

Untitled (20)

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[0:00] So I speak to you in the name of God, the Father, the Son, and the Holy Spirit. Please be seated. Well, we had a whole lot of water stories in the Gospel and in the Old Testament lesson.

So here's my initial question. Do you really believe Jesus walked on water? It defies science. But human beings are heavy.

Water cannot handle that kind of weight. So did it happen? Yes. Okay, so here's the deal. It says in John, In the beginning was the Word, and the Word was God, and the Word was with God.

Through Him were all things made, and without Him was not anything made that was made. That's Jesus. If He created it, He can, by golly, walk on it.

So I don't think it's a big deal. Jesus, as God in the flesh, had to deal with a whole lot of things we don't have to deal with.

[1:11] One was miracles. There's just something about Him that brought defiance of science.

And so this is one of those times. So we should talk about it today. And we're going to talk about it by looking at that Gospel lesson. Point one, what does it say? What's the content?

Context. Point two, what does it mean? What's the theology or spiritual principle? And point three, what does it mean to me? What's the application?

That's our roadmap. So let's begin. Context and content. Jesus is on a miraculous journey. What last week, Caleb talked about the feeding of 5,000 with a few loaves.

That's kind of a miracle. Today, he's going to hike around on water. That's kind of a miracle. And next week, he's going to heal a lot of people.

[2:13] That's kind of a miracle. The context is, he's showing forth who he is. All right. Now the content.

Four scenes in the content. One, he goes alone to prayer. Two, he walks on water. Three, Peter tries to walk on water.

And four, Jesus stills the winds. Those are the four scenes. So we can look at them step by step. All right.

So Jesus has been on a feeding frenzy with 5,000 people. Have you ever spoken before a group? It can get you exhausted.

Jesus spoke to a large group. They were able to hear him because he must have had a great voice. But he was exhausted. And so he said to the crowds, go home.

[3:17] And he said to the disciples, get in the boat and go to the other side of the lake. And for him, he went up in the hills. And he spent time alone with the Lord God.

He needed to recharge. He needed to recharge. As he still recharges us. So that's the first scene.

He spent a lot of time alone with his father. Now, second scene. It's about 3 in the morning.

He's been praying all night. And it's probably a beautiful moonlit night. And he looks out on the lake. And there are his dumb disciples. They're rowing into the wind.

And they're going nowhere. So, Jesus said, I think I'll join them. So, there he is.

[4:18] Beside the boat. And somebody happens to notice. And there's, you know, there's always a screamer in the crowd. Have you ever noticed that? And what did he scream?

It's a ghost! And everybody stops and looks. And they're afraid. And Jesus responds. This is a famous statement.

In addition to don't be afraid. It says in the scriptures, it is I. But the Greek rendering of the Hebrew or the Aramaic is. It is I.

It's I am is the translation. You know that. I am. That's a word for God. When Moses said, who shall I tell Pharaoh sent me?

I am who I am. Jesus says, don't be afraid. I am. Do you think they got it? Everybody except Peter got it.

[5 : 24] Peter goes, well, if it is you. Command me to come out on the water. Peter had a great big foot that always got stuck in his mouth.

If it's you, see if I can come out and walk on the water with you. And Jesus kind of smiles and says, come on. And so, the next scene, Peter steps out of the boat.

Somebody wrote a sermon called, the miracle can't start till you get out of the boat. And that's kind of characteristic for all of us, isn't it? He got out of the boat.

He took a step. He didn't sink. He took another step. He didn't sink. And he was beginning to think, this is really neat. But then he realized, you know, humans can't walk on water.

And he saw the waves. You know, the wind was howling. He saw the next wave coming at him. And he started to sink. He lost faith.

[6 : 30] He lost courage. And he gave the shortest prayer ever used in Scripture. Help! Save me!

He's sinking. And you know, Jews did not like swimming. It's the way it was in the Old Testament. They were afraid of water. And so, when we get into the New Testament, you could always see that kind of fear about water.

One of the most dangerous places for a Jew was out on the Mediterranean Sea. They didn't do water well. And so, Peter starts to sink and he's afraid.

And what does Jesus do? He takes my hand. He takes his hand and he leads him back to the boat. And then they both get in the boat. And what happens? The wind ceases. And they look at Jesus and they say, Wow!

[7 : 42] You are the Son of God. And then they did something that no Jew would ever do. They worshipped a man. And they worshipped him.

They saw beyond the human being, Jesus, to God. They had a glimpse who this was. Well, that's the story.

So, that's point one. What's it say? That's what it says. Now, but we have to go deeper. What does it mean? What's the theology behind this? What's the spiritual principle?

Well, first of all, the prayer part. Human beings need to have time to be alone with God. It's built into us.

In the Old Testament, on the seventh day, what did God do? He rested. He rested. He rested. God set an example for us.

[8 : 42] We all need to have times of rest with the Lord. Just to sit with Him. To be with this God Almighty. Time to recharge.

We all need to recharge. One of the problems of today is, well, now that we're all isolated for the last five months, we do have time alone.

But what's happened is, the world is so busy, we can't take time to be alone. We'll talk about that in a minute. But the first principle is, human beings need time to be alone with God, our Creator.

The second principle that's taught here is that, Jesus does amazing things. I'll be Captain Obvious for a minute. Jesus does amazing things.

So what do we do with that? What does that mean? Well, okay, let's talk about the storm, the winds, and our lives.

[9 : 49] Jesus wants us to see Him walking on the water. We are built to where our faith needs to be rejuvenated.

Courage needs to return. The theology is, God shows up in our lives. Sometimes we don't notice Him, but He shows up.

He's there for us. Which gives us the fact that Jesus meets us in our storms. Which brings us to point three.

What does the passage mean to me? What is the application of this passage? Everything written in Scripture is for our learning. Read, mark, learn, inwardly digest what God has for us.

So, what do we learn about our prayer life first? Sometimes it's the pits.

[10 : 58] For those who are married, sometimes our communication is the pits. With God, who we really can't see, like a physical being, it can go into the pits.

When that happens, that's the time to remember that God is a communicating being. He desires to spend time with us.

So, it's important that we block out time to be alone. Jesus went into the hills. We have a sliding glass door in our living room, and I sit in my recliner and look out that door. That's a time to be alone with the Lord in the morning. Each one of us needs to focus a particular time. Now, we're praying throughout the day, but we need a particular time to just be there with Him.

What do we do when we're there, we say. What do I talk about? Well, let's see. There's a pandemic. There are riots in the cities. There's an election coming up, which is going to be a clambake.

[12 : 11] There's explosions in Beirut. There are shootings in Syracuse. And that's to say nothing of our own lives.

Have you felt any stress ever? There's a little bit of stress in the world today. These are all things we can talk with the Lord about. How about changes in our parish?

We've had a big change. We've had a deacon and wife and six kids, vamoose to New Jersey. That changes the character of our parish.

We have people who, for one reason or another, are not able to join us on Sunday mornings. That's really hard for them, and it's hard for us. Talk with the Lord about changes in our parish.

We can talk about, actually, when it comes right down to it, honoring and thanking God. Not only that we got up this morning, but that we're going to have an eternity getting up with Him.

[13 : 22] Thanksgiving is an important part of time alone with God. Now, Thursday at noon, we have started what's called Lunch Bunch, intercessory group.

That's a chance for you to come and just spend quality time with God with a few brothers and sisters. Bring your own lunch, have a little communion, have a lot of fun, do some intensive prayer. Come and join that. That's a great way of focusing your life around Jesus. And then, in addition to prayer, then we need to pay attention to God doing marvelous things.

Jesus didn't just walk on the water a long time ago and rescue Peter. He walks through the storms of our life and rescues us.

That's the beautiful thing. There are a million examples I can think of where I've seen God step in and rescue me. Many years ago, Mary Ellen and I helped lead a marriage encounter weekend for only clergy couples.

[14 : 31] That's dangerous in itself. And then we found out that the bishop sent these clergy couples to the weekend. How do you think they felt about that?

So, as we started the weekend, the wall was 40 foot high between us and these clergy who didn't want to be there.

A few of the wives wanted to be there. A few of the wives desperately wanted to be there. Most of the clergy did not want to be there. And as the weekend went by, as we talked principle after principle about how to encounter your spouse in a wonderful, holy way, it got worse and worse. The last afternoon, we thought, we have incredibly failed these clergy. I mean, we might as well just go home now rather than finish it out.

Well, we had a time of sharing and the dam broke. One priest said, I am sorry for what I've done this weekend. I have ruined this weekend for everybody.

[15 : 38] Well, all of a sudden, all around us, clergy are apologizing. They're falling in love with their spouses again. God did a miracle. Those clergy did not remember that they had been recalcitrant.

They had to go home and look that up. They did not realize what a nasty group of people they had been because they were so much in love. It was a miracle.

We did that in Portland, Oregon, right, Mary Ellen? Yeah. We drove away from Portland and it was like, wow, look at what God did when we failed.

That's what Jesus wants to do with each one of us. So the conclusion is, He is there for us when we're sinking.

He says, don't be afraid. I am. Take my hand. I'll carry you through this. That's what it means.

[16 : 49] That's the theology. And that's the lesson. Take His hand. In the name of the Father and of the Son and of the Holy Spirit. Amen. I know there's a button I pushed to turn this off, but...

Thank you. Thank you. Thank you.