

**Jesus Clarifies Who He is**  
**Livin' the Life**  
**John 6:16-21**  
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David Taylor

We are continuing our series in the Gospel of John, Livin' the Life. My goal for this series is that we taste and see the infinite glories of Jesus and the life he promises! Today we look at the fifth sign, Jesus walking on the water in John 6:16-21, which occurs right after the feeding of the five thousand. This story is included in all the gospels but John focuses his version on Jesus. So, let's look at this passage together.

Remember that John wrote so that we would believe Jesus is the Christ, the Son of God or as he says in the beginning of his gospel, we have seen his glory, glory as of the only Son from the Father, full of grace and truth (1:14). Two weeks ago, we looked at Jesus miraculously feeding a crowd of fifteen to twenty thousand people. This is significant for this reason, the average person spent most of their income just for food. The crowd knew their Old Testament and how God provided manna in the wilderness. That is why they think Jesus is the Messianic Prophet that Moses promised and wanted to make him king. But they are not looking for a Spiritual Deliverer which is what they really need. But Jesus will not be manipulated so he disappears. The Deliverer King they want is not the Deliverer King Jesus is.

John mentions that this occurs about the time of the Passover. The Passover feast celebrated the Exodus when God delivered Israel from Egypt by judging them and saving his people by the sacrifice of a lamb. God did so by parting the Red sea so that Israel escaped but when Pharaoh's army went after Israel the waters engulfed them. It was also a time the Jews looked forward to the promise of a new deliverer. John mentions the Passover because Jesus is that New Deliverer in a New Exodus who will take God's judgment upon himself as the sacrificial lamb to bring about a much greater deliverance, freedom from the penalty and power of sin (1:29; 4:42).

That evening the disciples got into a wooden skiff to row across the sea of Galilee (16). It was dark and as they rowed across, a strong wind picked up and the sea became rough so that they struggled to cross (18). When they are about half way across they see Jesus walking on the waves and they were frightened (19)! Not only can Jesus create bread, he can conquer the sea by making it hold him up (107:28-30)! Jesus is graciously clarifying for his disciples who he really is. Jesus is not just some useful political and military king, he is God who rules over all his creation! He is the radiance of the glory of God and the exact imprint of his nature; he upholds the universe by the word of his power (Heb. 1:3). Jesus will not be trifled with like the crowds are doing. He is showing them graciously and powerfully that he is not just some useful king who will satisfy their sinful desires, he is the King of the universe, who came to overcome their sin!

Then Jesus says, it is I or literally I AM, do not be afraid (20). Jesus addresses their fear by clarifying for them his true identity. I am, in some way, the great I am who revealed himself to Moses (Ex 3:14). He gave them a glimpse of his deity by pulling back the veil of his humanity with the voice of the Great I am. And when humanity encounters God, the most natural and appropriate response is fear because God is terrifying. Yet when he is embraced, when he is trusted, there is no safer place to be. Jesus is showing his disciples that I am more than a mere human prophet and king, I am God. I think Jesus was concerned about the influence of the crowd on the disciples. He is not the useful king who would lead them in defeating Rome but who would die for their sin.

Well, the disciples are glad to take him into the boat and immediately the boat is on the others side of the sea. Who would not want God in their boat? Those who recognize their sinfulness and his glory and grace. We all have a tendency to make Jesus into an idol. What I mean by that is make him into something or someone he is not. The crowd wanted a useful Jesus to merely fulfill their physical needs but they did not see nor did they want the king he was. Jesus did not come primarily to give us bread but be bread for us. It is an offense to God to use him for his gifts but not want the giver of those gifts. Why do the disciples want him in the boat? The wind and the waves were life

threatening and Jesus' presence provided safety and security. Jesus overcomes all obstacles to be with us in our time of need. Nothing can keep him away. I am with you always is the promise (Mat 28:20). Immediately the boat is on the other side. When Jesus is present with them, they easily cross the lake, safe and sound with no more struggle. Though Jesus walks away from the crowd who wanted him for their own end, he graciously comes to his disciples and clarifies who he is to them and keeps them safe with his presence.

#### Questions for Life Groups:

1. How is God saying to you this week from his word? How did you respond?
2. Why did Jesus leave when the crowd wanted to make him king?
3. How do make an idol of Jesus?
4. Why did Jesus come to the disciples in the middle of the sea of Galilee?
5. What was Jesus demonstrating to the disciples in this sign?
6. Why were the disciples afraid?
7. Why does Jesus say I am, do not be afraid?
8. Why were the disciples glad to have Jesus in the boat?
9. Do you ever doubt Jesus presence with you (Mat 28:20)? How does Jesus presence with us help us in life?
10. Do you think it was a miracle that they were immediately at the other side of the sea of Galilee? Why or why not?