

Daniel, at the time, was an engineering student at the University of California in San Diego. He and several friends were hanging out one night when the police raided the place looking for drugs. Daniel, along with nine of his friends, were taken down to the San Diego Police Department and questioned. After they went through a series of questions, the police determined that Daniel would not be charged, but instead released later that evening.

[5 : 55] In the meantime, Daniel was placed in a five-by-ten-foot cell while the police finalized the paperwork.

Five days later, Daniel was still in that cell. Oh, it wasn't because they ended up charging him with something.

It was because the police officer forgot all about him. For five days, Daniel was trapped inside with no windows, no food, no water, no one even close enough to hear him kick the door.

He tried to set off the sprinkler system. He tried putting his shoelace underneath the door to get somebody's attention, not to mention the frequently screaming at the top of his lungs.

After a few days of this, with nothing to eat and all his efforts proving unsuccessful, Daniel began to accept his fate.

[7 : 03] By this point, fate family, five days into this, he was covered in his own feces. He was experiencing hallucinations. He was drinking his own urine. He even broke the glasses of his eyeglasses to carve a message to his mom on his arm.

He was certain he would die in that cell. When the police finally discovered Daniel, he was incoherent.

He was dehydrated and his kidneys were failing. He was taken to the hospital where he would spend three days in intensive care. He survived.

And maybe the only bright side to the story other than the fact that he did survive is he settled with the DEA for \$4.1 million. Let me ask you this.

Fate family, have you ever felt stuck? Have you ever felt stuck? Have you ever felt trapped somewhere? Have you ever been in a situation you thought you were never going to get out of it?

[8 : 11] It was never going to end. Things were never going to change. And no matter how hard you tried, your efforts seemed to fall short. Anybody relate to that?

Maybe you felt stuck physically. No matter how hard you tried, you can't seem to lose the weight you want to lose. Or maybe you feel stuck vocationally.

No matter what you do, you can't find traction in your career. You don't know what you want to do. Maybe some of you feel stuck routinely. That is, every day and every week kind of feels like the same.

Like you're stuck in Groundhog Day where there is no tomorrow. Because everything seems the same over and over. And my guess is that some of you at some point have felt stuck spiritually. Anybody? Anybody? You prayed? You read your Bible? You went to church? You did all the things you thought you were supposed to do? And it just felt like it wasn't going anywhere?

[9 : 10] Be honest. Most of us know this feeling. We know the feeling of being stuck. Of being trapped. And no matter how hard we try or what effort we give, it seems like we're going nowhere.

That is precisely the situation the disciples find themselves in in Mark chapter 6. Look at what Mark records here in verse 47.

He says, When evening came, the boat was out on the sea. Jesus is alone on the land. And he saw that they were making headway.

How? Painfully. Why? For the wind was against them. So first we see in this passage the disciples are stuck at sea.

This miracle comes right after the feeding of the 5,000 plus. You will remember. Now we looked at John's account. But in John and in Mark's account, what you find at the end of the feeding of the 5,000 is that they are ready to make Jesus king.

[10 : 21] The zealous crowd is ready to take over and Jesus is just the one to do it. Realizing that this is taking place, Jesus puts his disciples in a boat and sends them out on the sea of Galilee.

And they are struggling as they enter into a headwind. In fact, if you have the NIV version of the scripture, it will say that the disciples were, quote, straining at the oars.

They are stuck. They are in this headwind. And they have been there, faith family, for several hours. And you say, well, how do you know they've been there for several hours?

Well, let's put just a few things together. Verse 45 says, Jesus made them get in the boat. Verse 47 says, when evening came.

So everybody right here, were they in the boat before evening or after evening came? Before, right? And then verse 48 says, about the fourth hour, which is between 3 a.m. and 6 a.m., Jesus comes to them.

[11 : 33] So if you piece that together, what you discover is this. The disciples left shore before evening. And by early a.m. in the morning, Jesus can still see them from the shore.

In other words, they're stuck. They're not going anywhere. They are rowing. They are struggling. They're doing everything they can. But they are not making progress.

They are going nowhere fast. And so not only are they stuck, it means they're also exhausted. How many of you show of hands have ever rowed before?

How many of you have ever sung row, row, row your boat before? Okay, there we go. There's something, all right? It counts for something. If you have ever rowed before, you know the exhaustion of rowing.

In his book, *The Boys in the Boat*, which is about nine Americans that won the gold in 1936, the Berlin Olympics, highly recommend this book.

[12 : 38] It's a very pleasurable read. And in it, Daniel James Brown describes the agony of rowing. He says this, quote, Competitive rowing is an undertaking of extraordinary beauty preceded by brutal punishment.

Unlike most sports, which primarily draw on a peculiar muscle group, rowing makes heavy and repeated use of every muscle in the body.

And rowing makes these muscular demands not at odd intervals, but in rapid sequence over a protracted period of time, repeatedly and without relief.

Listen to this. It is estimated that rowing, a 2,000 meter race, takes the same toil as playing two basketball games back to back in a matter of six minutes.

The common denominator, whether in the lungs, muscles, or bones, is overwhelming pain. Rowing is perhaps the toughest of sports.

[13 : 55] Oh, the disciples are exhausted. They are caught in a headwind and they are straining at the oars. They are stuck in doing everything they can not to drift back.

They need a miracle. Now, let me stop. Let me stop. What headwind are you in today? What headwind are you in today?

What's keeping you from moving forward in your life? Maybe it's a wayward child. Maybe it's something from your past. Maybe it's other people in your life.

Maybe it's you don't feel you have enough money. Maybe it's a difficult marriage. But my guess is this, and it's a pretty good guess. There are some of you here, some of you watching online, and you feel like this.

You're exhausted. You have been rowing and rowing for hours. And the headwind of life seems to keep you from going anywhere.

[15 : 00] And if that's you, and be of good cheer, if it's not you, it will be one day. Okay? We're here to encourage you in your faith. That day is coming.

And what you need now is what the disciples got then. You with me? So, how is Jesus going to respond to his disciples who are caught in a headwind?

He is going to meet them with compassion. Amen? We're coming right off the feeding of the 5,000 plus. Jesus will show them compassion. Verse 48.

Does that puzzle you?

When I read that earlier, or when you read this on your own, do you read that? And he meant to pass by. Do you not want to stop and just say, what? What's up with that?

[16 : 17] What's up with that, Jesus? Why do you want to pass by? I have a better idea. How about stop and help? That sounds like a better idea.

Amen? Anybody with me in the boat saying, no, no, no, no. Don't pass by. Stop and help. Why? Does Jesus want to pass by?

Well, what we will discover is that it's actually passing by that is stopping to help. You see, if you have background in your Old Testament, that phrase, and he meant to pass by, starts ringing some bells, some lights start going off in your brain thinking, wait a minute, wait a minute.

I've heard this before. That phrase, he meant to pass by, isn't he meant to ignore, but he meant to do something.

Let me give you some examples in the Old Testament, which will help us understand what this phrase, he meant to pass by, means. Two examples. The first is Exodus chapter 33.

[17 : 28] The first is Exodus chapter 33. Exodus 33, verse 18. It says, Moses said, please show me your glory. And he said, I will make all my goodness, say it, pass before you.

And will proclaim before you my name, the Lord. I will be gracious to whom I will be gracious and I will show mercy on whom I will show mercy.

But he said, you cannot see my face for man shall not see me and live. And the Lord said, behold, there is a place by me where you shall stand on the rock. And while my, say it, glory passes by, I will put you in the cleft of the rock and I will cover you in my hand until I have passed by.

That's the first example with Moses. The second example that is common in the Old Testament is with Elijah. Elijah, Elijah, first Kings 19, verse 11, first Kings 19, verse 11 says this.

And he said, go out and stand on the mountain before the Lord. And behold, what did the Lord do? He passed by and a great and strong wind tore the mountains and broken pieces and rocks before the Lord.

[18 : 53] But the Lord was not in the wind. And after the wind and earthquake, but the Lord was not in the earthquake. And if you keep reading, you know that Elijah experiences the revelation of God, not through an earthquake, but through a what?

A whisper. But here's the point for us. Two examples from the Old Testament. Moses and Elijah were the phrase to pass by doesn't mean to abandon, doesn't mean to ignore.

It means to reveal. In other words, notice this on the screen. This will preach. Jesus will not ignore their or your struggle.

Jesus will reveal himself in their struggle. He does not intend on abandoning them. He does not intend on passing them by in that sense.

But he is going to pass them by in terms of revealing who he is. But notice it on the screen. Unlike Moses, who only saw the backside of God.

[19 : 56] Unlike Elijah, who only heard the whisper of God. The disciples will see the glory of God in the person of the Son of God. Oh, if you thought it was something that God passed by Moses.

If you thought it was something that God passed by Elisha. Just wait till you see Jesus pass by. He's not going to leave them alone.

He's going to give them what they need. Which is himself. And a fresh vision of his glory.

Isn't that what you need in your struggle? Are you with me? You don't. And we'll talk more about this later. You think all you need is just for the winds to die down.

But what you really need is for Jesus to pass by. You need a fresh vision of God. And what will this fresh vision.

[20 : 57] This revelation of God in the person of the Son of God be. Verse 49. But when they saw him. Walking.

On the sea. Let me read that again. When they saw him. Walking. On the sea.

They thought it was a ghost. And cried out. So not only does Mark show us the disciples stuck on the sea. They show us the Savior who walks on the sea.

Now let's be honest. Be honest. If you're like me and you grew up in church. The image of Jesus walking on water. Is almost kind of like a cool magic trick.

You almost think of it. I almost think of it as a really cool illusion. Like man I just want to see that happen. That would be so awesome.

[21 : 57] No. I assure you. That had you been in the boat with the disciples on this particular morning. You would have not seen this as a cool illusion.

You would have stained your undergarments. Just like the disciples. I mean try. Try. I hope.

Try to imagine this. You are out fishing. You're just out fishing. On a lake in Minnesota. And you look to your right. And you see somebody just walking across the water.

Hey. What's up? And just walks off. What? What just happened? Or imagine that you're at a swimming pool. And instead of someone walking around the pool.

They walked across the pool. You think you'd stare? Oh yeah. Or imagine that you're seated on the beach. Or watching out into the water.

[22 : 55] And you just see somebody walk up on the water. On to the beach. And pass you by. You are flipping out. This is not a cool illusion.

This is not a sweet little Sunday school story. Jesus is walking on the sea. Amen. He is walking on the water.

Faith family. Do not try this at home. Don't. Don't. Fill your bathtub up and try this. Right. This is a miracle. And it is one that I, with all my loud tone, have been trying to get you to not be unimpressed.

Please don't read this like you're familiar with it. Oh yeah. You know. Just that walking on the water thing. Be like the disciples in awe.

Who is this? Who is this? Now, question. If I'm in class, I'm raising my hand at this point.

[24 : 05] Why? Why does he walk on the water? Why? I mean, is he showing off? You know, like, I haven't shown him every trick I got in my bag, but let's do this one.

All right? No. Listen. If you go. Here's why I'm asking the question. If you go back to Mark 4, do you remember what happened? The disciples were in a what?

Storm. And there was winds. In fact, this, unlike the one in Mark 6, they actually thought they were going to die in that storm. And do you remember what Jesus did to calm that storm?

He just went, shh. And the winds and the waves obeyed. And are you tracking with me? That's all he has to do here.

All he has to do is from the shore go, hey, cut it out back there. And the winds would cease.

[25 : 03] Why walk on water? Well, what has Mark been stringing along for us already through the gospel of Mark?

Let me show you a few examples. We don't have time for all of them, but just a few that I think make it very clear that will then provide perspective on why. Have you ever wondered why Jesus walked on water?

Why did he do that? What's the significance of this miracle? Go back to Mark chapter 2 and look at verse 5. Mark chapter 2, verse 5 says this.

When Jesus saw their faith, this was the paralytic and his friends. When he saw their faith, he said to the paralytic, son, your sins are forgiven.

Now stop right there. Why was that such a big deal? Why was that a problem? For Jesus to say, son, your sins are forgiven. Well, the text shows us why this was a problem.

[26 : 01] Verse 6. Now some of the scribes were sitting there questioning in their hearts, why does this man speak like that? He is blaspheming. Who can forgive sins but God?

Jesus, you can't talk like that. You can't say you can forgive sins because only God can forgive sins. And what did I tell you last week?

Exactly. Example number 2. Mark chapter 2, later on, he has a debate with the Pharisees on whether or not you can pick grain on the Sabbath.

I mean, really, they're sitting around debating this. And of course, the Pharisees are, you can't pick grain on the Sabbath. And in chapter 3, he'll heal a man with a withered hand on the Sabbath. And Jesus makes a comment that is outrageous.

Here it is. This is Mark 2, 28. So the Son of Man is Lord, even of the Sabbath. I know it's just chapter 2, but Jesus, you really can't talk like this.

[27 : 06] You're not supposed to say these things because what you're saying is that you're God. Exactly. Example number 3. This was in the storm of Mark chapter 4, says, chapter 4, verse 39.

He awoke and rebuked the wind and said to the sea, peace, be still. And the wind ceased and there was a great calm. And I ask you in that sermon, well, what is the significance of that?

Well, you need to know your Old Testament background. And on Psalm 107, verse 28 says, then they cried to the Lord in their trouble and he delivered them from their distress. He made the storm be still.

Who made the storm be still? God did. And the waves of the sea were hushed. He calms the storm. Why? Because only God can calm the storm.

Exactly. Are you tracking with me? Say yes. Then why walk on the water? Why walk on the water? Is there anything in the Old Testament?

[28 : 12] And some of you are ahead of me, you smart students. Is there anything in the Old Testament that would speak to why walking on water? Job 9.

Job 9. Here it is. Job 9, verse 7. Who commands the sun and it does not rise? Who seals up the stars? Who alone stretched out the heavens and trampled the waves of the sea?

And guess what verse 11 says for the record? Behold, he passes by. And in Job's case, but I did not perceive him.

Aren't you thankful that we live after the revelation of Jesus Christ? What's the point here? What's the point? I hope the point is obvious. Who is the one that forgives sins? God. Who is the Sabbath ultimately about?

God. Who is the one that calms the waves? God. And who is the one who can walk on the sea? God. What Jesus is giving the disciples here is another gracious glimpse of his glory.

[29 : 21] He is the son of God. This faith family is God in the flesh. Amen. Amen. That's why he walks on the water.

Question. Why did the disciples need another lesson? Why did they need another glimpse of Jesus and who he is?

The text tells us, verse 51. And he got into the boat with them and the wind ceased and they were utterly astounded for they did not understand about the loaves, but their hearts were hardened.

We see the disciples stuck at the sea. We see Jesus walking on the sea. And lastly, we see the lesson learned on the sea. Why all of this?

Why the walking on water? Why the passing by or revealing who you are to the disciples? And here's the answer. And can I just tell you how encouraging this part of the text is?

[30 : 28] Oh, this is deeply encouraging to me and it will be deeply encouraging to you if you are anything like me. The disciples get this new vision of Jesus because they have not learned their lesson.

Amen. Anybody with me tonight? Anybody stubborn? Hard headed? Don't point. All right. Some of us just take a lot to learn.

Amen. They hadn't learned the lesson of the loaves. That's why he walked on the water and showed them who he is. It's why he passed by them.

They hadn't learned their lesson. So the question would be, well, then what was the lesson of the loaves? Verse 36. Same chapter. This is when the crowds are all gathering and it's late.

And the disciples say this. Verse 36. Hey, send them away to go into the surrounding countryside and villages and buy themselves something to eat. We're exhausted. You know, we've been doing ministry.

[31 : 27] Go to McDonald's. Verse 37. But he answered them, you give them something to eat. And they said to him, shall we go and buy 200 denarii worth of bread and give it to them to eat?

And he said to them, how many loaves do you have? Go and see. And when they found out, they said five and two fish.

I don't have time to go back through that whole miracle. We did that earlier in this series. And so you can go back online and listen to the sermon on that. But here's the point.

The disciples should have learned in the loaves, there's nothing impossible with me. Remember I taught you divine math?

Divine math is this. Jesus plus nothing means anything is possible. From the perspective of the disciples, it's like, we only have five loaves.

[32 : 32] Do you see how many people there are? Just send them into town. We can't do this. I know you can't do this. But I can.

Nothing is impossible with me, disciples. I don't care if he's a paralytic and hasn't walked. I don't care if he's had leprosy all his life.

I don't care if it's a storm so bad you think you're going to die. I don't care if it's 5,000 people and you only have five loaves. Aren't you going to learn?

Nothing is impossible with me. Trust me, men. Learn to trust me, men.

And how many loaves were left over after everyone was fed? Jesus has a sense of humor. Twelve disciples, twelve baskets, one for each of them, to remind them that when you think it is impossible, there is nothing impossible with God.

[33 : 45] Life can be multiplied in the hands of Jesus. That was the lesson of the loaves. And they still hadn't learned it.

So guess what? Oh, they're in the headwinds of life. And they're going to have to repeat the class. Here's what I wrote in my notes.

The disciples in the headwinds of life are retaking the course entitled Faith 101. Which, by the way, is both an introductory course to the Christian faith as well as an intensive.

And you will not graduate without it. You will not graduate without it. Because the life of a Christian is the life of faith.

And the disciples are going to have to learn that lesson again. Who's with me? Now there's one of these. I ain't done yet. All right. So just hold on. There's one of these disciples that's going to have to learn.

[34 : 46] He's going to have to be the lab rat of this course. All right. If we're going to understand faith and learn the lesson again, I'm going to need a volunteer. Anybody want to guess?

Just, you know, one guess who that volunteer might be. Not Thomas. Peter. Peter's going to be the lab rat. Peter's going to be the test case.

And you say, I don't see Peter anywhere in this passage at all. Who wrote this? Mark. Who was Mark a mentor under?

Peter. You think maybe Peter just said, you know what? We don't have to include every detail. All right. We can, under the inspiration of the Holy Spirit, leave a few things out.

But fortunately, Matthew did not. Matthew 14, verse 28. The same event of Jesus walking on the water.

[35 : 47] Matthew 14, 28. And Peter answered him, Lord, if it's you, command me to come to you on the water. And he said, come. And Peter got out of the boat and walked on the water and came to Jesus.

Peter steps out in faith. Peter believes if Jesus says, come to me, I can go to him. And so I am going to step out. I am going to step out in obedience to what Jesus has called me to do.

And like many of us, that first step of faith immediately turns into a rush of fear. When what happens?

Verse 30. But when he saw the wind. He was afraid. And beginning to sink, he cried out, Lord, save me.

Look at me. Isn't that how it always happens? You take that first step of faith. And then we take our eyes off of Jesus.

[36 : 52] And we put them on our surroundings. Or we start thinking about all the implications of what we're doing. Like I'm out in the water.

I might die. What am I doing here? I got no business being out here. And faith is so quickly overcome by fear.

And then Peter begins to sink. And Jesus reaches out. Verse 31. Jesus immediately reached out his hand and took hold of him. Saying to him, here's the lesson.

You didn't learn it with the loaves. You're going to have to learn it here. Oh, you of little faith. Why did you doubt? Pull up the chair.

Because you're back in class. You're going to have to learn again. To walk by faith, men.

[37 : 51] And this phrase, you of little faith. Why do you doubt? Why are you afraid? Is something that Mark has been showing us consistently real quick. We're almost done.

In Mark 4, in the storm. Why are you afraid? Jairus in Mark 5. Don't fear, but believe. When they see Jesus walking on the water.

Take heart. Don't be afraid. When Peter starts to sink. You of little faith. Why do you doubt? In other words, Jesus is over and over and over again teaching the lesson of faith in the headwind of life.

Are you with me? The disciples stuck at sea. The Savior who walks on the sea. And the lesson that had to be learned at sea.

And it had to be learned over and over and over again. Let me give you just, and this will be quick, four quick takeaways. I trust that I've taught this faithfully as we've walked through the text.

[38 : 57] What are a few takeaways, applications for us as we wrap up? And I've already been talking about this, but let me just say this again quickly. First is this. Faith is a required course in every semester of life.

Faith is a required course in every semester of life. You do not get to enter into any semester of life and say, I don't really want to take that course.

It's required in every season of life that you're in. What I find so encouraging about this is, stop for just a minute.

I've got to go quick. But think about your last week. What did you do this past week? You went to the grocery store. You went to work. You took your kids to school or all the different things that you did.

Okay, here is, this is going to encourage you. It encourages me. Here's the disciples last week. Okay, it's like this. We've seen the worst storm in our life calmed with a word.

[40 : 03] We've seen a legion of demons cast out of a man and into pigs. We've seen a little girl raised from the dead. We've seen 5,000 people plus fed with just five loaves with plenty left over.

Listen. And they still hadn't learned their lesson. Does that encourage you? It encourages me. Because faith is a course that's required in every semester of life. You don't ever graduate from it. And you can only ultimately graduate with it.

And so in every season of life, you must learn to live by faith. Amen?

Amen. Number two. Faith grows through frequent encounters with Jesus. Faith grows through frequent encounters with Jesus.

[41 : 03] I take this again from the fact that Jesus passed by. Again, he's revealing himself anew to these disciples. They have seen him in so many different ways.

The mosaic of Jesus and all of these, you know, healing somebody's sickness and calming the storm. And now he's walking on water.

Listen, all these miracles are signs, right? And they're showing us different things about our beautiful Savior.

And that's how our faith grows. This will preach. Faith doesn't grow based on one encounter with Jesus.

Faith grows throughout your life as you continue to encounter Jesus. You encounter Jesus that first time when you became a Christian. And you put your faith in him.

[42 : 04] The problem is some of you have stopped there. And you wonder why you're so afraid. And you wonder why you're sinking. No, Jesus is revealing himself repeatedly and through many different encounters.

So that the disciples will know him. And every single one of these encounters keeps adding a brick to their faith. I wrote this and then I must move on.

The disciples need to face the wind of Mark 6 so that they'll be prepared to face the winds of the book of Acts. Think about that.

They must go through this wind. And part of going through the wind of Mark 6 is having Jesus pass by. They need to see Jesus walk on the water so that in the book of Acts when they feel like they are drowning in the water of life, they'll trust him.

They've encountered him enough throughout their life that faith has grown strong. That's why I say to you, faith family, you need to be in church.

[43 : 12] You need to be in the word. You need to be in worship. Not because of any legalistic reason, but because you need to encounter God. Often, frequently, for each encounter with God strengthens your faith when you're in the headwinds of life.

Number three. I alluded to this earlier so I won't say much here now, but when you feel stuck, your greatest need is a fresh vision of God.

It's interesting why Jesus does this the way he does this. Again, as I said earlier, he could have just calmed the winds from the shore.

He can do that, you know. But he didn't do that here. And here's why. Okay, I'll say this and I'll move on. Are you listening? They needed a big view of God more than they needed a less windy life.

They needed a big view of God. I don't know, like the one who walks on water. They needed that more than they needed Jesus to just say, okay, calm down out there.

[44 : 23] That would have solved their physical situation, but it wouldn't have taken their soul deeper. They wouldn't have learned the lesson. They haven't learned from the loaves.

And so what we need is a fresh vision of God, not a less windy life. Lastly, and I just say this because I don't know why in my study it was like Jesus said somebody's going to need this.

And here it is. Jesus isn't going to let you drown. And I don't know who that's for. I don't know who it's for, but it's for somebody. He's not going to let you drown.

And then it feels like maybe you're Peter and you feel like you're 20 feet underwater. He ain't going to let you drown. He will pick you up.

Trust him. Trust him. And tonight, maybe what you need to do is take your eyes off the wind and get them back on the one who walks on water. Today, if you're here and you're like Daniel, maybe you're here and you're like the disciples, you feel stuck.

[45 : 34] You feel trapped. You feel like no matter how hard you row, you're never going to get anywhere. Well, here's what the gospel says to you.

Your Savior has not forgotten you. He will not leave you in that cell. He will not leave you lost at sea.

He knows right where you are. And at the right time, maybe the fourth watch of the night, he will pass by.

Take heart, faith family, and do not be afraid. Let's pray together. God, thank you for the gift of your grace to us tonight, which is your word.

I have no doubt that there are many of us that know what it's like to be caught in the headwind, to feel like we have been rowing and rowing and rowing, and we're still in the same place.

[46 : 45] Maybe we're making progress, but we are doing so painfully. We need a fresh vision of you tonight.

We don't need to think of Jesus walking on the water as some neat Sunday school story. We need to tremble in faith that he is God.

And there is not a single wind that we are walking in right now that he cannot step on in a moment. And so let us be like Peter. Let us learn the lesson to step out in faith, but not put our eyes on the wind, but to keep our eyes on the Savior.

And that we would learn whatever semester of life that we are in, that we would learn the lesson of faith. Trust me.

[47 : 51] In Jesus' name. Amen. Amen.