

SESSION TITLE: “Proof of Life: The Sign of Deliverance”

FOCAL PASSAGE: (John 6:16-21)

REVIEW/REACT: Last week we discussed how Jesus would provide for all of our needs, which is different from providing for our wants.

Would anyone like to share how God provided for him or her this week?

Review the Scripture verse from last week:

When therefore the people saw the sign, which He had performed, they said, “This is of a truth the Prophet who is to come into the world.” John 6:14

Central Teaching/Learning Aim: To help the learner find ease of anxiety in Jesus our LORD, for deliverance and comfort in the storms of life.

I. Creating Interest in the Series (Hook)

A. Share – THEN display the slide from the Power Point:

STRESS TEST

State - I'm not sure exactly how it works, but this is amazingly accurate. Read the full description before looking at the picture. The image has 2 almost identical dolphins in it. It was used in a case study on stress level at St. Mary's Hospital. Look at both dolphins jumping out of the water. The dolphins are identical. A closely monitored, scientific study of a group revealed that in spite of the fact that the dolphins are identical, a person under stress would find differences in the two dolphins. If there are many differences found between both dolphins, it means that the person is experiencing a great amount of stress.

Look at the photograph and if you find more than one or two differences it's time for you to take a vacation.

Source: unknown, a recent email going around on the Internet

Ask – What are the most prevalent causes of stress in your life?

State – In a recent survey by George Barna, “Religious faith showed a significant correlation with life perspectives. Evangelicals, for instance were substantially more likely than any other faith segment to strongly assert that they were very happy with life (84%), they feel connected to other people (85%), their religious faith is constantly growing deeper (89%), and they were the least likely to feel their life is getting more stressful each year (14%).

The faith group most dissimilar to evangelicals was the atheists and agnostics. Those in this “non-faith” category were the segment least likely to feel very happy (57%), feel connected (57%), say their faith is growing deeper (19%), and most likely to feel their life is increasingly stressful (29%) **and that life is too complex (16%).**

Source: <http://www.barna.org/FlexPage.aspx?Page=BarnaUpdate&BarnaUpdateID=137>

Compare – The power point or your statistics side-by side for your SGM members to see.

	<u>EVANGELICALS</u>	<u>NON-FAITH</u>
Very happy with life	84%	57%
Feel connected with other people	85%	57%
Feel that their faith is growing deeper	89%	19%
Life is getting more stressful each year	14%	29%

State – In today's passage Jesus teaches the disciples that He not only has sovereignty over creation, but also is personally involved in the calming of the storms and delivering His people through them.

B. Optional Method – Movie Clip “Perfect Storm”

Start: 1:44:06

Stop: 1:46:58

DVD: Chapter 32

Synopsis: (from rottentomatoes.com)

Gloucester, Massachusetts, is home to a swordfishing boat called the Andrea Gail, captained by Billy Tyne (Clooney), a veteran fisherman who has had a run of disappointing catches.

Tyne is convinced that he can change his run of bad luck by going beyond the normal reach of New England fishing boats to the Flemish Cap, a remote area known for its rich fishing prospects. Once out at sea, he hears about the storm building offshore. Hurricane Grace is on a collision course with two other weather fronts that are rapidly gathering strength. When the three meet, there will be a storm more terrifying than anyone has imagined, greater than any that has ever been recorded in modern history.

Billy thinks he can beat the storm back to Gloucester, taking an enormous catch with him. If he doesn't try, his crew will come away empty-handed on this last trip of the season. It is nothing out of the ordinary for fishermen to wager their lives against their livelihoods.

Ask – What are the storms in your life, the issues that seem ready to swallow you and drown you in their wake?

State – In today's passage Jesus teaches the disciples that He not only has sovereignty over creation, but also is personally involved in the calming of the storms and delivering His people through them.

II. Book

A. Utilize the discussion guide to examine the Scripture passages.

III. Look

A. Break up the class into discussion groups*. Have them share from first-hand experience how God had delivered them through a particularly difficult time in their lives.

* Depending on the size of your class, you may be able to do this as a large group

IV. Took

A. Display two columns on the marker board. (Evangelicals and Non Faith)

Compare – On your white board the statistics side-by side for your SGM members to see.

	<u>EVANGELICALS</u>	<u>NON-FAITH</u>
Very happy with life	84%	57%
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Ask - What do you think is the contributing factor in the information above?

State- Prayer has been proven to be a healthy stress and anxiety reducer by even the secular world.

When the world around you sees you going through the challenging storms that interrupt our lives, do they see your relationship with Christ guiding you through them, or do they see you straining at the oars to stay afloat?

Let's face stress and storm this week by reaching out for our LORD's hand first and ask Him to deliver us...in His manner, timing, will and sovereignty so that we may glorify Him and make Him famous among our circles of influence and the world.

Close in prayer.

Review this week's memory verse.

<p style="text-align: center;">Memory Verse</p> <p style="text-align: center;">But He said to them, "It is I; don't be afraid." John 6:20</p>
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B. Optional Method – Excerpts From an Article on “Napods”

Ask – How many people feel that they are rested enough?

Read- “It was last November when Arshad Chowdhury first shared his dream: to see the whole world napping. Chowdhury envisioned napping outlets in major airports, sleeping dens tucked away in skyscrapers, franchises just around the corner from your neighborhood coffee shop . . . all stocked with his patented (well, patent-pending) \$20,000 “Napods.” Chowdhury’s conceit grew out of the sober logic of supply and demand. In 2003, while an MBA student at Carnegie Mellon, he began charging a buck for 40 minutes’ rest on a collection of lawn chairs. By day five, he was filling every seat. And so, Chowdhury embarked on his outlandish mission. He persuaded a Danish angel investor to pony up not quite half a million dollars, and then brought on partner Christopher Lindholst. They coaxed a former Sony marketing exec to run branding, scored space in the Empire State Building, and began hatching ingenious marketing schemes like napping slogans printed on coffeehouse Java Jackets.”

Source: Fastcompany.com/lucasconley

Ask – Do you think the “Napods” will catch on? Why or Why not? What service does it provide?

Take some time this week to “retreat from the crowds” and to spend some time just listening. Try a park, or a coffee shop, revisit the backyard, or take a walk with your spouse or alone. Pray as you walk together that you might consider all the storms in your life as opportunities for your family and friends around you to see God at work.

Review the memory verse.

**DISCUSSION GUIDE
(Teacher's Copy)**

1. What is the reason for Jesus' withdrawal from the disciples and the crowds to the mountain? (John 6:15)
(The crowds wanted Jesus to be their political king, and fit into their agenda.)

2. In what ways do you deal with stress in your day-to-day life?

3. What are some storms you are currently facing?

4. How would you describe the condition of the seas (Matt 14:24; Mark 6:48a; John 6:18).
(So rough that the disciples, many experienced on the seas, were straining at rowing.)

5. What title did Jesus use to announce himself? (John 6:20)
("It is I")

6. What significance does Jesus using the "It is I" term have in his identifying himself to the disciples?
(It is reminiscent of "I am", the name used by God to identify himself to Moses)

7. What were the disciples' reactions upon hearing Jesus identify himself? (John 6:21)
(They willingly received Him into the boat.)

8. What is the significance of the end of verse 21 and the distance described in verse 19?
(Jesus not only calmed the storm, but he delivered completely the disciples to the shore.)

9. Complete the following chart to remember how Jesus has delivered you in the past.

Storms of Life	Deliverance	Outcome

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Storms of Life	Deliverance	Outcome

Daily Devotions for Next Week

Proof of Life: The Sign of Sight

John 9:1-7

MONDAY -- *Read John 9:1-7*

- In this passage we see a man with congenital blindness, generally, blindness from birth.
- Read Isaiah 29:17-19, 35:1-6, 42:6-7
- In light of the people of Israel, journal about what you think these words would mean to you if you were in their sandals. If you were the blind man, first making out the initial images your eyes have ever seen?
- How does this transpose into your life and current spiritual condition today?

TUESDAY -- *Read John 8:12*

- Right before he gives this man sight in Chapter 9, he speaks about being the light in Chapter 8.
- What do you think is the significance of this?
- Who is the audience in 8:12?
- How does this giving sight affect our own darkness and blindness?

WEDNESDAY -- *Read John 9:1*

- What is the significance of this man being blind since birth in light of the healing?
- What is the significance of his story in the Scriptures in light of John 9:39-41; 2 Cor. 4:4; and Eph 2:1-3
- In what ways are you blinded...take a moment to "get down wind of yourself" and seek out what you are blinded by right now.

THURSDAY -- *Read John 9:2-3*

- Read Ezekiel 18:4 and Exodus 20:5.
- What do you think the significance of this section of the story holds in the sign of sight?
- What significance does the connection or lack of connection to this man's blindness hold in your understanding of sin and suffering?
- Read Romans 3:9-20, and 23. Revisit the question above.

FRIDAY -- *Read John 9:6*

- Read Genesis 2:3
- What connection is there in the Creation story of man, and this re-creation of man to wholeness?
- What handicaps do you feel you have in your spiritual life?
- Have you asked Jesus for Deliverance?
- God doesn't always wait for us to seek Him...it brings him pleasure when we seek Him to do what He already wants to do, however, other times He just needs our lives to show others around us that we are created by Him and understood by Him beyond our own understanding of what He wants our lives to be.
- What is your story of God working in your life to your neighbors?

**PROOF OF LIFE:
“The Sign of Deliverance”
John 6:16-21**

**(Exegetical . . . What it meant to the World back THEN)
JESUS’ “SIGN” OF DELIVERANCE
SIGNALLED HIS IDENTITY
AS GOD’S UNIQUE AND SUFFICIENT PROTECTION
FOR HIS PEOPLE’S NEED**

After Jesus revealed his power to meet his people’s need by feeding the large crowd of 5,000 men, the people attempted to make him king as the way to fulfill their goals. Knowing this, Jesus withdrew to the mountain.

John’s narrative art becomes crucial in the following pericope, his choice of details very important. Although tempted to include colorful details from other Gospel accounts, these must not influence the significance of John’s presentation.

- I. The CONTEXT of the Sign of the Deliverance is the disciples’ difficult journey [back] across the Sea of Galilee without Jesus during the night (16-18).
 - A. The CHARACTERS in the story are the disciples and Jesus.
NOTE: unlike any of the signs to this point, this story presents only two characters, the disciples and Jesus.
 - B. The TIME of the journey is evening into the night (16a, 17b).
NOTE: Initially John states the time as “when evening came” (6:16a) after the miraculous feeding of the 5,000 (6:1-15), probably toward dusk. Soon it will be full darkness (6:17b).
 - C. The PLACE of the journey is the Sea of Galilee between the eastern shore and Capernaum (17a).
NOTE: The disciples descended from the mountain slopes to the shore. The goal of their journey was Capernaum. If the feeding occurred near Bethsaida (Luke 9:10), it’s less than five miles across the Sea of Galilee to Capernaum (17a).
 - D. The SITUATION is a night crossing without Jesus (17).
NOTE: John says that by now the disciples sailed in full darkness. It’s not clear why they left so late in the day, but obviously they saw the short distance across the water to Capernaum within their skill and speed.
NOTE: John offers an implicit reason for the late start: “Jesus had not yet come to them” (17b).¹ Apparently they expected him, but left without him as everyone knew (6:22). John draws attention to the unexpected turn of events and provides the first clue to the THEOLOGICAL context: again Jesus defied human understanding of his identity and expectation of his ministry.
 - E. The COMPLICATION occurs as a strong wind comes up, creating rough seas that make the disciples’ progress difficult (18).
NOTE: Strong northern winds blowing across the shallow lake’s surface quickly create dangerous conditions for small craft. Since they are traveling northeast, the other gospels note the wind was “contrary to them” (Mt. 14:34; Mk. 6:48).
- II. The MIRACLE occurs as Jesus walks to them on the water, identifies himself as God, and joins them (19-20).
 - A. While partway through their journey, the disciples became afraid when they saw Jesus walk to them on the water (19).
 1. The disciples were three or four miles into their journey (19a).
NOTE: The Greek word is *stadia*, a distance of about 600 ft., a total of 3 or 4 miles. John just says “they were continuing to row,” downplaying the disciples’ situation in order to focus on Jesus. (The other gospels show the trip was much more difficult. Matthew (14:25) notes they were now in the “fourth watch of the night” – between 3 and 6 A.M., a clear show of their struggle if they had left before dusk.)
 2. The disciples saw Jesus walking to them on the water (19b).
NOTE: Most likely the disciples, facing backward to row, saw Jesus overtaking them on the water. John states the disciples saw Jesus walking “on the water.” He confirms this impression with the second

¹ The other Gospels say Jesus sent them ahead (Mt. 14:22; Mk. 6:45), but John does not say this.

statement “coming near to them.” The disciples did not mistake Jesus walking along the shore. They saw him approach their boat.

3. The disciples reacted with great fear (19c).

B. Jesus identified himself and encouraged them to stop fearing (20).

1. Jesus identifies himself to the disciples as the God of the Old Testament (20a).

NOTE: In John Jesus’ expression “I am” is a *double entendre* (an expression with two meanings). On one level it means “It’s me” (cf. 4:26; 9:9; 18:5,6,8). But Jesus’ use also reflects God’s revealed name in the Old Testament, generally translated “I am” (cf. Ex. 3:14), as his assumption of that identity (cf. 8:24,28,58; 13:19). At the time the disciples may only have understood it in the first way. But on later reflection John understood it for its deeper significance.

2. Jesus commands the disciples to avoid fear (19b).

NOTE: Jesus’ command (“Do not fear”) corresponds directly to the disciples’ earlier reaction (19b). Since Jesus has already identified himself as their God (“I am”), they should have confidence in his presence with them.

NOTE: Having identified himself as deity, Jesus calls for fellowship rather than the characteristic response of fear to the appearance of God.

III. The RESULT of the miracle is when the disciples embrace his presence they experience immediate safe passage to their destination (21).

A. The disciples’ REACTION to Jesus identification is to embrace his presence with them (21a).

NOTE: “Willing” suggests a continuous attitude that “continued showing their willingness to have him with them in the boat.” This indicates their reaction to Jesus, a continual desire for his presence, and presents the sign’s theological significance.

B. The RESULT of Jesus’ presence with the disciples is their immediate safe passage to their destination (21b).

NOTE: Again Jesus doesn’t rebuke the disciples’ fear or lack of faith (as in other gospel accounts). Instead the story resolves quickly, emphasizing that upon their embracing of Jesus, they themselves at their destination.²

**(Theological . . . What it means to believers ALWAYS)
THE POWERFUL PRESENCE OF JESUS
PROVIDES SPIRITUAL PROTECTION
TO THOSE WHO ARE WILLING TO EMBRACE HIM.**

NOTE: The theological message of this text comes through details that draw the connection between Jesus’ divine identity and the disciples’ attitude of continual desire to have his presence with them that brings them to their destination.

(Pedagogical . . . What it means for us NOW)

I. The Story: Jesus presence provided protection for those who embraced him.

A. In Jesus’ absence the disciples struggled during a night crossing of the Sea of Galilee (16-18).

B. Jesus came to them across the water, identified himself as God, and asked their confidence in him (19-20).

C. When he entered the boat, they immediately arrived safely at their goal (21)

II. The Message: Jesus presence provides protection for those who embrace him.

A. Those who follow Jesus can be challenged by circumstances (16-18).

B. Jesus’ as God calls for his follower’s confidence in him (19-20).

C. When Jesus’ followers embrace his presence, they reach their goal (21).

III. The Application: Embrace Jesus’ protection in all your struggles.

² Some describe the completion of the story in this way: the parallel accounts say that Jesus’ entry into the boat immediately brought a calm sea, allowing for a rapid completion of a journey that was already close to completion (having already rowed 3-4 miles of the original <5 mile trip). This represents the intrusion of the details of parallel accounts that color the conclusion.