

Westside Kids' Adventures

Prologue:

In our last episode, the Westside Kids witnessed Jesus' compassion for his followers when he performed the miracle of feeding over five thousand men as well as women and children from just five barley loaves and two fish. And to complete the miracle, there were twelve baskets of bread left over. The Westside Kids were trying to find Fisher, who had managed to get aboard the disciples' boat that was headed across the Sea of Galilee to Capernaum. We rejoin the kids after they have spent the night sleeping on the same hill where Jesus had fed the crowd the day before.

Episode 4: Jesus Walks on Water (Matthew 14:22-33, Mark 6:45-52, John 6:16-21)

With Fish still missing, the Westside Kids woke up early in the morning and huddled together in the chilly morning air. Immediately, they began discussing their next steps, which included consulting Papa Jim's journal in order to arrive at their next destination and hopefully find Fish.

Willow removed the journal from the pouch and opened it to page four. On that page, Papa Jim had sketched a man who appeared to be frightened and up to his waist in water with his hands extended and his mouth open as if he was calling for help. The scripture below it simply read:

Do not be afraid.

Below the scripture, Willow noticed Fish's barely legible handwritten note, and she read it aloud to rest of the kids:

"Went with disciples to Capernaum. Meet me there. Fish."

"I wonder why he did that," said Joey.

"Well that's just Fisher McGinty for you," answered Max.

"I think I know why he did it," said Willow.

"Why?" asked Abby.

"If I'm right, Fish wanted to witness another of Jesus' miracles," said Willow. "We need to get to Capernaum right away to find Fish."

Once again, the kids together grabbed onto Papa Jim's journal and in a moment they found themselves at the north end of the Sea of Galilee by the town of Capernaum.



Following the feeding of the five thousand, Jesus commanded his disciples to go to their boat and cross the Sea of Galilee before him while he dismissed the crowds. And after that, he went up on the mountain by himself to pray. When evening came, he was there alone, but his disciples' boat by this time was a long way from the land.

Fish introduced himself to the disciples as they began the crossing, but they didn't take much notice of him. They were too busy rowing and observing the weather. After a while their boat was beaten by the waves because the wind was against them.

Despite the increasingly heavy seas, Fish's eyelids were slowly drooping closed because he hadn't slept in a long time. As he began to doze off, a great commotion jolted him awake. It was the most amazing thing he'd ever seen.

In the fourth watch of the night (that is, between 3AM and 6AM), Jesus came to them, walking on the sea! But when the disciples saw him walking on the sea, they were terrified, and said, "It is a ghost!" and they cried out in fear. But immediately Jesus spoke to them, saying, "Take heart, it is I. Do not be afraid."

And Peter answered Jesus saying, "Lord, if it is you, command me to come to you on the water."

Jesus said, "Come."

At Jesus' invitation, Peter got out of the boat and walked on the water and came towards Jesus.

This is what Fish had been hoping to see; the miracle that he remembered learning about in Sunday school.

Seeing Peter walk on water fascinated Fish even more than seeing Jesus do it, because Peter was just a person like himself, not the Creator of the world.

But then, when Peter noticed the strong wind, he was afraid, and as he began to sink, Fish could hear him cry out, "Lord, save me."

Jesus immediately reached out his hand and took hold of him, saying to him, "O you of

little faith, why did you doubt?"

When Fish saw Peter begin to sink, he understood what Peter must be feeling. At first, seeing Jesus inspired a burst of faith, but the strong wind and rough sea made Peter's faith weaken until he began to sink. Then Jesus showed his compassion for Peter in reaching out his hand to rescue him.

And when Jesus and Peter got into the boat, the wind ceased. And those in the boat were utterly astonished and they worshiped Jesus, saying, "Truly you are the Son of God."

Finally, Fish thought. Even after Jesus' miracles of catching the fish, calming the storm and feeding of the five thousand, it took seeing Jesus walk on water and calming the seas a second time for the disciples to finally see Jesus for who he is: *the Son of God!*

And immediately, the disciples' boat reached the shore where they were heading.



The Westside Kids had just arrived on the north shore of the Sea of Galilee. Max asked an old lady if this town was Capernaum, and she gave him a strange look as if he must be from some place far away, which, of course, he was. She leaned towards Max, staring directly into his eyes, and with her arms spread wide as if to encompass the whole town she said, "Well, if this isn't Capernaum, then I've been living in the wrong town all my life." And she let out a loud, raspy laugh as she walked away.

"Okay, now I feel stupid," said Max. "Next time, one of you guys gets to ask the dumb question."

"Well, at least we know this is Capernaum," said Joey. "This is where Fish said to meet him."

"So, if you were Fisher McGinty, where would you go once your boat arrived on this seashore?" asked Abby.

"I think he'd be trying to find some breakfast, which actually sounds like a great idea," said Max.

"Trouble is, we're broke, and I don't think we look much like beggars," said Willow.

"Let's head into town and see what we can find," said Abby. And that is just what they did.

Meanwhile, Fish was enjoying a terrific breakfast at the apostle Peter's home. Peter had taken pity on this poor lad who seemed to be all alone in the world. But as Peter began sharing the amazing events of the previous night with his wife, Fish thanked them profusely, excused himself and then left to try to find his friends.

It didn't take long. Because he was a fisherman, Peter's home was very near the seashore and Fish guessed that Papa Jim's journal would probably take the kids to that same shoreline. He guessed right.

As the Westside Kids began walking into the town, Fish came up behind them and said, "Does anyone know where I can grab a good cheeseburger?"

Max turned around, grabbed Fish and put him in a playful headlock and said, "If you keep running off on your own, you're going to get us into a lot of trouble one of these days, McGinty."

"He's right," said Abby. "We only have one book to take us all home, so we need to stick together from now on."

"I didn't want to put you guys in any danger," said Fish. "But last night was absolutely amazing."

"Let me guess. You saw Jesus walk on water, didn't you?" said Willow.

"How did you know?" asked Fish.

"Well, I read the Bible and go to Sunday school classes, too," said Willow.

"Well then I guess I don't have to tell you what happened if you already know," said Fish.

"Don't be silly," said Max. "Willow's been keeping us in suspense waiting for you to describe it all to us."

"Well, I'll do my best," said Fish.

The kids found a quiet place in the shade of a large tree, and Fish began retelling all that happened the night before, and how the apostles seemed to finally understand who Jesus is: the Son of God.

“Well, that must have been an amazing experience,” said Joey, “but isn’t this where Shammash always pops up and asks us what we’ve learned?”

“Yeah, I wonder what’s holding him up?” asked Max.

“I expect Shammash will still come to us like he always has, but we should pray,” said Willow.

The kids bowed their heads and gave thanks for God’s blessing in keeping them safe and for enabling them to see Jesus perform amazing miracles. They closed in asking God to bring Shammash safely back to them. But as the day wore on there was still no sign of him.

“Well, we’re way too far from Eliab’s place to spend the night there. What are we going to do?” asked Joey.

“I guess we could walk back to Peter’s house and see if he’ll take us in. I can’t think of any other options we have, and it’s already getting pretty late,” said Fish.

“Okay,” said Abby. “Let’s give it a try, but I’m feeling like maybe we’re asking too much of Peter and his wife after they’ve already helped Fish.”

As they were walking towards Peter’s house, suddenly three men in priestly garments stepped out of the shadows and confronted the Westside Kids. They were Pharisees, and they were angry. The oldest of the three stepped forward and grabbed Fish firmly by the shoulders and said, “You were seen with those fishermen, those disciples of that man Jesus, who makes false claims about being, and I have trouble even saying it, *the Son of God!*” The other two Pharisees laughed mockingly.

“Do you deny it?” asked the elder Pharisee menacingly.

Fish was frightened by these bearded men in black robes who were glaring at him, but he managed to reply, “It’s true I traveled with them from the other side of the Galilee last night, but I’m not one of his apostles, if that’s what you’re asking.”

Now all three laughed even harder and sneered at him. “I’m not asking if you’re one of his closest disciples, but rather whether you’re one of his followers.”

Fish felt his fright turning to anger partly because the man still had his hands clamped on his shoulders. “What if I am? What business is that of yours anyway?” asked Fish defensively.

“Impudent boy! If you are one of his followers, we will find your parents and throw them out of the synagogue,” said the oldest Pharisee.

“And that goes for the rest of you children as well,” said one of the other Pharisees angrily. “There is no place in our Jewish synagogue for anyone who claims to follow this Jesus, this so-called messiah.”

Just then, Shammash suddenly appeared. “Why are you questioning these children?” Shammash shouted angrily. “You should be ashamed of yourselves harassing children. Haven’t you anything better to do? Should I perhaps speak with your High Priest and tell him that your hatred for Jesus has made you sink to the level of challenging children on the street?” he roared.

The Pharisees were so taken aback by Shammash’s verbal attack that they backed away, and as they departed they mumbled something about those children should be taught discipline.

“Boy, you’re a real tiger for an old fellow,” said Joey. “You had me shaking in my sandals.”

“And you sure showed up at the right moment,” said Max. “Any later and Fish might be spending the night in the crowbar hotel.”

“No one is going to jail, Max,” said Shammash. “Now come with me. There is a shelter near here where you can spend the night, and I even have some food for you. Once we’re settled, I want to talk with you about something important.”

About ten minutes later, Shammash and the kids arrived at a stone hut with three walls and open on one side. Shammash explained that it belonged to an elderly man who no longer had a use for it, and it had been left vacant.

“By now, you kids have seen or heard about enough of Jesus’ miracles that something should be made clear to you,” said Shammash. “I want you to tell me who Jesus is.”

Willow spoke up first. “Without question, the miracles alone prove that Jesus is who he claimed to be: the Son of God.”

“The Messiah,” said Joey.

“The greatest prophet, healer, teacher and miracle worker,” said Abby.

“The Creator of all things who controls all things,” said Fish.

“He is our Lord and King and he loves us,” said Max.

“Those are all good responses,” said Shammash, “and they are all correct. Jesus is all those things and more. So why do you think it was so difficult for his closest disciples to put their full faith in him after all they had seen and heard?” asked Shammash.

The Westside Kids fell silent for a moment.

Shammash continued, “As it says in Philippians 2:9:

Therefore, God exalted him to the highest place and gave him the name that is above every name, that at the name of Jesus every knee should bow, in heaven and on earth and under the earth, and every tongue confess that Jesus Christ is Lord, to the glory of the Father.”

“You see,” said Shammash, “there is another name for Jesus that you haven’t mentioned yet, and that is, *Saviour*.”

Shammash paused to let that sink in. Then he said, “I want you to think about that between now and the next time we meet. There is one more adventure in store for you; one more miracle that you will see tomorrow. Use the book and take good care of it. Tomorrow it will take you to Jerusalem.” And again, Shammash melted into the night.



The Westside Kids were left to ponder Shammash’s name for Jesus: “Saviour”. What a powerful word. Tomorrow would be another adventure; they would witness another of Jesus’ many miracles. Which one would it be, they wondered. It had been another long day, and while they tossed these thoughts around in their minds, sleep soon overtook them. Will tomorrow be their last adventure? We’ll find out in the next episode of The Westside Kids Adventures.