

## **Reflections from a United Methodist Pastor**

**May 11, 2025**

### **Master of the Waters**

#### **John 6:16-25**

There is a lot of mystery in this week's focal text, but one thing is particularly obvious: Jesus showed up where He was not expected. Walking on the water! That's not exactly what the disciples were looking for!

But our Lord is like that. He shows up when we do not think He will be around. We encounter Him sometimes when we thought we'd be on our own.

Think about it. Suppose I am bitterly angry with someone. They are an enemy in every sense of the word. I begin to plot how I can make life miserable for them and I enjoy it when some harm knocks on their door. Just then, Jesus shows up and says, "Love your enemies." And our Lord has shown up when I did not expect Him.

Think about it. My life has been lived under a cloud of despair and disappointment. Nothing seems to be going right. One misery is followed by another misery. One loss is followed by another loss. One pain is followed by another pain. Just then, Jesus shows up and I know I am not alone. And our Lord has shown up when I did not expect Him.

Think about it. It's Monday morning and my week is scheduled to unfold like all the other Mondays. I eat breakfast and head to the office. Routine. I handle a few phone calls and type out a few business emails. Routine. I greet a co-worker during the morning coffee break. Routine. Then, that co-worker stops smiling and with intense sadness says, "I want someone to know. My wife told me this morning that she is leaving me." I had not expected to be so needed this morning, but my ministry of caring calls me. And our Lord has shown up when I did not expect Him.

In John 6:21, we learn that the disciples (who had first been terrified by the unexpected Jesus) wanted to take Him into the boat. May it be so! When Our Lord makes an unexpected presence in our lives, may we welcome Him and live life together with Him.

**What Someone Else Has Said:** William Willimon has written (*Why I Am a United Methodist Abingdon*): "When we are at our Christian best, all of our activity is worship. We praise God on Sundays in the eager expectation that, if we are good enough at in in church, we will also praise God on Monday morning at the office, or at school, or over the kitchen sink, or wherever we find ourselves."

**Prayer:** As you prepare this lesson, let your prayer begin: "God of surprising grace, help me find Your presence in my daily walk..."

Belton Joyner is a retired elder in the North Carolina Conference of The United Methodist Church. He has served in a variety of local church and connectional responsibilities. His publications range from church school curriculum to theology popularization to mystery novels. He has written these weekly thoughts on the lessons in *Adult Bible Studies* for his conference newsletter since December 2001. They are printed here with permission.