

Teaching Points

This brief section in John 6 records the fifth “sign” in John’s gospel. Since John’s record of this miracle is condensed, we’re going to lean heavily on the testimonies of Matthew and Mark’s gospel to fill in some details of the story. Yet again, this sign is evidence of Christ’s deity and a witness to the validity of His claims.

Verse 15 connects this miracle with the preceding one. Right after feeding the crowds, Jesus withdrew to a mountain to pray. Matthew 14:22 adds the detail that Jesus made His disciples depart ahead of him by boat, leaving Him alone on land. This is significant because Jesus is setting the stage for what He’s about to do. He wants some separation from His disciples for 2 reasons: #1. He wanted to spend solitary time communing with His Father in prayer. #2. He wants the disciples to experience the storm without Him being in the boat with them.

Discussion Question: What is the significance of Jesus praying alone like this? What do we need to learn from this example?

***Thoughts:** It’s an awesome picture of the communion of the Godhead. God the Son spoke to God the Father in prayer. This is a picture of the true humanity of Jesus - since He prays to the Father as a way of communicating with Him while Jesus was on earth. It also demonstrates Christ’s constant dependency on His Father. He did the works that His Father laid out for Him and He spoke the words that His Father gave Him (John 4:34, 5:20, 36). This should motivate us to a constant mindset of prayer. If Jesus found comfort and strength in praying to the Father so should we.*

Let’s consider the struggle that the disciples found themselves in. They’re out on the water and they get caught in a fierce storm. They’re rowing hard and they don’t have Jesus with them. This is exactly what Christ wanted! He’s about to demonstrate to them His supremacy over the forces of nature.

Discussion Question: Does God still bring His people into difficult circumstances in order to demonstrate His power in their life?

***Thoughts:** Most definitely. Most of us have experienced the love and grace of God during fiery trials in our lives. Even greater than these personal experiences is the objective testimony of Scripture which tells us clearly that God has a purpose for our trials (James 1:2-4, Romans 5:3-5).*

Although John doesn’t include the details of Peter walking on the water, we’re going to include them in our study. Matthew 14:28-31 tells us that Peter had the courage to go see Jesus while He was walking on water. **“Lord, if it is You, command me to come to You on the water.”** What a request! Jesus granted this request and enabled Peter to walk on water too. This is a tremendous scene of God’s power at work in His

people. Peter is doing something impossible because Jesus is exercising almighty power in him. We should always remember the nature of our union with Christ. He doesn't merely give us life and power - as if they were commodities that existed in a treasury somewhere. Instead, He shares His own life and power with us. In other words, our union with Christ is a personal participation in His life, power, and love.

It's very easy to point out Peter's imperfection as he takes his eyes off Jesus and begins to sink. We know that focusing on the storm and losing focus of Christ will always cause us to sink, But we don't give Peter enough credit. The other 11 disciples stayed in the boat! Peter had the faith and courage to get out and go see Jesus in the storm. Let this be an encouragement to us to exercise our faith in a strong Savior who enables us to do things that we could never accomplish in our own ability.

The end of this incident is instructive...

First, The disciples receive Jesus into the boat with them. Verse 19 says they had rowed about three or four miles by the time Jesus appeared to them. They were likely exhausted since Matthew 14:24 tells us they were rowing against the wind. They were rowing hard for several miles, being tossed around by the waves, and not exactly sure of Christ's whereabouts. They go from being afraid in verse 19 (thinking Jesus was a ghost according to Mark 6:49) to being comforted by His presence once He joined them in the boat.

Second, the wind immediately ceased when Jesus entered the boat (Matthew 14:32, Mark 6:51). This is consistent with the whole theme of this miracle. Christ is showing His disciples that the laws that govern our physical world are under His command. Nature is not an impersonal force with its own independent qualities. Christ is the one who upholds all things by His almighty power (Hebrews 1:3, Colossians 1:17). The storm arises at His command and the winds cease at His word.

Discussion Question: Why is it important to understand that God both sends the storm and calms it?

Thoughts: *Scripture testifies to God's sovereignty over all aspects of creation. We obscure the truth and undermine biblical teaching when we only attribute to God the calming of the storm while pretending that some force outside of Himself caused the storm in the first place. God is wise in all His ways and even when He arranges storms for us to go through **it's always for good reason**. In this miracle, the stormy sea was the stage for Christ to reveal His power to His disciples. God is free to teach us any way He chooses and all creation is at His disposal.*

Third, the disciples are deeply impacted by this display of Christ's power. Matthew 14:33, **"Then those who were in the boat came and worshiped Him, saying, 'Truly You are the Son of God.'"** Mark 6:51b, **"And they were greatly amazed in themselves beyond measure, and marveled."** Remember, belief is one of the major

themes in John's gospel. Here we have the disciples seeing the power of Christ and believing in Him.

Finally, John says the boat immediately arrived at the land where they were going. As soon as the miracle was over they arrived at their destination. There were no ordinary days with Jesus - and this was no ordinary boat trip across the Sea of Galilee.

Prayer Focus

Worship Jesus just like the disciples did when He got into the boat with them. Acknowledge that He is God's Son and the one who has power and authority over all creation.

Express trust in Christ to get you through the storms of life. State your confidence in God's wisdom and purpose even when you find yourself tossed about in a storm. Let's learn from this miracle and pray accordingly.