

Head Into the Storm

John 6:16-21; Mark 6:45-52

God reveals himself in the storms of life

Jesus spends a long day in fruitful ministry healing, teaching, and feeding the multitude (Matthew 14:13-21; Mark 6:32-44; Luke 9:10-17; John 6:1-15).

The people recognized Jesus as a prophet and wanted to make him King (John 6:14-15).

Jesus sensed the potential danger of “messianic enthusiasm” on his disciples and sent them away while he dismissed the crowd (Mark 6:45). Jesus wanted to get his disciples away before they got caught up in the momentum. Jesus made them get into the boat and head for the other side of the lake.

After dismissing the crowd, Jesus went up on a hillside to pray (Mark 6:46). He prays until early morning.

Even in poor conditions, the Sea of Galilee can be crossed in 6-8 hours. The disciples are helpless in the face of a hard wind from the north and made little progress (John 6:18-19; Mark 6:48).

In the dim light of early dawn (between 3-6AM), Jesus saw the disciples straining against the oars. He went to them, walking on the choppy waters (John 6:19; Mark 6:48).

The words, “pass by them” (Mark 6:48) does not mean to bypass them. Rather, it means to “pass beside” them in the sense of an Old Testament theophany (Exodus 33:19-34:7; 1 Kings 19:11-12). Jesus would pass by and reveal himself to his disciples.

The disciples were terrified, thinking Jesus was a ghost (John 6:19; Mark 6:49-50).

Jesus calmed their fears and spoke words of reassurance (John 6:20; Mark 6:50).

When Jesus joined them in the boat, the winds died down (Mark 6:51). They immediately arrived at their destination (John 6:21). The miracle was one more indication of Jesus' mastery over nature.

The disciples were completely amazed at the miracle. They had not understood the meaning of the miracle of the feeding of the 5,000 as it pointed to Jesus' true identity (Mark 6:52). The disciples had an earth-centered rather than a God-centered outlook.

Principles to Practice

God will sometimes send us into a storm.

God sees us in the storm and knows where we are.

God intercedes for us and protects us in the storms.

God uses storms to teach us about himself and to deepen our faith in him.

Rather than become hard-hearted, we need to learn the lessons he has for us.