



John 6:12-40

LIST OF MIRACLES

Last week we had a look at the fourth miracle John gives us in his gospel. Jesus was now a celebrity and people were following Him around. VERSE 6:1 After this, Jesus went across Lake Galilee (or, Lake Tiberias, as it is also called). 2 A large crowd followed him, because they had seen his miracles of healing the sick. PICTURE They were after a miracle and weren't disappointed. Jesus feeds 5000 from just 5 loaves and 2 fishes. Absolutely spectacular!

And the result: Jesus knows that they want to make him king and He takes Himself away from them. His agenda was different from theirs – His route to kingship was via the cross and His kingship is not Israel but King of Kings and Lord of Lords. We were encouraged last week to put aside our small ambitions and seek the will and way of the One who fed 5000+ from 5 loaves and two fishes.

SEA OF GALILEE

Our story today starts immediately after the feeding of the 5000. The disciples make a journey across the lake back home. What I found fascinating was that it was starting to get dark and Jesus hadn't returned – so they set off without Him! Why? We can speculate about the reason why but John writes about it in an unsurprised sort of way rather than in any sense of upset that Jesus had been left behind. For all we know Jesus had said to them something along the lines "I'm off to the mountain; if I'm not back, go back across the lake and I'll catch up with you later." What was the real surprise was where Jesus caught up with them!

STORMY NIGHT

For a disciple like John, the journey was not unfamiliar. As a fisherman he knew the lake well and was quite used to night travel on the lake and squally weather. I'm sure that James, John, Peter and Andrew found it hard work but not a problem and there's no sense they were concerned that it was a bit rough other than it was hard work. They could cope.

Are we travelling through life without Jesus? If you are a Christian then you'll say straight away "of course not!" The disciples followed Jesus – but not literally on this occasion; they had left Him behind. We can be disciples of Jesus and travel through life without Him, or ahead of Him. We have big decisions in life – and we don't speak to Him. We have a crisis – and we don't come to Him first. We find we have problems with our relationships and rather than seeking Jesus, we just react as everyone else does. And we find life hard work – a storm to row against.

Like the disciples we face the storms of life, and accept all the pain, the stress, the knock-backs, the pressure as just part of life. We find no peace in what's happening to us. Then we seek our own solutions and if all fails we maybe doubt our faith. Sound familiar?

But where was Jesus when we were going through it all. Was He left behind on the shore whilst we pushed our boat out without Him.

So there were the disciples, in rough weather where despite that, some of them found it no problem, even if the landlubbers were a bit worried and seasick – they could cope. John was an

experienced fisherman and knew the lake like the back of his hand. He records that they were well into the lake about three to four miles from shore.

This story is recorded in Matthew and Mark's gospel, but John just keeps it brief. As they were rowing hard because the wind was probably rather strong, here comes Jesus, walking on the water! Here were men accustomed to the dangers of storms on the lake, but to see this figure walking up to them on the water was just terrifying. Matthew and Mark record that the disciples thought Jesus was a ghost! Why? Because walking on the water is impossible. It can't be done. Well, I know that some people have created float like footwear – but try wearing them in rough weather!

SEA OF GALILEE

Of course rationalists have said, perhaps Jesus was standing on a sandbank. Not three miles out in the Sea of Galilee – it's 20-40m deep. Besides if Jesus had been walking on a sandbank, then the boat would have run aground!

SHAFTS OF LIGHT

The wonderful thing about Jesus is how much He loves. We may disobey Him, go our own way, do our own thing, but He is still willing to come to us. Whether you know Jesus or not this morning, whatever your situation, Jesus is here – where you are – offering Himself to you. How do you react?

I'd hope you'd be pleased. Or is it with fear of Jesus?

I know many people who won't come to Jesus because they don't feel they are good enough – they've done too much that's wrong.

There are those who just won't believe Him even though they are in a mess, facing problems, facing awful situations, facing death and they'll not do anything about it.

There are those that live in fear of God.

The disciples may have been shocked but they got Jesus into the boat. And what happened? Actually this miracle is two miracles. John records this: 21 *Then they were willing to take him into the boat, and immediately the boat reached the shore where they were heading.* They were three miles out, then they arrived – immediately. How did that happen? Teleportation may happen on Star Trek, but it doesn't exist now and it certainly didn't exist then! Another miracle.

PILOT 1

When Jesus got into the boat, they reached the harbour safely. Those of you who watch my videos know that I posted one recently on The Pilot Who Couldn't Fly. Although pilots are mentioned on Paul's journeys in Acts, a picture that modern poets and hymn writers have used of Jesus is that of a Pilot – the One who guides our lives through the stormiest seas into God's safe harbour. PILOT 2 It's based on this miracle and also Jesus stilling the storm but the Bible never suggests Jesus as a pilot but the picture is a good one anyway.

This passage in John tells us something important and that is that we must travel through life with Jesus because He takes us safely to our destination. To leave Him out just ends us up like the disciples – all at sea!

Let me give you this challenge this morning. If you follow Jesus, have you sailed ahead, or is He on board? If you realised you've been sailing without Him, He's still the gracious Saviour who walked out to the boat that night – He wants to bring hope, forgiveness and life to you.

But there's even more to the passage in the following verses which we haven't read yet. This miracle comes directly after the feeding of the 5000 and before a discussion Jesus has with the crowds who hunt Him down the following day. Let's read from John 6 verses 22-40.

PASSAGE

FEEDING 5000

So here we have the people catching up with Jesus. At the beginning of the chapter they were after some spectacle: a miracle. After the miracle, they wanted to make Him a king. But was that because they saw the power and authority of God in Him? No – quite different. Here's what Jesus says to them about their motive: I tell you the truth, you are looking for me, not because you saw miraculous signs but because you ate the loaves and had your fill.

Why did they want Jesus as king? Not to place the nation under the authority of God again, but that He had solved the nation's food crisis. Like the people in the wilderness in the time of Moses who were provided with manna from heaven, Jesus seemed like the answer to all their food supply problems. He would be the one that would keep them satisfied and their bellies full.

In one sense Jesus does these amazing miracles, but what is also amazing for different reasons is how people twist who Jesus is as a result. People are still doing it. To some Jesus is just a good man who said nice things. To the Muslims He's a prophet who did miracles. To others He's a made up figure. To modern Jews He was a false Messiah. What is the source of information for all these people? The Bible. Yet their conclusions are so different. Because they all filter the information as they please.

But as we read the Word of God we find that John presents us with a Saviour, who does miracles, who claimed to be equal with God and that He calls men and women to come to Him and follow Him. Here's His words again.

VERSE

"I tell you the truth, you are looking for me, not because you saw miraculous signs but because you ate the loaves and had your fill. 27 Do not work for food that spoils, but for food that endures to eternal life, which the Son of Man will give you. On him God the Father has placed his seal of approval." 28 Then they asked him, "What must we do to do the works God requires?" 29 Jesus answered, "The work of God is this: to believe in the one he has sent."

Like typical Jews, they ask Jesus for a miraculous sign.

30 So they asked him, "What miraculous sign then will you give that we may see it and believe you? What will you do? 31 Our forefathers ate the manna in the desert; as it is written: 'He gave them bread from heaven to eat.'"

Er, just a minute, haven't they just witnessed something along those lines?

32 Jesus said to them, "I tell you the truth, it is not Moses who has given you the bread from heaven, but it is my Father who gives you the true bread from heaven. 33 For the bread of God is he who comes down from heaven and gives life to the world." 34 "Sir," they said, "from now on give us this bread." 35 Then Jesus declared, "I am the bread of life. He who comes to me will never go hungry, and he who believes in me will never be thirsty."

God isn't about providing bread for the world, but giving people the spiritual food that gives them life and hope. The people then get the answer when they ask for that bread because Jesus says *"I am the bread of life. He who comes to me will never go hungry, and he who believes in*

me will never be thirsty." This is how the two miracles in John 6 link. In Jesus is all the sufficiency to get us through life and to take us into eternity. He isn't part of the answer to the mystery of life. He is the answer to how we can live life with meaning and with power. He is the answer to all questions about eternity.

If we have known Jesus for a little time or a long time, so often we try to travel on our own, and to seek satisfaction in life that doesn't build us up as people or doesn't build our relationship with God. If that's the case we need to recognise that and confess it to Him this morning, to take Him back on board and ask Him to feed us with more of Himself.

Maybe you've never really trusted Jesus before. This is Jesus' message to you from this passage.

For my Father's will is that everyone who looks to the Son and believes in him shall have eternal life, and I will raise him up at the last day."

Challenge

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