

**Text: John 6:16-24**

**Title: “Jesus and Our Storms”**

## **INTRODUCTION**

Open your Bibles this morning to John 6:16. There are seven of Jesus’ miracles that John records in his Gospel account. John includes these miracles because he wants to drive home a point. They are called “miraculous signs” because they point to something ... the power of Jesus which is unleashed when we believe. So we come to the fifth of these miracles here in John 6:16-21. Follow along as I read.

**PHOTO - ILLUSTRATION** – Some of you may remember from several years ago a movie entitled “The Perfect Storm.” It’s based on the true story of a massive storm that hit off the coast of New England. The storm was actually a convergence of at least two storms that created a powerful force of nature that did incredible damage and sank several fishing boats at sea. One of those boats was the *Andrea Gail*, a fishing boat with six men on board who all perished in the storm. It was a riveting story and since then the phrase “perfect storm” has become part of our vocabulary. A “perfect storm” is a situation that is made worse by a rare combination of different circumstances. It’s like getting a call that your child has broken their arm at school, and when you go out to get your car you have a flat tire.

So what happens here in John 6 is what we would call a perfect storm ... actually a convergence of two storms. The first storm was on the Sea of Galilee which is actually more like a lake. The Sea of Galilee was known for its unpredictable and treacherous storms, the kind that the disciples were caught in here in John 6.

But there was another storm raging at the very same time ... an invisible storm that blew up in the hearts of the disciples in the boat. They had just seen Jesus feed thousands of hungry people with a little boy’s sack lunch. They had never been prouder to be known as followers of Jesus, but then Jesus did something strange. When the people wanted to crown Jesus as their king, He abruptly walked away from them. Why wouldn’t Jesus want to become a hero? Maybe they don’t know Jesus as well as they thought they did. So there was a storm of confusion in the hearts and minds of the disciples.

And it is the convergence of these two storms that makes for the “perfect storm” that we have recorded here in John 6. Actually, it will be more of a “perfecting storm,” because it might well be the most frightening experience of their lives. And Jesus is going to use this storm to stretch, strengthen, and perfect their faith.

And we’re going to learn with them that that no storm in life can separate us from the love of our Savior Jesus. The storms of life that can be so overwhelming to us can never overwhelm or overcome our Redeemer. Jesus miraculously walks into the dark, turbulent world of the disciples and His presence brings peace to troubled, fearful hearts. I want us to see how Jesus does that ... how He makes His presence real to us in the storms of life.

### **1. JESUS SEES US IN THE STORMS OF LIFE.**

**John 6:16 - When evening came, his disciples went down to the lake,**

**John 6:17 - where they got into a boat and set off across the lake for Capernaum. By now it was dark, and Jesus had not yet joined them.**

After Jesus fed the five thousand, the crowds dispersed, and the disciples went down to the lake to get into their boats. Evidently, they expected Jesus to join them, but so far He was nowhere to be seen.

**ILLUSTRATION** – Now this miracle is recorded in two other Gospel accounts, Matthew and Mark. When we're studying an event like this that is recorded in more than one of the Gospels it's important that we see information each writer gives us so we can get the complete picture. It's sort of like taking Lego blocks and putting them together to build something. That's one of the fun things about studying the Bible. So the information that the other Gospel writers give us fills in some important details.

**Matthew 14:22 - Immediately Jesus made the disciples get into the boat and go on ahead of him to the other side, while he dismissed the crowd.**

That's important because remember the disciples get into a fierce storm on the lake. Did Jesus know they would get into this storm when He sent them? Yes He did; He's in complete control. Yes, Jesus will sometimes send us into storms.

Still they must have been expecting Jesus to join them. It was getting late and dark so they were forced to go on without Jesus.

**John 6:18 - A strong wind was blowing and the waters grew rough.**

Mark fills in a few more details. When the disciples went down to the lake, Jesus didn't go with them. He went up on to a mountainside to pray. Mark says...

**Mark 6:47-48a - When evening came, the boat was in the middle of the lake, and he was alone on land. He saw the disciples straining at the oars, because the wind was against them.**

So the situation is this: It is dark. They are out on the lake without Jesus. A strong wind was blowing which causes the waters to grow rough. Notice that they couldn't see Jesus, but Jesus could see them. There are times when we are so overwhelmed by storms in our lives that we feel all alone. How reassuring it is to know that even when we don't "see" Him, He sees us. We may think that we are in the storm alone, that Jesus either doesn't know or He doesn't care. But Jesus sees and knows what we are going through, and at just the right time He will come to us to make His presence real.

That's the next way that Jesus makes His presence real to us in the storms of life

**2. JESUS COMES TO US IN THE STORMS OF LIFE.**

**John 6:19 - When they had rowed three or three and a half miles, they saw Jesus approaching the boat, walking on the water; and they were terrified.**

It was fearful enough to be in the middle of a storm like this. They could have all easily died. Most of the disciples were fishermen, so they had been through storms, but I think it's safe to say that this may have been one of the most frightening days of their life.

Having rowed for three or three and a half miles they are probably at a place on the lake where they are as far from land as they can possibly be. (The lake is about six miles across.) Putting all the Gospel accounts together we calculate that the disciples could have been out on the water, caught in this storm, for as much as twelve hours. And they were long, dark, grueling, stressful hours.

But what terrified them the most was the way that Jesus presented Himself to them. When it says they "saw" Jesus it doesn't mean that they sighted Him. The word John uses means they looked with amazement on something that was really unusual. The other Gospel writers tell us they thought they were seeing a ghost. In the foam and sea spray at first maybe they saw a dark shape moving above the waves. Then it looks like a human figure. But how could any human being walk on water like that. They had never seen anything like it so they superstitiously assumed it was a ghost.

They were "terrified." We would be too. We're talking about fear that causes your heart to race and your mouth to go dry and your hands to shake and your breathing to speed up.

You see, the presence of Jesus with us in our traumatic times can be a very mysterious thing. Here in this fierce storm they thought that *harm* was coming to them, but it was really *help* coming to them. They thought someone *evil* was coming at them, but it was really someone *good* coming to them.

It's the storm that brought the presence of Jesus and a revelation of Jesus that these disciples would never forget. The wind that was holding the disciples back could not hold Jesus back. The waves that threatened to go over their heads were beneath His feet. They were in danger of sinking but Jesus wasn't.

Jesus sees us in our storms and He comes to us in our storms. There's no storm that can keep Jesus from you.

**Psalm 46:1 - God is our refuge and strength, an ever-present help in trouble.**

In our storms Jesus sees us, comes to us and...

### **3. JESUS SPEAKS TO US IN THE STORMS OF LIFE.**

The familiar voice of Jesus was heard over the frightful noise of the storm. And His words banished the fear from their hearts.

**John 6:20 - But he said to them, "It is I; don't be afraid."**

“Don’t be afraid...” That’s a command. How can Jesus just command us to not be afraid? Fear is a natural and real emotion, and we may think that we have no control over it. Well, remember we learned a couple of weeks ago that every command of Jesus is also a promise that, in His strength, we can do it. So we may assume that Jesus cares, He is here and He is in control. And if that is true then I can stop worrying and being afraid. I can trust Him.

O loved ones, I covet that experience for you ... that in the midst of your storms that you would open your Bibles and open your hearts and let Jesus come to you and speak to you, dispelling your fears. Then we will see that...

#### **4. JESUS SECURES US IN THE STORMS OF LIFE.**

**John 6:21 - Then they were willing to take him into the boat, and immediately the boat reached the shore where they were heading.**

This receiving of Jesus into the boat was not just a physical thing. It was a spiritual response to what they had discovered about Jesus in the storm. Matthew, in his Gospel account, says...

**Matthew 14:33 - Then those who were in the boat worshiped him, saying, “Truly you are the Son of God.”**

Listen, they would have never seen this about Jesus had they not gone through the storm. Whatever storm you go through in your life, you need to know that God is working to reveal Himself to you and for you to glorify Him.

And the most securing thing in the world is when you welcome Jesus into your life in the midst of the storm. The Bible tells us that they “immediately” arrived at their destination. When Jesus steps on the scene things change that quickly.

Now there’s something else you need to see here. The greatest storm we face in life is the storm of God’s righteous wrath against our sin. That storm is a deadly storm. We will perish if we are not rescued from God’s righteous judgment against our sin. The amazing thing is the God who judges our sin is also the God who provides rescue from our sin, so that His righteousness and His love can be satisfied at the same time. So Jesus SEES us in our dreadful condition and He COMES to us. Jesus came from heaven and it’s like Jesus laid a rugged cross across the stormy sea of God’s righteous wrath of our sin. And on that cross Jesus came to rescue us from the eternal death that we deserved because of our sin. And Jesus SPEAKS a loving invitation for us to come to Him. “It is I, do not be afraid.” And when by faith we receive Him into our lives He SECURES us for eternity in the family of God.