

No Lifejackets?

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- [0 : 0 0] Just bow our heads in prayer for a moment. Lord, we thank you for your word. We thank you for the vivid pictures and the imagery that you give us that helps us grasp and take hold of your power and your might.
- Lord, we pray that as we reflect upon this passage this evening that you'd reveal new things to us, that you'd open our hearts and our minds to learn new things about you and to commit ourselves to you.
- In Jesus' name we pray. Amen. I'm not sure if it was the early hours of December the 29th or the 30th, I just can't quite remember, in 1998, but I woke to hear the news reports that five sailors are dead and another presumed drowned.
- A British sailor by the name of Glyn Charles, who was 33 at the time, was washed off the sword of Orion on Sunday night and declared drowned on Tuesday. Charles had represented Britain in the star class at the 1996 Summer Olympics at Atlanta.
- And as the stories continued to unfold of that faithful Sydney to Hobart yacht race, there were further bodies found. The Winston Churchill had broken up and had been, had two of the sailors dead and then subsequently a third.
- [1 : 2 9] The Australians had died off the New South Wales coast as their boat had capsized. Of the 115 boats that had entered, 59 were in trouble within hours of the storm hitting and were heading for shelter or had been abandoned.
- The visual images were spectacular. The waves pounding or just rolling higher than the yachts, these ocean-going yachts.
- The wind and the waves just dominated the broadcasts on our news for a number of days and weeks. And I watched in awe and disbelieved just at the power of what was happening there.
- The conditions that just ripped and tore yachts apart. Like matchsticks thrown around in the Gulf Force conditions and the Gulf Force winds.
- I don't know if any of you have ever done any sailing. I've done a bit. Fortunately, not in that sort of sea. But if you've done any sailing at all, you know the power of the waves and the wind.
- [2 : 3 8] It's exhilarating, but it's a pretty awesome and frightening experience as well. The story tonight, we see Jesus and the disciples setting off in calm waters, heading to the other side of the Sea of Galilee, continuing his teaching work.
- Jesus was in the company of his disciples and just taking that breather as they moved from one place to another. But a pretty big storm obviously came up. There were some seasoned sailors.
- There were some seasoned fishermen on board. They were pretty perturbed by what they saw and what they experienced.
- Jesus doesn't seem too perturbed. Sleeping in the back of the boat, probably tired from the teaching and the walking around the countryside and taking this chance for a little bit of time out.

He seems unperturbed down the back as the waves continue or start to roll in as the wind whips up the water on that sea. And the disciples become more and more concerned for their safety until they fear that they're going to perish.

[3 : 58] It always interests me when I read that is why didn't they turn to the fishermen to save them at that point? Why did the disciples go and wake Jesus?

And he stands almost effortlessly in the boat and puts his hands up and calms the waters. He just commands, just his word. Goes out and the seas start to drop and the wind starts to die and we have calm.

Awesome. Absolutely awesome. Imagine being there. What an experience. What an experience. And the disciples are pretty gobsmacked at what they see.

But it's not so clear that they're gobsmacked. Pretty gobsmacked but not so clear that they're gobsmacked.

Let me read you something from the Psalms, Psalm 107. If you want to follow this, page 487 in the Pew Bibles.

[5 : 15] Some went down to the sea in ships doing business on the mighty waters. They saw the deeds of the Lord, his wondrous works in the deep.

For he commanded and raised the stormy wind and he lifted up the waves of the sea. They mounted up to heaven. They went down to the depths. Their courage melted away in their calamity. They reeled and staggered like drunkards and were at their wit's end.

Then they cried to the Lord in their trouble and he brought them out of their distress. He made the storm be still and the waves of the sea were hushed. Then they were glad because they had quiet and he brought them to their desired haven.

Let them thank the Lord for his steadfast love, for his wonderful works to humankind. Let them extol him in the congregation of the people and praise him in the assembly of the elders.

These disciples probably had heard those words, at least some of them. The power over nature, the power to do these things was a prerogative of God.

[6 : 31] This was not a prerogative of humankind. This was God acting. This was God's business. Who then is this that he commands even the winds and the water and they obey him?

Why are the disciples so surprised? Why are they so perplexed? We've been looking at Luke over a number of weeks or months.

A flip back through Luke shows a lot of things about Jesus and witnesses to him. The disciples have seen wondrous healings at Jesus' hand.

Simon's mother-in-law, the leper who sought to be clean, the paralytic man brought by his friends had lowered him through the roof, the man with the withered hand. They've seen demons flee from Jesus' presence, fearful and just fleeing and being away from the presence of the Son of God, the Holy One of God.

They've witnessed the raising from the dead of the widow's son. They've heard Jesus' declaration of forgiveness of sins.

[7 : 55] They've seen things and experienced things that only came about because of God's power and authority. Things that could only be of God and through his power.

A centurion has attested that all Jesus needs to do is speak and he has confidence that his servant will be healed. Doesn't even have to come to the house.

Just has to speak the words and all will be done because he has authority. The centurion sees that this man Jesus has authority. The disciples have sat at the feet of Jesus.

They've seen his teaching. They've seen the mind-blowing teaching in the sermon on the plain. They've seen and been with him as he's turned a lot of their preconceptions on the head but they know that he speaks with authority.

They know of his declaration about who he is when he goes to the temple and reads from the book of Isaiah and says that he is the one who has come from God.

[9 : 05] They've heard John the Baptist or know of his witness which has been affirmed just a few chapters before this when John says is this the one we've been waiting for and Jesus said go and tell them what I'm doing and saying.

That's enough. John will know. The angels declared the glory of God at his birth. Simeon and Anna Simeon said he could go to his grave.

He was happy. He had seen the one of God who was coming to save his people. This is God's son. This is the Messiah.

Everything points to it. Everything up until this point points to that fact. But the disciples are amazed and perplexed and afraid.

Jesus is bemused. Where is your faith?

[10 : 13] Where is your trust? Don't you yet understand? Who then is this that he commands even the winds and the water and they obey him?

This is a crucial question. The disciples' future rested on it. Our future rests on our answer.

For where we put our trust is important. Where we put our trust is important. Do we put it in the power of arms and force?

Do we follow the leadings of governments who want to use force to promote their self-interest or the peace of the world or whatever the question might be?

Is that the way? Is that where we can put our trust and be confident? Can we put it in our family? So many people do. I have.

[11 : 26] that focus that the family is the centre of our existence and where we have to put our first priority. But what happens when that breaks down?

Well, there's death. Well, there's separation. Do we put it in friends? Those whom we can count on? Those who will stand by us through all that is thick and thin?

What of estrangement? What of being let down? None of these things are bad things. Don't get me wrong that I'm saying these are bad things, but is this where we put our ultimate trust?

Do we put it in our study or our work that the good results will yield the job that is going to give us all the things that we want in life? will it be satisfying?

Do we put it in work, the security of work? And what happens if we're made redundant? Do we put it in health? Do we put it in that healthiness of our own bodies?

[12 : 37] And what happens if we face sickness? None of these things are bad things, but are they the place in which to put our ultimate trust? Do we put it in the pursuit of pleasure to make sure that we feel good?

Often so fleeting and so quickly can be stripped away. Do we look within ourselves as many spiritualities do to try and find that strength inside ourselves?

things? So often these things let us down, don't they? They're not the ultimate place in which we can put our trust.

And if they're not, then where do we turn with confidence? Where can we go where we will never be let down? I want you to return again with me in the Bibles to this time Colossians in chapter 1.

Colossians, that's found on page 956 if you want to follow the passage. listen to this for a list of credentials.

- [14 : 02] Speaking of Jesus, Paul speaks to the Colossians about the credentials Jesus has. He is the image of the invisible God, the firstborn of all creation, for in him all things in heaven and on earth were created, things visible, and invisible, whether thrones or dominions or rulers or powers, all things have been created through him and for him.

He himself is before all things and in him all things hold together. He is the head of the body, the church, he is the beginning, the firstborn from the dead so that he might come to have first place in everything.

For in him all the fullness of God was pleased to dwell and through him God was pleased to reconcile to himself all things, whether on earth or in heaven, by making peace through the blood of his cross.

Pretty sound list of credentials. Creator, ruler, reconciler, peacemaker, saviour, rescuer, strong rock, and for fear that we think it's just for us as individuals, this is cosmic in proportions.

this is about all of creation. This is the one who holds everything together, in whom everything is held in right place, whom everything is held in right relationship with God.

- [15 : 54] it's in Jesus that the disciples are exhorted to put their trust.

It's in Jesus that we're exhorted to put our trust. But it's not just a trust that relies on our subjective feelings or emotions.

It's a trust that is solid and grounded in in Jesus' identity as the Son of God, as God revealed to us. It's a trust that he is the person that's described in that Colossians reading by Paul.

It's a trust that says that God will keep his promises. In the letter to the Corinthians, Paul writes that we can trust because all of God's promises are yes in Christ Jesus.

The answer is yes to all of the promises that God has made that he will be the God of his people, that he will forgive them, that eternal life will flow to them, that his kingdom will come and justice will be seen, that the Holy Spirit will indwell in people's lives who put their faith in Jesus.

- [17 : 14] All of that is in Jesus. All of that is made possible. He is revealed to us. God is revealed to us in the person of this man who stood at the back of the boat and calmed the storm.

God is revealed to us in the world. God is revealed to us in the world. God is revealed to us in the world. God is revealed to us in the world. What does that mean for us?

Is that just a lot of head knowledge and academic information that we can take in? I don't know about you but I find that to put trust in somebody or something requires an intimacy of relationship.

To put trust in somebody requires a depth of relationship. We know that Jesus doesn't stand aloof from us.

The witness of scripture is that he has come to reveal God but to welcome us as members of God's family.

- [18 : 27] To be and make us brothers and sisters in God's family. family. And so as we turn back to verse 21 in the reading that we had this evening.

But he said to them, being those who had said that his mother and brothers were waiting outside, but he said to them, my mother and my brothers are those who hear the word of God and do it.

To have trust in somebody is to have that intimacy and that knowledge of what they stand for, of who they are, of what they say, of following their advice.

Jesus isn't just some nebulous fabrication of our own minds. He's the man who walked on this earth, who is now ruling at the right hand of God, but he's the man who spoke.

He's the man who we can read about in our scriptures. He's the man who speaks to us through those scriptures. He's God who speaks to us through scriptures.

[19 : 46] It's little good saying that we trust in someone if our actions and our behaviour and our speech makes alive our profession. When Jesus' mother and brothers came to him, I don't think he was saying, I'm rejecting you as no longer my mother and brothers, but he was expanding the understanding of what it is to be part of the family of God.

We are brothers and sisters of Jesus in that family of God. Jesus wanted his followers to know that. Jesus wanted his followers to understand why he had come, what his purposes were, what God's purposes were.

And he's left us lots of ways of being able to see that through his own words and through the profession of others who knew him and who knew of his mission.

So much of Jesus' ministry was showing forth in his life and his teaching that word of God. And hearing God's word and doing it is the character of Christian discipleship.

It's the character of following Jesus. It's the character of being in relationship with him. Faith is demonstrated in hearing and doing.

[21 : 29] But let's not confuse that with what faith is. Christian faith is not works, but faith in a person.

In Jesus Christ who is God, who has made God known to us, who creates us, who rescues us, who deems those who believe in him as brothers and sisters.

Who then is this? That he commands even the winds and the water and they obey him. It's a question for all of us, isn't it?

Who is this? Where do you put your trust? Who do you say that Jesus is? Shortly we'll come to an answer that Peter gave.

When he was asked, who do others say that I am? And some say a great teacher and others a prophet. And they say, who do you say that I am? And Peter says, you are the Messiah, the one of God.

[22 : 41] Lord, we thank you that you show.

To us, the Father, and that you invite us to be members of your family. Lord, we pray that we would know the awesomeness of that. We pray that we would, in our lives, give praise and glory to you.

We thank you that you have sent your spirit, as you now rule, at your Father's right hand. Lord, we pray that you would empower us through your spirit to live lives worthy of you, that we will continue to grow and mature in our discipleship and our following of you.

In Jesus' name we pray. Amen. Amen. Amen. Amen. Amen. Amen.

Amen. Amen. Amen. Amen. Amen. Amen. Amen. Amen. Amen.