

# Invite Jesus into the Boat

By

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*Text: Mark 6:45-51*

## The Great Risk of Ignoring Jesus

Does it sometimes feel like you could take charge of your own life and overcome the difficulties life throws in your way all by yourself? Are you so skilled and experienced in an area of life or situation that you do not need Christ to intervene?

Well, I am here to tell you that it's never out of place to invite Christ to intervene in a crisis or difficulty, no matter your level of experience or skill. You might be skilled and experienced but not so powerful to overcome all natural and supernatural forces that may confront you someday. And one or two will inevitably confront you over the course of your life. Bottom line is, you need Jesus every step of the way!

The early disciples of Christ did not readily realize this need for Christ *in all crises at all times* until the day they nearly drowned on the Lake Tiberias – despite their years of experience as fishermen – when they came against strong winds.

It was a desperate battle with a furious storm which would not be conquered by the dogged effort and skill of the professional fishermen-turned disciples of Christ!

*“And straightway He constrained His disciples to get into the ship, and to go to the other side before unto Bethsaida, while He sent away the people.*

*“And when He had sent them away, He departed into a mountain to pray.*

*“And when even was come, the ship was in the midst of the sea, and He alone on the land.*

*“And He saw them toiling in rowing; for the wind was contrary unto them: and about the fourth watch of the night He cometh unto them, walking upon the sea, and would have passed by them.*

*“But when they saw Him walking upon the sea, they supposed it had been a spirit, and cried out:*

*“For they all saw Him, and were troubled. And immediately He talked with them, and saith unto them, Be of good cheer: it is I; be not afraid.*

*“And He went up unto them into the ship; and the wind ceased: and they were sore amazed in themselves beyond measure, and wondered” (Mark 6:45-51).*

We can almost feel the charm of the place. The setting is the shore of the Sea of Galilee, which is actually a fresh water lake, and the sun has just dipped below the horizon.

Moments before, the Master had miraculously fed 5000 people from five loaves of bread and two small fish (Mark 6:38-44).

Thereafter, He ordered His disciples to get into a boat and sail ahead of Him to Bethsaida on the other side (of the lake), while He sent the people away. He then retired to one of the mountains surrounding the lake to pray by Himself.

From a distance, He saw the disciples caught up in a storm, for the wind blew against them, and they toiled frantically to row the boat into calmer waters.

Sitting seven hundred feet below the Mediterranean Sea which is a mere 30 miles away, the Sea of Galilee, or the Lake Tiberias as it's also called, is prone to strong winds caused by the cool breeze from the sea splashing into the hot air rising from the valley lake nestled among mountains and hills. Often, the swirl of wind will produce waves high enough to sink fishing boats.

So the disciples were in some real danger. And the Master saw their desperate efforts to keep out of harm. It must have been a hectic night of rowing, as they steered the heavy oars but made little headway.

### **The Redeemer intervenes at the 11<sup>th</sup> Hour!**

Although Christ, the Master, was on the shore and away from the unfolding danger on the lake, He was with His disciples in spirit and felt for them. For that was His nature. He was compassionate and couldn't bear to see people in pain or difficulty. He was moved to help them out before the situation could get any worse.

The hour of His intervention was "the fourth watch of the night" Roman time, which is between 3am – 6am. This suggests that during the previous three watches of the night, that is, from 6pm – 9pm, 9pm – 12midnight and 12midnight–3am, the disciples had struggled against the wind-storms, but just when they might have lost hope, He approached them in a spell-binding dramatic manner: He came walking on the lake (and gestured as if He would pass them by). A living miracle to the rescue!

But in their nervousness and fear of the worst, they saw not Christ but an apparition and began to cry out. They were all the more terrified by the fact that all of them saw this spirit (in Greek '*phantasma*', a water phantom) walking on the water and not a hallucination by a few.

But the Master spoke "immediately" to assure them that it was He, saying to them, "Be of good cheer; it is I, be not afraid." He then joined them in the boat, and the storm ceased raging. He extinguished their worst fears, and they were beside themselves with wonder. His joining them in the boat had changed what was a catastrophe in the making into a wonderful testimony to the power of Christ to calm the storm.

That, of course, is the whole point of the story – Christ as the storm calmer has the power to abase any force or power, whether of man, or spirit or nature. He is the instrument of divine miracles, and by His miraculous interventions, salvation is obtained.

### **Christ, our Companion in the Journey of Life**

Often, life can be like a boat caught up in a storm on the Sea of Galilee. On such occasions it becomes difficult, nay impossible, to row into safer waters much as we try, exerting all our strength and powers of reasoning among other resources. At such critical times when we are buffeted by the storms of life and we are powerless to withstand their furious power, we need a power beyond ourselves to intervene lest we drown.

That power is Jesus. He will come walking on the roiling waves of life and command to a stop all the waves of trouble threatening to submerge us. He has power over all forces – emotional, spiritual, physical and natural.

On the cross of Calvary, He summed it all up when He said, “it is finished.” He finished the redemption work. He has all the answers to the anxieties and insecurities of the human soul.

If only you will make Him your life companion in the journey of life now that you have come to faith in Him, no challenge will be unsurmountable; no crisis will be too overwhelming. He is in the boat with you.

Jesus the Messiah is not only the Bread of Life from heaven, but also a Deliverer par excellence. Hebrews 7:25 says “He is *totally able* to deliver those who approach God through Him” (CJB). In the hour of crisis, He will assure you of God’s presence saying, “Do not be afraid; it is I” and will deliver you. No boat can sink with Jesus in it! Amen!