

Jesus Walking On The Water

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Date: 12 May 2019

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[0 : 00] Shall we turn now to that portion of scripture that we read together? We shall look at that portion of scripture as a whole, but we shall find our text in the words in verse 29.

He said, Come, so Peter got out of the boat and walked on the water and came to Jesus. Peter got out of the boat and walked on the water and came to Jesus.

I'd like to look at this portion of scripture, wonderful portion of scripture that speaks of three miracles on the sea in Galilee.

I'd like to look at the three miracles that we see taking place in this portion we've read. Our first heading is Christ himself walking on the water.

Then we shall look at Peter walking on the water. And then we shall look thirdly in just a word of the calm of the storm.

[1 : 18] Many people when they read and picture Peter look at him as somebody who had the great ability to always say the wrong thing at the wrong time or do the wrong thing at the wrong time.

He seems to be the kind of person that we would say of him, he constantly put his foot in it. And if we were to describe this man of God in a word, many of us would probably use the words like arrogant or self-confident or overconfident and maybe brash.

And we would ask the question then, well if this is what made up one of the Lord's disciples, why on earth would the Lord choose such a man to be one of his disciples?

And surely as we study the life of Peter the answer to that can only be the same as it is for us today if we're Christians for exactly the same reasons that he chose you and I.

Are we all that different from Peter with all of our stumblings, with all of our failings in the life of grace?

[2 : 50] Do we as Christians and as individuals not have the ability to time and time again put our foot in it, saying the wrong thing and doing the wrong thing?

Peter has many faults and many of his faults are recorded in scripture but in the hands of the Lord by his side, this is a man who was able to do great things for the Lord and for the Lord's cause.

And this is a man who was greatly used by the Lord and we give thanks to the Lord today that his faults are recorded in scripture because that gives us encouragement as Christians on what we do and how we react and what we should do and say when we stumble and fall exactly like he did.

This portion that we read in scripture is found in Matthew chapter 14 which is made up of four main parts of this chapter. In the first 12 verses it speaks about the death of John the Baptist and then from verse 13 to the end of verse Mark 21 we see of Jesus feeding the 5,000.

Then we have this portion which speaks of Christ walking on the water and the final three verses speak of Jesus healing the secret Gennesaret.

- [4 : 23] And when we read this portion of scripture in verse 21 we read of the contentment of the 5,000 people who have just been fed with this incredible miracle of Christ.
- And then we read in verse 21 that immediately after this great miracle takes place Christ is constrained to move the disciples away from where they were.
- Christ immediately made the disciples to get into the boat and to go before him on the other side while he dismissed the crowds. It's incredible for us to realise that here is Christ and Christ is getting the acclaim of so many people but he's not interested in that.
- Immediately we read that he moves the disciples onto the sea and tells them to go and that he will again catch up with them or meet them on the other side.
- And we ask the question why is he in such a rush to do this? Why is he so constrained? Why does it have to be immediately? Why does Christ not want to just stay there for a wee while?
- [5 : 35] And the answer is given to us in the Gospel of John in House account in verse 6 and in verse 15 we read perceiving then that they were about to come and take him by force and to make him king Jesus with through again to the mountain to be by himself.
- You see our senior knew very well the fulfilment of the Psalms when the Psalmist said in Psalm 2 and in verse 6 as for me I have set my king on Zion my holy hill.
- It was the Lord and the Lord alone that was going to give him this position and Christ knows that this is not his time and so he chooses to leave there immediately.
- And you know there is a real lesson for us there today. I think one of the greatest problems that there is in the church today is many of us constantly are wanting a pat on the back for what we do for the Lord's cause.
- We are wanting to hear the well done. We are wanting the acclaim and the praise but that is not the way our Savior was. We read of Christ that as the disciples go to see he goes to prayer.
- [7 : 02] He goes up to the mountain by himself and here we see that here by himself Christ finds us rest, Christ finds us nourishment, Christ finds us delight and it takes him all night in prayer as the disciples go out on the boat.
- This is his refreshment, this is his delight and surely Christ here is telling us of our need of secret prayer, of our need of going into the closet and of our need of taking time in the day to be alone with God and we can most definitely be sure that Christ was praying for the disciples at this time.
- And it's with that in mind that we enter into our first heading of Christ walking on the water. These words we see are written to us in verses 24 to 27.
- It's very important for us to realise that the disciples are now exactly where Christ has asked them to be and in that place they come across this great storm.
- And yet in the midst of this great storm they are safer in the will of God in the midst of this storm than they were on the shoreline where the 5000 had received this great and incredible miracle.
- [8 : 34] They did not feel safe but they were safe in the will of God. And we read in John's account of this same portion of scripture in chapter 6 we read in verse 19 that when they had been rode about 3 or 4 miles they saw Jesus walking on the sea and coming near the boat they were frightened.
- Imagine that. I spoke for the children of my own we terrifying experience for a few hours but here are men that are caught up in this storm and Christ is not with them.

Christ is on the mountains alone. And yet incredibly as we study each gospel and as we study what each gospel tells us about the walking on the water in Matthew's account we read and when Christ saw that they were making headway painfully for the wind was against them and about the fourth watch of the night he came to them walking on the sea.

You see even though Christ was not with them he knew of their struggles and he knew of their pain and he knew exactly what they were going through and the purpose of this storm was to encourage them and to make them stronger and to make them realise that the day was coming when Christ would not be with them and they would go through the storms of life and ministry with Christ by their side and Christ is here trying to teach them that he will not be with them always and he had already taught us to teach them this in Matthew chapter eight where we read of our previous time when Christ was with them on a boat and they were caught up in another storm and these disciples were terrified and you know the story when they woke him up from his sleep and when they demanded that he gets up and they challenged him and they rebuked Christ for saying why are you asleep when Christ gets up and says peace be still.

What manner of man is this that even the winds and the waters obey him. Here is Christ testing him. He had tested them before while he was with them on the boat and now he tests them again with regard to their faith while he is not with them on the boat this time and there shall listen for them to learn here and there shall listen for us all to learn here with regard to the storms of life.

[11 : 20] We must remember that when we are in the will of God and when these storms come he who has brought the storm to us will enable us to endure and will be with us in the midst of that storm.

To make matters worse we read that this storm is taking place in the fourth watch of the night. The Romans had come up with a time scale from 6pm as we know it was 6am where they had to divide the 12 hour period into four three hour segments and it was known as the first watch, the second watch, the third watch and the fourth watch and the fourth watch is as what we would know time wise from 3am until 6am probably the darkest part of the night and you can imagine these men exhausted, rowing for their lives terrified.

Who knows how many hours they could have been, how many hours they were rowing perhaps even up to eight or nine hours and then they see that this figure comes before them on the water and we know that it is Christ but we read in verse 28, in verse 26 rather when the disciples saw them walking on the sea they were terrified and they said it is a ghost and they cried out in fear.

Why is it that our saviour approaches them in such a way? Why does he walk across the water in such a way to speak to them?

Surely it is to show them that the very thing which is terrifying them is not having any effect on him. He is walking on the sea, the waves which are lashing over them are having no effect on Christ.

[13 : 23] He is the one who is the creator of the sea himself and here you see Christ providing a pathway in the middle of the storm and this pathway the storm does not affect it as he walks to the boat where the disciples are and the nearer Christ comes to the boat the more terrified they become.

Isn't that incredible? This man, this Lord, this man that they had just witnessed the feeding of the 5000 and they don't recognise Christ.

This man who has promised to be with them on the other side they don't think for a minute here is Christ we are safe. Why is that?

Surely it is due to the fact that they weren't expecting him to come and you would have thought that from Matthew 8 that they would have learned from that experience but they hadn't.

They were slow to learn and here you see that they are terrified of the very waves and the very storm that they have caught up in the midst.

[14 : 47] JC Ryall says a wonderful thing. He says there is great encouragement here for all true Christians. Let them know that there is nothing created which is not under Christ's control.

All things serve Him. He may allow his people to be tried for a season, to be tossed to and fro by the storms of trouble. He may be later than they wish and coming to their aid.

He may not draw near until the fourth watch of the night but never let us forget that the winds, the waves, the storms are all Christ's servants that cannot move without Christ's permission.

Isn't that wonderful? Ah yes, the Lord's coming into our lives can be fearful.

It can be a fearful experience. There may be Christians here today and as you reflect on your testimony and when the Lord came into your life it may have been a terrifying experience.

[15 : 48] It certainly was for me. In the three weeks of mayhem in my life from the time I knew I was lost until I went to the first prayer meeting I can only describe it as terrifying.

What they saw was a physical impossibility, a man walking on the water coming before them and there had a gruelling night in the midst of the storm.

No wonder they were terrified. No wonder they think Christ is a ghost. Superstition, I don't fully understand why maybe there are men here who know but superstition at sea can be a great thing.

In a few hours I was out on my uncle's boat I heard much about whatever you do don't do this, don't say that, don't do this, don't touch that.

Superstition was a big thing. We don't read in scripture that these men were worried beforehand when they left the shoreline on the boat.

[16 : 55] Many of the Lord's disciples were fishermen and we don't read that they were worried but here they are filled with terror for their very lives and yet they don't recognise Christ but we read that Christ speaks to them and it's at that point that they recognise Christ.

Christ comes and in verse 27 immediately he spoke to them saying take heart, be of good cheer, do not be afraid, it is I.

And it's at that moment when they hear the voice of God speaking to them that they are still in the midst of the storm and it is at that point that they know of the voice of God speaking to them and calming their souls.

All my friends I wonder is the voice of God speaking to us today. Is the voice of God challenging us once again today to make things right with him, to put our trust in Jesus Christ as our saviour.

Do not delay anymore. Is the Lord speaking to you in your heart? Those of us that are here that are Christians know what it is for the voice of God to come and speak to their hearts and there are many of us who know what it is, the voice of God speaking to our hearts and we say no and not yet.

[18 : 32] It's one of the most things that amaze me the most is how the Lord gave me opportunity after opportunity and yet came into my life when time after time I said no to it.

You see the disciples they don't need to ask a second time who are the Lord, who are you, they know the voice of God and immediately the fear goes and with that we enter into the second heading where Peter walks on the water and we find that in verses 28 to 31.

In verse 28 we read in Peter answer to him Lord if it is you command me to come on the water. I love that reply and Peter said it would have to be Peter who would be the first one to speak.

When everybody else is silent on the boat Peter speaks, when everybody else wants to do nothing on the boat Peter wants to do something.

You see Peter at this moment is recognising something and he is saying something that the waves as we have said that are coming over the boat are underneath the feet of Christ and he is saying something supernatural taking place on the sea there and he is the one, the only one who wants to share in the glory of God.

[20 : 14] He is saying the Lord doing something incredible and he dares to be different. He wants to take part in it. He wants to go where Christ is even if it is just down on the sea in the middle of a storm.

You know we can be hard on Peter as we read scripture but what he does here is incredible and he says Lord if it is you command me to come to the water.

He doesn't say Lord command me to come to the water. He says Lord command me to come to you on the water.

You see Peter wants to be where Christ is even in this incredible situation his desire is to be where Christ is and this shows us his affection, his love for Christ.

He stands out as the one who was always making a mess of things with regard to the disciples but he stands out here on the sea of Galilee for different reasons.

[21 : 40] Nobody else is visualising and understanding what is taking place here with regard to the power and the presence of God and he wants to share to take part in it.

You know we would almost expect Peter just to jump off the boat and go and meet him. But see how composed he is in verse 29 he says he waits until Christ says come and I think that's an incredible thing.

The Peter that we know of we would almost expect him to just go and do what he wanted to do but he waits as it were for permission.

He waits until Jesus says to him come and when Christ says to him come Peter doesn't need to be asked a second time.

Can you picture Peter? Can you picture him in the storm, the boat rocking? Can you picture him manoeuvring himself trying to get a foot on the sea?

[22 : 59] Can you picture him standing by the side of the boat? Can you picture him taking his first step and his second and walking in the direction of Christ?

Here we have obedience and trust working hand in hand together what God demands of each and every single one of us.

You know for Christ to walk on the sea was an incredible miracle but for Christ to allow us in our little Peter to walk on the sea with him was even more incredible.

And surely this shows us what great things, what amazing things we can do for the Lord and for the Lord's cause if we step out in faith and if we are obedient to what he asks us to do.

Christ tells him to come. He bids him to come for two reasons because there are two lessons here that Peter must learn.

[24 : 10] Peter must learn of the power of Christ and Peter must also learn of his own weakness without Christ.

And here on this day Peter is going to learn both. Verse 30 is the words that we have known from our young days from when we were young and in Sunday school.

Verse 30 tells us that he saw the wind and he was afraid beginning to sink he cried out Lord save me. These are what we remember Peter by and it's easy for us to criticise him.

It's easy for us to be heavy on Peter. My friends never let us forget that Peter was doing the impossible when he started to sink.

Peter was doing the impossible when he took his eyes off Christ. Peter was the only one who was praising the Lord in this miraculous way when he begins to sink.

[25 : 23] Scripture tells us that he saw the wind. I don't believe that he actually saw the actual wind. I rather think of it as he was Christ as he's looking at Christ and as he's taking each step on this pathway that the Lord has provided and as he's gazing at the Saviour.

He comes and Scripture tells us that he's within touching distance of Christ and then it's as if the spray from the water, the spray from the waves that's the wind that he sees and somehow or other he looks at this spray that's still coming over his head and for that split second his eye is taken off Christ and he begins to sink.

But let's give him a little bit of credit here because what does he do? The minute that he begins to sink we read in Scripture that he cried out, Lord save me.

When I picture this, this is a supernatural thing taking place, this is a supernatural experience and I believe it's a supernatural sinking.

It's a slow sinking. If it was you or me standing on the sea and the sea gave way, we wouldn't even have time to cry out, Lord save me, before our head would be under the water.

[27 : 08] Peter begins to sink. He acts immediately. He knows he has done a mistake and he seeks to rectify it with fervent prayer immediately.

And it's only at that moment that we read that Christ saves him and puts out his hand.

Christ's time to save people is when we're sinking. Those of us that are Christians here today can we not put our arm into that?

We don't come to Christ unless we are sinking spiritually, unless we are in that situation where we think that we are heading head first into hell without a savior and we are sinking spiritually.

And it's at that time that each and every one of us cry out, Lord save me with a fervent heart. When we play a hundred percent of our heart what does Christ do?

[28 : 16] He reaches out his hand and he pulls him up. Has that been your experience in here today as a Christian?

The Lord caught him and then the Lord taught him. He says to him, O you of little faith, why did you doubt him?

I don't believe it was a stern rebuke that Christ gave him here. When I picture this, I picture the Lord putting his hands across him and saying to him, Peter, what made you lose your nerve like that?

You were so close to me and the fact that Christ reached out his hand when he was sinking and lifted him up tells him how close he was to Christ when he began to sink.

Little faith isn't it wonderful that's still saving faith? You might be here and you're thinking, well my faith is nothing in comparison to him or her behind me or him or her on the other side of me.

[29 : 37] I have such a weak faith. I have little faith. Weak faith, little faith will get you to heaven at the end of life's journey.

Many of us hear the term of a saint and what a saint is and we read about them in scripture. We read in them in the Old Testament and New Testament biographies.

Many of you in here have witnessed saints as it were in this congregation who have gone home to be with glory with the Lord.

A saint is not a man who never fails. A saint is a man who gets up and carries on every time he fails.

And that is what made Peter a saint. Yes he stumbled, yes he fell, but he is a saint.

[30 : 42] And Peter's failures only make him love Christ more. Is that not our experience when we go wrong and we repent of where we've gone wrong?

Does it not make us love Christ more? As we plead to our Immersive Lord I should have known better and I am sorry for what I have done.

And then in a word our time is nearly caught up with us. We look at the third heading, the calming of the sea.

And in verse 32 we see the word and when they got into the boat, they, I love that word.

We think so often of Peter walking to Christ in the sea. But we forget, don't we, that they walked back to the boat.

[31 : 47] As together on the water. What a conversation they must have had. What an experience they must have had.

As together they walk on the sea, back to where all the other disciples were. And it's at that moment you see that in an instant the sea becomes calm.

And they step off the sea into the boat. Peter's experience turned out to be a blessing to him.

And it turned out to be a blessing to his fellow disciples. Being in the storm of life.

And there are Christians here today and I know it's true. And you've experienced the storms of life. And you may be going through them just now but nobody else knows about it.

[32 : 53] And you hear and you have experienced things that you would wish that nobody else in this world would experience. You wouldn't wish them on anybody.

But despite that Christ make you in a most unique and incredible way in the midst of the storms you are going through.

Is that not true? That's what he's promised. That's what he has promised of each one who believes in him.

Sometimes there is great learning in the storm. Sometimes in the storms of life there is greater teaching with Christ by our side than there is from anybody in a pulpit.

That precious one on one encounter with the Lord by our side. And then we see that the only time that Matthew gives the full account to Christ truly you are the Son of God.

[34 : 01] That is the only time Matthew calls him this in scripture. Christ gets a full title. Truly you are the Son of God.

Well my friends, I'll never be able to walk down my croft in the air and go to the shore and walk across the sea to jump on headlight house.

And I don't suppose there's any of us here who will have the supernatural experience of going to the shores of Karelia and walking on the sea. We might not have and we will not have that supernatural experience.

But surely even though we won't, surely you realise that as Christians we are living a supernatural life.

So often we get caught up in thinking about our lives and when they come to an end and when we go home to glory.

[35 : 10] But we forget about whom who carries us and keeps us with each step that we take in Christ in this world. And there are great blessings to be found there.

So we give thanks today to the Lord for the life of Peter. And we give thanks that we read of his stumblings and fallings.

And we give thanks that the Bible is so pure and so honest that not just Peter but many of the great men and women that are in mistakes are recorded to encourage us that in this world we will not be perfect and we will stumble and fall until we get home to be with glory with Christ.

And we give thanks to the Lord today that Jesus Christ came into this world. But in conclusion we give thanks most of all that even still today that it is true of Christ, that of everybody that cries out, Lord save me.

They will hear the blessed reply of Christ come. Has that been your experience?

[36 : 32] Was there a time in your life when you felt you were sinking and you asked the Lord and you prayed Lord save me? Christ said come. You are here today as a Christian saved by grace and that's your experience.

But you know my friends what a privilege we are if that has been our experience. But what have anybody who is here and they have had this experience and they have not yet cried Lord save me.

Well Christ is saying again today come. Will you not come? Hell is full of people of whom Christ said come and they said no.

And it's by the Lord's own mercy and grace that I am not there myself. My hope and my prayer said us we are all found gathered here today worshipping Him that we will all be found gathered in glory at the end of life's journey.

Worshipping Him in glory because we were able to realise our need or saying Lord save me in this world. And He said come.

[37 : 51] May we come to Christ today each and every one of us. Amen. May the Lord bless each and every one of us.