

Discipleship Group Weekly Resources
Week 4 Passage: John 6:16-24

Big Thought:

Jesus walks on water.

This event is recorded by Matthew and Mark as well as by John with all three gospels placing this story after the feeding of the multitudes. These moments in the text are when we see the glory of the Word-made-flesh shine through not just because Jesus can do whatever he wants, but because these stories reflect a promise and fulfillment by God in Israel's history.

The scene of Jesus walking on the water is an echo of the Red Sea experience for the people of Israel. Israel began their journey to freedom by God making a way with water through the sea, with the waters parting before them and closing on the Egyptians behind them. As you know, Moses was the one leading the people through the waters and here in John, the crowds have just said in verse 14 that Jesus is the prophet who was to come (assumption is The Prophet is one like Moses). Even though the crowds misunderstood what the prophet had come to do, Jesus does something that the disciples surely saw in terms of the Exodus story and God's faithfulness.

In a moment of fear, Jesus meets his disciples where they are to comfort them and assure them of who he is. I am leaning on the words of the great theologian, N.T. Wright, for the concluding thoughts here:

“There are many times in our lives – and we never know when they will strike – when, metaphorically speaking, suddenly the wind gets up and the sea becomes rough. As we struggle to make our way through, sometimes we are aware of a presence with us, which may initially be more disturbing than comforting. (‘We’re already nearly drowning, and now we’ve got ghosts following us!’) But if we listen, through the roar of the waves and the wind, we may hear the voice that says, ‘It’s me – don’t be afraid.’ And if we are ready then to take Jesus on board, we may find ourselves, sooner than we expected, at the harbor where we will be calm and secure once more.”

4 Questions:

1. What seasons of “rough waves” have you experienced in your life?
2. In those seasons, did you find it easier or harder to sense God's presence?
3. How can we prepare to sense God's presence and hear his voice in the stormy seasons?
4. What can you practically start doing this week to move towards God's presence?