

Lord, Save Me

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[0 : 0 0] Let's turn back again to the chapter we read in Matthew's Gospel, Matthew chapter 14. And I want us really to consider that section from verse 22 where we find Jesus walking on the water to the disciples. And maybe if we're to home in on any particular part it might be more where verse 28, and Peter answered him, Lord, if it is you, command me to come to you on the water.

And he said, come. So Peter got out of the boat and walked on the water and came to Jesus. But when he saw the wind he was afraid and beginning to sink. He cried out, Lord, save me. So on. Now the experiences surrounding the life of Christ really are quite extraordinary. And if we, which we do, we stop and we're home in, we examine them. But when you read the gospels, you find that the gospel writers really kind of are very matter of fact. They just write it. It's never sensational. They're just writing it as it is. No drama concern or not enlarging anything, but just as it were stating the bare facts. But the more you study the life of Jesus and all that that happened in that time, the more extraordinary we find his life really is. And one of the features of the life of Jesus was that there were always crowds following him. And we know that so many believed, many didn't believe in him, but many did believe, but there were always crowds following him. And we find there in verse 14, but when he went to show, he saw a great crowd and he had compassion on them. You know, that's one of the phrases that quite often you find in the word regarding Jesus. He had compassion on them. And it highlights quite often, excuse me, how different Jesus was to his disciples. Because we find that the disciples are actually hard hearted. They're saying to Jesus, right? Or send this crowd away, get rid of them. Jesus had compassion on them. And I heard somebody define compassion as your pain in my heart. And if that is a definition of compassion, it's a lovely expression. Your pain is where you identify with someone, and it's like you're taking their pain, you're feeling so much for them, that it's like you're taking their pain into your own heart. And that's the Jesus that we worship, somebody who had compassion on them, who was moved with compassion. We read various descriptions along the way of the life of Jesus.

And you know, he hasn't changed. Still the same Jesus tonight. And he still has compassion on it. He still has the same compassion for you and for me as he had for the crowds then. But the disciples were different. We find another occasion where it's exact same response. Remember the mothers who were bringing the little babies to Jesus. The disciples are saying, they're more or less saying, get lost away you go. Don't be bothering him. And Jesus, that's where he was actually angry with the disciples. And that's where he said, suffer the little children to come unto me and forbid them not for of such is the kingdom of God. So the disciples at this stage in their life were quite a hard hearted bunch. And that is very obvious because one of the things was that they hadn't considered the miracle that had taken place. Because prior to the incident on the water, we see the feeding of the thousands. And it tells us in Mark's Gospel that this is what it says, that they considered not the miracle of the loaves, for their hearts were hardened.

So there are these disciples that are in the company of Jesus. They're seeing everything Jesus does. And yet they're possessing hard hearts. It's not really affecting them. It's not really touching them. And you know, the same can happen to you and to me as well. That we can take what Jesus has done. And we can take it for granted. And we become, you know, the expression familiarity breeds contempt. Sometimes we can almost, maybe we don't go as far as to say, well, I'm contemptuous of the Gospel, but we can become so used to it that we lose the wonder of it, the marvel of it.

[4 : 4 9] And that certainly was the case with the disciples. They had lost sight of who Jesus was and what he was doing. And I believe that that's one of the reasons why Jesus sent the disciples out into a storm. Because that's soon shook them up. And you know, sometimes the Lord allows a storm into our lives as well. When he sees us becoming hard hearted and complacent, where he

sees us just taking everything for granted, where he sees us not returning thanks to him, where he sees us losing our dependence upon him, where the focus has gone. He says, I'm going to shake him up. I'm going to shake her up a wee bit. And so he allows storms to come into our lives from time to time. And so Jesus is sending the disciples away. Of course, it's not the only reason, because we find in verse 23, and when he had dismissed the clouds, he went up on the mountain by himself. And that's important to notice. Now, of course, we know that Jesus in our nature, he was exercising continued dependence upon the Father. And he had the Spirit without measure. But the thing is that he had to have constant fellowship and communion with his Father. And that is at the heart of prayer. That is what prayer is ultimately about. Far too often we think of prayer about the things that we need or the things that we want. And of course, that that's an essential, because in Scripture, we're told to bring everything to the Lord in prayer. And I thank the Lord for that everything that it says. Can you imagine if the Lord says, well, you can only bring spiritual things. You can only pray to me about things concerning the church or things concerning your soul. But you can't come to me and pray about any of the practical things in life. That wouldn't be good. The Lord says everything, everything, major things, little things, everything that were to bring to the Lord in prayer. But the heart of prayer is really getting to know the Lord more and more. And that again is tied in with sometimes the storms that come into our lives because it throws us back upon the

Lord. And I'm sure every single one of us will be able to say that some of the times that we were closest to the Lord were times of difficulties, times when things weren't going the way we wanted. But Jesus is there by Himself. And again, that's important because we need to get alone with the Lord. Now again, a lot of our prayer time is not being alone with the Lord. A lot of our prayer time is we're praying on the go. We're praying in the car, we're praying at home, we're praying at work, we're praying in company, we're praying but often silently we're asking the Lord for help, for strength, for grace, for wisdom, for pardon, for forgiveness. For the Christian it's an ongoing, it's as natural, almost as breathing. It becomes part and parcel of your life. Just as we can pray about everything, we can also pray anywhere. Imagine if the Lord said you can only pray in church. If you have to speak to me, it's only in church. That means you'll be having to phone the church officer and say, again, supposing you have an emergency two in the morning and I need to pray, but you can't pray unless you have come to church. Thankfully, that's not how it is.

We can pray just as we say about everything, we can pray anywhere. That's a great thing. But having said all that and so much of our life is taken up with that sort of little prayers here, there and everywhere, it is also key that we give inner day time to prayer. And that's becoming harder and harder in the day that we're living in because time is just becoming loads of same, 24 hour clock we have time just seems to be getting less and less and less and everybody.

[9 : 10] It doesn't matter how old you are or how young you are, there seems to be pressure, pressure, pressure. And it's hard to get time alone, time to get alone with the Lord. But it's key. It's essential. It's essential for you. It's essential for the church. It's essential for the country, because we have got to remember that ultimately, the good of the nation, the good of the country, is very much in the hands of the church, on the hands of the Christian church. And we find that, remember how it says, that if my people who are called by my name, if they humble themselves and if they seek my face, I will hear that prayer and I will heal their land. It's not the politicians, ultimately, it's a church. And of course, the church, the politicians will respond as God moves them if the church is a praying church and if the church is taking their role in this world seriously.

So it's important that we get alone, that we get time to be with the Lord and pray. You remember that the enemy of your souls will do everything in his power to stop you. I'm sure you'll see to stop you. I'm sure you're all aware the number of times you said, you're sure I'm going to have a wee bit of time and have a wee bit of reading and I'm going to reflect on a wee bit of prayer and the phone will go or the doorbell will go or something will happen. Something will come and disrupt, you can almost guarantee it, because Satan never wants you to be doing serious business with the Lord. He will do anything and everything to prevent that happening. So Jesus is here as a great example to us that it's important to get alone to be with the Lord. And as Jesus is there, he sends, as he said, we sent the disciples away and if we were to look down upon the sea, there's these men, and we've got to remember the bulk of the disciples are fisherfolk and they're crossing the sea. And this really wild night, it blows up and it becomes really difficult and they're struggling and it's hard going. And we know that although they were fishermen and there were periods on the sea where they were frightened for their lives, they knew we live in an island and we're all aware of the force of the sea,

we're all aware of, should every one of us, maybe some of you are fishing, some of you know very well just the motion and the power of the sea and the way it works. I remember when I was, I used to be quite keen on going to sea when I was a boy, it was one of the things I fancied. And when I was 15, my father got me a job on a fishing boat in the summer and that's where my notions for going to sea changed. And I always hold and respect those who make their lives at sea. And I bought the Joanne which worked with the Scalpy Isle, it was back in the days of the Ring Netting and some of it was some great experiences. But I still remember just that feeling of leaving your stomach, of being so sick and just lying in nets and just it, anyway I think my father didn't want me to go to sea and it had the desired effect so it was quite smart. But the thing is that even fishermen, they're used to the rough weather, they're used and here are these disciples and they're making their way across and it's a wild night and they're struggling. But into the struggles and probably the fears that they're experiencing, a new fear, a terror comes. Because all of a sudden they're seeing in the middle of the night, it's probably between three and six in the morning, they see this apparition, they make out that it's a passion walking towards them on the water and they cry out in fear. You would, so would I, because you and I know the one thing that we cannot do is walk on the water but here is this passion walking and they cry out in sheer naked terror, it is our ghost. And as it's here we see Jesus displaying the great power, the sovereign power of God working in through him. And these waves that were defeating the disciples are just like a pavement to Jesus. He has total control because we shouldn't be surprised because we're told in the scripture with regard to the second passion of the Godhead is that by him all things were made. So this sea that he walks on is that which he has made.

And you know we should remember this because often in the church and with regard to the church at large we look out and we wonder what's going to happen. And we see the church and it seems to be buffeted on all fronts and the church is becoming more ineffective. The voice of the church is not far off silent within the land. People have very, pay very scant regard to what the church says. So many people don't have a Bible, they don't know about the Bible, they don't listen to it. And it can become very depressing when we think if we just look like that. But we've got to remember that Jesus the head of the church is still in control. Jesus who walked on the waters still the Jesus who tonight rules and reigns over everything. And we must never look at the way that things are at a particular moment. Ask how it's always going to be. And so this Jesus who walked to the disciples and this Jesus who calls out to them in their fear and he says take heart it is I be not afraid.

Great words, take heart it is I be not afraid. Jesus is speaking these words to you tonight as well. Irrespective I don't know what your own personal store might be. I don't know whether you're might be in a good place, you might be in a bad place, might be in a dark place.

Things might be going really well but into whatever situation you're in. The Lord is saying take heart it is I be not afraid. Great words. And it's from this that we see Peter, typical Peter, Peter the impetuous Peter who often speaks before he thinks, Peter who acts before he thinks and he's saying oh it's Jesus. And Peter I think it's one of the great moments of exuberant love. We find that Peter when he sees it's Jesus, oh man I've got to go to him. Now Peter knows perfectly well he had spent his life before following Jesus on these very waters as a fisherman and he says I've got to walk over to meet Jesus. And that's why he says Lord bid me come to you.

[16:25] And so we find here a great display in what Peter is doing of we could say of great faith. And then when we look at Peter as he begins to walk on the water we see the faith disappearing or very little faith and then as Peter cries out we see maybe returning faith or the restoration of faith. So Peter here shows initially great faith and that's the the nature of faith really is that you the faith focuses on Jesus. In fact when there is faith there is love. You know some people say oh you know I've got faith but you know I don't really love the Lord. Well you do if you have faith you love the Lord because faith works by love. We we have if you tonight have faith you have faith because the Lord loves you. And you if the Lord loves you you love him in return that's what the

Bible says. We love him because he first loved us. He set his love upon us and it is by his grace he drew us. And that's where the word of God tells us that it is by grace you're saved through faith.

So faith focuses upon Jesus and the love that works faith wants to get as close as possible. That's what love does. Love wants to be with the object of love. If you love somebody very much you like to be with that person. You want to be with that person. That's what love does.

And it is equally through spiritually when we love the Lord we want to be with the Lord. That's what we do when we come to church. We come to church to be with God's people. But we come to be in

the presence of the Lord to be with the Lord. That's what we're remembering this morning at the Lord's Supper. And so we find Peter here. He's asking the Lord and what's lovely about it here is that faith here propels that's what happens propels Peter to do what normally he couldn't do because when faith works in us this is what what happens is that Peter Peter knew this we can see this Peter knew that he couldn't walk on the water but this is what Peter says Lord if it is you command me to come to you in the water. That was great faith. Peter knew 110 percent that he could not physically walk on that water but his faith at that moment in Jesus was so great that he knew that if Jesus commanded that he walk on the water he could. That's what I think is some of the one of the greatest displays of faith of anybody in the Bible. It's just like what you or I would say you know and he did it out of a it wasn't to make a display or something it was just out of this exuberant love for Jesus. I need to get a Jesus command. Me he's more or less saying command me to do what is absolutely and utterly impossible to do but he believed that Jesus could do that command. And you know that's the way we come as Christians.

And could I say to you tonight that anybody here who is not a believer and when I mean a believer I believe that all of here tonight believe to a certain extent and maybe believe more than to a certain extent but maybe there are some here who have never come to exercise saving faith in Jesus. And you see all kinds of hindrances and barriers and obstacles in the way.

[20 : 31] You've heard the gospel story so often. In fact you know it so well that if somebody said to you you know how do I how do I become a Christian what do I do to be saved you say well I believe in the Lord Jesus Christ and you'll be saved you know it. But knowing it and how to get there you know it's a problem. And that's what you have to do just the very thing that Peter did is say to the Lord Lord I need to get from here to there. And you know as I can't you know something you're right you can't yourself but that's what the Lord does the Lord is the saving. So you say to the Lord Lord command me to come so that you will hear help me Lord to hear your voice with an enabling power to respond. Because that's what happens when we come to faith.

Because I'm sure like you I heard many many invitations to come to Christ and I couldn't sometimes I wanted to sometimes I didn't want to often I didn't want to but there were times I did but I couldn't I couldn't understand how you got from here to there.

Seemed there's great great barriers at where and there were things in the way and how do I get. But that's what the Lord does he takes us and that's what we have to do is go to the Lord and say Lord you got to help me because I can't do this myself. That's a great discovery. So long as we think we can do it we're never going to really seek him. But the moment we come to the conclusion I can't do this Lord you have to save me. That's when the Lord comes in and the Lord enables.

And that's what the Lord did for Peter. There was power in the word and always remember that there is power in the word. The word of God has power. It always has power and Jesus spoke that word that one word come and that's what Peter did and Peter he comes enabled to come and faith that's what faith does. Faith takes you on to do what normally you cannot do and it will continue like that throughout your Christian life because it's faith when you become a Christian it's faith then that takes you the next step to profess faith in the Lord Jesus Christ and I'm sure there are some in this congregation who have come to faith in Jesus Christ but have not exercised that little bit more faith. It's not you're as safe as ever you'll be but you need to exercise faith dependence upon God to go on in a strength because you know so often we feel we're not up to the task. We're not fit. We're not worthy and you know God is always getting people who who don't feel they're up to the task to do the thing just like Moses remember when God called Moses and you to lead them out of Israel out of Israel to lead Israel out of Egypt God appeared to Moses the burning bush what did Moses say straight away on all or not me you got the wrong passion it's my brother you you should have called my brother

Aaron he's the man not me that's basically what Moses is saying and you know so often we're like that Lord I think you've got the wrong person here how about somebody else because sometimes the Lord challenges us to be something to do something and we thought that's too big for me can't do that well this is where we need to rely and to go in the strength of God the Lord and that's what Christianity is all the time discovering more and more the strength of God the Lord going forward in his strength every single day that's the way we do it and so we see Peter and the way he goes he goes over the side and it's from there that we see Peter as it were the collapse very briefly of his faith because it starts so well that's what we find so Peter got out of the boat and he walked on the water and he came to Jesus he's on the way it's going really well but then he begins to sink why

well the very first thing he took his eyes off Jesus that's what it tells us but when he saw the wind in other words when he saw the effect of the wind when he saw what was happening around him and he was seeing the wild surge of the sea and he was saying to himself what am I doing [25 : 26] I can't do this and the moment he took his eyes off Jesus and began to focus upon what he was seeing he began to sink and you know the same thing will happen to you and to me as well the moment we take our eyes off Jesus we begin to sink and then again the other thing is that we we listen to other things but when he saw the wind he was afraid and beginning to sink he cried out you see what would be happening is there would be this mighty roar going on the roar of the wind and the surge of the sea and he's hearing this he's seeing it and he's hearing it he begins to sink and you know it's the same for you and for me because as we walk through this world there's a host of voices a host of voices pulling us away a host of voices bringing us to question devil will come whispering to you and saying you don't believe all that you do you realize the how small a minority of people believe what you do do you honestly in this enlightened age believe this Satan will come to you it doesn't matter how long you've been following and even in all the different different tiles and things in your life he's always going to be whispering away trying to get you off and the moment you begin to listen to him or the moment you begin to view the circumstances sometimes that's another thing we see the circumstances bigger than we see the Lord that's what happened with Peter Jesus began to fade from his view and all he could see was the surge of the sea and the big waves I'm done and you know that so often happens in life and particularly when we're going through tiles and problems they become so big that they block out our view of the Lord and the moment our view of Jesus is blocked out we're in trouble it's going to become more and more difficult for us because as long as

Jesus is in our focus he will enable us to go on he will give us that enabling every single day to go on and so that's what's happened happened to Peter but then we see this returning faith because as Peter begins to sink what does he do he cries out to Jesus what does he say well we know it three words Lord save me you know some of the great prayers in the Bible they're so tiny you know sometimes we think in order to for the Lord to hear us we've got to have a big prayer that we've got to have a big theological prayer we've got to stroke all the T's and dot all the I's spiritually we say oh I must I must it's almost like we're trying to impress the Lord no no the great prayers are scripture Lord save me Lord have mercy on me Lord remember me when you come into your kingdom these were all prayers that Jesus heard and answered Lord that I might receive my sight you couldn't have simpler prayers than that Lord save me that's all three words straight away Jesus heard his cry took hold of him and saved him and he'll do exactly the same for you tonight that's what he'll do he'll save you the thing is will you ask him will you cry to him and ask him because sometimes we hold back and we say yeah Lord you need to save me but right not right now and you know it's amazing how many things come into our mind and say oh if I became a Christian right now it's going to affect a few things on and I've got to get through all that first before I become a Christian no it's now because we don't we don't know what the future holds Lord save me and so we find that that's exactly what what Jesus does he reaches out his hand and he takes him in may you tonight ask the Lord to reach out his hand to you because actually his hand is stretched out already in the gospel there's a bit in the pilgrims progues where we find that picture of the man raking about and he's looking for a little something for a wee coin just something to give him a wee lift in life something to get by with and all the time he's searching in the dust and he's raking about in the ground and above him there's a hand stretched out with a golden crown funny looked up all the riches a wealth everything he needs is there but he's not looking up he won't look up he's too busy raking about and you know sometimes that's the way we are as well too busy raking about just something to get by something the world is oh here it's in here the Lord is saying look I've got an outstretched arm my hand is holding the crown of life it's there for you and that's who it is tonight what is your response going to be?