

JESUS WALKS ON THE WATER

Mark 6:45-56

Key Verse: 6:48b

"About the fourth watch of the night he went out to them, walking on the lake. He was about to pass by them...."

Today's passage is a story about Jesus walking on the water. This event shows us that Jesus is the Creator of the heavens and earth and Jesus is God himself. Nobody walked on the water. But in his divinity, Jesus walked on the water. In this passage, we also learn what we should overcome first to grow as disciples of Jesus; we must overcome fear to be raised as disciples of Jesus. Once again, we learn Jesus' shepherd heart when we see that he takes care of so many sheep one by one until no one was left.

I. Jesus went up to pray (45-46)

As we have studied, Jesus attempted three times to have a vacation for his disciples (4:35; 5:1; 6:31). This time is the fourth time that Jesus wanted to give them a short vacation to get some rest. This time Jesus did not just try to escape the crowd. Jesus had a strategy to send his disciples away first to a vacation spot and then to dismiss the crowd. The strategy worked. Jesus made his disciples get into a boat and go on ahead of him to Bethsaida, while he was with the crowd (45). It is not recorded here, but when Jesus saw that the disciples were far away from him, and that they were almost in the middle of the sea, he also left the crowd.

What did Jesus do when he sent his disciples away by boat and he left the crowd successfully? Did Jesus immediately try to get to the disciples to join them for a vacation, for he needed some time to rest? Did Jesus sit on the grass to put himself together? No. Jesus went to pray. Verse 46 says, "After leaving them, he went up on a mountainside to pray." In this small event, we find Jesus' personal relationship with God. Jesus went to God first to pray. To Jesus, prayer is the time of listening to God, and, at the same time, it is the time of talking to God. In order to obey God's will for world salvation, Jesus had to humble himself. In order to

obey God's will for world salvation, Jesus came down from the throne. In order to obey God's will for world salvation, Jesus gave up the honor and power of the kingdom of God and became nobody (Php 2:5-7). Therefore, Jesus had all the rights and privileges to carry out the earthly messianic ministry. But Jesus did not carry out the earthly messianic ministry according to his idea. Jesus came to God to pray, so that he could listen to God's instructions. Jesus prayed so that he could report to God what he had done.

When we pray, usually we nag God to grant us all our requests. When we pray, usually we put a tremendous imposition on him and expect everything will be granted. But when we see Jesus' life of prayer in Mark's Gospel, we see that first Jesus prayed to listen to God's instructions in the early morning. Mark 1:35 says, "Very early in the morning, while it was still dark, Jesus got up, left the house and went off to a solitary place, where he prayed." Jesus' prayer in 6:46 clearly shows us that Jesus reported how he obeyed God's instructions. Second, Jesus prayed to receive God's power to obey God's will. When we read the entire gospel of Mark, we see that Jesus received the power of God through his prayer. The prayer at the Garden of Gethsemane is a good example. Third, Jesus also prayed on so many occasions for an individual person. In short, Jesus prayed to save each individual soul.

At this particular time, Jesus prayed for his disciples after feeding the five thousand people with the five loaves and the two fish. It is obvious that Jesus prayed for them to feed 5,000 people with five loaves and two fish. Obviously, Jesus prayed for them to be responsible people for the flock of God. He also prayed that his future disciples might feed the innumerable flock of God with the principle of the five loaves and the two fish. Jesus knew that the event of feeding the 5,000 people so alarmed people in authority that they began to plot to destroy Jesus' ministry. Nevertheless, Jesus planted the seed of miraculous faith in the disciples. At that time, the disciples were more interested in bread than miraculous faith. Nevertheless Jesus came and prayed for his disciples to have faith in God to feed the flock of God of the whole world. Most importantly, Jesus came and prayed to God to maintain a vine and branch love relationship with God.

A certain medical student attended a UBF winter conference. After the conference, he said, "I am no more old Bob. I am a new Bob. I want to be a great servant of God next to Billy Graham." But from the next day he gave up his life of faith. This happened when his faith was based on his emotional feeling. His failure is that he did not pray before making his decision of faith. When he wanted to be a great servant of God without prayer, the devil immediately made his weak faith stumble, saying, "You better be a great servant of God after medical studies."

In our life of faith, the most important thing is to pray to God. But these days people do not pray. Most people have a habit of calculating. Those who only calculate become the slaves of anxiety and fear. On the other hand, when we pray we can experience the power of God. When we pray we can have the desire to live for the glory of God. When we pray the desire to be a great man begins to burn in our hearts. We must pray in the time of hardship. We must pray when we are in sin for the grace of forgiveness. We must pray especially in the time of God's blessing. We must always pray as our Lord Jesus Christ showed us by his example. Let's read verse 46 together. "After leaving them, he went up on a mountainside to pray."

II. Jesus trains his disciples not to fear (47-52)

First, very fearful disciples (47-50a). When evening came, the boat was in the middle of the lake. The moonlight was shining upon them for a while. But suddenly the wind turned against them and they had to strain at the oars. Jesus saw that they were in deep trouble. It was about the fourth watch of the night, around 3:00 a.m. Jesus was ready to rescue them. So he came near them. In the Jewish thought, the sea ghost was most horrible because it made the sea water turbulent and made so many fishermen die and made fishermen's widowed wives and children cry all their lifetimes. The disciples saw Jesus walking on the water. They thought he was a ghost (49). They cried out, because they all saw him and were terrified (50a). Whenever they started out to a quiet place to rest, the sea water prevented them from doing so. There were Peter, James and John, who were veteran fishermen. When they were tired, their minds were also tired. Even if Jesus came to rescue them, they saw Jesus as a ghost and cried

out as if they were about to die. This is the psychology of ungodly people.

The disciples of Jesus should be the soldiers of Christ who know no fear. But the disciples were full of fear. Because of their fear, even when they saw Jesus, they saw Jesus as a ghost. This shows us that they did not have basic faith. They had no faith that Jesus is the Creator of heaven and earth. They had no faith that Jesus is the Son of God. When they had no personal faith in God they were slaves of fear.

Timothy was the right-hand man of St. Paul. But he had a fear problem. So Paul said in 2 Timothy 1:7, "For God did not give us a spirit of timidity, but a spirit of power, of love and of self-discipline." Timothy learned Paul's courageous faith and served Paul unto death as his assistant, even in the Roman prison. Although it is not recorded, obviously, he suffered and was martyred together with St. Paul.

There are two kinds of children. One is the children of God. The other is the children of the devil. There are wars between the children of God and the children of the devil. The children of the devil are eager to corrupt the children of God morally. The children of the devil are eager to deceive the children of God, saying, "If you live by faith you are going to starve to death." The devil is a liar and the father of lies (Jn 8:44b). The devils are the enemies of God. The devil always prowls around like a roaring lion looking for someone to devour (1Pe 5:8b). The children of God cannot ignore them. The children of God must fight against the devils who destroy the children of God. The children of God are those who live by the promises of God. The children of God believe that if we believe in the promises of God, God will bless us abundantly. The children of God believe that Jesus is the Son of God who died on the tree for our sins. The disciples of Jesus are all like four-star generals who command his soldiers. And the disciples of Jesus are Christian soldiers who have courageous faith.

When we are going to be Christians we must overcome the spirit of fear in us (Ro 8:15). New Christians are targets of the devil. Therefore, the senior soldiers of Christ must fight for them. President Roosevelt said, "We have nothing to fear but fear itself." Fear itself is the devil. How can we overcome the fear of the devil? When we have fear of God we fear nothing

else. When we have no fear of God, the devil comes and plants the spirit of fear in us and makes us fearful all the time.

Second, Jesus plants a sense of history in the disciples (50b-52). Jesus spoke to them and said, "Take courage! It is I. Don't be afraid" (50b). The disciples saw with their eyes it was Jesus. The disciples heard that he spoke to them, "Take courage! It is I. Don't be afraid." But still they were gripped with fear and they saw Jesus as a ghost. To them, the ghost was climbing into the boat to catch them. They all must have fainted, not knowing it was Jesus who came to rescue them.

The author Mark comments that they were so fearful because they had no sense of history. Verse 52 says, "...for they had not understood about the loaves; their hearts were hardened." This means the disciples saw Jesus who fed 5,000 people with the five loaves and two fish. When they brought the five loaves and two fish, Jesus satisfied them. Still there were twelve basketfuls of broken pieces left over. Through this event Jesus showed them that he is the Son of God. Through this event Jesus showed them that he is the Creator of heaven and earth. Through this event Jesus showed them that he is the Ruler of history. Not only had Jesus fed the 5,000, but he had also stilled the stormy sea (4:35-41). Jesus had shown them that he is the compassionate God. They had seen so many events which showed them that Jesus is the Son of God. The disciples only enjoyed such a great and glorious messianic work of Jesus as fun, and no more. As a result, the disciples did not have God in their hearts. What is worse, they could not remember what God had done through Jesus. They were blank because they were paralyzed by fear.

Third, when we remember God's grace we can have a sense of God's history. When we studied the Gerasene demoniac, most of us laughed at him. But we were just like the Gerasene demoniac. Most of us were slaves of sorrow and slaves of fatalism. Most of us were busy in self-torture. But God saved each of us through his Son Jesus Christ. When we remember his grace, we can be children of God. But if we forget his grace, we immediately become the children of the devil. Paul is great, not because his outward appearance was so gorgeous, but because he remembered God's grace to the end. When Paul thought about himself, he felt that he

was born abnormally because of his past sins (1Co 15:8). But when he thought about the grace of Jesus he could recognize himself as a child of God. So he said in 1 Corinthians 15:10, "But by the grace of God I am what I am, and his grace to me was not without effect..." Peter, who knew the grace of Jesus, commanded the soldiers of Christ at the time when persecution was most severe. Paul, who knew the grace of Jesus, conquered the huge Roman Empire fearlessly with the gospel of Jesus.

It is easy to remember the grace of Jesus when we are in trouble. But when God blesses us abundantly we immediately forget God's grace, not because we are so bad, but because the devil whispers, "Now you gotta eat and drink, right?" So Paul said in 2 Timothy 2:1, "You then, my son, be strong in the grace that is in Christ Jesus." As long as we abide in the grace of our Lord Jesus Christ we can be courageous.

III. Jesus cares for his sick children (53-56)

When Jesus' company crossed over the lake, they landed at Gennesaret and anchored there. Now the time came to eat and rest. This time, nobody should bother them. But people recognized Jesus. They ran throughout the whole region and carried the sick on mats to wherever they heard he was. And wherever he went--into villages, towns or countryside--they placed the sick in the marketplaces. They begged him to let them touch even the edge of his cloak, and all who touched him were healed. Here the phrase, "all who touched him were healed," tells us that Jesus took care of every one of them and all of them were healed. This small event demonstrates that God wants to save all peoples of all nations, missing no one.

In this passage we learn that Jesus wants us to overcome fear with faith until we see Jesus, not as a ghost, but as Jesus the Son of God and the Ruler of history. Let's also remember that Jesus prayed to God as of first importance.