

=MIRACLES OF CHRIST=

Lesson 6

Jesus Walking on the Water

SCRIPTURE: Matthew 14:22-33.

AIM: to teach my pupils the truth concerning Jesus' walking on the water.

POINT OF CONTACT: Bring a piece of ivy and a limb from a tree to your class. Jesus was trying to teach His disciples here to be strong like a tree and not weak like ivy. He would not have them as the ivy, needing always an external support, but as a tree that can brave the storm. Jesus wants us to grow up and be able to stand alone, if needs be, as did Daniel, Shadrach, Meshach, Abed-nego, Joseph and others. To be sure, we will always need Him. A tree needs the sunshine and the rain, but nevertheless, it is strong enough to stand. Show the class the comparison between the two.

INTRODUCTION: This miracle is recorded in Matthew, Mark and John. All three of these who recorded this miracle agreed that it took place immediately following the feeding of the five thousand and on the evening of the same day. Jesus constrained (or made) His disciples to get into a ship to go across the Sea of Galilee. He Himself went apart alone to pray. The crowd had tried to take Jesus by force and make Him a king. Jesus went alone, not willing that this should be done. Now get the picture: Jesus is on a mountain praying. This mountain overlooks the Sea of Galilee. The disciples are in a boat crossing the sea. From where He prayed, His watchful eye of love was still upon them.

I. THE TROUBLE.

1. They were tossed with the waves. (Matthew 14:24) The wind had become violent and the apostles' little boat was tossed by the waves. This represents the problems we face in life. There come times in each of our lives when we are tossed to and fro. It seems we have no control over the circumstances, and there seems to be no direction. This story is to teach us what to do in such times.
2. They were on the middle of the sea. The record says that they were a little more than 25 or 30 furlongs out. That is a little more than half the way across the lake. The lake was supposed to be about 45 furlongs in breadth. They no doubt were finding themselves even more unable to proceed, the danger ever increasing. This typifies that when we come to the middle of life, we realize the tossing more than ever. There is not the confidence of being close to shore as at the beginning of life, neither the awareness that the end is approaching. The burdens and problems and perplexities of life come as one approaches middle age. Here is where we find most of the storms and most of the violent winds.
3. It was at night. It was in the fourth watch of the night, which means it was in the wee morning hours. The storms always seem worse at night, and the nighttime is coming for everyone. There must come hours of darkness and loneliness. The way we accept these determines our usefulness for God.
4. The stilling of the tempest in Matthew 8, which we recently studied, found Jesus in the boat with them, but this storm finds them alone in the boat. Before, they knew Jesus was there; this time they thought that He wasn't. What they did not know was that He was up on the mountain overseeing them. He wanted them to think they were alone, to test their faith; yet, He was always looking down upon them, ready to help. Let us always be aware, in the storms of life, even though it seems that He is not with us, He is always at the right hand of the Father looking down upon us. (Here would be a good place to dwell on the fact that there is a God Who looks down upon us and that Jesus sees all we do. Explain to the children that He sees us at school, He sees young people on their dates, He sees us when we play. You can think of many other circumstances of life where a child should pause to realize he is being watched by Jesus.)
5. Jesus does not help us until we have done all that we can do for ourselves. Then when we are at our wit's end, it is marvelous how He suddenly comes, as He did here in Matthew 14:26.
6. Notice in Mark 6:48, "...and would have passed by them." In other words, He wanted to make Himself available, but He did not force Himself upon them. Had they not called upon Him, He no doubt, would have passed them by. Oftentimes He appears to forsake us so that we might pray and call upon Him. You will recall His walking with two of his disciples on the road to Emmaus after

His resurrection. Luke 24:28 says, "...and he made as though he would have gone further." He longs for our fellowship. He longs for us to call upon Him for help, but He does not force Himself. He does not force one to be saved; He does not force one to be helped in times of need. He is available, but we must appropriate His help by faith.

## II. THE HELP.

1. Notice the Helper. (Matthew 14:25) Jesus is coming to help. He is running to their side in their time of need. I John 2:1b says, "...And if any man sin, we have an advocate with the Father, Jesus Christ the righteous." The word "advocate" means "a runner to our side." (Describe a little child falling down and the mother or father running to pick the child up, wipe off the dirty knee, stop the bleeding of the nose, etc.) Jesus is always ready to run to our side in time of trouble. He comes to us and will help us when we call upon Him. In other words, He makes Himself available if we will ask for His help.
2. Notice the first words Jesus said: "Be of good cheer." (Matthew 14:27) How often God has spoken words of encouragement to His own. Compare the following Scriptures: Genesis 15:1; 21:17; 26:24; Judges 6:23; Daniel 10:12-19; Matthew 17:7; 28:5; Luke 1:30; 2:10; Revelation 1:17. Several times in the New Testament Jesus says "Be of good cheer." (Look up these verses in the aforementioned Scriptures and use them in the lesson.)
3. Notice the words in Matthew 14:27, "...be not afraid." Jesus does not want us to fear. In times of trouble let us trust Him and hear His words, "...be not afraid."
4. Peter's mistake of looking down is mentioned in Matthew 14:28-30. Peter asked the Lord if he could come out of the ship and walk upon the water. This he did for a while, so long as he looked to the Lord and to Him only, but when he stopped to look down, he took his eyes off Jesus, became afraid and began to sink! As long as we look up, we can perform the impossible. When we look down upon the conditions prevailing below, we will become discouraged. When Brother Hyles was a paratrooper, they told him never to look down upon jumping or landing, for fear would grip him and he would not jump. If he had looked down upon landing, he would have become tense and bones could have been broken easily. The same thing should be applied to our lives. Let us look up to His limitless power and not become discouraged by the conditions below.
5. Notice Peter's prayer for salvation in Matthew 14:30. Compare this to Romans 10:13. Not only does this speak of salvation, but it also speaks of help. Peter's prayer was a simple one. He needed help, and he got it! Stress Romans 10:13 to the class, especially if there is an unsaved one present, and teach them that if they will call upon the name of the Lord, they can be saved.
6. Notice the words in Matthew 14:31, "Jesus stretched forth his hand." (Look up in your concordance the word "hand," especially every time it pertains to Jesus. You might try John 10:27-30; Revelation 1:19, 20 as starting Scriptures for this.)

CONCLUSION: Ask the class if they have any burdens or problems or troubles. Some might want to share their problem with you very briefly. Notice the words, "very briefly." (They should not take over 15 to 30 seconds in doing this.) Remind them of this story and of the ever-present Christ.