

## WELCOME JESUS INTO YOUR BOAT

SEPTEMBER 11, 2022 | WALKING WITH JESUS | JOHN 6:16-21 | PASTOR SCOTT TURANSKY

[PRAYER] In this moment, Father, we come before you knowing that it's sacred when we open your word. We don't do it lightly. We do it recognizing that we need instruction from you. We need inspiration, we need conviction, we need guidance. And we don't exactly know what's going to happen when we open your word, but we do know that you speak to us. So we thank you for that. We ask today that you would do that again as we look at this very interesting story in John 6. In Jesus' name, amen.

Over 100 people have signed up for Grace Groups. And those of you who are in those Grace Groups already know what we're going to talk about today because you've already prepared yourself. You've already studied what's going to take place in John 6.

It's a story about a storm. It's a story about Jesus walking on the water and the disciples welcoming Jesus into the boat. That's the story that we're going to look at. As we do, we're going to learn about some very specific things about our own lives. That we have some challenges in our own lives as well. So when we see these storm passages like these in the Bible, we learn from them how we can apply the biblical truths to our own lives as we face storms on a daily basis.

In order to understand this, I want to help you understand a little bit more about the weather and about geography. As we get into the weather of just how a storm is created, let me explain to you what happens in a storm. Some of you already know this. If you have warm air and the cold front comes through, then the cold air (because it's heavier) goes down underneath the warm air, forcing the warm air up, creating these magnificent clouds and often rain, and we have a storm. Now the intensity of the storm is often determined by two things. One is how fast the cold front is coming in. And secondly, by the difference in temperature between the cold air and the warm air that's going up.

Now, if you know that information about storms in general, then when you come to this idea of the storms on the Sea of Galilee, remember that the Sea of Galilee is the lowest freshwater lake in the world. It's 700 feet below sea level and it's hot there. And of course the water and the air is rather humid. Now the cold air comes in. When a cold front comes in, it comes speeding through the mountain passes that are there. So it's accelerated through this tunnel effect, through the mountain passes down onto the Sea of Galilee, causing the warm air to rise. And because it's coming in so quickly and the temperature difference is so great, we can have violent storms on the Sea of Galilee. Sometimes the waves on the Sea of Galilee are reported to be about ten feet high. That's pretty high.

Now here's what we know about storms. When these storms come through, they are unexpected, they are threatening, and they are dangerous. Now we take those ideas and apply them to our own lives. Because there are some times when we're just rowing out on life or just doing our thing, we all like to go down to... There's something that about bodies of water that attracts us. And so we go down to the shore, or we go by the lake or a stream or a river. We just like being there. There's something about that that's very peaceful and relaxing. Just like in the Christian life, as Christians, we, for the most part, should be experiencing a lot of joy and peace in our lives. But then storms come into our lives. These storms are sudden, unexpected, they are threatening, and they're dangerous. They're dangerous in the sense that they threaten to cause us to be off balance. Something is threatened. Our livelihood's threatened, our marriage is threatened, our health is threatened, something is threatened. And so these storms create a problem in our lives. So we need to know how to respond to them.

In essence, this is what I would suggest is not just a problem for those who are facing a storm right now; this is something we all need in our Christian lives. Because this is a call that the Bible gives us for all of us. There's a sense of peace that we are called to in our Christian lives. It's part of our calling that we see and God has given us this calling in regards to our peace.

Let me show you some verses. Before we get into our passage today, look at Colossians 3:15. It says this: *And let the peace of Christ rule (or reign) in your hearts, to which indeed you were called.* You were called. We were called to peace. That means if you get up in the morning and you have a to-do list you want to get done, then the first thing on your to-do list is peace. So when you put your feet on the ground and you start feeling those aches and pains, you don't start going into negative territory, you say, "The peace of God needs to reign in my heart today." When you step out and see those other people that live in your home, which threaten your peace maybe, the top priority on your life is peace. When you get in the traffic or you go to work or you go to do whatever you do, the top thing on our list should be peace. Because we want Christ's peace to reign in our hearts. There's things that can knock Him off the throne and some of those are storms in our lives.

So the Bible is full of these passages that talk about the peace of God. Because they're so significant that we were called to this. So when we go to John 14:27, Jesus makes this very clear. He says – *Peace I leave with you; my peace I give to you. Not as the world gives do I give to you. Let not your hearts be troubled, neither let them be afraid.* You see, the peace that the Lord gives to us is different than the world's peace. The world's peace tends to say things like "I'll have peace when the problem is over." Whereas Christ's peace gives us the ability to have that peace in the midst of the storm or in the midst of the problems that we experience in life.

Another verse in Philippians 4 says – *Don't be anxious about anything.* Notice all of the very strong language here. *Don't be anxious about anything, but in everything by prayer and supplication with thanksgiving let your requests be made known to God.* And what will happen then? *The peace of God, which surpasses all understanding, will guard your hearts and your minds in Christ Jesus.*

So today's message is about a storm, certainly, but it's really about peace. This is our takeaway. This is where we're going to go in our lives. Because I think storms create anxiety in us. They

cause us to be in turmoil inside. In fact, I was talking about anxiety with one lady and she said, “Boy, if I weren't anxious, I wouldn't have anything to think about.” Isn't that true about anxiety? Sometimes our minds go straight to that and we just kind of ruminate in that. There's something more for each one of us. We want to experience peace. So the message today is all about peace. In fact, I like this verse in Isaiah 26:3. It says – *You keep him in perfect peace.* Boy, I need that. I need the perfect peace of God, *whose mind is stayed on you, because he trusts in you.* That's where we're going today.

Jesus is going to calm the waters, they're going to experience peace. But the reason this story appears in three gospels is because the gospel writers are saying don't miss this story. This is one of those stories where we learn something very important about Jesus. Do you remember the story from last week, where we learned about Jesus breaking the bread and the loaves and the fish, and fed 5,000 plus people. We learned in that story, as the four writers talked about it, that Jesus Christ is our provision. Jehovah-Jireh. He's our provider.

Now, in this particular message in this particular miracle that John... He only recorded seven miracles now. In this miracle, he records the fact that Jesus is our peace. And I think, oh, Jehovah Shalom. In fact, I started thinking this week, I wonder if the seven miracles that John records each have a counterpart of a name for God in the Old Testament. I haven't had time to do the research on that. Maybe you would. There is Jehovah-Nissi (God is my banner), El Roi (God sees), there's El Shaddai (God is almighty). I wonder if the seven miracles that John records in his gospel correspond to some of the names of God in the Old Testament. If you do the study on your own, report it to me and I'll share it with others. Because see, John has this goal in mind as he's writing these different miracles. He's saying, I want you to know that Jesus Christ is the Messiah, the Christ, *so that by believing you can have life in his name.* That's the purpose of the book of John.

If we go to the other two gospel writers who wrote about this, Matthew 14, Mark 4, we see that they have their rendition of the story that's very similar, but have a little bit different details. So we'll look at those today. But we see in each of those books why this particular miracle is present. This is what happens with the disciples. Let's look at what takes place in that in just a moment. But I'd like us to stand. Would you stand with me, and I want to read this passage of scripture to us in honor of God's word.

It says this: *When evening came, his disciples went down to the sea, got into a boat, and started across the sea to Capernaum. It was now dark, and Jesus had not yet come to them. The sea became rough because a strong wind was blowing. When they had rowed about three or four miles, they saw Jesus walking on the sea and coming near the boat, and they were frightened. Interesting that they were frightened when they saw Jesus. Interesting. But he said to them, “It is I; do not be afraid.” Then they were glad to take him into the boat (they welcomed Him into the boat), and immediately the boat was at the land to which they were going.*

You may be seated.

Now both Mark and Matthew recount this story. Matthew also tells us a story about Peter walking on the water, but John doesn't include that particular detail in his story as he's sharing it

with us. But notice what happens in Mark at the end of the story, what happens to the people. Because I think this is what's going to happen to us today as we look at the storms of our own lives. In Mark 4:41 it says – *And they were filled with great fear and said to one another, “Who then is this, that even the wind and the sea obey him?”* Who is this that takes care of the problems that I'm experiencing in my life? Whether it's a relationship, or a moral problem, or financial problem, whatever it is, God wants to address those to calm the sea in our lives. And these disciples were just so amazed at this.

Matthew ends this story by saying this. *And when they...* This is Peter and Jesus get back into the boat. *When they got into the boat, the wind ceased. And those in the boat worshiped him, saying, “Truly you are the Son of God.”* I think that sometimes God allows us to go into storms in our lives, because He wants us to learn something more about Him. I think that's what's happening in this particular story with the disciples. They're learning some valuable things about who Jesus is.

Let's go into this story verse by verse, and let's take some of the ideas from it. I've included some of the related passages so we can get the full picture of the story. It says in John 6:16 – *When evening came, his disciples went down to the sea, got into a boat, and started across the sea to Capernaum.* That's where we start in our story. But in Matthew 14, it uses these words. It says – *Immediately, he made the disciples get into the boat and go before him to the other side, while he dismissed the crowds.* Think about those words. *He made the disciples.* He gave them instructions. He told them what to do. Go down and get into the boat. Which tells me that these disciples are going to experience a storm in their lives when they're being obedient to God.

It's very important for us to realize that. Because sometimes you're being obedient and a storm comes. Sometimes we think a storm comes and we say, “Oh, no. God's judging me. Oh no, I've done the wrong thing and that's why the storm's here.” And sometimes storms do discipline us, like they did with Jonah. But many times, God allows us to go into storms, or maybe even can I say sends us into storms, because He wants to do something bigger in our lives. He wants us to understand Him in ways that we never understood before. He gave them instructions.

I think we do a disservice to our young people as we're growing them. Because we talk about all the blessings of the Christian life, which are many. And I think that's good that we share. But sometimes we miss out in saying to them, you're going to experience trouble in your life. You're going to experience problems in your life. But God is still present in the storm. You need to invite Jesus into your boat in the midst of the storm. That's really the message that our young people must grasp. Because sometimes young people, if they get the idea that we are blessed when we serve the Lord, and so we grow up, and we understand that and then something bad happens to a young person, they go, “Well, I'm doing the right thing. And this bad thing happens to me. This Christianity stuff must not be real. I'm going to reject it.” Wow. They missed out on a key element. That sometimes even when you're obeying God, even when you're doing the right thing, you're going to experience a storm in your life.

It's very possible that that's what's taking place. Because God wants to take us deeper. He wants to grow us in our lives. He wants to help us deal with the anxieties. He wants to teach us how to trust in Him more.

One of the privileges I have is to work with children in a lot of different ways. But one of the things I help kids do is overcome anxiety. Because some kids today have some real major problems with anxiety in their lives. I think there's a plan, a biblical plan for anxiety. I try to teach that to children so that they can embrace that, they can understand what trust looks like in their young life. Trust is very important when overcoming anxiety.

But basically, here's the plan, I think, that God does in our lives. We have a comfort zone. And sometimes that comfort zone is too small. So God allows us to experience a problem in a controlled environment. I like to say "in a controlled environment" because we don't take a child who's afraid of water and throw him in the water and say, "Get used to it." We don't do that. Okay. We do it in a controlled manner. So it's the 1 Corinthians 10:13 approach where it says in there that *no temptation has overtaken you that is not common to man. God is faithful, and he will not let you be tempted beyond your ability, but with the temptation he will also provide the way of escape, that you may be able to bear up under it.* What he says is I'm going to expand your comfort zone a little bit. I think God does that. He expands our comfort zone to move us out of our anxiety situations so that we can experience more chaos in life and be okay experiencing the peace of God because we learn to trust Him. And then He expands that more and more.

Recently, I worked with a boy who was ten years old, experiencing some significant anxiety in his life. You could tell when he came in to meet with me that he was quite upset. Even being in my presence it was like "oh no, here I am being called into the principal's office" kind of thing. And so he was quite anxious about being there.

In my time with him, I said to him, "Let me tell you a story. I worked one day with a thirteen-year-old boy. I worked with him for eleven weeks. And for that eleven weeks, we were working on anxiety in his life. He had some major problems with anxiety. We worked for eleven weeks, and after eleven weeks, he told his parents and he told me, 'My anxiety is gone.'"

This little boy who is ten years old looks at me and says, "Do you think that can happen to me?" I said, "Yes, it will happen to you. Let's get to work. We've got some things to do. But it's going to be rough sometimes. Because sometimes I'm going to take you and your parents are going to take you outside of your comfort zone to experience a little anxiety so that you can practice the new skills you're developing. You're going to be able to grow more and more and more."

In five weeks, this boy said to his parents and to me, "My anxiety is gone." Now, if you have a problem with anxiety, you know that that is a miracle in anyone's life. And I suspect that this thirteen-year-old and this ten-year-old will continue to struggle with anxiety in their lives. But what happens, see, is when you learn how to trust God in this situation, then it expands your comfort zone. And then when you got a little bit more trust in God, it expands your comfort zone a little bit more. So compared to where you were to where you are now, you can say my anxiety is gone, because I've learned how to trust God. And that gives you the confidence to take the Lord into your boat in all kinds of different ways and to move you forward in life.

That's the beauty of this story. I was going to call this sermon "Storm Basics" or "Storm Management 101." But I ended up calling it "Welcome Jesus Into Your Boat." Because I think that's what we need to do, each one in our lives.

Let's go on to the next verses. It says in verse 17 – *It was now dark, and Jesus had not yet come to them. The sea became rough because a strong wind was blowing.* In Mark 6:48 it recounts it this way: *And he saw that they were making headway painfully, for the wind was against them.* Now I would suggest that the wind being against them is what we often experience in our lives. I don't know what your wind is that's against you, but you feel like you're trying to get somewhere in life and there's something opposing you. It may be somebody at work, it may be some financial problem, it may be a health issue, but you're trying to move forward and you continually face challenges. The wind that's against you. I think that's what's taking place here. These guys are trying to get somewhere to the other side, but there's this wind that's opposing them. That's one thing.

But I noticed in Mark 6 he says – *And he saw that they were making headway painfully.* How could He see them? He's up on the mountain. This is a violent storm. The visibility is zero. Yet Jesus can see them through the storm. They can't see Jesus. But it's not that important that we see Jesus. It's more important that Jesus sees us. Because Jesus cares for us. He loves us.

Peter would later write a book of the Bible. And when he wrote in 1 Peter 5:7, he says – *Cast all your care on him, for he cares for you.* Why do you cast your anxiety on the Lord? Because He cares. He's compassionate. He sees you. I want you to know whatever you're struggling with today, the Lord sees that. That's why Jesus emphasized so much the compassion of the Father. And how the Father knows every hair on your head. He has them numbered. That He knows each one. He takes care of us more than the birds or the flowers. He cares about each one of us.

So don't ever feel like you're alone in a storm. You're not alone in a storm, because Jesus can see through the storm. He can see you and He cares about you. It's just this beautiful picture of what's taking place with these guys, that Jesus knows them. He can see what's happening in their lives in the challenges that they're experiencing in their situation right now in the midst of the storm.

Jesus cares about you. He cares about me individually. He sees the crowd, but he works with Philip. He sees the Ninevites, the crowd, but He works with Jonah. Continually God is concerned about the individuals, you and me. He cares about us. He cares about the challenges that we're facing. He wants us to grow in our ability to trust Him to deal with our anxiety. That's what's happening in this passage.

Well, let's go on in the verse. It says in John 6 – *When they had rowed about three or four miles, they saw Jesus walking on the sea and coming near the boat, and they were frightened.* Mark 6 says – *And about the fourth watch of the night he came to them, walking on the sea.* The fourth watch of the night is between 3-6 A.M. It's dark then. It's hard. They have been rowing for hours now. It's difficult when you've worked hard. You've done all of these things. It's hard sometimes to trust the Lord, but that's the call that's being sent out for us. That we really need to trust the Lord and welcome Him into our boat now in the midst of the struggle that we're experiencing. Not when we get to the shore, but now in the midst of the struggle, that's what we want to do. We want to have the confidence that the Lord can help us.

You know, I wrestle with this idea of confidence. Maybe you can wrestle with me with it for a minute. Because I think of the word self-confidence, and I say, oh, no, that's not good. We really want to have Christ-confidence. But then I think, you know what, I do have self-confidence. I don't think self-confidence is bad. If I recognize that all that God has given me is the grace of God. I mean, every problem that I experience I don't pray... You know, if I walk along and I see my shoes untied, I don't say, "Oh, there's a problem, Lord. Help me tie my shoe," because I learned how to tie my shoe when I was four. So I have the confidence that I can tie my shoes. So I bend down and tie my shoe. Is that kind of self-confidence wrong? I don't think so. As long as I recognize that it's God's grace that gives me gifts and talents and money and ability and whatever to be able to do what needs to take place. So sometimes I'm teaching children as I'm helping them deal with their confidence, their trust. They need to learn how to trust. Sometimes you can trust in yourself, I don't think that's bad. As long as you remember that God has given you all that you have and so on.

But sometimes we can't trust in ourselves. We trust in other people. Because sometimes we're rowing on a lake with other people. And some of these are very experienced fishermen. So together we row in life. There's this encouragement that comes when I have other people I can trust in as well. I think that's a biblical approach that we recognize that there's some times we can't handle it. So we trust in and we go to our parents for help when we're a child, or we rely on other people in our Grace Group, or we have family that we can rely on. There's something about being part of a church where we feel like we're connected. There's something satisfying about that. There's some element of trust in the group.

But then there's always those things that cross the line. It's one thing that my shoe's not tied and I can have confidence to tie it, but when I trip and fall and break my arm or something, I go, whoa, this is a little bit outside of my ability here. I really need to trust the Lord.

Now, please understand. I think we need to pray about everything, as a passage says in Philippians 4. I think we need to have this attitude of God's grace working in our lives continually. But I think there's some people who have this line out there that says, "I got this under control, I don't really need to bring this one to the Lord," and the line is too far out. I think we need to come to the Lord more quickly in our lives. In our personal lives when we start to trust ourselves more than we should. Or around those people around us, we trust in them more than we should. The line is probably too far out there. And so that leaves room for anxiety to grow. I think we pull that line back somehow and we step out of the boat, as Peter does in Matthew 14. Or we allow Jesus to come into the boat in our lives. We're doing something very important. It's just strategic what God wants to do in our lives.

I think it's very interesting in the passage here that they're afraid of Jesus. They don't even know it's Jesus. Sometimes God disguises His blessing or His growth experiences in the form of a storm. And we don't recognize them when they're coming. Very interesting. And this is why we need to trust God all the time, in everything in our lives. We're coming to Him and understanding what this trust factor looks like.

Well, let's go on in the passage. I think this is where the key idea is in the passage in the end of this story in John 6. It says – *But he said to them, "It is I; do not be afraid."* It is I; do not be

afraid. *Then they were glad to take him into the boat, and immediately the boat was at the land to which they were going.*

They took Him into the boat. They welcomed Him in. I just think we need to do that more in our lives. We need to welcome Jesus into the boat. I think that there are some people who just reserve Jesus for the really big things that they can't control. But I think if we're going to have good anxiety management, we're going to be able to manage the challenges that we face internally, we must invite Jesus Christ into the boat more quickly in our lives. We must ask Him to come in and reign in our hearts. As Colossians 3:15 says, we want Jesus Christ's peace to reign in our hearts. Sometimes it gets knocked off because we got these other things going on and we're trying to balance a lot of stuff. We must make a priority of peace in our lives. When anxiety starts to creep in, we got to catch them earlier. We got to say, whoa, I need to give this one to the Lord. Because if we don't, then they actually do capture all of our thinking and we get ourselves in trouble.

So I know there are some people who haven't accepted Christ as their Lord and Savior, and they're going, wow, this is really valuable. Could this be true? And I want to say it is true. It is so true that we can come to the Lord and we can embrace what He has to offer for us. We can say I want to trust God in my life. I want Him to reign in my life. And so when you ask Christ to get on the throne, He brings all these benefits. One of those is peace in the midst of the storm. Not as the world gives, which is "I'll have peace after the storm is over." But I can have peace in the midst of the storm of my life.

You know, as I was praying about this passage this week and thinking about some of you and some of my friends, I realized that there's some people who seem to be in these long-term storms. It doesn't seem to be ending. It just seems that the relationship problem, or the health problem, or the financial problem just seems to go on and on and on. And my heart goes out to you if you're in that situation. It's so hard, I'm sure, to be in that kind of difficult situation. But the solution is the same. The solution is to invite Christ into the boat. Because the peace is going to come inside of our hearts in our lives as we're moving forward.

Paul understood this when he wrote to the Thessalonians. He wrote a letter to them. These Thessalonians were experiencing persecution in their lives. The message of 2 Thessalonians is really about the second coming of Christ. And we all have this hope that Christ is going to come back soon. When we're suffering, we say let Him come back quickly, Lord. Because we just see the brokenness all around us. I want you to see how Paul ends his letter to the Thessalonians. It's such a precious statement. He says to them in his conclusion in 2 Thessalonians 3:16 – *Now may the Lord of peace himself give you peace at all times in every way. The Lord be with you all.* The Lord be in everybody's boat, Paul is saying. These are people that are being persecuted for their faith. It's not going to end in their lifetime. They're going to experience a lot of trials. It's going to continue on. But Paul is saying – *May the Lord of peace, Jehovah Shalom, himself give you the peace at all times in every way. The Lord be with you all.*

Jehovah Shalom. I went back to look at that story of where the name Jehovah Shalom came from. It actually comes from a story in the book of Judges 6 where Gideon is going to be the judge that God calls in the situation. They are under the oppression of the Midianites, these

raiders that would come in and take their grain. They always lived in this sense of anxiety because of the Midianite raiders would come in. So in the story in Joshua 6, this guy is threshing his grain, but he's doing it in private. Because he can't thresh the grain out in the open floor, Gideon is doing it in this privacy of the trampling of the grapes, where that takes place. So he's doing it in private to try to get the grain. He's experiencing this anxiety. And God reveals to him that He's going to give him a mission. He's going to take on this assignment. His assignment is very important because he's going to get to know God, and this is where His name is revealed in the Bible – Jehovah Shalom. The God of peace. The God who's going to help us deal with our anxiety.

I would suggest that every one of us have an assignment. God has given us an assignment. He takes that assignment, He gives it to us so that we can bless other people, so we can grow in our lives. But peace is right at the top of that list. And so we see over and over again, *the peace of God that passes all understanding will guard your hearts and your minds in Christ Jesus*. The story of the storm, yes. But it's really a story about peace. And how does peace come? By welcoming Jesus into the boat.

Would you stand with me and let's pray together.

[PRAYER] Heavenly Father, peace seems elusive sometimes, especially with all of the complicated nature of life. Just the busyness of life, let alone the problems of life. So Lord, I ask that you would take this message and embed it in our hearts right where it needs to be so that there's a space there for your peace. We want to welcome you into our lives in a special way and ask you to do a deep work in our hearts. We will look forward to that peace that we can enjoy that you provide, that perfect peace. In Jesus' name, amen.