

# Further up, Further in

## Resources for Continued Study



LOOKOUT  
MOUNTAIN  
Presbyterian Church

### “JESUS WALKS ON WATER”

For individual study or group discussion

DATE: May 10, 2026

SPEAKER: Frank/Chad

SERIES: The Gospel of John

PASSAGE: John 6:16-21

“It was a dark and stormy night...” The scene in John 6:16-21 begins with the disciples alone in a boat, crossing the sea in darkness, caught in the middle of a terrible storm. Christ is notably absent. Notice the shift from John 6:1-15: One moment the disciples are participating in the miracle of the *Feeding of the 5000*, surrounded by an awed crowd; the next, they face darkness, fear, and death. Yet Jesus is the sovereign One who knows their situation, has ordained it, and is working through it for their good.

**Jesus is the sovereign One who finds us in our darkest moments. (vv. 16-19)**

Jesus meets the disciples in the darkness. They are alone, at night, battling strong winds. In verses 16-19, the darkness the disciples encounter reflects their despair. What makes this scene even more striking is its placement after the *Feeding of the 5000*. Those who had just witnessed God’s abundance and order are now surrounded by chaos and lack of control. The contrast highlights a biblical pattern: God’s people are not exempt from storms, even after moments of great spiritual clarity or blessing. J.C. Ryle captures this well: “*Trial, we must distinctly understand, is part of the diet which all true Christians must expect. It is one of the means by which their grace is proved, and by which they find out what there is in themselves. Winter as well as summer—cold as well as heat—clouds as well as sunshine—are all necessary to bring the fruit of the Spirit to ripeness and maturity. We do not naturally like this. We would rather cross the lake with calm weather and favorable winds, with Christ always by our side, and the sun shining down on our faces. But it may not be. It is not in this way that God’s children are made ‘partakers of His holiness’ (Heb. 12:10). Abraham, and Jacob, and Moses, and David, and Job were all men of many trials. Let us be content to walk in their footsteps, and to drink of their cup. In our darkest hours we may seem to be left—but we are never really alone.*”<sup>1</sup>

- When have you experienced a “dark crossing” season in life? How did God meet you in it?
- Read Job 9:8. What does it mean for you to witness Jesus doing what Scripture attributes only to God, and how does it deepen your understanding of his authority over chaos?
- Read Job 42:5. Theologian R. Kent Hughes states, “*Following Christ will take us into some fierce storms, but the rewards are even greater...You may know Christ, but you will never know him deeply until he comes to you in the midst of the storms of life.*”<sup>2</sup> How does knowing Christ in a middle of a crisis differ from simply knowing about him during times of peace and prosperity?

**Jesus is the sovereign One who frees us from our deepest fears. (vv. 19-21)**

When the disciples see Jesus walking on the water, their fear increases before it fades. But his words, “*It is I; do not be afraid*” change everything. The phrase, “*It is I*” (literally, I AM) echoes the divine name revealed to Moses, reinforcing that Jesus is the promised prophet who will deliver his people. Just as God brought Israel safely through the Red Sea, Jesus brings his disciples to their destination (v. 21). The One who fed the crowd and walked on the sea will preserve you through every storm you face. Again, Ryle affirms: “*Let all true Christians take comfort in the thought that their Savior is Lord of waves and winds, of storms and tempests, and can come to them in the darkest hour, ‘walking upon the sea.’ There are waves of trouble far heavier than any on the Lake of Galilee. There are days of darkness which test the faith of the holiest Christian. But let us never despair if Christ is our Friend. He can come to our aid in an hour when we do not think, and in ways that we did not expect. And when He comes, all will be calm.*”<sup>3</sup>

- As he had done privately to the Samaritan woman, “*I who speak to you am he*” (4:26), Jesus now identifies himself to the disciples with the name that God first reveals to Moses at the burning bush: “*I AM; do not be afraid*” (v. 20). How does Jesus’ use of the divine name “*I AM*” in the midst of the storm reshape the disciples’ understanding of who is actually present with them in their moment of terror?
- In Exodus 3:1-15, God commissions Moses to lead his people out of slavery—revealing himself as the God who delivers. This same God, now revealed in Jesus Christ, declares a mission of freedom in Luke 4:16-21 and confirms it in Luke 7:20-23. What does this reveal about the nature of the freedom Jesus brings (both physically and spiritually)?
- Read Mark 6:45-52 and Exodus 33:18-22. Whereas Moses experienced only a glimpse of God’s glory, the disciples experience the fullness of God’s glory in the person of Jesus. There’s an odd phrase in Mark’s parallel account of Jesus walking on water (Mark 6:48c). How does the Exodus 33 passage provide clarity to, “*He meant to pass by them*”?

## Family Dinner Table

### Hyperlinks

By feeding the crowd, walking on water, and claiming the divine name “*I AM*,” Jesus reenacts the Exodus. These events signal that the God who rescued Israel is now present in his Son. To understand this deep continuity, one must look at the Bible as a series of hyperlinks—a concept theologian Benjamin Gladd describes as “*inner-biblical connections*”: “*The Bible was written over a period of 1,500 years, as God communicated it to his people through Hebrew, Aramaic, and Greek. One of the reasons that the Bible is utterly unique is how it references itself. The New Testament authors quote the Old Testament 350 times and allude to it more than 3,000 times. But that’s only half the story: The Old Testament often references itself, as later Old Testament writers refer to portions of earlier writings and, especially, the Pentateuch. This happens thousands of times. Because God designed the Bible to be self-referential, he expects his people to pick up on these inner-biblical connections. And when we do trace these connections, we unlock Scripture’s full meaning.*”<sup>4</sup>

- The apostle John has been showing us that Jesus is the greater Moses, the promised prophet who leads his people out of the darkness of bondage and sin. Just as Moses turned water into blood (Exodus 7:17), Jesus turns the water into wine at the wedding of Cana (John 2). In John 3:14, Jesus compares his future lifting up on the cross to Moses lifting the serpent in the wilderness. Similar to Moses providing water from the rock (Exodus 17:6), Jesus promises “*living water*” to the Samaritan woman in John 4. List other similarities between Moses and Jesus you’ve encountered in your readings of John 5-6. How do these OT parallels deepen your understanding of who Jesus is?

### PRAY FOR HOME MISSIONS

Faith Co-Op, supported ministry partner

### PRAY FOR WORLD MISSIONS

Paul O., supported world missions partner, Dean of the theological department at a regional seminary and in an area church

<sup>1-3</sup>J.C. Ryle. *Expository Thoughts on the Gospel of John*. GraceGems.org. <https://www.gracegems.org/Ryle/jo6.htm>

<sup>2</sup>R. Kent Hughes. *John: That You May Believe*. 1990, Wheaton, IL. Crossway Books. 196, 198

<sup>4</sup>Benjamin L. Gladd. *To Understand Jesus Walking on Water, Turn to the Old Testament*. November 1, 2025. TGC.org. <https://www.thegospelcoalition.org/article/jesus-walking-water-old-testament/>