

The Sea of Galilee is a large lake—12 ½ miles long and 7 ½ miles wide in a large bowl
700 feet below sea level and located in the northern part of Israel
The lake has a reputation—the wind can quickly become dangerous

That day the disciples had seen Jesus take 5 barley loaves and 2 fish and feed a huge crowd
They were still talking about it that evening
They went down to the Sea of Galilee and left for Capernaum—across the lake
Jesus had not come with them

They were alone in the boat on the Sea of Galilee
In the night the wind picked up—it does that quickly on the sea
Soon the wind howled and the waves tossed the boat about

These were fishermen—they were familiar with the lake and its sudden storms
They were busy guiding the boat so they wouldn't be swamped
But they weren't afraid—they had seen storms much worse than this on the lake

But then sometime in the night—while it was still dark and after rowing 3-4 miles
They saw something on the water
Now that was scary!
It looked like a person walking on the water
Was it a ghost?!

Jesus reassured them and said, *"It's me. It's all right. Don't be afraid."*

Just the day before, Jesus fed 5000 men plus women and children
with 2 fish and 5 loaves—yet they had 12 baskets left over
Jesus healed people
Jesus had stopped the storm once before on this same lake
That time the storm was scary—much worse than this time

But the disciples never seemed to be amazed at Jesus
They didn't expect him to come to them in this storm

When they recognized that it was Jesus, they took him on board
In no time at all they reached land—the exact spot they were headed to

The truth is there are stormy places in our lives
Sometimes those are times we don't think we'll make it
We feel helpless, alone and powerless to do anything
Other times, it's not too bad—we can do this, and we settle in to managing it
We work hard and do the next thing
Sometime it's a good thing—but it feels so huge
Bigger than I am
Sometimes I'm riding high on the miracle
And suddenly we panic at where we are
We lose the sense of being carried
It doesn't matter whether it's good or bad—whether we're new to Jesus or old friends
There are times when we lose our way and we are overwhelmed

But in all of these Jesus comes to us
Sometimes, like when Jesus walked on the water, it startles us
Jesus come to us and we may be thrown off balance
We don't recognize that it is Jesus at first and that alone startles us
Jesus is with us and he reveals himself to us
He may not walk on water—but he is there
And he will let us see him as present—if we look
He will reassure us when just his presence throws us off kilter
“Fear not!” “Don't be afraid!”
Jesus come to us and gets in our boat with us—steady the boat
Jesus joins us wherever we are—he sits with us
If we notice—things start to get calmer as we wait together
We find our equilibrium again
Together we get where we are going

As the people called Friends in North Seattle
There will be times when we wonder what we've done
Did we really hear God right?
I've wondered that many times
I need to ask again
I need to “see” Jesus coming to me
I need to retell the stories of God's miracles in my life and in our church life

Because, like the disciples that night—the miracle of Jesus feeding the 5,000 quickly fades
And we live with the reality of the moment
Which defines everything
But remember that Jesus is present
Jesus who calms the storm
and feeds the hungry
and heals the sick
Jesus is present and recognizable!
We are never alone!
Jesus will help us get where we are going!