

Westside Kids' Adventures

Prologue:

In our last episode, the Westside Kids saw Jesus perform the miracle of filling Peter's nets with so many fish they were beginning to burst. After witnessing this miracle, Peter, James and John left everything behind to follow Jesus because they believed he was the long awaited Messiah – the Son of God. The Westside Kids then returned with the Galilean boy and his father to the shed where the kids again met up with the wise, old man. He told them their next adventure would start the next day, and that is where we rejoin the Westside Kids.

Episode 2: Jesus Calms a Storm (Matthew 8:23-27, Mark 4:35-41 Luke 8:22-25)

The Westside Kids were gathered together in Eliab's wooden shed, still talking about the miracle they witnessed the day before. They were marveling over the abundance of fish that filled Peter's nets at Jesus' command.

"That was so awesome," said Joey. "When I go fishing with my dad we think it's a good day if we catch one or two fish."

Adriel had just entered the shed and overheard Joey's remark. "If you want to go fishing, I'll bet I can talk my dad into taking you out this evening after it cools off a little."

"That would be great," said Abby. "Maybe we could help him toss the nets out if he's willing to show us how."

"I'm sure he would, but let me check with him first," said Adriel.

"Great! We can be ready to go whenever he is, if he's willing," said Willow.

The day passed uneventfully with Adriel showing the Westside Kids around his little village. As evening approached, Adriel's father, Eliab, told the kids he'd be happy to take them fishing for an hour or two, so he called the kids to follow him down to the shoreline. Together they launched his boat into the lake and rowed out to where they could start to fish.

It was a beautiful evening and perfect conditions for tossing out the nets. Eliab showed the kids the proper technique. Though it took them a while to get the hang of it, it wasn't long before they were tossing the nets well out from the boat, and they even brought in a few fish.

“Hey, look over there towards the shoreline,” said Fisher. “There are some boats coming this way.”

As the other boats came closer Eliab remarked, “I’m pretty sure the first boat is Peter’s.”

Joey, who was known for his sharp eyesight, said, “You’re right, sir. But it doesn’t look like they’re stopping to fish. I see Peter positioning the sail and the other disciples rowing. It looks like they might be heading for the other side of the lake. I think they might pass right by us.”

Eliab waved at Peter as his boat was passing by and Peter returned Eliab’s wave.

“Look!” shouted Max. “There’s Jesus lying down at the rear of Peter’s boat. It looks like he’s sound asleep.”

“After all the teaching and healing he’s been doing he must be exhausted,” said Abby.

“Maybe he’s going to the other side of the lake to do more teaching tomorrow and that’s why these other boats are following him,” said Willow.

“You may be right,” said Eliab, “but we can’t go with them. It will be getting dark soon, and we need to start pulling in the nets to go home.”

“And besides,” said Adriel, “there’s a pretty stiff wind just starting to blow. Father is right. We better pull up the nets quickly and head back in.”

The kids all began retrieving the nets as the wind suddenly whipped up, causing waves to slap hard against the side of the boat.

As he kept pulling in the net, Max said to Fish seated next to him, “It’s too bad they don’t have life jackets in this time period. If the weather gets worse, I hope everybody is a good swimmer.”

“This is getting dangerous,” shouted Eliab over the howling wind. “Now that our nets are in the boat, I think we should stay close to Peter’s boat in case we need their help.”

“I guess so,” said Joey, “but they seem to be having a lot of trouble themselves, and can you believe it? Jesus is still sleeping on a cushion in the stern!”

The sea continued to churn and the wind blew even harder. As Eliab’s boat heaved on the crest of a giant wave, Willow clung tightly to her seat to keep from being tossed to the floor. Fish began silently praying that they would be kept safe during this violent

storm when he suddenly realized the person he was praying to was asleep in Peter's boat.

At that instant, another powerful wave broke over the bow of Eliab's boat catching Joey off balance, and it threw him over the side of the boat and into the sea. Willow screamed. Fish stretched out to grab Joey's hand, but he was just out of reach. Despite Joey being an excellent swimmer, the strong sea current was carrying him away from the boat. Eliab, recognizing Joey was in great danger, yelled out to Adriel, "Throw him a line!" Adriel responded, immediately tossing a rope out to Joey for him to grab onto so he could be pulled back to the boat.

Joey managed to wrap his hand around the line, but the current was so strong Fish and Max could not manage to pull Joey any closer to the boat. Then all the kids, including Adriel, joined in tugging on the line, straining every muscle to save Joey. At the same time, Eliab was desperately trying to steer his boat to avoid capsizing in the powerful waves.

Joey was gradually coming closer, but they began to worry that his strength to hold on to the line might run out before the kids could haul him all the way in.

Eliab's boat was now so close to Peter's that the kids could hear the disciples shouting to each other over the roar of the wind. The waves had grown so high they had begun to spill into Peter's boat as well. Even though Jesus' disciples were skilled fishermen, they could not overcome the power of the wind and waves that were pounding their craft and threatening to sink them.

At that moment, Jesus's disciples woke him and they cried out to him, "Teacher, do you not care that we are perishing?"

Jesus awoke and rebuked the wind and said to the sea in a loud voice, "Peace! Be still!" And the wind ceased, and there was a great calm. And he could be overheard saying to those on Peter's boat, "Why are you so afraid? Have you still no faith?" And they were filled with great fear and said to one another, "Who then is this, that even the wind and the sea obey him?"

With the wind and seas now totally calm, the disciples on Peter's boat went back to their original plan and began making their way towards the eastern shore of the Sea of Galilee.

Meanwhile, the calm seas also allowed the kids to finish retrieving Joey who managed to climb over the side of the boat and collapse on the floor thoroughly exhausted.

Eliab was concerned about the well being of the kids after such an ordeal, and he asked if everyone was all right.

“We’re all okay,” said Fish. “Maybe a couple of bruises and some soaking wet clothes, but we’ll be fine, thanks. We’ll all pitch in and help you bail out the water in the boat.”

“And then we can help to row back to shore,” said Abby.

“Thanks, kids. It’s getting dark, and I think we’ve had enough excitement for one day,” said Eliab. “I’m really sorry I put you kids in danger.”

“You know, as soon as I saw that Jesus was awake, I wasn’t so scared,” said Willow.

The kids arrived safely back on shore and as they helped drag the boat up onto the beach, Eliab suggested that the kids head back to the shed while he and Adriel cleaned and stored the fishing nets.

On their way to the shed, the kids couldn’t stop talking about the great miracle they had just witnessed – how Jesus had saved them all with a single command and the wind and the seas had immediately obeyed.

By the time they reached the shed, it was dark. They thought about building a campfire, but no one had any matches. Max yawned. “I’m tired and hungry, but I think sleep is winning out over my stomach. I’m going to get a little shuteye, and maybe later when Eliab and Adriel return, they’ll be kind enough to bring us some food.” The rest agreed Max had a good idea, and in short order all five kids were sound asleep.

The early morning dew was still on the grass when the old man called out, “Rise and shine, my friends. Rise and shine.”

The Westside Kids began to wake from a deep sleep, and pulled themselves up to a sitting position as they rubbed the sleep from their eyes and stretched their aching muscles from having slept on the hard ground.

“If you’re going to keep popping up like this, sir, can you at least tell us your name?” Willow asked.

“I suppose you could call me *servant*, or *helper*, or maybe *messenger*, but if you really insist on a proper name ... well, why don’t you just call me *Shammash*.” Even Willow didn’t know that *shammash* was the Hebrew word for servant.

“I won’t ask you how to spell that,” joked Max.

“We wanted to speak with you last night,” said Fish, “but when we returned to the shed,

you weren't here."

Shammash sat down . "Well, I go where God calls me, and I'm here now. What would you like to ask me?"

"Well, first of all, when we were out on the lake last night, why was Jesus sleeping when there was a storm going on?" asked Abby. "Wasn't he concerned about his apostles drowning?"

"Well first, let me ask *you* a question, Abby," said Shammash. "After all your activity yesterday including fishing and going through that storm, what did you want most when you finally returned to Eliab's shed?"

"I guess I wanted to rest. We all fell asleep."

"Exactly," replied Shammash. "You need to understand that while Jesus is God, during his life on earth he was also fully human. In other words, after a long day of teaching and healing and probably walking a long way, he was very tired and he simply needed rest: and so he slept."

"But why did his boat almost have to capsize and his disciples fear for their lives before he woke up to save them?" asked Joey.

"Do you remember what Jesus said to his disciples after he calmed the sea?" asked Shammash.

Willow piped up, "He asked them, '*Why are you so afraid. Have you still no faith?*'"

"That's right," said Shammash. "Jesus' disciples had already seen him perform many miracles, and though they all professed faith in him, Jesus used the storm to show them that their faith in him was still weak."

"What does that mean for us?" asked Max.

"When you have troubles or storms in your own life, if the first thing you do is start worrying and thinking the worst, then you are reacting like the disciples did. Instead, Jesus wants you to place your faith in him. He wants you to know that he is always there to comfort you if you'll only turn to him in prayer."

"I think I'm beginning to understand," said Max.

"Good," said Shammash. "Remember when we talked about *Psalm 8*? We learned that

God has command over all creation including the wind and the sea. But he also wants to show us that he will help us through the storms of life, that he will treat us with compassion, and he loves us more than we can imagine.”

“I’m sorry we didn’t get a chance to say goodbye to Eliab and Adriel and to thank them for all they did for us,” said Fish.

“You may still get that opportunity, Fisher McGinty. And now, as I depart, I leave you with God’s word from Philippians 4:6-7:

Do not be anxious about anything. Instead, in every situation, through prayer and petition with thanksgiving, tell your requests to God. And the peace of God that surpasses all understanding will guard your hearts and minds in Christ Jesus.”

“He’s gone,” said Joey. “How does he do that?”

“I don’t know, but he gave us a lot to think about,” said Willow.

“I think that’s why God brought us here: to learn more about him through witnessing his miracles,” said Fish.

As the day wore on, the Westside Kids kept discussing all they had experienced since their adventure started. But they knew it was time to move on, so they brought out Papa Jim’s journal and gathered around it. Grabbing on all at the same time, the kids once again found themselves transported to a different place.

It was difficult to say how much time had passed. After all, the old man had told them that time did not pass in the ordinary manner while the kids were on these adventures. But one thing they did know was they were no longer in Eliab’s shed.

“Where are we now?” asked Joey.

“And, more importantly, is there any chance of lunch?” asked Max.

Looking around, Willow did a quick assessment. “I’d say we just crossed over to the other side of the Sea of Galilee; the eastern shore.”

“Okay,” said Fish, “but can you also explain why there are thousands of people walking right towards us?”

It looks like the next adventure for The Westside Kids is already starting. Join us next time, when we look at one of the greatest miracles Jesus performed during his time on earth.