

# Sermon Outline

“LIFE IN HIS NAME”:  
THE PURSUIT OF WHOLENESS AND THE GOSPEL OF JOHN

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## OUR HEAVENLY KING

*JOHN 6:15-21*

### I. Introduction

### II. Withdrawal (Jn 6:15)

- A. After the Lord had performed the miraculous feeding of the five thousand, the people were astonished by what he could do.
- B. They wanted “to come and take him by force to make him king...” (v 15; cf. 18:36).
  - 1. The use of force suggests that there was nothing tame, kind, or polite in how they approached Jesus.
  - 2. The reaction is understandable, even predictable: If God’s great Prophet has come, could only mean that political and national liberation would immediately follow.
  - 3. But they were doing this *against* Jesus’ will. They were *forcing* all this on Jesus.
- C. Jesus, “perceiving” that that was what they wanted to do, “withdrew again to the mountain by himself.”
- D. There are a few lessons we can learn from this passage.
  - 1. Jesus will not allow himself to be coerced into action.
    - a. Jesus is the Lord, not us.
    - b. Jesus is the Son of the Father. He takes all his instructions from the Father, not popular vote.
  - 2. Love does not mean doing whatever people want you to do all the time.
  - 3. Loving people does not mean that you need to be their punching bag.
- E. To be a Christian is to be like Jesus.
  - 1. That sometimes means *withdrawing* from people (i.e., taking a break, leaving the scene, avoiding a potential conflict situation, going on a sabbatical, saying “no” to a request, etc.).
  - 2. Being a Christian is about having the freedom to say “no” to some things so that you can say “yes” to God and to his definition of you.

### **III. Storm (Jn 6:16-18)**

- A. Jesus' withdrawal sets the stage for the next sign that he would perform.
- B. This next miracle is not done for the crowds, but for the disciples themselves, i.e. for true believers who have committed themselves to Jesus and what God wants him to be.
- C. Verses 16-17: "When evening came, his disciples went down to the sea, <sup>17</sup> got into a boat, and started across the sea to Capernaum."
- D. But evening came "and Jesus had not yet come to them" (v 17).
  - 1. Earlier in the day, Jesus had withdrawn to the mountain to get away from the crowds.
  - 2. But he had yet to reappear.
  - 3. Why were the disciples sailing off without their rabbi? Perhaps Jesus had instructed them to go ahead and sail off by a certain time, even if he is not with them.
- E. Then the situation got bad.
  - Jn 6:18: "The sea became rough because a strong wind was blowing."

### **IV. Walking on the Sea (Jn 6:19)**

- A. When they were three or four miles out into the sea, struggling against the waves, the disciples saw an unusual sight. It looked like someone was walking toward them.
  - Jn 6:19: "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."
- B. When they saw this, the disciples became afraid (cf. v 19).

### **V. "It Is I" (Jn 6:20)**

- A. The disciples soon recognized who it was. It was Jesus!
- B. As Jesus came up to the boat, "he said to them, 'It is I; do not be afraid'" (v 20).
- C. On another occasion, if the person walking toward them had not been Jesus, they might have had reason to be afraid. But since the person is Jesus, their Teacher, Lord, and Friend, they don't have to be afraid.
- D. When we have Jesus, we don't have to fear storms, churning seas, howling winds, or death.

- E. “It is I” is also translatable as “I am.”
1. “I AM” is the name of God.
  2. Is this a case of double-meaning? Did Jesus just give away who he really is?
- F. Some Old Testament texts that shed light on this miracle:
- Job 9:8: who alone stretched out the heavens and trampled the waves of the sea;
  - Ps 77:16-20: When the waters saw you, O God, when the waters saw you, they were afraid; indeed, the deep trembled.
- <sup>17</sup>The clouds poured out water;  
the skies gave forth thunder;  
your arrows flashed on every side.
- <sup>18</sup>The crash of your thunder was in the whirlwind;  
your lightnings lighted up the world;  
the earth trembled and shook.
- <sup>19</sup>Your way was through the sea,  
your path through the great waters;  
yet your footprints were unseen.
- <sup>20</sup>You led your people like a flock  
by the hand of Moses and Aaron.

## VI. Our King from Beyond This World

**Jesus is the heavenly king. He may not be made king *by* us. But he is a king *for* us. And he continues to be our king even when we cannot see him in a storm, even when we are filled with fear, and wonder whether or not he is even present in our lives. The kingship of Jesus has a life of its own, independent of our thoughts, our feelings, or even the health of our faith. This is the good news that I cling to for myself: Jesus remains king over my life even when I struggle to gather the faith to believe in him. For that, I am grateful. Because Jesus is my king, regardless of how weak my faith, I can be assured that my boat will make it to shore. And you can too.**

## **Questions for Reflection**

1. Was there anything in particular about today's sermon that blessed and encouraged you?
2. Was there anything that you disagree with or found difficult to accept?
3. Why did the crowds want to force Jesus to be king?
4. Why did Jesus withdraw from the crowds? What lessons does this have for us?
5. What do you think the disciples experienced while they were at sea?
6. How did the disciples react to Jesus walking on the waters?
7. What was the Lord communicating to us through his walking on water? Refer to Job 9:8 and Ps 77:16-20.
8. What is the Lord teaching you through this episode?