

# SHARE THE BIBLE LESSON

## WEEK 13

### Jesus walks on water

Matthew 14:23–33



## DAY 1

*Jesus sought the presence of His Father • Matthew 14:22–23*

### READ

Matthew 14:22–33

### EXPLAIN

**The truth of Matthew 14:22–23**

It is good to spend time alone with God. Jesus sent the disciples and crowds away so that He could be alone in His Father's presence. Because Jesus was human, the crowd's offer tempted Him. It tempted Him to avoid rejection, pain, death, and wrath and instead accept the crown that day and march into Jerusalem with a huge crowd of followers. But thank God He did not! Instead, in that moment of temptation, He turned to His Father. There, in His Father's presence, He found the strength to humbly obey, even though He knew it would cost Him His life (Phil 2:8). Jesus also spent time alone with God because God is His Father. As the Son of God, Jesus submits to His Father, depends on His Father, and delights in His Father (John 5:19; 17:4). He loves to be with His Father and do the things that make His Father happy (4:34). He found greater joy in doing His Father's will than in anything temptation could offer (Heb 12:2). This is the lesson Jesus wanted to teach His disciples—find protection and pleasure in the powerful presence of God.

### ASK

1. Was Jesus with the disciples in the boat?  
*No. He had sent them away right after dinner.*
2. Why did Jesus send the disciples and crowds away?  
*So He could be alone in His Father's presence.*
3. Why did Jesus pray?  
*To find protection (from temptation) and pleasure in the presence of His Father.*
4. What lesson did Jesus want His disciples to learn?  
*That protection and pleasure are found in God's powerful presence.*

### DISCUSS

1. What did you do the last time you were tempted? What should you do (Jas 4:8a).
2. When you obey God, why do you do it? Because you have to? To avoid punishment? Or because you love Him so much you want to do what He loves?

## DAY 2

Jesus allowed the disciples to struggle away from His presence • Matthew 14:24–25

### READ

Matthew 14:22–33

### EXPLAIN

#### The truth of Matthew 14:24–25

Why did Jesus let the disciples struggle so long? By late evening, around 9 PM, the disciples were in the middle of the Sea of Galilee (Mark 6:47). They should have been close to the northern shore of the lake, but the wind had blown them several miles off course (John 6:19). All night they rowed against the wind, until sometime between 3 and 6 AM (Matt 14:25). They must have wished Jesus was with them as He had been in the last storm (8:23–27)! Why does He sometimes seem to stay far away from us and leave us in difficulty? David wondered this too: “How long, O LORD? Will you forget me forever? How long will you hide your face from me?” (Ps 13:1). But God knows what He is doing. He is teaching us to trust Him (13:5). “Suffering produces endurance, and endurance produces character, and character produces hope,” and when we hope in God, we are never disappointed (Rom 5:3–5). Those “who wait for the LORD shall renew their strength” (Isa 40:31). When He feels far away, wait for the Lord.

### ASK

1. How long were the disciples on the lake?  
*All night.*
2. Why were the disciples struggling to stay on course?  
*The wind was against them.*
3. When did Jesus come to the disciples?  
*In the fourth watch of the night (sometime between 3 and 6 AM).*
4. Why did Jesus let them struggle so long?  
*He was teaching the disciples to trust Him.*

### DISCUSS

1. Have you ever had growing pains? Why does learning to trust Jesus often include some “growing pains” (Rom 5:3–5)?
2. What’s another common reason we might feel distant from God (Isa 59:1–13)?

## DAY 3

Jesus came to be present with His disciples • Matthew 14:26–27

### READ

Matthew 14:22–33

### EXPLAIN

#### The truth of Matthew 14:26–27

When God feels far away, we can wait eagerly for Him because He sees, He cares, and He comes with great power to save. Jesus saw the disciples struggling (Mark 6:48), and when they could not come to Him, He came to them walking on the water as only God can do (Job 9:8). But instead of being comforted, the disciples were terrified! They thought they were seeing a ghost (Matt 14:26)! Then they heard Jesus’ voice: “Take heart; it

is I,” or, literally, “I AM” (14:27). This is the same way God encouraged Moses at the burning bush, when He said, “I AM” (Exod 3:14). God told Moses, “I will be with you” (3:12), and by His presence with Moses, God brought Egypt to its knees. Later, when Moses despaired, God let His presence “pass by” to encourage Moses (34:6). He did the same thing to encourage Elijah (1 Kgs 19:11). Now, Jesus put Himself in God’s place. He planned to “pass by” the disciples (Mark 6:48), to display His divine presence to them just as God had done to Moses and Elijah. By His own powerful presence, Jesus would rescue His disciples.

DAY 3 CONTINUED ON NEXT PAGE

**ASK** 

1. How did Jesus come to be with the disciples?  
*He walked on water.*
2. When the disciples saw Jesus, were they comforted?  
*No. They were terrified.*
3. Why were the disciples terrified?  
*They thought they were seeing a ghost.*
4. What did Jesus say to them?  
*He said, "It's Me," which is the same as "I Am." He was saying He was with them like God was with Moses*

**DISCUSS** 

1. What are you afraid of? Why do you not need to be afraid when God is with you (Isa 41:10)?
2. Can you think of another time when God's presence made all the difference (Josh 1:9; 3:7, 17; 6:2, 6, 11, 20)?

**DAY 4***Jesus invited Peter into His presence • Matthew 14:28-31***READ** 

Matthew 14:22-33

**EXPLAIN** **The truth of Matthew 14:28-31**

Peter got the message. When he said, "If it is you," he was not doubting. He knew it was Jesus. This was **faith**. First, Peter was **trusting** in the presence of Jesus. Despite the craziness of jumping into the stormy sea, Peter figured he would be safer outside the boat next to Jesus than inside the boat away from Him! Second, Peter was **submitting** to Jesus' will, seeking permission before jumping out. It was also love, as Peter wanted nothing more than to be with Jesus. In response, Jesus welcomed Peter to come to Him. The trouble came when Peter took his eyes off Jesus and focused instead on the howling wind. What he saw with his eyes challenged what he believed in his heart, and he began to sink. Yet despite his hesitation, he still had faith, crying out, "Lord, save me." Jesus responded with ever-present love. In love He saved him, and in love He rebuked him, for the Lord disciplines the one He loves (Heb 12:6). He had used this extreme situation to show Peter, and the rest of the disciples, that His presence was more powerful than they had realized before.

**ASK** 

1. How did Peter show his faith in Jesus?  
*He trusted Jesus enough to jump out of the boat. He submitted to Jesus by asking permission.*
2. What else did Peter's request show?  
*It shows his love. Peter wanted to be with Jesus more than anything else.*
3. When did Peter start sinking?  
*When he stopped focusing on Jesus.*
4. Why did Jesus rebuke Peter for doubting?  
*The Lord disciplines the one He loves.*

**DISCUSS** 

1. Put yourself in Peter's position. What kind of faith did it take to get out of the boat in the midst of the wind and waves?
2. Have you or your parents ever chosen to take a risk in order to be close to Jesus?

# DAY 5

Jesus' presence is the presence of God • Matthew 14:32–33

## READ

Matthew 14:32–33

## EXPLAIN

### The truth of Matthew 14:32–33

This time, Jesus did not even speak to stop the storm (cf. Matt 8:23–27). He simply got into the boat, and the storm stopped. Not only that, but the boat was immediately at their destination, even though they had been two or three miles away (John 6:21). The first time they had seen Jesus calm a storm, they only wondered who He was (Matt 8:27). This time, they knew: Jesus is the Son of God. They were in the presence of God Himself. As humans, we are all designed to be in God's presence (Gen 3:8). God was present with Israel in the tabernacle and in the temple (Exod 40:34–35; 1 Kgs 9:3), He was present on earth in the life of Jesus (Col 2:9), He is present today in the Holy Spirit living in the hearts of believers (1 Cor 6:19), and one day He will be fully present as King over the New Creation (Rev 22:3). Yet we often live as if His presence did not matter to us. But this week we have seen that His presence—His powerful and loving presence—makes all the difference (Ps 27:4; 84:10).

## ASK

1. What happened when Jesus got into the boat?  
*The storm stopped and the boat was immediately at the shore.*
2. Who did the disciples say Jesus is, and what did they do?  
*The Son of God, which means Jesus is God. He is God the Son. They worshiped Him.*
3. How was God present with Israel?  
*In the tabernacle and in the temple.*
4. How is Jesus present today in the hearts of believers?  
*The Holy Spirit.*

## DISCUSS

1. What blessings are there in God's presence (Ps 16:11)? What trouble is there away from God (Deut 31:17)?
2. What kind of person enjoys God's presence (Isa 66:2b)? Do you enjoy God's presence?

## NEXT WEEK

### Jesus defines discipleship

Mark 8:27–38

