

November/December 2009

SMALL GROUP SERIES:

# 7 Signs of Jesus

Discussion Guide  
Sign #5  
Jesus Walks on Water

## **Sign #5: Jesus Walks On Water**

### **John 6:16-21**

<sup>16</sup>When evening came, his disciples went down to the lake, <sup>17</sup>where they got into a boat and set off across the lake for Capernaum. By now it was dark, and Jesus had not yet joined them. <sup>18</sup>A strong wind was blowing and the waters grew rough.

<sup>19</sup>When they had rowed three or three and a half miles, they saw Jesus approaching the boat, walking on the water; and they were terrified. <sup>20</sup>But he said to them, "It is I; don't be afraid." <sup>21</sup>Then they were willing to take him into the boat, and immediately the boat reached the shore where they were heading.

### **Notes For Reflection:**

## **Facilitator's Guide**

### Commentary on the passage

In the context of John's discussion of Jesus as the New Passover, new manna and one greater than Moses, Jesus' miracle on the sea may have reminded his first readers of Israel's crossing the sea in the days of Moses.

**6:16-19.** Squalls were frequent on the lake. Given where they are traveling, they had probably already gone over halfway when caught in the storm; turning back is no longer an option. Fishing boats were equipped with oars; the sail would be counterproductive in this storm.

**6:20.** "It is I" (v. 20) is literally "I am." "It is I" is a legitimate way to translate the phrase, and no doubt how Jesus intends the disciples to understand it; but given the context of Jesus walking on water, the nuance of deity in "I am" (Ex 3:14; Is 41:4; 43:10, 13) is probably present. Several pagan miracleworkers claimed to be able to walk on water, but these were not part of Palestinian Jewish tradition. In the Old Testament, Moses, Joshua, Elijah and Elisha all parted bodies of water, but only God trod upon the water (Job 9:8; cf. Ps 77:20).

**6:21.** The boat being instantly at its destination has no exact Old Testament parallels, but the Spirit had sometimes carried prophets from one place to another almost instantly (e.g., Ezek 8:3; 11:24 - probably in a vision; cf. 1 Kings 18:12; 2 Kings 2:16).

Taken from the InterVarsity Press New Testament Commentary

## **Facilitator Tip of the Week**

How is your group prayer life? One of the core values of small groups at RBCPC is to grow in intimacy with God through prayer:

- As a facilitator, begin with yourself: *Pray for your group* before meeting and invite the Holy Spirit to be a part of the time you have together.
- Schedule prayer time as a regular part of your meeting each week.

Here are some suggestions to spark some creativity and interest with the group:

- Ask for prayer requests and write them down on a 3 x 5 card (or something like that) and have one person pray them at the end of the session.
- Write them down on a 3 x 5 card and have each person take one home to pray for throughout the week.
- Assign one person to keep a prayer journal so the group can reflect on their journey together.
- Break into smaller groups of 2 or 3 to pray for each other.
- One person pray for each request immediately after it is spoken.

*The Small Group Ministry Team is praying for you and your group!*

## Jesus Walks On Water

### START IT

- Have you ever felt overwhelmed by the forces of nature?
- What do you do during the Christmas season to remind yourself that Jesus is the reason for the season?

### STUDY IT

- Why didn't Jesus just get in the boat with the disciples or take his own boat to Capernaum?
- Put yourself in the disciples' position in the boat, what would they be thinking in this situation? Why were they afraid?
- John says this sign occurs near Passover when the Jews were celebrating the Exodus story – Moses leading the Israelites out of Egypt. What symbolism might the Jews of the day have read into Jesus walking on water?
- Two miraculous events happened here: Jesus walked on water and the boat reached shore upon Jesus entering the boat (covering a distance of about 3 miles). What do these miracles say about Jesus' character?

### LIVE IT

- Have you ever felt like you were in a boat in rough waters, waiting for Jesus? Are you still there?
- How could you invite Jesus into a difficult situation?

### PRAY IT

- As a group, pray for Jesus to meet us in our time of need. Commit to pray for each other this week.
- Pray for God's guidance for the church as it goes through a process to clarify what could hold it back from moving into the future.