



the
gospel
of

JOHN

part two: *can He be trusted?*

PART TWO: W3 READING PLAN

OUT OF CONTROL

WEEK OF MONDAY, MAY 4TH, 2026
THROUGH SUNDAY MAY 10TH, 2026

JOHN 6:20


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SCRIPTURE TO MEDITATE ON AND MEMORIZE THIS WEEK

But he said to them, 'It is I; do not be afraid.'

JOHN 6:20

Spend a few minutes each day repeating this verse aloud slowly. Ask the Lord to make it true in you, not merely known by you.



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WEEKLY SUMMARY

WEEK OF MONDAY MAY 4TH 2026 THROUGH SUNDAY, MAY 10TH 2026

OUT OF CONTROL

John 6 moves quickly from abundance to anxiety. One moment the disciples are watching Jesus feed a massive crowd with more than enough. The next moment they are in a boat, in the dark, on rough water, rowing against a strong wind. That shift feels deeply familiar. Life often changes like that. A moment of confidence can give way to confusion. A season of visible provision can be followed by a night of strain, fear, and uncertainty. John gives us a short story here, but it is full of tension and human emotion. The disciples are not passive. They are working hard. They are rowing. They are using their strength, skill, and experience. But the sea is rough, the wind is against them, and everything they know to do is not enough.

This week's readings follow the movement of that scene. We will sit with the experience of overwhelm and ask what it exposes in us. We will see how fear distorts the way we read reality, and how quickly the human mind fills in the blanks with threat when the moment is unclear. Then we will turn to the voice and presence of Jesus, because that is where the story turns.

The passage is short, but it speaks into a very common human condition. Many people know what it feels like to be still rowing while the wind is against them. Many know what it is like to feel out of control even while doing everything they know how to do. John 6 reminds us that when life feels out of control, we are not abandoned to our own effort. The One who fed the multitude is also the One who comes near in the dark. As you move through this week, let this story train your heart to trust the One who controls what you cannot.

MONDAY, MAY 4, 2026

Still Rowing

READ

John 6:16-19; Psalm 69:1-3; Isaiah 43:1-3; Mark 4:35-41; 2 Corinthians 1:8-10

REFLECT

John tells us that evening came, the disciples got into the boat, darkness fell, and the sea grew rough because a strong wind was blowing. Then he adds one more important detail. They had rowed about three or four miles. They were not standing still. They were not careless. They were not doing nothing. They were working. They were straining. They were using strength and skill, and still the moment remained overwhelming. This is one of the reasons the story feels so close to real life. Some of the most frightening moments are not the moments when we are passive, but the moments when we are doing everything we know how to do and still not arriving where we need to be.

Many people know what it feels like to be still rowing. You are showing up, trying, praying, working, planning, pushing, and yet the wind still feels against you. This is where John 6 begins to uncover the heart. Overwhelm reveals where our trust has been placed. It shows whether we have been leaning on our competence, our plans, our endurance, or our ability to keep the whole thing moving. Strength and skill are good gifts, but they cannot carry the full weight of our lives. The storm has a way of reminding us that human effort, for all its value, makes a poor savior.

QUESTIONS

- Where are you overwhelmed right now, even though you are doing everything you know how to do?
- What has this season been exposing about what you trust most?

TUESDAY, MAY 5, 2026

When Strength Runs Thin

READ

John 6:16–19; Psalm 121; Isaiah 40:28–31; Matthew 11:28–30; Philippians 4:11–13

REFLECT

The disciples in this story are not weak men. Some of them know the sea, the wind, and the boat. They understand effort, direction, and physical strain. Yet John presents them as men whose experience does not exempt them from overwhelm. That alone is worth sitting with for a moment. Being overwhelmed is not proof that someone is failing. It is often what happens when a situation grows larger than strength and skill can manage. The boat scene strips away the illusion that competence can protect us from every kind of fear.

That is often a difficult lesson for capable people. We are used to solving, fixing, carrying, leading, and making things work. We know how to row. We know how to stay productive. We know how to keep going. But there are moments in life when strength stops being enough, and that moment often feels deeply exposing. John 6 does not shame the disciples for being there. It lets us see them there. The dark, the distance, and the contrary wind all reveal the same thing. Human strength is real, but it has limits. The story is already inviting us to look beyond our own resources.

QUESTIONS

- Where have you been relying on strength, skill, or competence to carry what only God can carry?
- How do you usually respond when your own effort begins to feel insufficient?

WEDNESDAY, MAY 6, 2026

Fear Fills in the Blanks

READ

John 6:19; Psalm 56; Proverbs 3:5–6; Matthew 6:25–34; 2 Timothy 1:7

REFLECT

After rowing for miles in the dark, the disciples see Jesus approaching the boat, walking on the water, and John says they were frightened. That line is so honest. The One they needed most was drawing near, and their first response was fear. The passage does not present them as foolish caricatures. It presents them as frightened human beings in an unclear moment. The sea is rough. The wind is strong. They are exhausted. Their senses are already on edge. Then something appears that they cannot immediately interpret. Fear rushes in before peace does.

We know what that feels like. Fear takes what is unclear and fills it with threats. A delayed text becomes rejection. A hard conversation becomes catastrophe. A closed door becomes proof that God has abandoned us. A change in plans becomes panic. A season of waiting becomes, “Nothing is ever going to work.” Fear does not only affect how we feel. It affects how we see. It distorts our reading of the moment and trains us to assume danger before we have reason to believe it is there. John 6 helps us recognize that fear can make us misread reality, including the nearness of Jesus.

QUESTIONS

- Where are you letting fear fill in the blanks?
- What situation in your life are you interpreting through fear rather than through trust?

THURSDAY, MAY 7, 2026

The Voice In the Wind

READ

John 6:20; Isaiah 43:10-13; Psalm 29; John 10:27-28; Hebrews 12:1-2

REFLECT

Into the disciples' fear, Jesus speaks. "It is I; don't be afraid." The turning point in the story begins with His voice. Before the shore is reached, before the whole journey is resolved, before every external condition is changed, Jesus speaks into the fear-filled moment. This is how the Lord often works. He does not always begin by removing the storm. He begins by revealing Himself within it. His word reframes the entire scene. What looked like threat is now recognized as the nearness of Christ.

This is one of the great comforts of the Christian life. The voice of Jesus does not wait for calm conditions before it speaks. It comes into the middle of uncertainty, strain, and confusion. The disciples do not need another plan. They do not need more rowing technique. They need His presence and His word. Many people spend their lives trying to quiet fear by controlling circumstances, but John 6 directs our attention elsewhere. The first answer to fear is not control. It is the voice of Jesus who calls to us in the winds and the waves.

QUESTIONS

- How can you start to listen for the voice of Jesus above the noise of your fear?
- Where do you need to let His word define what's happening around you more than your emotions do?

FRIDAY, MAY 8, 2026

Welcome Him Into the Boat

READ

John 6:20–21; Psalm 46; Luke 24:28–32; Revelation 3:20; James 4:8

REFLECT

John says the disciples were willing to take Jesus into the boat, and immediately the boat reached the shore where they were heading. The story turns not when the disciples row harder, but when Jesus is received. His presence changes what their effort could not. They had been doing everything they knew to do. They had been straining against the sea. But the change in the story does not come through better performance. It comes through the welcomed presence of Christ.

This is where the passage becomes intensely practical. There are situations we keep trying to manage with effort, planning, analysis, and control, while still holding Jesus at a distance from the very center of them. We want help, but not surrender. Guidance, but not dependence. Relief, but not nearness. John 6 shows us another way. Everything changes when we welcome Jesus into the boat. That does not mean every storm ends instantly in the same way, but it does mean the whole journey is transformed by His presence. Peace begins when we stop acting as though everything depends on us.

QUESTIONS

- What are you trying to manage without fully welcoming Jesus into it?
- Where in your life do you need to move from striving toward surrender?

SATURDAY, MAY 9, 2026

Peace for What You Cannot Control

READ

John 6:20–21; Psalm 131; Isaiah 26:3–4; Philippians 4:6–9; Colossians 3:15

REFLECT

One of the beautiful tensions in this story is that the disciples cannot control the outcome. They cannot command the wind. They cannot flatten the waves. They cannot force the shore to come closer. Their efforts matter, but their efforts do not master the situation. That is often where anxiety becomes most intense. Human beings like leverage, options, and predictable outcomes. When those things disappear, fear looks for a place to take over. But the presence of Jesus brings peace when our efforts cannot control the outcome.

This kind of peace is not denial. It is not pretending the sea is calm when it is not. It is not passivity or resignation. It is the steadiness that comes when Jesus becomes more central than fear. Peace is not found in finally controlling everything. Peace is found in trusting the One who is never threatened by what feels out of control to us. Life often reminds us that we do not get to master the sea. In the Christian life, what we do get is the nearness of Christ who calms the storm in us.

QUESTIONS

- What outcome are you trying to control right now?
- How might the presence of Jesus bring peace where your effort cannot?

SUNDAY, MAY 10, 2026

Safely to Shore

READ

John 6:16–21; Psalm 107:23–32; Romans 8:31–39; Hebrews 6:19–20; 1 Peter 5:6–1

REFLECT

The story ends quickly. Jesus is welcomed into the boat, and immediately they reach the shore where they were heading. John does not give us every detail. He gives us enough to show the contrast. The night began with darkness, distance, effort, and fear. It ends with arrival. The disciples are not left to the sea forever. Their journey does not end in chaos. The One who came near to them in the dark brought them where they needed to go.

This is a fitting way to end the week. John 6 does not promise a life without wind, waves, or weariness. It does not promise that every night on the water will be short. It does not deny the reality of fear. What it does promise is that Jesus is trustworthy in the middle of what feels out of control. He comes near. He speaks. He steadies. He leads. He brings His people through. The same Christ who came to the disciples on the sea still comes near to His people now. No darkness, no distance, and no storm can keep Him away.

QUESTIONS

- Where do you most need to remember that Jesus is able to bring you safely through?
- What has this passage shown you about trusting Christ when life feels out of control?