

Gospel of Matthew

14:22-33

Who Treads On the Waves



[Job 9:8] –

Who is Job talking about here?,,,, Right! It can only be Almighty Creator/God whose name is Yhwh! He is the one that created the laws of physics by which all material things must behave predictably. *Step off a roof and you know you will be going down – every time – falling fast and hitting whatever is down there, hard! That is “the Law of Gravity”. Gravity is a wonderful physical law that keeps our feet to the ground so we don’t go floating off into space! *Or, the properties of water. It has three natural states – liquid, solid, and vapor. It changes and takes on these other properties when it reaches certain temperatures – and it is always the same temperature – 212 degrees at sea level. But that boiling point goes down the farther up you are from sea level. At 6000 feet above sea level the boiling point is right around 200 degrees, and lessens the higher you climb upward.

There are 1000s of physical laws, wondrous, every one of them, and these laws often have variables that are laws in themselves – and these laws rule our physical environment so that things always behave in a certain way. It makes things predictable for us because these rules are so reliable! If we pay attention to the rules we stand a much better chance of escaping the physical consequences to our physical bodies of ignoring them!

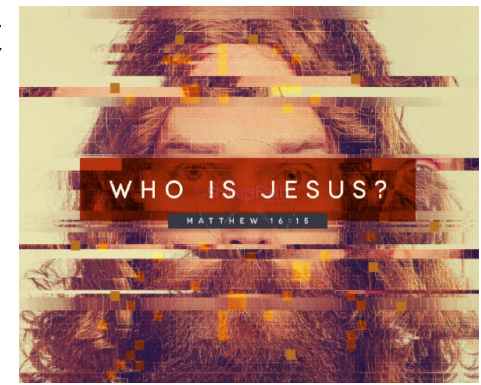


The things the Creator can do with the Laws of physics that He Himself created are mind-blowing. We have absolutely NO power to change the way these laws work. But He who conceived of these laws, and spoke them into existence can also speak and alter them at will! Jesus was not just a man, or even a prophet that got God to do things that counteract the laws of physics – miracles, we call them – but Jesus was God incarnate, God who took on human flesh! How did He do that? Well, we don't know. It's not normal, but since He wanted to, He just found a way to make it happen! He created new rules that bend or even break the old ones so that what He wants to happen, actually happens! When we want something to change, we have no ability to make it change to accommodate our wishes. But all things are absolutely subject to what He wants! When he wishes it to be just so, it IS just so!



But the truth of what was really going on here had not yet dawned on the 12 disciples. All they knew was that Jesus was proving He was the Messiah. What they didn't know yet was that He was proving that He was God incarnate – God with human flesh! They didn't figure that out until after the resurrection of Jesus when He revealed everything to His disciples plainly. Previously to that he spoke in parables which were like riddles to the disciples – unsolvable riddles! They would get part of the meaning, but not the main part of it. So after His resurrection it appears that Jesus stopped speaking in riddles and spoke plainly. It is clear that the disciples certainly understood who Jesus was by the time He ascended! He was way more than a prophet!

[Col. 1:15-20] Here is how the disciples came to understand the identity of Jesus and they also understood that *who* He was, *what* He was, was how He did what He did! Because He was God, perfect and holy, the sacrifice of Himself for the sins of humanity worked. It was the most amazing transition – from stupefaction to illumination!



The disciples finally got it. It took quite awhile, but they eventually got over what they had previously thought the Messiah would look like - what He was supposed to do, and who He couldn't be. They never imagined in their wildest, weirdest, wackiest dreams that the Messiah would be, and *was*, God the Creator Himself – on earth – in human form! That was totally and completely unexpected! And yet that is what Jesus revealed! And the disciples figured out soon enough that Jesus was no madman! Lots of madmen have claimed to be the Chosen One, the Christ, Jesus, or God, or Buddha, BUT, they're madmen – loops crazy! But Jesus could do things that took Him out of that category! Madmen are powerless! They can't back up what they proclaim! But Jesus - whatever He was, He wasn't crazy!



He also could not be some unusual man who was a prophet and a miracle worker! Jesus did miracles at a rate that no prophet had ever done! Prophets did occasional miracles. Jesus did miracles every day, one after the other, most of the day, day after day! In sheer volume, He outdid all the other prophets combined – by far!! But He did not part the Sea of Galilee, or stop the flow of the Jordan River – or knock down the walls of Jerusalem! He did not do the more sensational, visible miracles. He generally healed people that came to Him, desperate for healing. That was enough! It wasn't flashy because most of the people He healed were poor, unknown, and without influence in Judean society. But it was effective for what He was trying to accomplish!

14:22,23 –

So Jesus was able to finally dismiss the crowd. He had gotten the news that His cousin - the prophet John (the Baptist) – had been beheaded by King Herod, and He had left with His disciples in a boat. He had gone to grieve. But the crowd kept an eye on the boat and were there to greet Him when He landed a few miles away. Then He had taught them, and healed them, and fed them - 5, 10, 15, 20 thousand of them! Now, finally, He is able to send the disciples away in the boat, and then He dismisses the crowd and they finally leave, leaving Him alone,.. finally! Now He has some time to Himself and He talks to His Heavenly Father and, if the timeline is consistent, He finally is able to grieve for John for a little while. It doesn't say that, but we can safely assume that He prayed and spoke to His Father about John's murder. We have no idea how that conversation went, but Jesus and the Father and the Holy Spirit had a conversation about this and certainly other things. It begs the question – what does God talk about within Himself? And the answer is – we cannot know that,.. There is not the remotest chance of discovering what God talks about within His Tri-unity! We cannot conceive of what there even is to talk about within a personage that knows EVERYTHING! Yet this is one God in three Persons, and persons talk to each other. The gospels record that Jesus and God the Father talked together on a regular basis. I, for one, would love to have eavesdropped in on that conversation





At “the fourth watch” – this was the way the Romans divided the guard duties of their soldiers at night. The first watch began at 6 in the evening and was changed every three hours. The fourth changing of the guard began at 3 a.m. in the morning. The disciples were struggling to get across the big lake – about 5 miles across at this juncture – but they had been

bucking stormy winds the whole way. They had rowed all night and were, perhaps, $\frac{3}{4}$ of the way across. But by this time they must have been exhausted as they had toiled at the oars against the wind all night. That last $1\frac{1}{4}$ miles must have looked more daunting than the entire 5 miles had looked when they had first begun to row that heavy boat across the lake the previous evening! Their arms felt like lead, their backs ached fiercely, and their hands were painfully blistered, but they couldn’t quit or they would have swiftly blown back across the lake toward the directions they had come! But in the wee hours of the morning, sometime between 3 and 6:00 in the morning, they are mystified and frightened by the sight of a single figure of a man materializing out of the dark, walking on the surface of the water. Their immediate conclusion is that it was a ghost and they are completely spooked out of their minds! But then the figure gets closer and they recognize that the apparition looks like Jesus. But it can’t be! People can’t walk on the surface of a lake! It must be His spirit they thought.

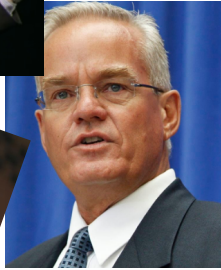
But as Jesus nears the boat He sees their panic and He speaks to assure them. “*Relax! It’s really me!*” The disciples are skeptical, and Peter finally speaks for them. “*If it is really you, make me walk on the water too. Call me to yourself!*” I can’t imagine what possessed Peter to ask this of Jesus. But Jesus bade him simply to “***Come***”.



So Peter climbs out of the boat onto the surface of the water, and lo and behold, he stays up on the surface and shakily lets go of the edge of the boat and takes his first tottering steps, and then the realization hits him of where he is! He says to himself, “*What am I doing?!*” and then he immediately begins to panic! To make matters worse, he then starts to sink! So he does the only thing he can think of in that crazy moment, and screams, “***Lord, save me!***”



Jesus reaches out, grabs his outstretched arm, pulled him back up and then asks, “*You of little faith! Why did your doubt kick in and take over?*”



What Jesus fails to mention is that Peter was the only one of the disciples to actually risk climbing out of the boat in the first place! Why would He not commend the faith of Peter in front of the 11 others that had no

faith at all? Why not go after the 11 that never even attempted it. But that is

not how Jesus worked. Peter was the alpha male who always just assumed that the mantle of leadership would always fall to him. But he was no big deal! He was no spiritual giant! None of them were! But **Peter** didn't know that, yet! It appears that He needed to. Before he could become someone of importance in the Kingdom of God, He had to learn that he was no one of consequence! It was a very important concept for him to learn. The only thing about him that mattered in the Kingdom of God was that he knew and believed in Jesus completely! If he believed even in a mixture of himself and Jesus, he would fail at his leadership role! *Sadly, this concept is being illustrated again and again as renown pastors of mega-churches, well-known evangelists, and best-selling Christian authors are biting the dust at an alarming rate! They have experienced incredible success, acclaim, recognition, honor! But behind the scenes they have been having affairs, been brutally mean to their associate pastors and lay people in leadership, and have thought themselves invincible! And they WERE - until enough people finally started exposing them, bringing the spotlight of truth to shine on the things done in secret. And then these “great men” were brought down into dishonor and disrepute! And then the truth of who they were begins to trickle out! And the world laughs and scorns!

These mighty ones thought being big, successful, mattered most! But it didn't matter in the least! The only thing that mattered was being real! Jesus was reminding this "sinker", Peter, that he could not walk on water by himself. He was a sinker like everyone else and it was vitally important that he never forgot this lesson so that he never became a real stinker! The beloved church of the Lord Jesus Christ has had far too many of those!



Folks, Jesus wants authenticity! We are nothing at all – of no consequence in ourselves – none of us! We are just another speck of microscopic dust on this tiny piece of cosmic mud we call earth, seemingly lost in a vast universe. But He is everything, and ***He*** makes us ***something*** only through our association with Him and our dependency upon Him! We sink or float by Him for He is our ***EVERYTHING!*** Our faith has to be ***in Him and not on ourselves!*** Appearances don't matter even in the slightest for God sees the heart. He is staring right through us right now! What is He seeing? Listen, if there is a lack of faith, it should be in our own self! We are truly powerless without Him! I don't care how talented we are or the skills we were given at birth, we are nothing in God's Kingdom but very likely a destructive force just waiting to implode, unless and until our ego is put in check, subdued, cowed under the sheer magnitude of the Living Christ! But when He is lifting us up it is a completely different story!

[I Pet. 5:5b-11; Ph'p. 4:13]