

Reading Horizontally by Using a Synopsis
147. Walking on Water (Matt 14:22–33; Mark 6:45–52; Luke 8:22–25)
Small Group Activity

1. Compare and contrast passages overall.

- 1.1 What is the most obvious difference between Luke and the other two gospels about this episode of the walking on water?
- 1.2 What significance does this contrast have for Luke's gospel?
Helpful questions to ask in order to determine significance here would be: What is the outline of Matthew and Mark at this point in their gospel? What is happening in their narratives? What plotlines are they developing?
 - 1.2.1 Matt:
 - 1.2.2 Mark:
- 1.3 Why include this particular episode at this point in their narratives?
- 1.4 What is different about Luke's outline in contrast to Matthew and Mark?
- 1.5 Why would Luke not include this episode in his narrative?

2. Notice differences in detail. Determine their significance, if any. Use observations to establish themes. Assuming Markan priority (that Matthew and Luke used Mark as a source):

- 2.1 What does Matthew do with Mark's geographical specification of "to Bethsaida" in Mk. 6:45?
 - 2.2 Is this detail significant or insignificant? Helpful questions to ask here in order to determine significance would be:
 - 2.2.1 Does Mark refer to Bethsaida often or seem to have a dominant theme in his gospel related to this town?
 - 2.2.2 Does Matthew refer to Bethsaida often or seem to have a dominant theme in his gospel related to this town?
 - 2.3 What detail does Mark include about Jesus's intentions at the end of his verse 48 that Matthew suppresses in his own account at his verse 25?
 - 2.3.1 Is this editorial activity significant or insignificant?
 - 2.3.2 If significant, one is obligated to suggest a reason why Matthew might do this.
 - 2.4 Matthew clearly has added a lengthy section in verses 28–31 that Mark does not have after the saying of Jesus to have no fear. Who is the center of attention in this section?
 - 2.4.1 Does Matthew have a special interest in this character beyond Mark?
 - 2.4.2 If yes, you are obligated to show character development in the two gospels. To get a quick idea, another parallel passage is helpful—the Caesarea Philippi Confession (Mk. 8:29 vs. Mt. 16:16–19). Can you contrast the two presentations on this key character?
 - 2.4.3 What theme is Matthew developing with this character?
 - 2.5 What is strikingly different about how Matthew and Mark each end this episode?
 - 2.5.1 Matt:
 - 2.5.2 Mark:
 - 2.6 What do these different endings suggest about reasons for including this episode in their respective gospels?
 - 2.7 What do these different endings suggest are some important themes in their gospels?
 - 2.7.1 Matt:
 - 2.7.2 Mark:

Reading the Gospels Horizontally—Using a Synopsis
147. The Walking on the Water

Matt. 14:22–33

14:22 Then

he made the disciples
 get into the boat and go before
 him to the other side, while
 he dismissed the crowds. 23 And after
 he had dismissed the crowds, he went up on the
 mountain by himself to pray. When evening
 came, he was there alone, 24 but the boat by
 this time was many furlongs distant from the
 land, beaten
 by the waves; for the wind was
 against them. 14:25 And in the fourth watch of
 the night he came to them,
 walking on the sea.
 14:26 But when the disciples saw him
 walking on the sea,
 they were terrified, saying,
 "It is a ghost!" And they cried out for fear.

27 But immediately he spoke to them,
 saying, "Take heart, it is I; have
 no fear." 28 And Peter answered
 him, "Lord, if it is you, bid me
 come to you on the water." 29 He said, "Come."
 So Peter got out of the boat
 and walked on the water and
 came to Jesus; 30 but when he saw the
 wind, he was afraid, and beginning
 to sink he cried out, "Lord, save
 me." 31 Jesus immediately reached out his
 hand and caught him, saying to him, "O
 man of little faith, why did you doubt?" 32 And
 when they got into the boat, the
 wind ceased. 33 And those in the boat
 worshiped him, saying, "Truly
 you are the Son of God."

Mark 6:45–52

6:45 Immediately

he made his disciples
 get into the boat and go before
 him to the other side, to Beth-sa'ida, while
 he dismissed the crowd. 46 And after
 he had taken leave of them, he went up
 on the mountain to pray. 47 And when
 evening came, the
 boat was out on the sea, and he was alone
 on the land. 48 And he saw that they were
 making headway painfully, 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, 49 but when they saw
 him walking on the sea
 they thought
 it was a ghost, and cried out; 50 for
 they all saw him, and were terrified.
 But immediately he spoke to them
 and said, "Take heart, it is I; have
 no fear."

51 And

he got into the boat with them and the
 wind ceased. And they were utterly
 astounded,
 52 for they did not understand about
 the loaves, but their hearts were hardened.

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