

STEP BY STEP THROUGH YOUR LENTEN JOURNEY BIBLE STUDY GUIDE

# Week Five: Conquering Chaos

## Jesus Walks on Water

The sea has always been a place associated with chaos. Even now, when we think we know a lot about it, it still has a depth of unknown. The ancients were terrified of the seas because it was something that could not be controlled, it was a place of the mystery, and of something that could kill. There are many examples in the Bible of the sea being associated with the demons and where evil would lurk (Gen. 1:2; Mt. 8:31; Rev. 21:1). However, when Christ is seen walking on the sea, He is demonstrating not only His power over the demons below, but also over the chaos in this world and in our lives. Chaos which causes us worries, fears, anxieties and is a product of Satan. Satan creates chaos, whereas God creates order.

**Read John 6:15-21**  
**Read Matthew 14:22-33**

### What do you think?

1. Have you ever been on a boat in a storm? What feelings did you have or what do you think you would feel?
2. St. John says, “when they had rowed about three or four miles, they saw Jesus walking on the sea” (verse 19). This means they were in the center of the sea with no land nearby. How would you react if you saw someone walking on water?
3. Compare the two readings. What is different in St. Matthew’s account from St. John’s?
4. St. Matthew says when Peter saw the waves (chaos) around him, he began to sink. What are the waves in your life that cause you to doubt your faith and cause you to sink into despair and depression?
5. When you are drowning in the sea of life, where do you turn to help? What is your life vest?

In both Gospel accounts, when the disciples see Christ, they are scared and He assures them, literally saying, “I am”. This is a reference to the burning bush when Moses asks whom he should say sent him to Pharaoh (Exodus 3:14). God is the God of the here and now. He is the one that exists. This is why His name is in the present and in Armenian, He is referred to as “the one who is” – Է (eh). We often forget this and think that God is in the past or in the future and not here with us now during our troubles and worries.

When walking on water Jesus demonstrates that by trusting him, we can walk the unwalkable. Only knowing that He is God and He has the power to save us we will conquer the evil that is pulling us into chaos. We see this in Peter. When he trusts and believes, he can do the same, yet the moment he sees the waves coming toward him he doubts and begins to sink.

When we allow the distractions around us to take our focus off Christ, we become overwhelmed and chaos of worries (about work, family, school, politics, finances, friends, health issues, etc.) begin to envelope us and even drown us. If we look to Christ in these trying times, we will have the strength and faith to conquer the chaos, walk on the waves thrashing around us, and reach Christ, our salvation. Achieving this is not an easy task, but it is also not impossible. Our Church Fathers knew this and, in our hymns, they wrote and sang this truth.

The Penitential Orhnootyoon hymn, in the second mode (ԱԿ) from the Armenian Church hymnal (sharagnots), we hear:

*“The sea of life pummels me daily. The enemy, the stormy waves, rise up against me. Good Captain, be a haven for my soul. I am close to drowning, help me good captain, for the weight of sins have grown heavy upon me. O God, make haste to help me for the depths of misery plunge me to the abyss but you be my captain and lend me a hand...I beseech you Heavenly Father, do not turn your face from me for I am in trouble; hear me soon, O Lord...My soul is drowning from the burden of sin, receive me as you (received) Peter who wavered at the beating waves.”*