

Week 42: Jesus Walks on Water - Faith in the Storm

A Sabbath Family Bible Study

Introduction

After feeding the five thousand, Jesus sent His disciples away by boat while He remained behind to pray. Night fell, the wind rose, and the sea became violent. The men who were seasoned fishermen found themselves fighting against forces beyond their control. Then, in the darkest part of the night, Jesus came to them - walking on the water.

This account is about a miracle, about fear, faith, authority, and recognition. It reveals Christ not only as provider, but as Lord over this world. The sea in Scripture often represents disorder, chaos and danger. Yet here, Jesus walks upon it.

This week's study teaches families that storms are not accidents. Christ sometimes sends us into difficulty. But He never abandons His own. He comes in the storm, not always removing it immediately, but revealing Himself within it. Faith is not proven in calm waters. It is proven when the wind is strong and the footing feels uncertain.

Scripture Reading (KJV)

(Matthew 14:22–24, Matthew 14:25–27, Matthew 14:28–31, Matthew 14:28 32–33, Psalm 46:1–3)

Matthew 14:22–24 - Sent Into the Storm

22 And straightway Jesus constrained his disciples to get into a ship, and to go before him unto the other side, while he sent the multitudes away.

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.

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

Commentary

Jesus “constrained” them, He compelled them to go. The storm was not the result of disobedience. It occurred in the path of obedience. We must understand that: hardship does not

always mean failure. Sometimes obedience leads directly into testing. The disciples were exactly where Christ told them to be, and still the waves were against them.

Meanwhile, Jesus prayed. Though unseen, He was not absent. The same Lord who sends us into difficulty intercedes on our behalf.

Matthew 14:25–27 - Fear in the Night

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.

Commentary

The fourth watch was between 3:00 and 6:00 AM, the darkest, most exhausting part of the night. The disciples saw Jesus but did not recognize Him at first because fear distorted perception. They mistook His deliverance for danger.

Christ's words are firm and calming: "Be of good cheer; it is I; be not afraid." The literal phrase is "I AM." The same divine name spoken to Moses now walks upon the sea. The antidote to fear is not self-confidence, but recognition of who Christ is, and ultimately faith.

Matthew 14:28–31 - Peter Steps Out

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.

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

Commentary

Peter often speaks before thinking, but here, his request is bold faith. He desires to be where Jesus is, even if it requires stepping into impossible circumstances. For a moment, he walks above the storm. But when his focus shifts from Christ to the wind, his fear returns. Like Peter our circumstances sometimes regain dominance in our mind. And like him we begin to sink.

Notice what saves him: not pride, not strength, but a simple cry, "Lord, save me." And immediately, Jesus responds. Faith is not perfection, but direction. Even faltering faith that cries out to Christ is met with mercy.

Matthew 14:32–33 - Worship in the Boat

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.

Commentary

The storm ceases only after Jesus enters the boat. The disciples' conclusion is worship. The storm revealed Christ's identity more clearly than calm seas ever could. We should be reminded in this, that trials often clarify our theology. Difficulty exposes what we truly believe about God's authority and presence.

Storms either deepen worship or deepen fear. The difference lies in whether Christ is recognized and trusted.

Discussion Questions for All Ages

Young Children

- Who told the disciples to get in the boat?
- Why were they afraid?
- What did Peter say when he started to sink?

Older Children & Teens

- Why would Jesus send His disciples into a storm?

- What caused Peter to begin sinking?
- How can you keep your focus on Christ when life feels overwhelming?

Adults

- Are there storms in your life that came through obedience rather than rebellion?
- What “winds” distract your focus from Christ?
- Does your household respond to trials with panic or prayer?

Psalm Reading - Psalm 46:1–3 (KJV)

1 God is our refuge and strength, a very present help in trouble.

2 Therefore will not we fear, though the earth be removed, and though the mountains be carried into the midst of the sea;

3 Though the waters thereof roar and be troubled, though the mountains shake with the swelling thereof.

Commentary

God is described as “very present.” Even if mountains fall into the sea (the most dramatic image of chaos) God remains refuge and strength. The disciples experienced this Psalm firsthand. The sea roared and the wind raged, yet Christ stood above it all.

Hymn: “Eternal Father, Strong to Save”

By William Whiting (1860)

1.

Eternal Father, strong to save,
Whose arm hath bound the restless wave,
Who bidd'st the mighty ocean deep
Its own appointed limits keep:

O hear us when we cry to Thee
For those in peril on the sea.

2.

O Christ, whose voice the waters heard
And hushed their raging at Thy word,
Who walkedst on the foaming deep,
And calm amid the storm didst sleep:
O hear us when we cry to Thee
For those in peril on the sea.

3.

Most Holy Spirit, who didst brood
Upon the chaos dark and rude,
And bid its angry tumult cease,
And give, for wild confusion, peace:
O hear us when we cry to Thee
For those in peril on the sea.

4.

O Trinity of love and power,
Our brethren shield in danger's hour;
From rock and tempest, fire and foe,
Protect them wheresoe'er they go;
Thus evermore shall rise to Thee
Glad hymns of praise from land and sea.

Family Application Points

1. **Obedience Does Not Prevent Storms**
Teach your family that difficulty can exist even in faithful obedience.
2. **Recognize Christ in the Darkness**
Fear distorts vision. Train your home to identify God's presence before reacting.
3. **Keep Eyes Fixed on Christ**
Focus determines stability. What captures attention shapes response.

4. **Cry Out Quickly**

When sinking begins, pride delays rescue. Humility calls immediately.

5. **Let Storms Produce Worship**

Hardship should refine faith, not weaken it. Encourage reflection after trials.

 **A Sabbath Feast Prayer**

Father, we thank You that You are present even in the storm. As we sit at this table, bless this food before us and bless the loving hands that prepared it. Teach our family to trust You when winds rise and waves threaten. Keep our eyes fixed on Christ, and when fear overtakes us, give us humility to cry out quickly. Let our home rest in the steady confidence that You rule over every storm. In Jesus' name, Amen.

 **Closing Prayer**

Lord Jesus, You who walk upon the waters, strengthen our faith. Guard our hearts from panic and pride. When storms arise in our home, our work, or our minds, remind us that You are near. Teach us to step out in obedience when You call and to cling to You when we falter. May our household respond to every trial with deeper trust and truer worship. In Your holy name we pray, Amen.