

Better Than Walking on Water

[Text - Mark 6:41-52]

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Of the four New Testament Gospel accounts, *Mark* is the shortest and most concise. That's why in this morning's brief 11 verses, we get not just one - but two - of the major miracles attributed to Jesus: the feeding of the 5,000, and walking on water. And while one of those stories alone could cause some 21st Century skeptics to shake their heads, the two of them together could make their heads spin completely around! However, for Mark's 1st Century readers, the miraculous details of these stories really isn't that big of a deal. For them, the central point of both stories would be readily apparent: That what the Holy One began through *Moses*, is now being brought to fruition through the *Messiah*, Jesus of Nazareth.

With *Moses*, the Holy One sends manna from heaven to feed the people; but Jesus feeds people with resources that are right at hand. *Moses* delivers the people from peril by parting the sea; but Jesus walks right across those troubled waves, to reach-out and rescue his frightened friends. As the great Law-giver, *Moses* goes up Mount Sinai to receive the 10 Commandments; but in Jesus Christ, the heart of Hebraic Law comes down to earth and is fully embodied in one person - so that it can be clearly expressed and lived-out in an extraordinary and compassionate way.

For Mark and the other Gospel writers, the stories of Jesus feeding the multitude or walking on water have more to do with comparing him to *Moses*, than with trying to assert that he possesses *magical* powers. Back in that pre-scientific era, stories about miracles are rather common. It's only because of a relatively recent preoccupation with taking the Bible *literally*, that people today get all caught-up in debating the details of how those remarkable things could [or could not] have happened. Sadly, that's missing the essential point. These incredible stories are *intended* to stimulate our imaginations and to stir-up our sense of wonder! But chiefly they are meant to energize our compassion and generosity; to inspire our trust in Divine Abundance; and to motivate our caring for others - as active participants in the on-going miracle of Christ-like love and service.

The feeding of the multitude is a *Sign*, which points us toward an even greater miracle: the Transformation of the human heart. A transformation that inspires *us* to feed the hungry and help the hurting; to stand-up for the outcast and the oppressed; to proclaim the Divine Realm of Welcome and Compassion - through our words *and* our actions! It's a *Sign* that points to the abundance of the Divine blessings which all around us - blessings that you and I can freely share, every day. And it's a *Sign* which points to Jesus as "the Bread of Life" - the One who willingly shares his life, and gives his all, to nourish, sustain, and bless all people.

In the same way, the story of Jesus walking on water isn't intended to encourage you and me to try to stroll across the sea, or to take foolish risks as a way of "proving" our faith. It is told to remind us that no matter how difficult or frightening our life's

circumstances may be, you and I are never left hopelessly adrift! Our Divine Source is always with us, around us, and within us. And through the tangible presence of one another, the Holy One continues to offer us the help we need. Not unlike a rolling sea, our lives will consist of ups and downs; periods of calm, and times of turmoil. And in the person of Jesus Christ, you and I are given a wonderful example of how a deep and abiding *trust* in our Divine Source can help us move faithfully forward - regardless of the circumstances that surround us.

Jesus trusts that his Divine Source is ultimately in charge. And because of this fundamental trust, he is able to live freely and fully. By worldly standards, Jesus lives at the bottom of the poverty level; yet the richness of his relationships, the abundance of his joy, and the depth of his inner peace are truly amazing! Jesus' life and love aren't constricted by social pressures or by religious boundaries. His profound trust in Divine Grace allows him to reach-out to every person he encounters. And his intimate connection with his Divine Source, gives Jesus the ability to do some truly miraculous things:

To feed the hungry, regardless of the odds;

To offer healing and wholeness to the afflicted, wherever he meets them;

To boldly speak-up for the oppressed and the outcast, in spite of the personal dangers;

To welcome and raise-up *all* people, no matter who they are, or how deeply they may have fallen.

Now I'll admit that seeing Jesus Christ walk on water would be a spectacular sight! But I'm far more interested in seeing the day-to-day miracles that are being performed through *this* Living, Loving Body of Christ:

As we continue to feed hungry people with our food-bank donations, our Hunger Meal events, our support of the Cleveland Roots project;

As we provide physical healing through our contributions of money, medicine and medical supplies to the S.A.R.A. Program;

As we provide psychological and spiritual healing, by joyfully opening our doors and our hearts to *all* people - especially those who religion and society often reject and push-

aside;As we share our gifts and blessings every day, making a positive difference in the lives of others.

The bottom line is, that when you and I realize that our entire lives are a Divine Gift - an amazing *Miracle* - and we truly trust in the abundance of Divine Love, then there is little that we cannot achieve. For when we join our hands and hearts, share our hopes and dreams, combine our resources and energy - and are *stirred* with Divine Compassion - then you and I have the perfect mix for making miraculous things happen today! So while we may not be able to manipulate the laws of physics in order to multiply food or to defy gravity, we can absolutely work together to make this world a better place. And *that* is far more wonderful than walking on water!