

Walking On Water

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Preacher: Pastor Cal Morrison

- [0 : 0 0] Well, this morning we're continuing in John's Gospel, looking at the signs in John's Gospel, and I trust that if you were here last week, you were blessed by Craig Dyer.
- John chapter 6, let me pray. God, our Heavenly Father, we thank you so much that we can gather here in your name. We thank you that you have brought us together in Christ.
- Wherever we come from, whatever our situation, whatever our background, it is no accident that we are here. We thank you that you are at work always.
- We thank you for the work of Jesus Christ, in which we solely rely on. And we thank you for the faith that you have given us in Christ. We thank you that you have given us your word, and your word is sure that even the world will pass away before your word does.
- Your word will never fail and will never pass away. And so we thank you that we have opportunity to come together and to speak truth and life to one another in song and prayer and preaching and conversations.
- [1 : 3 0] Let us do so with love and to your glory. We pray in Jesus' name. Amen. Amen. Well, John chapter 6, verses 16 to 21.
- When evening came, his disciples went down to the sea, got into a boat, and started across the sea to Capernaum. It was now dark, and Jesus had not yet come to them.
- The sea became rough because of a strong wind and was blowing. When they had rowed about three or four miles, they saw Jesus walking on the sea and coming near the boat.
- They were frightened. But he said to them, It is I. Do not be afraid. Then they were glad to take him into the boat, and immediately the boat was at the land to which they were going.
- Amen. Well, if this works, I want to play a quick game of word association. For instance, if I was to say chocolate, you might say cake.
- [2 : 4 4] If I were to say wood, you might say tree. If I was to say clock, you might say time. So, please... Let me see if this works. Please feel free to shout out whatever comes to your mind if you're that way inclined to shout out.
- Well, say a word. Shout out something in association. Sorry? No. Let me see.
- Let me see. Right.
- Window. Door. Right. Song. Letter. Car.
- Car. Food. What did you say? Right. I thought you said good. Boat.
- [3 : 5 4] Space. I like it. Power. So, yeah, it was a bit of fun.
- Bit of fun. I really wanted to see what came to mind with the word power. What comes to mind? What do you think of? There are many areas in life that people vie for power.
- People fight for power. For instance, who has the most power? Who has more power than the other?
- From two people fighting to all-out wars between nations over power. In fact, often you will have countries.

You'll probably think of one when I mention this, but I won't say it. But countries that parade their nuclear missiles down the public street in tanks just to show power.

[4 : 50] Just to show power. Perhaps prisons are a place where people often want to be seen as powerful. You don't want to be the one that is being oppressed or abused.

So you want to show power. You want to show power to other people so that people won't bother you. Yet others want to use their power to abuse others. There's a story.

This is a true story. You might have heard of this. You probably wouldn't have. You might have heard of this. A true story of a 28-year-old guy who was put in a cell, put in a prison cell, after being arrested.

And after being placed into the cell, the officer turned around, walked out, slamming the door shut behind him. But what he didn't realize was the guy that was arrested also jumped up and went to grab the door to stop himself being shut in.

And he put his hand between the door and the doorway. And what do you think was more powerful, the prison cell door or his fingers? Sad story.

[6 : 01] But three fingers were lost in that. See, even if you're the hardest man in prison, you won't beat a metal cell door. How do we measure power?

See, there are two things. And I'm thankful for the songs that you chose this morning. And that one there was just talking about power. The two main things that I want to draw out of this text is power and presence.

More specifically, the power and the presence of Jesus. So I was thinking about power just to get us understanding about the power and presence of Jesus.

So for instance, a fridge. Your average fridge will use about 35 watts per hour of power. And it's on all the time.

The light bulb, use about 60 watts, depending on what kind of bulb you've got. A TV will use about 145, depending on how big it is or how small it is.

[7 : 01] What about a washing machine? Quite expensive. Yeah, 500 watts per hour. A kettle. Yeah, a kettle is 1,200 watts per hour.

But you've only got it on for a couple of minutes, so don't worry. Something that has become quite popular in this country, which is bizarre when you think about Scotland, but I think it's probably because of lockdown.

Spending a year on lockdown. Something that's become quite popular. Hot tubs. Hot tubs. But hot tubs use between 3,000 and 7,000 watts per hour.

So you want to get out there before you turn into a prune and before you lose all your money and energy. But what about this? How much power does the UK use in a year?

In a whole year, how much power does the UK use? Well, 2,249 trillion watts of power used in a year.

[8 : 02] That's a massive number. For instance, a lightning bolt will produce about 1 billion watts from a lightning bolt. Or the Nagasaki bomb, 20 billion watts.

But the UK in one year uses 2,249 trillion watts of power. That's a lot of power. That's like 2 million lightning strikes.

Or 100,000 nuclear bombs. That's the energy that we use in a year as a nation. So what about the sun? How much power does the sun, how much energy does the sun, how many watts does the sun produce?

Well, I don't know if you've heard of this number, but 384.6 septillion watts. And if you can see underneath, that's just a lot of zeros.

That's all you need to know is a lot of zeros. It's a number that's pretty much too big to understand. In fact, in relation to how much power the UK uses in a year, the sun uses about 171 billion times that.

[9 : 15] 171 billion times more energy than the UK uses in a year. But here's the astounding thing. 171 billion times more energy is produced by the sun in just one second.

One second, that's what the sun is producing. Now I know that sounds like an advert for solar power. Get your panels ordered today. It's a lot of power.

When you're thinking about power, that is powerful. But what's that got to do with this passage? What's this kind of power got to do with Jesus? You see, not only is this the briefest account of Jesus walking in water in John's gospel, this is also a debated sign.

This is debated whether it's a sign or not. Not everyone agrees on how many signs there are in John, and not everyone agrees on the list. Most of the signs are unanimous. The ones we've been in so far, everyone agrees.

But this one is debated. And just very briefly, I'll tell you why I think it's a legitimate sign. See, John writes at the end, in chapter 20, that Jesus did many other signs in the presence of the disciples.

[10 : 32] That's how he writes it. The presence of the disciples, which are not written in this book. But these are written so that you may believe that Jesus is the Christ, the Son of God.

And that by believing you may have life in his name. So in the presence of his disciples, so that you may believe that Jesus is the Christ, the Son of God.

And that by believing you will have life in his name. Whose name do you have life in? See, sometimes John will show how other people respond to signs.

But he is primarily including signs done in the presence of the disciples. Because they're the witnesses. Signs that led the disciples to believe who Jesus is.

And signs that ought to lead us, the readers, to believe also. And so Jesus walking on the sea, in the presence of his disciples, I think was certainly something of an astounding sign, telling them about who Jesus was.

[11 : 37] So all this talk of power is to show that when we begin to believe who Jesus really is, when we begin to learn who Jesus really is, we begin to learn the kind of power that we've been talking about in the Son.

And the UK uses that kind of power. There's nothing to Jesus. Nothing. There's nothing more powerful than Jesus. Nothing. Not just no one more powerful.

No other person, but no other thing. No animal. No machine. No electricity. No lightning bolt. No storm. No sun. No law of physics or nature.

That is not subject to Jesus. There's nothing more powerful than Jesus. There's nothing so powerful that it is not subject to Jesus.

See, I like that in the first song. Lord over everything. Everything. Everything's subject to Jesus. Even the laws of physics. Even the sun.

[12 : 40] The universe. So at the start of John's gospel, and this might sound like a leap to say this about Jesus, but at the start of John's gospel, he tells us who Jesus really is. He tells us that Jesus is the creator of all things.

You see, the sun releases enough power in one second to power the world for millions and billions of years. But that's nothing to Jesus. Because he created the sun.

He has the power to create the sun. Of course we're going to get life in his name. The gospel of John is revealing this truth about Jesus.

There's nothing. There's nothing too big in life. There's nothing too hard. Nothing too powerful. Nothing too impossible. That Jesus cannot deal with.

Remember, there's no wine left. Well, that's no problem. The creator of all things can produce wine out of water. A boy is dying, and Jesus is nowhere near him. That's no problem.

[13 : 43] The creator who created him, who created the world with his words, can just say that the boy will be healed, and he is. Or a man has been incurable for 38 years.

No problem. The creator who made him can remake him. Five thousand men, not to mention women and children, out in the country without any food.

No problem. The creator, the very God who rained down manna in the desert for Moses, can turn five loaves and two fish into more food than thousands can handle.

What about this? The disciples. The disciples out in the stormy sea and Jesus on the shore. No problem.

The one who made the sea can walk on it if he wants. There's nothing too big. Nothing too crazy. Nothing too scary. Nothing too powerful. Nothing too impossible for Jesus.

[14 : 44] In our passage, John. John, who was an eyewitness, he was there. He's seen it. He's not making things up. He's not telling people a lie.

He's telling people what he's seen. He's seen Jesus walking on the sea in the midst of a storm when they were far away from him. They were rowing for miles, and yet they see something like a figure walking on the sea.

They know that Jesus was left on the shore, but now they're terrified. Then Jesus climbs into the boat. One minute he's far away in the land, the next minute he's in the boat. They didn't pull into a pier.

They were out at sea. Jesus was on the land. Then he walked on the sea, climbed into the boat. Either John's lying, or he's simply telling us what he saw. And Matthew and Mark tell of this too.

All the disciples must be lying, or they're just reporting what they saw. They're not all having the same hallucination. See, John is building this case. He's building a case about who Jesus is by showing that nothing is too big, nothing is too crazy, nothing too powerful or impossible for Jesus.

[15 : 55] Things that are completely impossible for any other human is nothing to Jesus. And this is important. This is important when it comes to the impossible issues that we face.

And boy, do we face impossible issues. What impossible issues can you think of? When it comes to impossible issues, what about the issue of sin?

What about the problem of sin? See, humans have never been able to solve that problem. Never. No amount of technology. No amount of charity or ethics.

No amount of teaching or education. No effort to make utopia. No human effort or advancement in medicine. Has ever been able to remove a single bit of sin from any single human.

Every human person still has this inherent sinfulness that leads to another impossible problem for us. The problem of death. We can't solve that problem.

[17 : 00] Again, no advancement in medicine or technology has ever given us eternal life. And just as well, remember in Genesis when Adam and Eve were sent out of the garden after sinning.

They were prevented access from the tree of life. Why were they prevented access from the tree of life? Can you imagine the consequences of sinners living forever?

Imagine eternally perpetuating sin. It would be eternally devastating. Is that not what hell is? And then you have to deal with the problem of judgment.

That sin has made humanity hellish beasts, haters, destroyers and rebels against God. And as such we owe God a great debt. Too great to bear.

The punishment is too great. It is impossible for us to escape. Even Peter. Jesus' friend, apostle, disciple.

[18 : 05] Peter seeing how impossible these problems are. Ask Jesus. Who then can be saved? Who can be saved? And notice how John.

John doesn't mention Peter in this account. Did Peter not also walk on the water? Well, only for a step or two before he realized the point of it all. See, Jesus answered.

What is impossible for man is possible for God. And that's what we see in the Gospel of John. See, that Jesus is God.

And so what is impossible for man is possible for Jesus. How else can Jesus do the impossible? See, though he is man, he is the Son of God.

And that's what we need to know. No one else will rescue us in the end. No one else can. Everyone ends up in the grave. But Jesus is the one who came out of the grave. Because he was too powerful for the grave to hold on to him.

[19 : 05] The only reason he went to the grave in the first place was to pay our ransom. See, Jesus is the only one with the power to do what needs to be done to save us of our impossible situation.

And that's the power of Jesus. Now let's look at the presence of Jesus. You see, what we learn from this is that Jesus is the one who shows up in the midst of our mess.

The disciples are rowing hard against the wind. They are in the midst of a storm. I remember the last time I was hill walking. We left at 4am because we wanted to see the sunrise from the top.

I thought that would be a good idea. How silly. Let's leave at 4am so that we can see the sunrise. We left so early that when we pulled into McDonald's for a breakfast, they were still serving the main meals from the night before.

But I just got a Big Mac. Anyway, we wanted to climb this mountain. It was just a small mountain. It was just Ben Ann. We wanted to climb this mountain, take a picture of the sunrise from the top. We climbed it in the dark.

[20 : 17] We got to the top before the sunrise. We set up our cameras. But it was as if the sun didn't rise. The rain and mist and clouds got a little bit stronger.

And it just seemed like the clouds around us just got a little bit lighter. Just a fraction lighter. I'm like, oh, the sun must have rose. Because it was just a little bit lighter.

The storm was battering us. Wind and rain. Couldn't get pictures. Getting battered and flung around. You see, Jesus. Jesus can stop a storm.

He's been there before. He's done it. When we're in situations where we feel like we're getting battered. We're getting flung around by the storm. When we feel like we're rowing hard against the wind. And that things are just coming up against us.

That's what the disciples were like here. See, Jesus could stop these things. And I'm sure every one of us have experienced things like that in life. Jesus could stop them.

[21 : 18] But that isn't always what he does. It doesn't always stop them. Just heard about what Trevor's been through. In this moment, the disciples.

The very disciples. Chosen disciples of the Lord Jesus. Are in a storm. On their own. In a boat.

In a stormy sea. Rowing hard against the wind. In waves. And Jesus is on the shore. He could stop it if he wants. But he doesn't. He could make it easier for them.

To row. But he doesn't. He could make it plain sailing for us. But he doesn't always do that. What he does instead is he comes to them.

He comes right into their storm. Right into their situation. And meets them right there. He meets them where and when they did not expect it.

[22 : 17] And that's what we need to learn. He's not always going to stop the storm. But he can meet us right there and then. Right where we don't expect him. He comes into it.

You see, even if Jesus had a boat. Rowing himself against 12 disciples. Rowing. He wouldn't catch up with them. Or if he could swim. A person would drown in those conditions.

What we see here is. The disciples are unreachable. He can't reach them. A normal human cannot reach them. Mountain rescue.

Coast guard cannot reach them. Not only does this tell us that Jesus has the power to do the impossible. But it also tells us that he's willing to do the impossible. Precisely to be present with those who are otherwise completely out of reach.

The situation the disciples are in. They're completely out of reach. Is that not what the incarnation is about itself? That God the Son does the impossible. To be present with those who are otherwise completely out of reach.

[23 : 22] To rescue those who are otherwise lost. And unable to rescue themselves. And Jesus doesn't just do it for the sake of it. You see, there were a crowd of thousands just before this.

And they were trying to make him king by force. When he fed the 5,000, they wanted to take him and make him king. But that wasn't the plan. And that's why Jesus sent the disciples away.

He didn't want them to be influenced by this crowd. There's a problem. Thousands want to make him king by force. And Jesus needs to get his disciples away from them. So he sends them out to sea on a boat.

The next problem, deal with the crowd. And we're talking thousands of people wanting to take him by force. Make him king. Yet that's not too big a problem for Jesus.

He deals with the crowd. The next problem, uh-oh, the boat's gone. He's on the shore. How can he get to his disciples? Again, it's just not a problem for Jesus.

[24 : 27] It's not too big for Jesus to deal with. And he comes walking on the sea. It's no coincidence the disciples are in a storm when he comes to them. You see, Jesus doesn't use his power frivolously.

When he comes to them in such a way, he does it when it's absolutely impossible. You see, they wouldn't have been out of reach if it was calm.

They probably would have picked him up. But because of the storm, they're totally out of reach. Do we ever feel like we're in situations where we are out of reach?

A situation that we're too far gone. A situation where we just feel stuck. We cannot get out of it ourselves.

Whether it's health. Whether it's poverty or crime or sin. Sin is a problem we can't get out of ourselves. Out of reach. Too far gone.

[25 : 25] Sinking in the midst of a storm without any hope of rescue. Jesus not only has the power to change things. He is the one willing to come into a situation.

And more specifically, he's often the only one who can. Certainly when it comes to sin and death, he's the only one who can. Sometimes people might be able to support you in a situation.

But nobody can take away your sin. Nobody can pull us out of death. Jesus can. He has the power. And he is the one who comes to us in our darkness.

And what about in the end when we die? What about when the paramedics stop doing CPR? What about when there's no resuscitation? What about when there's no saving us?

What about when we are at the point of no return? When we die and we are at the point where no one can come to us. No one can come and help us. Completely out of reach.

[26 : 25] But Jesus can. We're never out of reach of Jesus. If we have put our faith in him, he can come to us when we are out of reach. He can cross the stormy sea of sin and death and rescue us.

When we put our faith in Jesus, he is present with us. He doesn't always calm the storm, but he is with us. And he has the power to pull us out when we sink. The ones he came to were his disciples.

Twelve men in a boat in the middle of a storm. Twelve men who were believing in Jesus. Who were trusting in him even though he wasn't in the boat with them. The five thousand saw the amazing power of Jesus when he made the food.

But they didn't understand who he was. Nor did they put their faith in him. Many of them walked away. But it was the disciples. It was his own people that he came to.

Because they were his. Brothers and sisters, you are his. Are you not? Do you not think he sees you?

[27 : 36] Do you not think that he desires to be present with you? Do you not think that he will come to you and rescue you? This is the same for those who believe. Jesus is not obliged to help everyone and anyone.

Why should he? Why should he help those who reject him? People who have no faith. The truth is often he does anyway. Often he does help people.

Because he is gracious and loving. Did he not come to us when we were yet enemies? But for those who do have faith. For those who are his own.

Did he not promise to always be with us? Promise to rescue us. Promise that even if we die yet shall we live. He will raise us up and give us eternal life.

Because we are his. Do you know the power and presence of Jesus? You see this is the takeaway. If you've got your Bible open, look at this.

[28 : 36] Look at verse 20. This is the takeaway. The very words of Jesus in this very brief account. Firstly, when Jesus says it is I. In the Greek it is more specifically ego am I.

Which means I am. That's the words in Greek. I am. That's what he comes saying. It's the exact same phrase and words in all the I am statements.

Jesus comes on the sea and says I am. You want to know who I am? I am. I am. That's the name of God. It's the identification with the divine name and nature of God.

I am. Look to me. I am. When you have this man. This man Jesus from Nazareth. Who does signs and wonders.

Who speaks with authority and seems to be the Christ. Yet what he does and says are things that only God can do. And now. Now he comes walking on the sea.

[29 : 41] And the first thing he says. I am. There isn't any mistake in what he's getting at. Especially the way that John presents it in his gospel.

And then the second thing that Jesus says. Is a command that is repeated more than any other command in the Bible perhaps. Do not be afraid. And so the point right here being that the only basis that we.

The readers. Believers. Disciples of Jesus. The only basis that we should not be afraid. In any situation or facing any possible.

Impossible problem. Is on the basis that Jesus is. The great I am. He's the self existing one. He's the all powerful. The son of God.

And because of that. That is who we have faith in. And because of that. Do not be afraid. No matter what things look like.

[30 : 40] If you believe. Then you absolutely will have life in his name. He will be with you in any and every situation. No matter how impossible it looks.

Nothing is impossible for him. He has the power to come to you. And the desire to come to you. He has the power to set you free from your sin. He has the power to raise you up from the dead.

Nothing is too impossible for the creator of all things. Nothing is too powerful for him. All things. All things are subject to Jesus.

He is the master and Lord of all. You can trust in the power of Jesus. Because he made all things. And you can trust in the presence of Jesus. When you feel like you are completely out of reach.

He will be there. Do not be afraid when you are trusting in Jesus. Because he is the great I am. Our God and our saviour. Amen.

[31 : 42] Well we are going to sing just now. And it is good to say that we are going to sing. We are going to sing and rejoice. In our great Lord and saviour. Thank you Ruth.