

THE GOSPEL ACCORDING TO JOHN

18. The King Jesus Won't Be — The King Jesus Is John 6:14-21

INTRODUCTION

By inspiration of God the apostle John wrote this curated selection of moments in the life of Jesus so his readers (you and me) *may believe that Jesus is **the Christ (the true and forever King)**, the Son of God, and that by believing you may have life in his name.*

This morning we pick up in John 6:14 with the response of the multitude to the miracle performed by Jesus in which he fed 20,000 people with five loaves and two fish.

Before we read from John 6, would you please write in the margins of your Bible [Mark 6:45-51](#) and [Matthew 14:22-33](#). We will reference those two accounts and use them much like an overlay to help us understand what the Holy Spirit wants to show us about the Kingship of Jesus in the next section of [John 6](#).

John 6:14-21 (ESV) When the people saw the sign that he had done, they said, "This is indeed the Prophet who is to come into the world!"¹⁵Perceiving then that they were about to come and take him by force to make him king, Jesus withdrew again to the mountain by himself. ¹⁶When evening came, his disciples went down to the sea, ¹⁷got into a boat, and started across the sea to Capernaum. It was now dark, and Jesus had not yet come to them. ¹⁸The sea became rough because a strong wind was blowing. ¹⁹When they had rowed about three or four miles, they saw Jesus walking on the sea and coming near the boat, and they were frightened. ²⁰But he said to them, "It is I; do not be afraid." ²¹Then they were glad to take him into the boat, and immediately the boat was at the land to which they were going.

Here in this passage I want us to observe two major things

1. The King the People Wanted — We don't want to miss that the king the people wanted Jesus to be is **the King Jesus Won't be** — the King they wanted Jesus to be is not the King they truly need

2. The King Jesus Truly Is — And the King Jesus truly is the King we truly need.

Jesus is the King who knows us personally — sees the dangers in a moment and the weakness of our own hearts

Jesus is the King actively loves us and lovingly guides us to safety

Jesus is the King who sees us in our adversity and prays for us in our struggles.

Jesus is the King who is greater than the storm

Jesus is the King who comes to us using the storm as His pathway to us.

So here we go!

1. THE KING THE PEOPLE WANTED IS THE KING JESUS WON'T BE

John 6:14 When the people saw the sign that he had done, they said, **"This is indeed the Prophet who is to come into the world!"**

Of the four Gospel accounts John is the only author who gives us the response of the crowd to the miracle.

The Jews were waiting for the prophet Moses had promised to them.

"The Lord your God will raise up for you a prophet like me from among you, from your brethren -- him you shall heed" (Deut. 18:15).

The way Jesus provided bread in the wilderness reminded the multitude of Moses in the wilderness — *and* his promise of a coming Prophet.

There was another connection to Moses at work here as well. **If** Moses delivered the Israelites from the rule of Pharaoh, **surely** the prophet that was yet to come would deliver them from the oppressive rule of Caesar.

¹⁵Perceiving then that they were about to come and take him by force to make him king....

“Take by force” (one word in Greek) is a strong verb, often used with the connotation of physical force or violence. The word could be rendered “to cause him to be king even if he didn’t want to be.”

WHY would they want to **make** Jesus their king? Because they had seen what Jesus could do. He had healed them. He fed them. *“This man has power —with His power He can **feed** and us **free** us. Like it not He’s our king!”*

CHECK THIS OUT — Though they wanted to be free of the rule of Rome — these people wanted a king and a kingdom just like Rome. *“Bread and circuses”* was Rome’s formula for keeping the people happy. Rome set aside ninety-three days each year for public games at government expense. It was cheaper to entertain the crowds than to fight them or jail them. The movie *Gladiator* captured that bit of history. They really wanted a BREAD KING.

As warped as it seems — even if they had to do it by force — they wanted to harness Jesus and His power to their dreams. The bottom line was this: They wanted to make use of Jesus for their ends. Jesus was the way their kingdom would come and their will would be done.

JESUS WOULD NOT BE THAT KING!

¹⁵Perceiving then that they were about to come and take him by force to make him king, Jesus withdrew again to the mountain by himself.

The Bible gives to Jesus the title KING OF KINGS.

Revelation 19:16 (ESV) ¹⁶*On his robe and on his thigh he has a name*

written, King of kings and Lord of lords.

Jesus never denied that He was King.

John 18:33; 36 So Pilate entered his headquarters again and called Jesus and said to him, "Are you the King of the Jews?" ³⁴Jesus answered, "Do you say this of your own accord, or did others say it to you about me?"..... ³⁶Jesus answered, "My kingdom is not of this world.

The Kingdom of Jesus does not have its origin on earth. His reign is not rooted in or brought about by the power structures and systems of this world.

Jesus is the self-existent, eternal Son of God who possesses glory and honor by His very nature — who by His very nature is omnipotent. He did not become come man to be given power and title by man.

Jesus is the King who from His cradle to His grave He was "*clothed with humility*" (1 Pet. 5:5). He was born into poverty. He spent the first thirty years of His life in a carpenter's house at Nazareth. He was so poor that He had no place to call home — "*The foxes have holes, and the birds of the air their nests--but the Son of man has no where to lay his head*" (Matt. 8:20). When Jesus went on the Sea of Galilee, it was in a borrowed boat. When He rode into Jerusalem, it was on a borrowed donkey. When He was buried, it was in a borrowed tomb.

Jesus would not have a Crown or a Kingdom without **first serving** and **then redeeming** those who would be citizens in His Kingdom.

He graciously and compassionately exercised His divine power to give bread — heal the sick and raise the dead. He **served** the very world that rejected Him.

Edmund Clowney (President of Westminster Theological Seminary 1966-1984)

he would go to Jerusalem not to wield the spear and bring the judgment, but to receive the spear thrust and bear the judgment

THAT IS THE KING JESUS IS!

Jesus WON'T be the Bread King because fallen man needs infinitely more than more free food and miraculous health care. Jesus **WON'T** be the Bread King because fallen man needs a different King who has the power in and of Himself to establish a different Kingdom. Jesus would not inaugurate His Kingdom by conjuring bread in exchange for human approval. He would inaugurate His rule and His Kingdom on earth, not by fame and approval — but by suffering shame, surrendering power, by serving and giving His life as the payment for our sins. **THAT is the KING Jesus is!**

NO SMALL SIDE NOTE — Because **that** is the kind of King Jesus truly is — humility and sacrificial service is the trademark of His Kingdom and the citizens of His Kingdom.

1. THE KING THE PEOPLE WANTED IS THE KING JESUS WON'T BE

2. THE KING JESUS TRULY IS

¹⁶When evening came, his disciples went down to the sea, ¹⁷got into a boat, and started across the sea to Capernaum. It was now dark, and Jesus had not yet come to them. ¹⁸The sea became rough because a strong wind was blowing.

It is here that we want to overlay the record of Matthew and Mark.

Matthew 14:23 Immediately he made the disciples get into the boat and go before him to the other side, while he dismissed the crowds.

Mark 6:45 KJV And straightway he constrained his disciples to get into the ship,

FIRST — With this composite we see that **Jesus is the King** who **knows us personally** — **sees** our flawed understanding. Jesus is the King who **sees the dangers** in a moment and in the weakness of our own hearts

Follow me here — The disciples were opposed to the idea of getting into

the boat. If there was no opposition, He would not have had to CONSTRAIN them — MAKE them — get into the boat.

As we look at the response of the crowd I can't help but think that these men thought that THIS was the moment for Jesus to step forward and embrace the role the people wanted to force on Him.

SECOND — Knowing our flaws and frailties and the dangers around us and within us Jesus is the King who **actively loves us** and **loving guides us to safety**

So, Jesus constrains them to get into the boat and make their way across the sea while He then stays on the shore to send away the people. Then Jesus goes up into a mountain and pray. In a moment we will see that these men will be caught in a storm and fatigued from rowing.

Did Jesus know that a storm was coming? Absolutely. Then why did He deliberately send His friends into danger? Jesus was actually rescuing them from danger. The storm was the SAFE place to be!

As much as Jesus knew the crowd — He knew these men. He knew that the last place they should be was in the presence of this crowd where they could be swayed by their fanaticism.

As much as Jesus knew the crowd — Jesus knew these men. He knew that they would be safer in the storm than they would on the land caught up in a wrong concept of who He was.

Jesus sent these men into the storm because He knew how crucial it was for them (and is for us) to know that He was not merely some bread king — He is the God of the storm and the KING over all nature.

Christians who approach Jesus on the basis of what they can get tragically discover that when difficulty comes their life falls apart because they have built on sand.

THIRD — Jesus is the King who watches and prays

.... It was now dark, and Jesus had not yet come to them. ¹⁸The sea became rough because a strong wind was blowing.

Mark 6:46-48 And after he had taken leave of them, **he went up on the mountain to pray.** ⁴⁷And when evening came, the boat was out on the sea, and **he was alone on the land.** ⁴⁸And **he saw** that they were making headway painfully (**KJV - toiling in rowing**), for the wind was against them. And about **the fourth watch** of the night he came to them, **walking on the sea.** He meant to pass by them,

Notice where Jesus is while they are agonizing towards their destination. Jesus is in a high place — he sees them and He is praying

The account of the feeding of the multitude began with a time stamp: Passover was near. That means that it would be nearly a full moon. But even on a well lit night, Jesus is still at least 3 miles away from these men. The unaided eye would only see a spec on the lake. This is DIVINE vision..

This is an awesome real life picture of where our king is right now and what He is doing.

The Bible tells (**Ephesians 1:20-21; Romans 8:34; Hebrews 7:25**) that Jesus our King is at this very moment seated on high at the right hand of the Father, and that He ever lives to make intercession for us.

Back in John 6 — Notice the situation that Jesus sent them to.

¹⁸The sea became rough because a strong wind was blowing

Literally — “the lake (sea) was being stirred up, there was blowing a strong wind.” This condition is expressed in some languages as “there were many big waves” or “the waves had become large” or “the water was foaming.”

They were *Making headway painfully — toiling in rowing — for the wind was against them.* They were rowing against resistance! Think of working out a muscle group until you totally fatigued that muscle group. THAT is what the language is saying.

In **verse 16** we were told Jesus had sent them off around evening when the sun was going down. Mark tells us that Jesus came to them in the fourth watch. The Fourth Watch is a reference to the appointed times in which men would guard their cities. The Fourth Watch ended at 6 in the morning. These guys had been painfully toiling in rowing for about eight or nine hours. I don't know about you — but I don't like to put together the words *Toiling* and *eight hours*.

Matthew supplies these details —

Matthew 14:24 (ESV) ²⁴but the boat by this time was a long way from the land, beaten by the waves (literally, “tormented”), for the wind was against them.

Kostenburger — *After rowing about three or three and a half miles, the disciples were driven off course and found themselves halfway toward Magdala, where the lake was the widest* ¹

Have you ever found yourself in a situation or a season when you were *toiling and toiling* — *the wind is blowing in your face* — you're *making headway painfully* and you're not getting anywhere — and to top it off you're way off course from your original intent? And in that season or situation you start wondering if the waters are rough and the wind is against you because you're in trouble with God — or someone comes along and tells you it's because there's sin in your life.

REMEMBER — they were in that situation because Jesus loved them. It was the healthiest place for them to be. This wasn't His judgment. They were in the midst of a storm because they were in the midst of His will. They were fatigued — the wind was against them — because they had obeyed Jesus.

BY THE WAY — Peter, Andrew, James and John had grown up on this body of water. They had most certainly experienced ferocious storms on the Sea of Galilee. Then they became followers of Jesus. And guess what? Following Jesus did not give them immunity from storms. This is the **SECOND** storm they have encountered since following Jesus. But it was daylight then, and

¹ Köstenberger, A. J. (2004). John (p. 205). Baker Academic.

Jesus was with them. Even then they thought they were going to die. Then Jesus stood up and rebuked the wind and the waves and immediately the lake became like glass. Great lesson! “Wow, as long as Jesus is in the boat we’re all good!” This time it’s night and Jesus isn’t in the boat! New Storm — New Lesson. Jesus was prepping them for the time when He would no longer be physically with them — for the time He would be at the right hand of the Father watching and praying for them.

QUOTE: Alexander Maclaren — *Mark gives us one sweet touch when he tells us that Christ on the hillside there saw them toiling in rowing, **but they did not see Him**. No doubt they felt themselves deserted, and sent many a wistful glance of longing towards the shore where He was. Hard thoughts of Him may have been in some of their minds. ‘Master, carest Thou not?’ would be springing to some of their lips with more apparent reason than in the other storm on the lake. But His calm and loving gaze looked down pitying on all their fear and toil. The darkness did not hide from Him, nor His own security on the steadfast land make Him forget, nor his communion with the Father so absorb Him as to exclude thoughts of them.*

Somewhere in the Forth Watch the Father said, “Ok it’s time.” So somewhere in the fourth watch Jesus comes to them.

FOURTH — Jesus is the King who is greater than the storm

¹⁹When they had rowed about three or four miles, they saw Jesus walking on the sea and coming near the boat, and they were frightened. ²⁰But he said to them, “It is I; do not be afraid.” ²¹Then they were glad to take him into the boat, and immediately the boat was at the land to which they were going.

Jesus is the King who is ipowerful over all creation and the laws of physics that govern the physical universe.

AGAIN — We are tethered to the prologue —

"All things were made by him; and without him was not anything made that was made." (John 1:3.)

It was just as easy for Jesus to walk on water as it was for Him to create water. It was just as easy for Jesus to suspend the laws of physics, as it was for Jesus to create them and impose them on His creation. Jesus is the King who is not bound by the laws of physics, Jesus is the King who is above them!

QUOTE: J.C. Ryle — *These so-called "laws of nature" are neither immutable nor eternal. They had a beginning, and will one day have an end.*

FIFTH Jesus is the King who uses the storm as His pathway to us

The waves that fatigued and frightened the disciples (including the fishermen in the group) were the very things that brought Jesus to them.

By the way — **walking on the sea** is peripateo — to walk effortlessly.

The storms that frighten and fatigue us — even threaten us — are nothing to our King. They are means by which our King comes to us in ways that we could never know in moments of ease.

QUOTE: Alexander Maclaren — *When it is night, and it is dark, at the hour which is the keystone of night's black arch, Christ comes to us, striding across the stormy waters. Sorrow brings Him near to us. Do you see that sorrow does not drive you away from Him!*

²¹Then they were glad to take him into the boat, and immediately the boat was at the land to which they were going.

Mark adds this interesting note —

Mark 6:48 *he came to them, walking on the sea. He meant to pass by them*

Why did He **act** as though He would pass them by? Because He wanted them to recognize Him, trust Him, and invite Him into the ship.

Matthew tells us (interesting that Mark doesn't) that something else

happened BEFORE Jesus got into the boat. When Jesus said — *“Take heart; it is I. Do not be afraid.”* that Peter said

Matthew 14:28-29 “Lord, if it is you, command me to come to you on the water.”²⁹He said, “Come.” So Peter got out of the boat and walked on the water and came to Jesus.

I love that. Jesus coming to them on water stirred Peter to get out of the boat and walk on water with Jesus.

²¹Then they were glad to take him into the boat, and immediately the boat was at the land to which they were going.

As soon as Jesus gets in the boat with you, you are where you want to be. Where you really want to be is in the boat with Jesus.

1. The King the People Wanted — We don’t want to miss that the king the people wanted Jesus to be is **the King Jesus Won’t be** — the King they wanted Jesus to be is not the King they truly need

QUOTE: Barclay — That crowd of Jews would have followed Jesus at that moment because he was giving them what they wanted and they wished to use him for their own purposes. That attitude still lingers. We would like Christ's gifts without his Cross; we would like to use him instead of allowing him to use us.

Let’s ask ourselves the question — Is there anything in our hearts that resembles theirs? Do we love Jesus for what we can get out of Him. Do we want to see His power manifested to carry out our own agenda — or do we want to see Him exercise His power to carry out His plans and wishes?

2. The King Jesus Truly Is —

Jesus is the King who knows us personally — sees the dangers in a moment and the weakness of our own hearts

Jesus is the King actively loves us and lovingly guides us to safety

Jesus is the King who sees us in our adversity and prays for us in our struggles.

Jesus is the King who is greater than the storm

Jesus is the King who comes to us using the storm as His pathway to us.

THAT is the King He truly is — the King we truly need