

Why Did Jesus Walk on Water?

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Let's open by going to a scripture that states a truth that we can all count on. 2 Timothy 3:16—we're very familiar with this scripture; one of those memory scriptures. Paul is writing here.

2 Timothy 3:16 *All Scripture [not some of it, not part of it] is given by inspiration of God, and is profitable for doctrine, for reproof, for correction, for instruction in righteousness ... (KJV)*

This is the only time the phrase, "*inspiration of God*" is used in the Bible. The Greek for *inspiration of God* is just one Greek word. Strong's #2315 and it's the Greek word *theopneustos*; *theos*, meaning "God", *pneu* means "wind" or "breath", and it literally means "divinely breathed". That's why the New International translates this as "*all scripture is God-breathed*". It comes from Him—from His very mouth. All of us understand this. We understand that the entire Bible is true and divinely inspired. We count on that and stake our lives on that. But how often do we consider every word and every detail? It's easy to get the big picture but do we actually believe every word and every detail? I understand that there are manuscript problems sometimes and one scribe copying down and making a mistake. But we're talking about the words used and the detail used; do we realize and count on the fact that it is breathed by God?

Most everyone in the Christian world has heard of the account of Jesus the Messiah walking on water. That term has even entered the vernacular. I've heard said several times, "He thinks he walks on water". That comes right out of the Bible. It just means this person thinks very highly of himself—next to God or something. Some believe this account is true—in the world, I'm talking about—and others, particularly the critics of the Bible believe it's nothing more than a fable or a myth. We believe, obviously, that it is an absolute fact. It actually did indeed happen. So, with that in mind, what we are going to do today is examine this account. We're not asking whether it's fact or not—we know it's fact—but we are going to ask the question, which is our title for today:

Why Did Jesus Walk on Water?

Why did He do that? What was His purpose? What was His point? We'll cover that through five points. In Point 1, what we want to do—as we should when examining any scripture is to:

1. Look at the context of the account of Jesus' walking on water.

We have to put it in context. What we're going to do is look at the event that happened on the very same day prior to His walking on water. Let's go to John 6 and read verses

1-14. I'm going to read this out of the NIV. Unless otherwise noted though, we'll be reading out of the King James Version.

John 6:1 *Some time after this ... (NIV)*

That is referring to back to the healing of the crippled man at the pool of Bethesda in Chapter 5, which happened previously, not the same day.

1 continued) ... Jesus crossed to the far shore of the Sea of Galilee (that is, the Sea of Tiberias) ... (NIV)

The Sea of Galilee is about 65 miles north of Jerusalem and the sea runs north and south, basically. Jesus' home area was to the west of the lake, toward the Mediterranean Sea. So, the far shore here would be the eastern shore. Where Christ grew up was off beyond the western shore. Going on in verse 2 in the King James.

2) And a great multitude followed him, because they saw his miracles which he did on them that were diseased.

3) And Jesus went up into a mountain, and there he sat with his disciples. (KJV)

This is the same day, earlier in the day, prior to when He was walking on water. It's important to get the context here.

4) And the passover, a feast of the Jews, was nigh.

5) When Jesus then lifted up his eyes, and saw a great company come unto him, he saith unto Philip, Whence shall we buy bread, that these may eat?

6) And this he said to prove him: for he himself knew what he would do. (KJV)

He already had a plan, He just wanted to see what Philip was going to say.

7) Philip answered him, Two hundred pennyworth of bread is not sufficient for them, that every one of them may take a little.

8) One of his disciples, Andrew, Simon Peter's brother, saith unto him,

9) There is a lad here, which hath five barley loaves, and two small fishes: but what are they among so many? (KJV)

It's a drop in the bucket.

10) And Jesus said, Make the men sit down. Now there was much grass in the place. So the men sat down, in number about five thousand. (KJV)

That's a good-sized Feast site in the old days. They were sitting on a hillside on the grass, Christ was making sure that they were comfortable.

11) *And Jesus took the loaves; and when he had given thanks, he distributed to the disciples, and the disciples to them that were set down; and likewise of the fishes as much as they would.*

12) *When they were filled, he said unto his disciples, Gather up the fragments that remain, that nothing be lost.*

13) *Therefore they gathered them together, and filled twelve baskets with the fragments of the five barley loaves, which remained over and above unto them that had eaten. (KJV)*

Think about that—you have this tiny little bit of food and Christ just pulling out loaf after loaf after loaf in this basket and fish after fish after fish and everybody is looking and seeing this and it's being passed all over out of one basket. After a while, I'm sure people's eyes started getting wide and wondering what's going on. Notice what happened in verse 14.

14) *Then those men, when they had seen the miracle that Jesus did, said, This is of a truth that prophet that should come into the world. (KJV)*

The New Living Translation says that these men said, “surely He is the prophet we have been expecting”; the Messiah. It's interesting that the 5000 came to this conclusion, but the Bible is absolutely silent about what the apostles' impression was. They didn't say that—there's no record of them saying what the 5000 said. Hold on to that thought because it's going to be important.

So, we see that those 5000 unconverted men—and there were obviously women and children there too—understood by this one miracle that Jesus was indeed the Messiah. They came to that conclusion after seeing just one miracle. Let's compare that to the miracles that the 12 disciples had already seen. They had witnessed—I'm going to read a few—up to this point, to this very day.

- Jesus healed a demon possessed man in Capernaum—they were right there.
- Remember He healed Peter's mother-in-law and that evening He healed many of demons and many who were sick.
- Remember the disciples were trying to fish and they had their nets on one side of the boat and couldn't find anything, couldn't get anything and Jesus told them to throw their nets on the other side of the boat and the nets were so full, they couldn't even lift the net into the boat.
- They witnessed that. He cleansed a leper,
- He healed the centurion servant,
- He healed a paralytic man who was in a bed let down through the roof. They took the tiles off the roof and dropped him down—He healed him.

- He healed a man's withered hand on the Sabbath and got a lot of heat from the Pharisees for doing so.
- He calmed a storm on the sea.
- He healed a woman in a crowd who had an issue of blood.
- He raised Jairus' daughter back to life.
- He healed two blind men and ...
- He actually raised a widow's son from the dead.

Let's just see that one miracle in Luke 7:14-17. The disciples witnessed all of these miracles and they witnessed someone coming back from the dead. I'll read this out of the New King James. Put yourself there—you're there, as one of the disciples, watching this.

Luke 7:14 *Then He came and touched the open coffin, and those who carried him stood still. And He said, "Young man, I say to you, arise."*

15) So he who was dead sat up and began to speak. And He presented him to his mother.

16) Then fear came upon all, and they glorified God, saying, "A great prophet has risen up among us"; and, "God has visited His people." [This was the conclusion of those who saw this]

17) And this report about Him went throughout all Judea and all the surrounding region. (NKJV)

There's no indication here that the disciples said anything. We have no record of that. So, despite witnessing all of these miracles first-hand, up to this point—to this very day—there's absolutely no record that the disciples truly believed that Jesus was the Son of God. There's no record of them saying that prior to this incident of Jesus walking on water. The miracles of the loaves and fishes was good enough for 5000 men to say,

"The Messiah is among us, this is the One we've been waiting for."

But apparently not from the disciples, otherwise there would be some record of that, I would think. My guess is, they had not yet internalized that Jesus was truly the Son of God. Notice Mark 6:52—just this one verse. We're going to cover this in detail later, but this is after the miracles of the loaves and fishes and after Jesus walked on water. Notice what it says about the disciples and their view of Jesus at this point.

Mark 6:52 *... for they still didn't understand the significance of the miracle of the loaves. Their hearts were too hard to take it in. (NLT)*

The Greek can mean either “blind, callous or hard”. Their hearts were too hard to take it in. We’re told that up to this point, the disciples were blind or callous or they just couldn’t accept that Jesus was indeed the Son of God. Maybe they thought He was a prophet, maybe they thought He was a soothsayer—who knows—but this verse tells us very clearly that because of their hard hearts, they had not accepted the fact that Jesus was indeed the Son of God.

All four gospels record the feeding of the 5000 men. Three of the four gospels give the account of Jesus walking on water, which occurs immediately—the story begins—after the feeding of the 5000. It occurs later that day, into that night. This is after the feeding of the 5000, who recognized Jesus as the Messiah. So that’s the context, which we come to the account of Jesus *walking on water*. You have 5000 men who believed He was the Messiah but it certainly seems like the disciples were not totally convinced due to the blindness or the callousness of their heart.

2. Let’s look at the three accounts of Jesus walking on water.

What we’re going to see is that each account is a little bit different and each one adds details that the other one doesn’t have. We’re going to read all three of them and then put them all together in a timeline of what actually happened.

We’re going to start with John since we’ve already seen from him what happened earlier in the day. Let’s go to John 6:16.

John 6:16 *And when even was now come [the Greek can mean early evening or in the afternoon, still daylight], his disciples went down unto the sea, 17) And entered into a ship, and went over the sea toward Capernaum. [That’s on the Northwest shore of the lake] And it was now dark, [it was probably light when they got into the boat, but they began rowing and the sun set, it was now dark] and Jesus was not come to them. 18) And the sea arose by reason of a great wind that blew. 19) So when they had rowed about five and twenty or thirty furlongs. (KJV)*

That means about three or four miles and at that part of the lake, that’s half way across the lake. They are rowing, going from the east to the west, or the southeast to the northwest depending on where exactly they started from.

19 continued) ... they see Jesus walking on the sea, and drawing nigh unto the ship: and they were afraid. 20) But he saith unto them, It is I; be not afraid. [Don’t worry, I’m here now] 21) Then they willingly received him into the ship: and immediately the ship was at the land whither they went. (KJV)

So, we see two miracles—actually three miracles. We see Jesus’ walking on water, then we see the minute He steps into the boat and they are all looking at Him and focusing on Him but when they look out around them, the boat is at the shore and

there's no wind. We see, according to John, three important miracles happen that the disciples witness.

Now let's go to Mark 6 and get Mark's account of this—we're going to read verses 45-52. Mark is going to add some details that John did not have or include. Here's an important detail that is pertinent to this day and why it happened.

Mark 6:45 *And straightway he [Jesus] constrained his disciples to get into the ship ... (KJV)*

The New King James and the NIV says, "*He made them get into the boat.*" The New Living Translation says, "*He insisted they get into the boat.*" So this was not their idea. Jesus had a plan and He wanted them to get into the boat, row across to the far shore. He's on the east side, they are rowing toward the west side. So He constrained, He insisted, He made them get into the ship.

45 continued) ... and to go to the other side before unto Bethsaida [that's about five miles from Capernaum, still at the north shore at the top of the lake], while he sent away the people. [The 5000] (KJV)

Jameson, Faucet and Brown, in their Commentary said,

"The word *constrained* implies reluctance on their part (the disciple's part) perhaps from unwillingness to part with their Master and embark at night, leaving Him alone on the mountain".

So He gave them an order despite the fact that they might have been reluctant to do so.

46) And when he had sent them away, he departed into a mountain to pray. [By Himself]

47) And when even was come, the ship was in the midst of the sea, and he alone on the land. (KJV)

He's watching them about three or four miles out and of course in Jesus' mind He could be in the boat with them, as far as what He could perceive. Jameson, Faucet, and Brown Commentary goes on to say,

"In a place where He might watch the disciples on the lake, pray for them and their extremity and observe the right time for coming to them in a new manifestation of His glory on the sea".

Jesus had a plan where He was going to show them that He was indeed the Son of God. He was creating circumstances to pass to bring all of this into place.

48) And he saw them toiling in rowing; for the wind was contrary unto them: and about the fourth watch of the night ... (KJV)

Each watch was three hours. There were 4 watches, each three hours. The first was from 6 to 9, the second watch was from 9 to midnight and the third was from midnight to 3 in the morning and the fourth watch began at 3. So He is now looking at them at 3am and they are still rowing and they are still toiling.

48 continued) ... he cometh unto them, walking upon the sea, and would have passed by them. (KJV)

That's an interesting comment. The NIV says, *He was about to pass by them.* We will come back to this later—this is an interesting insert.

49) But when they saw him walking upon the sea, they supposed it had been a spirit, [the King James would say “a ghost”] and cried out: [They were afraid, they didn't know what was going on.]

50) For they all saw him, and were troubled. (KJV)

The Greek can mean “agitated”. You can imagine, they've been rowing from 6pm to 3am and they are tired and they are wet and they are cold and now they see this apparition walking across the water—you can see where they might be a little agitated. What's going on here?

50 continued) ... And immediately he talked with them, and saith unto them, Be of good cheer: it is I; be not afraid.

51) And he went up unto them into the ship; [Here's a miracle] and the wind ceased: and they were sore amazed in themselves beyond measure, and wondered. (KJV)

You think after all of this you would think they would accept Jesus as the Messiah. But it says up to this point, they were still wondering. Then, verse 52—which we read earlier—is the insert.

52) For they considered not the miracle of the loaves: for their heart was hardened [blind or callous]. (KJV)

We see here that Mark's account indicates that Christ is walking on water, He comes into the boat, the wind ceases and they are kind of troubled. They aren't quite there yet. (KJV)

Now let's go to Matthew 14 and see his account. We're going to read verses 22-33. Matthew brings this to a conclusion, as we'll see. He uses the same terminology as Mark does.

Matthew 14:22 *And straightway Jesus constrained [that means He made them or insisted] his disciples to get into a ship, and to go before him unto the other*

side, while he sent the multitudes away. [The 5000 men with the loaves and the fishes]

23) And when he had sent the multitudes away, he went up into a mountain apart to pray: and when the evening was come, he was there alone. (KJV)

He is on the eastern shore, looking to the west, and they are about half way across the lake.

24) But the ship was now in the midst of the sea, tossed with waves: for the wind was contrary. (KJV)

Pushing them in a direction they did not want to go.

25) And in the fourth watch of the night Jesus went unto them, walking on the sea.

26) And when the disciples saw him walking on the sea, they were troubled, saying, It is a spirit; and they cried out for fear.

27) But straightway Jesus spake unto them, saying, Be of good cheer; it is I; be not afraid.

28) And Peter answered him and said, Lord, if it be thou, bid me come unto thee on the water.

29) And he said, Come. And when Peter was come down out of the ship, he walked on the water, to go to Jesus.

30) But when he saw the wind boisterous, he was afraid; and beginning to sink, he cried, saying, Lord, save me. (KJV)

He stopped looking at Jesus and He started looking at the conditions around him—the wind and the waves and all of that. He began looking at the physical instead of Jesus and began to sink. He cried out, “*Lord, save me.*”

31) And immediately Jesus stretched forth his hand, and caught him, and said unto him, O thou of little faith, wherefore didst thou doubt? (KJV)

This would be pertinent in a sermon on faith, *why did you doubt?* The key is, don't doubt! Don't let thoughts of doubt come into your mind; don't do that, because then you're going to sink.

32) And when they were come into the ship, the wind ceased.

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

This is the first time in all four gospels where the disciples are quoted as saying, we now know that You are indeed, the Son of God. It took all of this—what happened earlier in the day, the feeding of the 5000, then them going into a lake tossed with wind and a storm and they are rowing from 6pm until 3am and their lives are absolutely in danger.

Then Jesus walks across the water and they finally realize that Jesus is the Son of the God they worshipped. He is Yehovah's Son. He has said that all along when He was referring to His Father. He kept pointing back to His Father. They finally acknowledge in verse 33 that *You are the Son of God*—the God that we worship.

We need to stop here in the account, because before we go any further, we need to have an aside to explain a few things. This is important that we understand, but not necessarily germane to the flow of the story, so we're going to stop and have this aside before we go any further.

All three gospels record that the fact that as Jesus got near the boat, He said, "*it is I*"—three English words and those are translated from two Greek words. The Greek word *ego* which is Strong's #1473 which means "I" and the Greek word *eimi* which is Strong's #1510 and it can mean, "I exist", "I am", "to exist" or "to be". The Bible Hub Interlinear translates it as, *I am He*. As we're going to see, it is translated, *it is I*, or *I am He*. The problem is, today in English we don't say, "it is I". We just don't say that. Or we don't say, "I am he". What we do say is, "Hey, it's me". The Bible wasn't written in English and a lot of people think it is. It was not written in English; it was written in Hebrew and Greek. The point is, some churches of God contend that *ego eimi* refers to the "*I AM*" of Exodus because they are looking at the English and not at the Hebrew or Greek. They take *ego eimi* and say it refers to the *I AM* of Exodus in an effort to prove that Jesus is the God of the Old Testament. They are attempting to prove in English what cannot be proven in Hebrew or Greek. Mark Sappington has talked about that at length in several of his sermons—*ego eimi*. We don't have time in this sermon to go off in that direction because it would take away from what we're trying to get across about Jesus' walking on water. Let's just notice a couple of verses in this, about who is the God of the Old Testament, relative to *ego eimi*. Notice in Matthew 16:13; this is two chapters later after the disciples said, "*of a truth, you are the Son of God*".

Matthew 16:13 *When Jesus came into the coasts of Caesarea Philippi, he asked his disciples, saying, Whom do men say that I the Son of man am? (KJV)*

"What are people saying about Me?"

14) And they said, Some say that thou art John the Baptist: some, Elias; and others, Jeremias, or one of the prophets.

15) He saith unto them, But whom say ye that I am? (KJV)

"I want to know what you think about Me. Who am I?"

16) And Simon Peter answered and said, Thou art the Christ [the anointed one], the Son of the living God. (KJV)

Notice what Peter did not say, "You're Yehovah, the God our ancestors worshipped." If Jesus was the God of the Old Testament, then Peter was wrong here. What Peter did

say was that “You are the Son of the God that we worship—that our ancestors worshipped”. Notice Jesus’ answer.

17) And Jesus answered and said unto him, Blessed art thou, Simon Barjona: for flesh and blood hath not revealed it unto thee, but my Father which is in heaven. (KJV)

So we see, God Almighty inspired Peter to come to the realization that

“You are the Son of the God that our ancestors, going all the way back to Abraham, Isaac, and Jacob, have worshipped”.

This would be a perfect place for Peter to say that Jesus is the God of the Old Testament, if indeed Jesus was the God of the Old Testament. “You are the God we’ve always worshipped”, but that was not what was said.

Ego eimi appear in two other verses in the Bible, so let’s go there and take a quick look and then get back to the story. To see how they are translated, let’s go to John 18:4-6. This is when Jesus was taken captive on His last night on earth.

John 18:4 *Jesus therefore, knowing all things that should come upon him, went forth, and said unto them, Whom seek ye? [Judas with the band of Roman soldiers with knives and spears]*

5) They answered him, Jesus of Nazareth. Jesus saith unto them, [ego eimi] I am he. [I am Jesus of Nazareth] And Judas also, which betrayed him, stood with them.

6) As soon then as he had said unto them, I am he, they went backward, and fell to the ground. (KJV)

Some people say, *ego eimi* is “I am He” and therefore “I am God, I am the God of the Old Testament”. But is that what this says? No, it isn’t. What is the context? The context is, “Whom are you seeking?” This mob comes out led by Judas and Jesus says, “Who are you seeking?” They said, we are seeking this Jesus of Nazareth and He says, “I am He, it’s Me”. Jesus simply says, I am the one you are seeking—that’s all He is saying. Not the “I AM” of the God of the Old Testament; that is such a huge stretch, it boggles the mind. He is just saying, “I am the One you are seeking.” They fell back as a graphic demonstration of the power of the Son of the living God. To make an impression on this. This has nothing to do with who is the God of the Old Testament.

Let’s look at the other account of *ego eimi* in John 8:57-58. Jesus is addressing the Jews who said He had a demon.

John 8:57 *Then said the Jews unto him, Thou art not yet fifty years old, and hast thou seen Abraham?*

58) Jesus said unto them, Verily, verily, I say unto you, Before Abraham was, I am [ego eimi]. (KJV)

What is the context? It's not who is the God of the Old Testament, the context is Abraham. Jesus said, "I was around when Abraham was born." He's not saying, "I am the I AM that talked to Moses." All He's saying is, "Before Abraham existed, I existed. I was already there before Abraham was even born." As I said in modern English, we don't say, "it's I" or "I am he". Jesus said, when He was coming to the boat, in our language today He's saying, "It's Me, Jesus, don't be afraid, don't worry, I'm here." That's all He was saying.

In the midst of these incredible miracles, which no doubt got the disciples attention—we've read all three accounts—and those miracles if indeed Jesus was the God of the Old Testament, finally, finally, they got their attention. Without a doubt they got their attention and Jesus stated, "It's Me my friends, don't worry." The miracles proved that He was indeed the Son of God. The disciples finally, after all that happened that day, realized that indeed He was the Son of God; the God that their ancestors had worshipped all those years.

Let's go back to the context now. When we combine the three accounts—if you put all three accounts together—here's what we have:

Jesus told the disciples to get into the boat, it wasn't their idea. He told them, He constrained them, He ordered them, to get into the boat. He stayed back to pray by Himself, after dismissing the 5000. Evening was coming, but it was probably still daylight when they got into the boat. Around 6pm a storm hits the disciples as they are out, starting their way across the lake. The text says that a great wind was blowing and they were tossed by the waves, which pushed them off course three or four miles. Then, at the beginning of the 4th watch—3am—the disciples are still struggling. They had been rowing from 6pm until 3am. You imagine, if you've ever rowed a boat, to row for that many hours—for 9 hours, at least—against not just over a placid lake, a stream or a river, but rowing against a stiff, stiff, wind; for 9 hours. They are still struggling. They're wet—the wind is blowing up a gale so the waves are coming across the boat, getting them wet. Then you have the wind blowing and the fact that they've been rowing for 9 hours. So they are about shot and they're becoming hypothermic. Hypothermia is where heat is leaving your body faster than your body can generate heat. If you look at the consequences of hypothermia, you're starting to die. You get delusional, your mind isn't thinking straight, you're losing strength because you're losing heat and your body can't replace that heat. Their lives that are in absolute danger when Christ starts walking across the water. He picks this exact moment to perform this miracle of walking towards them while they are struggling for their lives.

At first the disciples think He is a spirit—a ghost. They don't recognize Him but they notice that this isn't a normal human being; human beings don't walk across the water. They cry out in fear and the text says, *He was about to pass by them*. They see Him—not recognizing Him in the beginning—and cry out in fear. Then, at the last minute when they cry out in fear, instead of passing by them, He comes to them in the boat and says, "It's Me, don't be afraid, don't worry." Then Peter recognizes Jesus, he takes a few

steps toward Him on the water in faith, looking at Jesus. Then the wind is blowing, the rain is pounding and waves are hitting him, even though he's walking on water, and he gets distracted—he gets his mind off of Jesus—and begins to be afraid again and starts to sink. Jesus saves Peter and then gets into the boat. The minute He gets into the boat, the storm immediately stops. Just stops. Then suddenly, when they notice the storm has stopped, they look around and they are on land—they are at their destination. Only then do the disciples exclaim, "*Surely You are the Son of the living God.*"

We've summarized the three accounts, now let's get to the 3rd point. This scriptural account raises some questions that need to be answered. In this 3rd point I'm just going to itemize the questions that at least came to my mind and probably would come to yours. Before we do that, let's establish the fact that Jesus loved the disciples. That's the overriding principle. Let's go to John 13:1.

John 13:1 *Now before the feast of the passover, when Jesus knew that his hour was come that he should depart out of this world unto the Father, having loved his own which were in the world, he loved them unto the end. (KJV)*

The overriding motivation of Jesus was His love for the twelve. With that in mind, let's ask some questions.

3. Why did Christ tell the twelve to get into the boat if He knew a storm was coming?

Why did He tell them to get into the boat when He was going to create the storm? When the storm came, why didn't Jesus stop it? They dealt with the storm for 9 hours, why didn't He stop it? He clearly had the power to stop it. Why did Jesus let the disciples struggle for their very lives for 9 hours—from 6pm to 3am the next day—as He sat on the shore and watched them. He calmly watched them and they were struggling for their lives. Why would Jesus have passed by them in their greatest moment of need. That's according to the gospel of Mark. He was about to *pass them by*.

We're going to address all of these questions before we are finished, but before we do, that leads to the 4th point.

4. Let's look at the overriding spiritual principles which will speak to all of these questions.

The spiritual principles of God our Father and His Son—first I won't number these—but to enter the Kingdom of God, we are told very plainly that we have to be tried, tested, and proven. Let's go to Acts 14:21-22 out of the New Living Translation.

Acts 14:21 *After preaching the Good News in Derbe and making many disciples, Paul and Barnabas returned to Lystra, Iconium, and Antioch of Pisidia,*

22) *where they strengthened the believers. They encouraged them to continue in the faith, reminding them that we must suffer many hardships to enter the Kingdom of God. (NLT)*

That is an overriding principle that applies to all of Jesus' disciples—no matter what age. All who seek the Kingdom are destined to suffer; that's just a fact. James has talked about that many times in previous sermons. We've all discussed that *through much tribulation, we enter the Kingdom of God*. That is a principle. Notice Hebrews 12:4-11. When I came into the church in the mid-60's there was a common—at least in Michigan where I came into the church—that bad things don't happen to God's people. If bad things happened to you, you must be a sinner. That's not what the Bible says. Out of the NIV.

Hebrews 12:4 *In your struggle against sin, you have not yet resisted to the point of shedding your blood.*

5) *And have you completely forgotten this word of encouragement that addresses you as a father addresses his son? It says, "My son, do not make light of the Lord's discipline, and do not lose heart when he rebukes you,*

6) *because the Lord disciplines the one he loves, and he chastens everyone he accepts as his son."*

7) *Endure hardship as discipline; God is treating you as his children. For what children are not disciplined by their father?*

8) *If you are not disciplined—and everyone undergoes discipline—then you are not legitimate, not true sons and daughters at all.*

9) *Moreover, we have all had human fathers who disciplined us and we respected them for it. How much more should we submit to the Father of spirits and live!*

10) *They disciplined us for a little while as they thought best; but God disciplines us for our good [always for our benefit, so that we can become sons and daughters of His in His Kingdom], in order that we may share in his holiness.*

[That's the ultimate goal—eternal life in His presence, sharing in His holiness.]

11) *No discipline seems pleasant at the time, but painful. Later on, however, it produces a harvest of righteousness and peace for those who have been trained by it. (NIV)*

We see here that chastening by our Father always results in our long term benefit. It may hurt for a while, but it's to chasten us, to discipline us, to make us head in the right direction, to mold and shape our character so that we can be His sons and daughters. Let's go to the scripture that has been quoted so many times recently, Romans 8:28. I'll read this out of the NIV.

Romans 8:28 *And we know that in all things God works for the good of those who love him, who have been called according to his purpose. (NIV)*

Everything our Father does is for our benefit. Everything He causes to come our way, everything He allows to come our way. We may not see it at the time, we may think it's

a horrible trial we are going through, but it's for the good of those who love Him. It was even true in the Old Testament. This carnal nation of Israel without the Holy Spirit, it shows the nature of our Father and His Son. Let's go to Genesis 50:18-21. We're breaking into the account of Joseph being reunited with his brothers. Remember they planned evil for him. They wanted to even kill him. They sold him into slavery. I'll read this out of the New Living Translation.

Genesis 50:18 *Then his brothers came and threw themselves down before Joseph. "Look, we are your slaves!" they said.*

19) *But Joseph replied, "Don't be afraid of me. Am I God, that I can punish you?"*

20) *You intended to harm me, but God intended it all for good. (NLT)*

Everything Joseph went through—all of the trials and tribulations he went through—was ultimately for his good and as we will see, for the nation's good; the nation of Israel.

20 continued) *... He brought me to this position so I could save the lives of many people.*

21) *No, don't be afraid. I will continue to take care of you and your children." So he reassured them by speaking kindly to them. (NLT)*

As bad as it was for Joseph—wrongly accused, being in prison, horrible conditions—it all turns out for the good and he sees this at this time. None of us have been through what Joseph went through and yet, it was all for his good and the nation of Israel's good. Let's go to Deuteronomy 8:15-16. Moses is speaking, looking back at the end of his life over what had happened. I'll read this out of the NIV.

Deuteronomy 8:15 *He [Yehovah] led you through the vast and dreadful wilderness [horrible place, nobody would pick it to live], that thirsty and waterless land, with its venomous snakes and scorpions. He brought you water out of hard rock.*

16) *He gave you manna to eat in the wilderness, something your ancestors had never known, to humble and test you so that in the end it might go well with you. (NIV)*

All of that they had to go through, walking through the desert and yet miracle after miracle—everything that He brought upon them or allowed to come upon them was for their ultimate good. Our Father is concerned about how it ends—how we end. Not how we begin, not in the middle of our journey, but how we end. That is His overriding concern. Our Father always sees the beginning and the end. He is eternal and can look into the future and He can bring circumstances to pass so that we get what we absolutely need. Every action that He causes or allows is always for the goal of our being in the Kingdom of God—our being His children. Our Father always, sees the big picture. At the same time, He knows our limitations. He promises not to give us more than we can handle, more than we can endure. Notice 1 Corinthians 10:13. In the middle of a trial, we need to remember this. We aren't going to be overwhelmed by the trial because our Father will not allow it. I'll read this out of the New Living Translation.

1 Corinthians 10:13 *The temptations in your life are no different from what others experience. And God is faithful. He will not allow the temptation to be more than you can stand. When you are tempted, he will show you a way out so that you can endure.* (NLT)

What love He has for each one of us, when we think about it. Everything He causes or allows is for our benefit and yet even though it's painful or stressful, He always makes a path forward or a way out of it. He shows us the way. What love He has for us!

Now we've seen the spiritual principles that the Father and His Son operate by. Now we can answer those questions that this account brings up. Why did Jesus tell the twelve to get into the boat when He knew a storm was coming? When the storm came and hit them, why didn't He stop it? He clearly had the power to stop it. The answer is, He wanted the disciples to experience that storm. He wanted the disciples to feel in danger for their very lives, or the fact that they might lose their lives. He also wanted to put them at the extreme limits of their own physical power and their own personal strength. Remember they were cold, they were wet, they were exhausted, they were hypothermic, they were losing more heat than they could generate. In other words, He put them in a situation where they were physically helpless. The storm was about to overtake them, the boat was about ready to sink, they were absolutely exhausted, they had no more energy at all—they were physically helpless. At that point they had no one to turn to except Him. No one could rescue them except Jesus. He allowed all of that to happen so that He could miraculously save them. Could miraculously, at the last minute, rescue them. Only then would they learn that He was indeed the Son of God.

Remember Matthew 14:33, we read earlier, when the ship was at the shore and the boat came and they worshiped Him and said, "*of a truth You are the Son of the living God.*" You see He brought all of these circumstances to pass. The trip across the lake, the storm, rowing for nine hours, hypothermic, wet, tired, cold—He allowed all of that—allowed those circumstances to bring them to the point that they would realize that Jesus is indeed the Son of the living God. He does the same for us. Think about that. He will bring us right to the edge. He and His Father will bring circumstances to pass in our lives to teach us exactly the same thing. Who is God the Father? Who is the Son of the living God?

That's one question answered. Why did Jesus let the disciples struggle for their very lives to the point of right to the edge? Nine hours—6pm to 3am—think about rowing against the waves for nine hours and He was sitting on the shore watching them. Calmly sitting on the shore, watching them struggle and struggle. Why did He allow that to happen for nine hours? He does the same for us. He allowed that to happen so that He could evaluate them. How are they going to handle this? Stress brings out strengths in our character, but stress also brings out weaknesses in our character. He was watching them to see who's going to quit, who's going to whine and complain, who's going to blame Yehovah for all their troubles, or blame Jesus for all their troubles? Or who would help the others, who would encourage the others. He is watching to see how

they would handle this stress. All of this so that He could further teach them going forward. He sees their weaknesses; He sees their strengths and now He knows—particularly in their weaknesses—how He can teach them going forward so they can grow in character. He would shape their character in the future. He does exactly the same thing with us. He allows us to go through stressors and then watches how we handle them and then He knows what we need going forward. He knows what we have to work on and He will teach us, bring circumstances to pass, to help us work on what we need to be in the Kingdom of God.

Then the last question was, why was Jesus ready to pass by them in their greatest moment of need? That is according to the gospel of Mark—the only account. Let's go back to read it again, Mark 6:48-50.

Mark 6:48 ... *he cometh unto them, walking upon the sea, and would have passed by them.* (KJV)

The NIV says, "He was about to pass by them". But notice what happens.

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

50) For they all saw him, and were troubled. And immediately [when He saw them troubled, agitated, confused] he talked with them, and saith unto them, Be of good cheer: it is I; be not afraid. (KJV)

Mark is the only account to mention this, that Jesus was about to "pass on by". The answer is pretty simple. He went and was walking toward the ship and if nothing happened, it says He was about to pass on by. He waited until the last absolute minute to come to them; when they were right at the edge of their strength, at their limitations on several fronts. They cried out in fear. What was His response when they cried out in fear? He said, "Don't be afraid, it's Me". There is a lesson for us there. If we cry out in fear, we're not alone. If we are at our limits and can't take anymore—whatever it is—and cry out in fear, Jesus is right there and says, "It's Me, don't be afraid, don't worry."

Another thing to think about when we are in the middle of a crisis is this. Will we allow Jesus just to walk on by and not appeal to His Father and to Him, saying, "I'm afraid or I'm at my limits, I need help?" If we do that, then here is the response. Jesus says, "Don't be afraid, I'm right here."

We've seen now, that everything Jesus caused or allowed that day and that night was for the benefit of His disciples—for their long-term benefit.

The 5th and last point, very quickly.

5. Why did Jesus walk on water?

Remember the context of all three accounts; the miracles of the loaves and the fishes came first, the 5000 men said surely this is the prophet we have been expecting, this is the Messiah. But this understanding did not register with the disciples. So why did Jesus decide to walk on water? To demonstrate that He was the Son of the Living God, He was the Messiah. The disciples had not acknowledged that up to this point, even after the miraculous feeding of the 5000, even though the 5000 did. He told His disciples to get into the boat, He stayed back to pray by Himself, He caused the storm to build, the disciples were tossed by the waves—wet, cold, tired, and hungry. At the beginning of the 4th watch at 3am, they were struggling, they were hypothermic, they had been rowing for nine hours—perfect conditions for hypothermia and going downhill very quickly. The disciples' lives were definitely in danger when He started walking on the water. He walks out to the boat and when they are at their absolute limits, Jesus said, "Don't be afraid, it's Me". The sea became calm, they looked around and they were at their destination at the shore and after all of this, the disciples finally said—as we read earlier in Mark 14:33—they worshipped Him saying, "Of a truth, You are the Son of the living God". He orchestrated these tremendous miracles to get the disciples to finally realize that He was indeed the Son of the living God.

In concluding, everything that Jesus did—that day, earlier in the day, that night—feeding the 5000, telling His disciples to get into the boat and row across the lake, causing the storm, walking on water, it was all done to fix in the minds of His disciples, that He was indeed the Son of the God they worshipped. This miraculous incident is there, written for us in this intimate detail, to prove to us that Jesus is indeed *the Son of the living God*.