thy name; thou art mine.

"When thou passest through the waters, I will be with thee; and through the rivers, they shall not overflow thee."

Then verses 10 and 11 say:

"That ye may know and believe me, and understand that I am he: before me there was no God formed, neither shall there be after me.

"I, even I, am the LORD; and beside me there is no saviour."

And verse 16 says that the LORD makes a way in the sea and a path in the mighty waters.

Now compare Isaiah with the Gospel.

Isaiah says, "Fear not."

Jesus says, "Be not afraid."

Isaiah says, "When thou passest through the waters, I will be with thee."

Jesus comes to His disciples upon the water.

Isaiah says the waters will not overflow God's people.

Peter begins to sink, but Jesus does not allow the water to overwhelm him.

Isaiah says, "Understand that I am he."

Jesus says, "I am."

Isaiah says there is no Savior beside the LORD.

Peter cries, "Lord, save me."

Isaiah says the LORD makes His way in the sea.

Jesus walks upon the sea.

This is not one matching word pulled out of context.

This is water, presence, fear, divine identity and salvation brought together in one Old Testament chapter and then displayed in one Gospel event.

Jesus did not first promise that the wind would stop.

He did not first explain how soon they would reach the shore.

He did not first tell them that everything would become comfortable.

His first answer was His identity.

"It is I."

"I am."

"Be not afraid."

Before Jesus changed the conditions around them, He revealed the identity of the One among them.

The presence of Christ was the first answer.

The calming of the wind came afterward.

Matthew now tells us what Peter did.

Peter answered:

"Lord, if it be thou, bid me come unto thee on the water."

Peter did not simply jump from the boat.

He did not choose an impossible adventure and ask Jesus to bless it afterward.

He waited for the command of Christ.

Jesus said one word.

"Come."

Matthew says Peter came down out of the ship and walked on the water "to go to Jesus."

Peter's objective was not to walk on water.

His objective was Jesus.

This also answers an important objection.

If walking upon the water reveals that Jesus is God, what do we do with the fact that Peter also walked upon the water?

Does that make Peter divine?

Not at all.

The differences are decisive.

Jesus walked by His own authority.

Peter walked only after Jesus commanded him.

Jesus needed no one to hold Him above the water.

Peter remained above the water only through the authority of Christ.

Jesus never began to sink.

Peter did.

Jesus called no one to rescue Him.

Peter cried to Jesus for rescue.

Jesus was not the one in danger.

Jesus was the Savior.

Peter did not prove that an ordinary man can naturally do what God does.

Peter proved that Jesus possessed enough authority over creation to command the water concerning another man.

Peter's faith was not a supernatural substance holding him up.

Jesus was holding him up.

But Matthew says Peter saw the wind boisterous and became afraid.

The wind was not new.

It had been blowing before Peter stepped out of the boat.

What changed was not the wind.

What changed was the attention Peter gave it.

He began to sink.

Then Peter prayed one of the shortest prayers in the Bible.

"Lord, save me."

It was not an elegant prayer.

It was not a long prayer.

It contained no impressive vocabulary.

But it was honest.

It recognized the danger.

It confessed Peter's inability to rescue himself.

It identified Jesus as Lord.

It asked Jesus to do what Peter could not do.

Matthew says:

"And immediately Jesus stretched forth his hand, and caught him."

The order matters.

Jesus rescued Peter before correcting Peter.

Jesus did not make him listen to a lecture while he was drowning.

He caught him immediately.

Then He said:

"O thou of little faith, wherefore didst thou doubt?"

Grace did not ignore Peter's doubt.

But neither did Jesus allow Peter's imperfect faith to prevent the rescue.

Peter's faith was imperfect, but his imperfect faith was directed toward the perfect Savior.

Remember Isaiah 43:11:

"I, even I, am the LORD; and beside me there is no saviour."

Peter cried, "Lord, save me."

And Jesus saved him.

When Jesus and Peter entered the ship, the wind ceased.

Matthew says those in the ship came and worshipped Jesus.

But before we reach that climax, Mark gives us a sobering explanation.

Mark 6:52 says:

"For they considered not the miracle of the loaves: for their heart was hardened."

The disciples should have understood something from the bread that would have prepared them for the water.

What should they have understood?

They should have recognized that Jesus possessed creative authority.

He did not merely distribute food someone else had provided.

He multiplied the loaves in His hands.

He acted as the divine Provider in the wilderness.

The loaves and the water were not unrelated demonstrations.

Both answered the same question.

Who is Jesus?

There is a difference between a miracle and a sign.

A miracle causes us to ask, "What happened?"

A sign causes us to ask, "What does what happened reveal?"

The crowd saw the bread and wanted more bread.

The disciples saw Jesus upon the water and were merely astonished.

Both groups were in danger of enjoying the evidence without reaching the proper conclusion.

Mark's warning is especially serious because he says the disciples' hearts were hardened.

We might expect hardened hearts among the enemies of Jesus.

But these men followed Him.

They heard Him teach.

They participated in ministry.

They distributed the miraculously provided bread.

They collected the leftovers.

They had abundant evidence in their hands.

Yet they failed to consider what the evidence meant.

Familiarity with Jesus is not the same as faith in Jesus.

Being close to Christian activity is not the same as recognizing Christ.

Knowing the stories is not the same as surrendering to the Savior those stories reveal.

Have we become so familiar with the miracle that we no longer ask what it reveals?

Have we heard "Jesus walked on water" so many times that the words no longer surprise us?

Have we reduced a revelation of God incarnate into a motivational message about taking a courageous step?

Astonishment says, "That was amazing."

Faith says, "Of a truth thou art the Son of God."

Psalm 107 helps us understand how the story ends.

The Psalm describes people who go down to the sea in ships.

The stormy wind lifts the waves.

The sailors reel and stagger.

Their courage melts.

They come to their wits' end.

Then Psalm 107:28 says:

"Then they cry unto the LORD in their trouble, and he bringeth them out of their distresses."

Verse 29 says:

"He maketh the storm a calm, so that the waves thereof are still."

Verse 30 says:

"Then are they glad because they be quiet; so he bringeth them unto their desired haven."

Now look at what Jesus does.

He comes to distressed sailors.

He commands fear to cease.

He stills the wind.

He enters the ship.

He brings them to their destination.

John 6:21 says:

"Then they willingly received him into the ship: and immediately the ship was at the land whither they went."

The Gospel does not merely say Jesus resembles the God of the Psalms.

Jesus occupies the place the Psalm gives to the LORD.

He does what the LORD does.

He receives the response that belongs to the LORD.

Matthew 14:33 gives us the proper climax:

"Then they that were in the ship came and worshipped him, saying, Of a truth thou art the Son of God."

The story does not principally end with Peter safely returning to the boat.

It does not principally end with the wind becoming calm.

It does not principally end with the ship reaching land.

It ends with worship.

That response matters.

When Cornelius fell before Peter in Acts 10, Peter told him to stand because Peter was also a man.

When people attempted to worship Paul and Barnabas in Acts 14, they rejected it.

When John fell before an angel in Revelation 19, the angel said, "See thou do it not."

Faithful servants refuse the worship that belongs to God.

Jesus accepted the worship of the disciples.

He did not correct their conclusion.

He received their confession:

"Of a truth thou art the Son of God."

Now bring the entire case together.

Job says God alone treads upon the waves.

Jesus walks upon the sea.

Job describes God passing by and not being perceived.

Jesus passes before disciples who do not recognize Him.

Exodus describes God passing by to reveal His glory and proclaim His name.

Jesus passes by and declares, "I am."

Psalms 77 says God's way is in the sea.

Jesus makes the sea His path.

Isaiah 43 joins the water, the divine presence, "fear not," "I am he" and the only Savior.

Jesus comes upon the water, says "Be not afraid," declares "I am" and saves Peter.

Psalms 107 says the LORD stills the storm and brings the sailors to their desired haven.

Jesus stills the wind and brings the disciples to land.

Then the disciples worship Him.

Was Jesus walking on water to reveal that He is God?

The combined testimony of Job, Exodus, Psalms, Isaiah and the Gospel accounts points unmistakably in that direction.

Jesus was not merely showing them what He could do.

He was showing them who He is.

There are several truths we should carry from this boat into our lives.

First, obedience does not guarantee calm circumstances.

The disciples entered the ship because Jesus told them to go.

Do not judge God's will only by the direction of the wind.

Second, Jesus sees before He is seen.

The disciples did not know where Jesus was.

Jesus knew exactly where they were.

Third, the presence of Christ is a greater promise than immediate comfort.

He first said, "It is I."

The wind stopped afterward.

Fourth, what is over our heads remains beneath His feet.

We should not promise that every difficulty will disappear immediately.

But no difficulty prevents Christ from reaching His people.

The waves that were over their heads were already beneath His feet.

Fifth, Jesus does not wait for our understanding to become perfect before He comes to us.

The disciples misunderstood the bread.

They misidentified Jesus upon the sea.

Their hearts were hardened.

Yet He came.

He spoke.

He entered their boat.

He continued teaching them.

That is grace.

Finally, imperfect faith can still call upon a perfect Savior.

Peter did not pray a polished prayer.

He prayed the necessary prayer.

"Lord, save me."

That brings us to the most important question of the day.

Do you know Jesus only as the subject of a familiar Bible story?

Or do you know Him as your Lord and Savior?

Peter's danger that night was physical.

He was sinking into the water.

The Bible teaches that every one of us faces a greater spiritual danger because of sin.

Romans 3:23 says:

"For all have sinned, and come short of the glory of God."

Our good works cannot remove our guilt.

Religious familiarity cannot save us.

Being near Christian people cannot save us.

Knowing the story of Jesus walking on water cannot save us.

We need the Savior Himself.

Jesus Christ, God the Son, came into this world.

He lived the sinless life we could not live.

He went to the cross and bore the judgment our sins deserved.

He died, was buried and rose again on the third day.

The One who held Peter above the water possesses the authority to save the sinner completely.

Romans 10:9 says:

"That if thou shalt confess with thy mouth the Lord Jesus, and shalt believe in thine heart that God hath raised him from the dead, thou shalt be saved."

Verse 13 says:

"For whosoever shall call upon the name of the Lord shall be saved."

You do not need an impressive speech.

You need honest repentance and genuine faith in Jesus Christ.

If you have never trusted Him, you can call upon Him now.

You may pray from your heart with me.

Lord Jesus,

I know that I am a sinner.

I know that I cannot save myself.

I believe that You are the Son of God.

I believe that You died upon the cross for my sins.

I believe that You were buried and rose again.

I turn from my sin and place my trust in You alone.

Forgive me.

Save me.

Be my Lord and Savior.

Thank You for hearing me and receiving me.

In Jesus' name,

Amen.

If you prayed that prayer sincerely, please do not leave today without speaking with me or another trusted Christian.

We would be honored to pray with you, answer your questions and help you begin walking with Christ.

Let us close in prayer.

Heavenly Father,

Thank You for the revelation of Jesus Christ in Your Word.

Thank You that the waves which terrify us are beneath His authority.

Thank You that when His disciples could not reach Him, He came to them.

Thank You that He saw them in the darkness, spoke to their fear, entered their boat and brought them safely onward.

Protect us from becoming familiar with the miracles while remaining blind to their meaning.

Soften every hardened heart.

Strengthen every wavering believer.

Comfort those who are rowing against a contrary wind.

Help us remember that Christ's apparent absence is not ignorance and His delay is not indifference.

Teach us to recognize His presence, trust His Word and worship Him for who He is.

For anyone who called upon Jesus today, give assurance through the promises of Scripture and lead that person into faithful Christian fellowship.

May we leave this place saying with the disciples, "Of a truth thou art the Son of God."

In Jesus' name we pray.

Amen.

Before we say goodbye, I want to encourage you to carry this conversation into the coming week.

Read Matthew 14, Mark 6 and John 6 together.

Then read Job 9, Psalm 77, Psalm 107 and Isaiah 43.

Do not read them merely looking for another interesting detail.

Ask what each passage reveals about the identity of Jesus.

Talk about it with your family or a friend.

If you are facing a contrary wind, please do not face it alone.

I am available after the service and throughout the week if you need prayer, counsel or simply someone willing to listen.

Join us in the Reason Together Cafe for coffee and conversation.

There are free refills on both.

The disciples began that night believing Jesus was somewhere far away.

They ended the night worshipping Him in their boat.

They began with a contrary wind.

They ended with a confession.

"Of a truth thou art the Son of God."

Thank you for being with us today.

Aloha Nui Loa.

COMMENTARY ORIENTATION

The walking on the water appears in Matthew 14:22-33, Mark 6:45-52 and John 6:15-21. Each evangelist tells the same event with a distinct emphasis. Matthew includes Peter and closes with worship and the confession that Jesus is the Son of God. Mark emphasizes Jesus seeing the disciples, His intention to pass by them and their failure to understand the loaves. John places the event beside the attempted coronation after the feeding, repeats Jesus' self-identifying words and records the boat's arrival at its destination.

Read together, the accounts answer more than the practical question of how the disciples survived a difficult crossing. They answer the Christological question, "Who is Jesus?" The scene draws upon Old Testament descriptions of the Lord who treads the waves, makes His path through the sea, passes before His servants, tells His people not to fear and brings distressed sailors to their desired haven.

CENTRAL COMMENTARY CLAIM | Jesus did not walk upon the sea merely to demonstrate that He could perform an astonishing miracle. He came to reveal that the works, presence and saving authority of the God of Israel are present in Him.

The passage should not be described as a direct prediction fulfilled in the narrowest sense. Job 9:8 does not say, "The Messiah will one day walk on Galilee." It says that God alone treads upon the waves. Psalm 77 says that God's way is in the sea. Isaiah 43 joins God's presence through the waters, His command not to fear, His "I am he" and His exclusive saving identity. These passages form a Biblical pattern that the Gospel narrative brings to fulfillment in Jesus.

THE SETTING AFTER THE LOAVES

John 6:14-15: The prophet and the forced crown

After the feeding, the people conclude that Jesus is "that prophet that should come into the world." Their language likely recalls Deuteronomy 18:15 and the promised prophet like Moses. Their conclusion contains truth. Jesus is the promised One. Their response, however, reveals a distorted expectation. John says they intended to take Him by force and make Him a king.

The crowd has received bread in the wilderness and sees in Jesus the possibility of national provision and political power. A ruler who can feed thousands from almost nothing would appear capable of sustaining an army and breaking dependence upon Rome. Yet Jesus will not accept a crown defined by appetite, coercion or national ambition. He withdraws to the mountain alone.

This withdrawal is not a denial of His kingship. It is a refusal to let the crowd define it. Jesus will receive all authority through the Father's will, the cross and the resurrection. He will not become king by popular seizure. The event at sea then reveals what kind of King He truly is. The crowd wants to enthrone a provider of bread. The disciples are about to encounter the Lord whose path is upon the waters.

Matthew 14:22 and Mark 6:45: "Jesus constrained his disciples"

Both Matthew and Mark say Jesus "constrained" the disciples to enter the boat. The verb conveys urgency or compulsion. Jesus does not merely make a casual suggestion. He presses them to leave while He dismisses the multitude.

The text does not explicitly explain why the disciples needed to be sent so firmly. Jesus may have been separating them from the crowd's political enthusiasm. He may have been protecting the timing and shape of His mission. He may simply have been directing the next stage of ministry. Any claim beyond the text should be stated with modesty.

What is certain is that the disciples enter the boat in obedience. This matters when the wind becomes contrary. Their difficulty is not proof that they misunderstood the Lord's direction. They are in the storm because they followed His command.

This corrects a common but harmful assumption. Opposition does not automatically mean that a believer has stepped outside God's will. Scripture contains storms produced by disobedience, such as Jonah's, but it also contains storms encountered in obedience. The disciples' crossing belongs to the second category.

Matthew 14:23 and Mark 6:46: Jesus alone in prayer

After dismissing the crowd, Jesus goes up into the mountain to pray. The Son who exercises divine authority also lives in communion with the Father. The Gospel writers do not treat prayer and deity as contradictions. The eternal Son has entered genuine human life and carries out His mission in loving dependence upon the Father.

The mountain separates Jesus from the noise of the crowd. He has refused an imposed crown and turns toward the Father. This provides a quiet contrast between human acclaim and divine communion. The crowd would elevate Him according to its wishes. Jesus seeks the Father's will.

The prayer also frames what follows. Jesus does not come to the disciples as a performer returning to an audience. He comes from the place of prayer. His solitude does not make Him unaware of their suffering. Mark will soon state that He sees them toiling.

THE DISCIPLES IN THE CONTRARY WIND

Matthew 14:24: "Tossed with waves"

Matthew says the boat was in the midst of the sea, "tossed with waves: for the wind was contrary." The word translated "tossed" can carry the sense of being tormented or battered. The boat is not simply moving more slowly than expected. It is under repeated assault from the waves.

The wind is "contrary" because it opposes the direction of travel. The disciples are experienced fishermen, but experience cannot make the wind cooperate. Their skill is real and should not be mocked. It is simply insufficient for the conditions.

The passage does not denounce effort. Mark says they are rowing. The disciples do what sailors should do. The eventual coming of Christ does not mean their labor was useless or faithless. Scripture often places responsible human action under divine sovereignty. They row because it is their task. Jesus comes because their task cannot finally save them.

Mark 6:47-48: "He saw them toiling in rowing"

Mark creates a strong visual separation. The boat is in the midst of the sea and Jesus is alone on the land. The disciples cannot see Him, but He sees them. They experience distance. He experiences no loss of awareness.

The phrase "toiling in rowing" describes painful struggle. The underlying term can be used for torment or severe distress. The men have made progress, but every stroke meets resistance. Their bodies are exhausted and the night is advanced.

The pastoral value of the verse lies in its sequence: He saw them before they saw Him. Their inability to perceive Christ does not imply Christ's inability to perceive them. They do not know what He is about to do, but their condition is already before Him.

This truth must not be turned into a promise that help will always arrive at the moment we prefer. Jesus sees them for hours before He comes in the fourth watch. His knowledge is immediate. His intervention follows His wisdom.

John 6:17-18: Darkness and absence

John says, "it was now dark, and Jesus was not come to them." The statement communicates more than the time of day. Darkness, a rising sea and the apparent absence of Jesus combine to create the disciples' experience.

John does not say Jesus had forgotten them. He records how the situation appeared from inside the boat. Their knowledge is limited to what they can see: darkness, wind, water and no visible Christ.

This is a recurring human problem. We often interpret reality by the contents of the boat. If we cannot see the Lord's action, we assume no action exists. Mark corrects the assumption by revealing what the disciples cannot know: Jesus sees them.

John 6:19: Twenty-five or thirty furlongs

John gives a measured distance. The disciples have rowed about twenty-five or thirty furlongs, which places them roughly three to four miles into the crossing. This detail grounds the account. The figure approaching them is not a person walking on a shoreline that frightened men have misperceived.

The distance also magnifies the exhaustion. They have labored far enough to be well into the lake yet remain under the opposing wind. Progress has not produced safety.

THE FOURTH WATCH

Matthew 14:25 and Mark 6:48

The fourth watch of the night was approximately 3:00 to 6:00 in the morning under the Roman division of the night. Jesus comes after the disciples have struggled for a prolonged period.

The delay should be allowed to retain its force. The text does not say that every hardship ends quickly when people obey. The disciples are obedient, watched by Christ and still required to row through most of the night.

Divine delay is not divine neglect. Jesus' timing exposes the inability of the disciples, prepares them to recognize the character of His coming and prevents the rescue from being confused with their own strength.

The fourth watch also creates the proper atmosphere for revelation. It is dark, the men are tired, the water is disturbed and their ordinary resources have reached their limits. Into that scene Jesus comes by a road no human being can make.

JESUS WALKING UPON THE SEA

Job 9:8 as the primary background

Job declares of God, "Which alone spreadeth out the heavens, and treadeth upon the waves of the sea." The subject is the Lord and the action is presented as uniquely divine. The verse stands within a description of the Creator who governs heaven and earth, performs wonders and cannot be summoned or controlled by man.

When Matthew, Mark and John say Jesus walks upon the sea, the action should be heard within this Biblical world. The Gospels are not merely telling the reader that Jesus possesses unusual power. They are showing Him doing what Scripture says God alone does.

The word "alone" raises an obvious question because Matthew also records Peter walking briefly. Peter, however, does not possess an independent ability. He requests Christ's command, moves only after Christ says "Come," begins to sink and requires Christ's hand. Jesus stands upon the water before Peter asks and remains Lord of the scene. Peter participates by delegated authority. Jesus is the source.

Psalm 77:19: The sea as God's road

Psalm 77 says, "Thy way is in the sea, and thy path in the great waters, and thy footsteps are not known." The psalm remembers the Exodus and describes the waters responding to the presence of God. The Lord makes a path where human beings see only danger.

This illuminates the Gospel language. The sea is not an obstacle Jesus happens to overcome. It is His way. The disciples thought the water separated them from Jesus. They discover that the water is the road by which He comes.

Psalm 77 also says God's footsteps are not known. The emphasis is not upon explaining the physical mechanism. The Gospels give no theory of surface tension, buoyancy or hidden support. They call the reader to recognize the One whose path cannot be traced by ordinary means.

Isaiah 43:16: "A way in the sea"

Isaiah identifies the Lord as the One "which maketh a way in the sea, and a path in the mighty waters." In the same chapter God promises, "When thou passest through the waters, I will be with thee." The promise is not that the redeemed will never encounter waters. It is that the Lord will be present with them.

Jesus embodies this divine presence. He does not remain on the mountain and send instructions across the lake. He comes into the place of danger. The waters that threaten the disciples carry the feet of their Savior.

COMMENTARY INSIGHT | The miracle is not only power over the sea. It is presence upon the sea. The Lord is not kept at a distance by the thing His people fear.

"HE WOULD HAVE PASSED BY THEM"

Mark 6:48 and an apparent difficulty

Mark says Jesus "would have passed by them." Read without Biblical background, the phrase can sound as though Jesus intended to ignore exhausted men and continue to the other shore. That

interpretation conflicts with the surrounding verse. Mark has just said Jesus sees them toiling. Jesus then speaks to them, enters the boat and ends their fear.

The phrase should be read as revelation language. In the Old Testament, the Lord passes by His servants when He unveils His glory and proclaims His identity.

Exodus 33-34: The Lord passes before Moses

Moses asks to see God's glory. The Lord promises to make His goodness pass before Moses and to proclaim the name of the Lord. Moses is placed in the cleft of the rock while the glory passes by. In Exodus 34 the Lord descends, passes before Moses and proclaims His covenant name and character. Moses bows and worships.

The pattern contains divine approach, passing by, proclamation and worship. Mark's account contains the same theological movement. Jesus approaches in a divine manner, intends to pass by, speaks identifying words and produces astonishment. Matthew completes the pattern explicitly with worship.

1 Kings 19: The Lord passes before Elijah

At Horeb the word of the Lord tells Elijah to stand before the Lord, "And, behold, the LORD passed by." The expression again belongs to a manifestation of divine presence.

Mark's phrase therefore does not suggest neglect. Jesus is making Himself known. The sea crossing is a theophany, an appearance in which divine identity is disclosed through action and word.

The wording also recalls Job 9:11: "Lo, he goeth by me, and I see him not: he passeth on also, but I perceive him not." Job 9 combines God treading the waves and passing by without being perceived. Mark combines Jesus walking on the sea, passing by and being initially misidentified. The convergence is difficult to dismiss as accidental.

THE DISCIPLES' FEAR

Matthew 14:26 and Mark 6:49-50

When the disciples see Jesus, they suppose He is a spirit and cry out. The Greek word can describe a phantom or ghostlike apparition. The Gospel writers report the disciples' interpretation without endorsing it.

Their fear is understandable. A human figure upon the sea in the hours before dawn does not fit any ordinary category. They attempt to explain what they see with the categories available to them and arrive at the wrong conclusion.

The episode reveals that fear does more than magnify dangers. Fear can misidentify help. The disciples are terrified by the very One who has come to save them. They see Christ but name Him incorrectly.

This feature also resists the suggestion that the disciples created a comforting vision because they expected Jesus. Their initial response is not recognition, peace or wish fulfillment. It is terror. The sight confronts rather than confirms their expectations.

"They all saw him"

Mark specifically states that they all saw Him. The experience is collective. Jesus speaks, approaches and enters the boat. Matthew adds Peter's physical interaction and rescue. The narrative is not structured like the private subjective experience of one exhausted disciple.

"BE OF GOOD CHEER: IT IS I; BE NOT AFRAID"**The order of Jesus' words**

Jesus speaks immediately. He gives courage, identifies Himself and forbids fear. The order is pastorally significant. He does not first explain the wind. He reveals His identity.

"Be of good cheer" calls the disciples out of terror. "It is I" tells them why courage is possible. "Be not afraid" applies His presence to their immediate condition.

The deepest answer to their fear is not yet calm water. The wind does not cease until Jesus enters the boat. Peace begins with recognition of the One who is near.

Ego eimi: ordinary identification and divine resonance

The Greek words ego eimi can mean the ordinary "It is I." That translation should not be discarded. Jesus truly assures them that the figure is not a spirit but their Lord.

Yet the context gives the phrase more weight than ordinary identification. Isaiah repeatedly uses "I am he" in declarations of God's unique identity. Isaiah 43 joins "I am he" with "Fear not," passage through waters, the claim that no savior exists beside the Lord and the making of a way in the sea.

The argument for divine revelation does not depend on treating every occurrence of ego eimi as a quotation of Exodus 3:14. It depends upon hearing the phrase on the lips of the One who is performing the Lord's works within a scene saturated by the Lord's language.

Jesus' words reassure and reveal at the same time. "It is I" means, "You are not seeing a phantom. I am Jesus." In the full Biblical context it also means, "The One who rules the waters and saves from the deep has come near."

Isaiah 43 and the command not to fear

Isaiah 43 begins, "Fear not: for I have redeemed thee, I have called thee by thy name; thou art mine." It continues, "When thou passest through the waters, I will be with thee." Later the Lord says, "that ye may know and believe me, and understand that I am he" and "beside me there is no saviour."

The Gospel scene brings these elements together. The disciples are upon the waters. Jesus is with them. He tells them not to fear. He says ego eimi. Peter cries, "Lord, save me," and Jesus performs the saving act.

The cumulative correspondence is stronger than any isolated word study. Isaiah supplies the categories. Jesus occupies them.

PETER COMES TO JESUS**Matthew 14:28: "If it be thou"**

Peter answers, "Lord, if it be thou, bid me come unto thee on the water." The expression "if it be thou" need not indicate skeptical doubt. It can carry the sense, "Since it is You" or "If this is truly You as You say, command me."

Peter does not presume that sincerity or courage will support him. He asks for Christ's word. The request is unusual, but its foundation is correct: only the command of Jesus can authorize what Jesus is doing.

Peter also wants to come "unto thee." His destination is not the experience of water walking. It is Christ. This purpose should govern the application.

Matthew 14:29: "Come"

Jesus answers with one word. Peter leaves the boat and walks upon the water toward Jesus. Matthew plainly presents this as a miracle. Peter does not find a hidden ridge. He participates in the authority of Christ through the command of Christ.

This participation does not reduce the uniqueness of Jesus. Peter's walk is derivative. He cannot begin without Christ's word, continue apart from Christ's sustaining authority or recover without Christ's hand.

The verse also clarifies the nature of faith. Faith is not confidence that a risky act will succeed because it is brave. Faith answers the actual word of the Lord. The command "Come" supports Peter. No general command has been given for Christians to attempt spectacular acts in order to prove faith.

Matthew 14:30: The wind and the sinking disciple

Peter sees the wind as "boisterous" and becomes afraid. Strictly speaking, wind itself cannot be seen. Peter sees its effects in waves, spray and the instability around him. The conditions that had been present before he left the boat now dominate his attention.

Matthew does not say Peter ceases to believe everything about Jesus. His faith becomes divided and unstable. He has enough faith to cry to the right Person yet too little confidence to remain steady upon the word already given.

Peter begins to sink. The wording suggests a process, giving him time for the shortest prayer in the passage: "Lord, save me." The prayer contains no explanation, promise or argument. Its sufficiency lies in the Savior to whom it is directed.

Matthew 14:31: The immediate hand of Christ

"And immediately Jesus stretched forth his hand, and caught him." The immediacy belongs to rescue. Jesus does not require Peter to demonstrate stronger faith before being grasped. Correction follows salvation.

The order is important for pastoral care. Christ catches Peter, then says, "O thou of little faith, wherefore didst thou doubt?" The rebuke is real, but it comes from the One whose hand already holds the disciple.

The word translated "doubt" can convey wavering or being divided. Peter is caught between Christ's command and the visible threat. His problem is not that he noticed the wind. His problem is that the wind became a more controlling reality than the word and presence of Jesus.

Peter should not be mocked. He alone asked to come and he actually walked. Neither should he become the hero. His courage, weakness, prayer and rescue all direct attention to Christ.

JESUS ENTERS THE BOAT

Matthew 14:32 and Mark 6:51: The wind ceased

When Jesus and Peter enter the boat, the wind ceases. Mark reports the same result when Jesus enters. The change is connected to His presence and authority.

This event echoes Psalm 107, where distressed sailors cry to the Lord, the Lord makes the storm a calm and brings them to their desired haven. Psalm 89:9 likewise says of the Lord, "Thou rulest the raging of the sea: when the waves thereof arise, thou stillest them."

The Gospel writers do not merely compare Jesus to a prophet who prays and then watches God calm the wind. Jesus enters and the wind ceases. The narrative places the Lord's authority in Him.

The passage should not be universalized into a guarantee that every storm ends immediately when Jesus is welcomed. The Gospels record a sign with a particular revelatory purpose. The abiding comfort is not a timetable for relief. It is the identity of the One present with His people.

John 6:21: The desired destination

John says the disciples willingly receive Jesus into the ship and "immediately the ship was at the land whither they went." The statement may indicate a miraculous arrival or the rapid completion of the crossing. John does not explain the mechanism and the commentary should not claim more certainty than the text provides.

The theological emphasis is clear. The crossing that had become almost impossible reaches its intended end when Jesus is received. This again resembles Psalm 107: "so he bringeth them unto their desired haven."

The arrival also completes a new Exodus pattern. Passover is near, bread has been supplied in a wilderness setting, Jesus has gone to a mountain, His people cross the sea and the divine presence brings them through.

MATTHEW'S CLIMAX: WORSHIP

Matthew 14:33: "They worshipped him"

Those in the boat worship Jesus and confess, "Of a truth thou art the Son of God." Matthew does not end with a statement about Peter's bravery. He ends with the response to Jesus' identity.

The Greek word for worship can sometimes describe homage before a human ruler, so the term should not be isolated from the scene. Here the worship follows divine mastery of the sea, salvation from the deep and the cessation of the wind. The confession identifies Jesus as the Son of God. Within Matthew's Gospel the action has clear Christological force.

Faithful servants in Scripture refuse worship that belongs to God. Peter tells Cornelius to stand because he also is a man. Paul and Barnabas reject divine honors. Angels command worshipers to worship God. Jesus receives the worship of the disciples.

Earlier, after Jesus calmed another storm, the disciples asked, "What manner of man is this, that even the winds and the sea obey him!" The walking on the sea moves the answer forward. He is the Son of God.

The confession does not mean the disciples now understand everything that the title will require after the cross and resurrection. Their understanding will continue to grow. Yet the confession is true and appropriate. The sign has moved them from fear to worship.

MARK'S CLIMAX: THE UNUNDERSTOOD LOAVES

Mark 6:51: Amazed beyond measure

Mark says the disciples are "sore amazed in themselves beyond measure, and wondered." Their reaction is intense, but amazement is not the same as understanding. A person can be overwhelmed by an event without reasoning correctly from the event to the identity of Christ.

Mark therefore adds an explanation that initially seems surprising. They are amazed because they did not understand the loaves and their heart was hardened.

Mark 6:52: "They considered not the miracle of the loaves"

The feeding and the water interpret one another. The disciples had distributed the multiplied bread and gathered twelve baskets. They possessed recent evidence of Jesus' Creator-like sufficiency. Yet they had not considered what the sign meant.

Had they understood the loaves, His mastery of the sea would not have been an unrelated category. The One who commands abundance in the wilderness also commands the waters. Both signs reveal more than generosity or power. They reveal identity.

Mark later repeats the bread-and-boat problem in Mark 8. The disciples worry because they have one loaf. Jesus asks whether their heart is still hardened and whether they remember the feedings. The pattern exposes a form of spiritual dullness that can exist beside firsthand experience.

"Their heart was hardened"

Hardened heart language is strong. It does not necessarily place the disciples in the same condition as hostile unbelievers, but it reveals real resistance and dullness. They have facts without comprehension. They handle miraculous bread without reasoning from the gift to the Giver.

This is a warning for readers who possess extensive Biblical knowledge. Nearness to evidence is not identical with perception. A heart may remember details and still fail to recognize the glory those details reveal.

The cure is not fascination with more spectacular signs. It is careful consideration of the signs already given. Mark invites the reader to do what the disciples failed to do: connect the loaves, the sea, the words and the identity of Jesus.

JOHN'S CLIMAX: THE KING WHO BRINGS THEM THROUGH

John's account begins with the rejected forced crown and ends with willing reception. The crowd wants to take Jesus by force. The disciples willingly receive Him into the ship. The contrast is theologically suggestive.

Jesus cannot be seized and made into the king people prefer. He must be received as the King He reveals Himself to be. He rules bread, mountain, sea and destination. His kingship is not established by the crowd's enthusiasm but displayed through His divine authority.

John's wider discourse on the bread of life develops the same correction. The crowd seeks Jesus because it ate and was filled. Jesus calls it beyond the perishing gift to Himself. The sea sign makes the same movement in narrative form. Do not stop at what Jesus provides. Recognize who Jesus is.

THE NEW EXODUS READING

John notes that Passover was near before the feeding. The narrative then presents bread in a wilderness setting, a mountain, a sea crossing, divine self-identification and arrival at the intended shore.

Moses is central to the original Exodus as God's servant. Jesus is greater than Moses. Moses crosses where God opens a path through the water. Jesus walks upon the water as its Lord. Moses receives and communicates the divine name. Jesus speaks *ego eimi* in a setting filled with divine action.

The new Exodus theme does not erase the historical event. It explains its placement within the larger story of redemption. The God who led Israel through the sea has come near in the Son to accomplish the greater deliverance from sin and death.

The theme also connects the sign to the cross. Jesus refuses a crown without suffering. The true Exodus will be accomplished not by popular force but through His death and resurrection. The Lord of the sea is moving toward the hour in which He will pass through death and bring His people into life.

THEOLOGICAL CONCLUSIONS

Jesus shares in the divine identity

The passage contributes to the New Testament's cumulative presentation of the deity of Christ. It does not depend upon one disputed word. It presents a network of divine actions and responses: Jesus treads the waves, makes the sea His path, passes by in revelation, speaks the assuring *ego eimi*, saves the sinking, stills the wind, brings the boat through and receives worship.

At the same time Jesus prays to the Father. The event does not identify Jesus as the Father. It reveals the Son in unique relation to the Father and sharing the divine nature and work.

Creation recognizes its Lord

The sea is not presented as a rival deity that Jesus barely defeats. It is creation under His feet. The wind ceases when He enters. Bread multiplies in His hands. The created order is responsive to the authority of its Lord.

The miracle is therefore not an arbitrary violation of creation. It is the Creator's freedom within His creation. The regular order remains real, which is why the event is recognized as a sign. The One who established the ordinary behavior of water is not imprisoned by it.

Salvation is personal and authoritative

Peter's cry, "Lord, save me," receives an immediate hand. The rescue is both compassionate and sovereign. Jesus is close enough to grasp, strong enough to hold and authoritative enough to correct.

This moment provides a small picture of salvation without reducing salvation to physical rescue. The sinner's hope does not rest in the elegance of the prayer or the strength of the one sinking. It rests in the Savior.

Worship is the proper destination of evidence

The narrative supplies historical detail, Old Testament resonance and theological argument. Yet its end is not merely intellectual agreement. Those in the boat worship.

Reason Together Church rightly values questions and evidence. This passage reminds us that reasoning reaches its proper purpose when truth about Christ leads to trust, allegiance and worship.

PASTORAL COMMENTARY

Obedience may encounter resistance

The disciples' hardship occurs after Jesus sends them. Believers should not interpret every contrary wind as evidence of wrong direction. Discernment remains necessary, but difficulty alone cannot decide the question.

Some resistance exposes sin and requires repentance. Other resistance forms endurance, reveals weakness and becomes the setting in which Christ is more clearly known. The text belongs to the latter pattern.

Christ sees before He is seen

The disciples cannot locate Jesus in the darkness. Mark lets the reader know that Jesus has already located them. This does not answer every question about delayed deliverance, but it refuses the conclusion that invisibility means indifference.

The Christian may truthfully say, "I cannot see what Christ is doing," without falsely concluding, "Christ cannot see me."

Fear can give the wrong name to grace

The disciples call Jesus a spirit. They are not afraid only because of the wind. They are afraid of His approach. The response of Jesus is to identify Himself.

Pastoral care should recognize that exhausted people may initially misread help. Christ is patient enough to speak into confusion. He does not abandon the boat because frightened disciples named Him wrongly.

Faith depends upon Christ's word

Peter's experience should not be used to sanctify impulsive risk. He does not step out until Christ says "Come." Faith is not the power of positive expectation. It is reliance upon the Lord who has spoken.

The difference protects people from manipulative preaching. Not every personal ambition is a boat from which God commands us to step. The relevant question is not, "What daring act do I want to attempt?" It is, "What has Christ actually commanded?"

Little faith still knows where to cry

Peter wavers and sinks, but his prayer is directed to Jesus. Little faith is rightly corrected, yet the passage shows that imperfect faith may still reach the perfect Savior.

Christ's hand precedes the rebuke. This order does not weaken the correction. It locates correction within grace.

Christ is more valuable than calm conditions

The disciples receive calm, but the climax is worship. If the sermon leaves hearers wanting a life without wind more than the Lord in the boat, it has missed the narrative's destination.

Christ does not promise that every sea will immediately become still. He reveals Himself as Lord in every sea. The Christian hope is not control of circumstances but belonging to Christ.

INTERPRETIVE CAUTIONS**Do not call every Old Testament connection a direct prediction**

Job 9, Psalm 77 and Isaiah 43 provide theological patterns and identity markers. Their fulfillment in Jesus is real, but precision about genre strengthens rather than weakens the argument.

Do not make ego eimi carry the case alone

The phrase can serve ordinary self-identification. Its deeper significance arises from Jesus' action, the Old Testament setting, the command not to fear, the saving work and the worship that follows.

Do not make Peter the center

Peter's episode is valuable for discipleship, but Jesus is the revelation. The sermon should spend more energy answering who walks upon the sea than urging hearers to leave boats.

Do not promise immediate relief from every trial

The wind ceases in this sign. Other Biblical saints endure suffering without temporal escape. Preach the certainty of Christ's identity and presence, not a formula for controlling outcomes.

Do not treat "pass by" as indifference

The surrounding context and Old Testament background point toward revelation. Jesus sees, approaches, speaks, enters and saves.

Do not insist that John describes teleportation

The immediate arrival may be miraculous or may summarize the swift completion of the journey. The central point is that Jesus brings the crossing to its intended end.

COMMENTARY SUMMARY

The event begins with a false crown and ends with true worship. Jesus refuses to become the crowd's useful king and reveals Himself as the divine King. He sends His disciples into a crossing they cannot master, sees them while they cannot see Him and comes upon the sea during the fourth watch.

His approach gathers the Old Testament witness. Job says God alone treads the waves. Psalm 77 says God's path is in the sea. Isaiah 43 joins the Lord's presence through waters, the command not to fear, "I am he," exclusive salvation and a way in the sea. Exodus and Kings portray the Lord passing before His servants in revelation. Psalm 107 portrays the Lord calming distressed sailors and bringing them to their desired haven.

Jesus walks within that divine pattern. He says, "It is I; be not afraid." He permits Peter to participate by delegated authority, catches him when he sinks, enters the boat, ends the wind and brings the crossing to completion.

Matthew closes with worship and the confession, "Of a truth thou art the Son of God." Mark warns that astonishment without understanding is possible because the disciples had not considered the loaves. John contrasts the crowd's attempt to seize Jesus with the disciples' willing reception of Him.

FINAL COMMENTARY STATEMENT | The water beneath Jesus' feet is a Biblical declaration. The God whose path is in the sea has come near in the Son, and the only adequate response is to receive Him, trust Him and worship Him.