

Peace! Be Still!

Disclaimer: this is an automatically generated machine transcription - there may be small errors or mistranscriptions. Please refer to the original audio if you are in any doubt.

Date: 02 May 2021

Preacher: Rev James Maciver

[0 : 00] We're going to begin by reading, first of all, from God's Word, and our reading is from Psalm 93, from the Book of Psalms, and Psalm 93. Psalm 93.

You are from everlasting. The floods have lifted up, O Lord. The floods have lifted up their voice. The floods lift up their roaring. Mightier than the thunders of many waters, mightier than the waves of the sea, the Lord on high is mighty.

Your decrees are very trustworthy. Holiness befits your house, O Lord, forevermore. Pray God will bless to us that short reading from His Word. We're going to now engage in prayer. Let's call upon the Lord and join together in prayer.

Gracious God, we thank You for that reminder that we have been given from Your Word of the greatness that belongs to You, a greatness that is unparalleled, a greatness above anything we can possibly understand in this world, and yet a greatness that we give thanks for, a greatness that You are, a greatness that You are, a greatness that You have valued down through the course of history.

For in Your greatness You have regarded us in our plight as lost sinners, and in Your greatness You have prepared for us and perfected a salvation through Jesus Christ, that which we could never do, that which not even the greatest angel could ever do.

[1 : 56] We thank You, O Lord, that we come before You tonight as one who invites us to come and have our fellowship with You, that invites us to come and receive from You the blessings of Your covenant for Your people.

And we thank You, O Lord, that we are able once again to gather in this place of worship. We know that the places in which we gather are not themselves the most important aspects of our worship. You have chosen Your people to be Your temple in which You yourself have placed Your presence. But we give thanks, O Lord, for the maintenance of places of worship that Your people have gathered in throughout many generations.

We thank You again for the way in which in Your providence we are able to gather together physically in this way. We pray that while many restrictions yet are applied to our gatherings, Lord, we give thanks that we are able to do this.

We give thanks for the way in which we see the pandemic being reduced in our own locality and in our nation. We pray, O Lord, that the number of infections will continue to decrease.

[3 : 14] And we pray that that will be so throughout the world as well. Lord, our God, we recognize that we have much to give thanks for. We have to give thanks to You for not only our circumstances here, but especially in the way that You have proved Your faithfulness to us even over these past months and even that last year through which You have brought us safely through this pandemic.

We recognize, Lord, that every act of Your providence is under Your own sovereign guidance. You have purposed it. You have set it in place. And this has been the case from all eternity.

And, Lord, we pray that as we come to recognize Your greatness and worship You tonight, we may do so in a way that draws near to You depending upon Your Holy Spirit.

We ask that You would bless us, for we need Your blessing, Lord, at all times. We need Your blessing as we come together to worship You tonight. We pray for all of us here and for all of us joining us by online means that Your blessing, Lord, will reach out to us, touch our hearts and form our minds, we pray, warm us inwardly in fellowship with You.

Make us glad, Lord, that we are here before You. Impress upon us the importance of Your forgiveness. Give us, Heavenly Father, to come before You again with our confession of our sin, which is so appropriate for us at every time we come together and when we bow our knees privately before You.

[4 : 51] For our sin is ever with us. And yet we give thanks as we confess our sin that we know You have made such provision for us in the Lord Jesus Christ, who has carried the sin of His people and its guilt and penalty to the cross, and who has come to, by His resurrection, reveal that You have been pleased to accept His sacrifice of Himself.

We thank You tonight that we come on the basis of His merit, and that we, O Lord, approach You knowing that that is sufficient for You, that there is nothing else required of us in order to have a standing in Your presence, in righteousness above all that He has done, but in addition to anything that He has shown Himself to be as our Saviour.

We thank You, Lord, for all that You have done, for Your presence among Your people, for Your constant guidance through Your Spirit. We pray that tonight we may enjoy that for ourselves, to fulfill our chief end by Your grace, which is indeed to glorify You, to enjoy You forever.

Bless, we pray, the world in which we live. We thank You that in our very small and what we feel at times so much are inadequate prayers, that we are able to embrace the whole world of humanity and bring that before You.

We are able to embrace, as You place it in our minds and hearts, the well-being of people everywhere. And, Lord, we do so tonight, conscious that so many, many millions of people in the world have been caught up in the devastation of this pandemic and have lost loved ones and continue to live in the devastation that has been caused.

[6 : 40] Remember especially the countries of the world, the nations and the peoples that don't have the facilities that we enjoy by Your goodness in our land. Remember, we pray especially where the pandemic is rife at the moment, in Peru and in Brazil and especially in India.

Lord, our God, our heart is broken as we look at the plight of our fellow human beings, at their poverty, at their distress, at the loss of life. Oh, Lord, gracious one, provide for them, we pray. Lord, our God, our God, our God, our God, our God, our God, our God, our God, our God, our God, our God, help us to place other things of less importance than the well-being of these poor people.

Lord, we spend so much money on things which we do not regard as important in their own right compared to these. And yet, Lord, we ask that You would show to us how Your goodness provides for us in a way that is able to help others too.

We ask too that You'd make us thankful for the agencies that have been involved in our own well-being and care over these past months. We bless You, O Lord, for the rollout of the vaccines locally here.

[7 : 59] So much has been done, O Lord, in our islands. We are thankful for the extent to which the vaccines have been rolled out. And we pray that You would continue to provide for us in that regard.

We thank You for those who have oversight of that. And we pray that that demanding program, as it has been set in effect in our midst, that we be thankful, Lord, for those who have given so much of their time, even constantly giving of their time to make sure that this is successful.

We pray for them and give thanks for them, as well as for all our medical facilities that we are so thankful for. We ask, Lord, that You would grant Your blessing too to those agencies in the world that seek to carry the gospel into these parts of the world where such poverty and distress exists.

Remember Tear Fund. Remember Compassion. Remember SGA. Remember all the mission organizations that carry the gospel in its purity to these places of the world.

And remember us, we pray as a nation, when we find, O Lord, that so much opposition increasingly seems to be directed against Your gospel. O Lord, may this pandemic itself bring people to realize their need of salvation, their need of the gospel, their need of Christ, their need of God in their lives.

[9 : 25] And we pray that You would turn many to righteousness, even through blessing this pandemic to them. Grant Your blessing to us as we come in Scotland to elect a government.

Later this week, we thank You for the freedom that enables us to do so. We pray that we may not misuse it, but rather, Lord, give us, we pray, to be concerned to cast our vote.

Whatever differences of opinion we have of political persuasions or parties, we thank You for the freedom to elect a government over us. And we pray that whatever the outcome is, O Lord, that we may regard it as in Your providence under Your sovereignty, and that we may continue to pray for those in authority over us, as Your Word so clearly shows.

Bless us now, we pray, as we continue here in Your presence. We ask all of these things, seeking cleansing and pardon of our sin, for Jesus' sake. Amen. Amen. Well, for our children this evening,

I'm not sure if many of them are present here, but anyway, it's something that we always value ourselves as adults as well, but some are probably watching online, I hope, with their families. And we've been asking the question for a number of weeks, what certain people in the Bible thought about Jesus. And tonight I want to ask the question, what did John the Baptist think of Jesus? And the text we have in mind tonight is John chapter 1 and verse 29, where we find that the next day, John the Baptist saw Jesus coming towards him and said, Behold, the Lamb of God who takes away the sin of the world, or who lifts away the sin of the world.

[11 : 11] Now, why did John the Baptist refer to Jesus as the Lamb of God? Well, he was thinking of the Old Testament Scriptures, where the sacrificial lamb, the lamb used in sacrifice, often appears in the Old Testament.

And twice, at least in the Old Testament, in the references to the lamb, they were probably in John the Baptist's mind. The Passover lamb, for example, that goes way back to the time of Israel in Egypt.

They had to kill the Passover lamb before they left Egypt, and the blood of the lamb, as you know, was placed on the doorpost and the lintels of the homes in which they were gathered. And that was really a symbol to Israel that they needed a sacrifice to deliver them from death, from the death that was attached to sin.

The other reference that probably might have been in his mind was in Isaiah chapter 53, where Jesus is prophesied about, and where the prophecy there in Isaiah 53, one of the big chapters of the Bible, says that he was brought as a lamb before his shearers, as a lamb before his shearers is dumb or silent, so he opened not his mouth.

He was led like a lamb to be put to death. These are another references in the Old Testament, where very much, I'm sure, in John the Baptist's mind, and behind that text in John 1 verse 29.

[12 : 43] So it has to do with the death of Jesus as a sacrifice. It has to do with the obedience of Jesus as a servant, the servant of the Father as he came into the world to give his life in obedience to God the Father and therefore provide a sacrifice for sin.

And it says there he takes away the sin of the world. For every kind of person, of every background, Jesus is sufficient to be the Savior.

Behold the Lamb of God who takes away the sin of the world. And you know, children, when your sins are forgiven, they are forgiven for good. They are forgiven forever.

They don't come back again so as to accuse us before God. That's why I think this verse says that he lifts away the sin of the world.

The sin of those who come to trust in Jesus is lifted away, never comes back to meet them again with an accusation that they are guilty. Once God forgives our sin, it is forgiven for good forever.

[13 : 51] And so that's such an important emphasis in thinking about what a Christian is and what it means to be a Christian. A Christian is somebody who has had their sin forgiven.

Because they've come to Jesus and confessed their sin and come to God the Father, accepting Jesus as the Savior, we are assured from the Bible, whoever believes in him has everlasting life. And everlasting life cannot take place without sin being lifted away and taken away from them. So remember, this is John the Baptist's view of Jesus, and it has to be your view and my view of him as well.

The Lamb of God who takes away the sin of the world. So let's now pray the Lord's Prayer together. Our Father, which art in heaven, hallowed be thy name.

Thy kingdom come. Thy will be done on earth as it is in heaven. Give us this day our daily bread, and forgive us our debts, as we forgive our debtors.

[14 : 57] And lead us not into temptation, but deliver us from evil. For thine is the kingdom and the power and the glory forever. Amen.

Now our second reading of Scripture tonight is from Mark's Gospel, the Gospel of Mark in chapter 4. We'll begin reading at verse 26, and then we'll look at the miracle that's in the later part of this passage.

So first of all, Mark chapter 4 at verse 26. And Jesus said, And he said, With what can we compare the kingdom of God?

Or what parable shall we use for it? It is like a grain of mustard seed, which when sown on the ground is the smallest of the seeds on the earth. Yet when it is sown, it grows up and becomes larger than all the garden plants, and puts out large branches, so that the birds of the air can make

nests in its shade.

With many such parables he spoke the word to them, as they were able to hear it. He did not speak to them without a parable, but privately to his own disciples he explained everything.

[16:37] On that day when evening had come, he said to them, Let us go across to the other side. And leaving the crowd, they took him with them in the boat, just as he was.

And other boats were with him. And a great windstorm arose, and the waves were breaking into the boat, so that the boat was already filling. But he was in the stern, asleep on the cushion.

And they woke him and said to him, Teacher, do you not care that we are perishing? And he awoke and rebuked the wind, and said to the sea, Peace, be still.

And the wind ceased, and there was a great calm. He said to them, 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?

So as we continue our study of the miracles of Jesus, we're looking tonight at this miracle of Jesus stilling the wind, and the waves of the sea, in this situation where the storm had broken out on the Sea of Galilee.

[17:51] Now as we've looked at the miracles previously, this is actually number 14, if I remember rightly. So we've gone through quite a number of them, and we've not really taken them in any particular order.

We could have taken them in the order in which they appeared in the life of Jesus as his life is brought before us in the gospel, so that we just follow them out in process of time chronologically, but we haven't done that.

We've just chosen to focus on the main points of teaching in each of them as they've come up, and that's what we're doing tonight as well. But there's one thing that has tended to come up repeatedly in these miracles, and it is the authority of Jesus.

Authority sometimes presented as his power, but even at times when his power is mentioned, it's really pretty much his authority that lies behind that, and that is emphasized more than anything else.

And that's what you will find in this particular one as well, that the authority of Jesus is something which is presented in the miracle that took place.

[18:58] And in fact, that's really what the disciples came to realize as they saw him perform this miracle, as they reflected on it.

They came to, who then is this that even the wind and the sea obey him? Who is this that has such authority as even these great forces of nature in the creation actually come to obey him when he speaks?

So again, you see, it's the greatness, it's the grandeur and the authority of Jesus in his grandeur and greatness that's presented to us through this parable. You can compare that to chapter 1, verse 27, where you find again Jesus saying to those who are listening, the Sabbath was made for man, not man for the Sabbath, for the Son of Man is Lord even of the Sabbath.

There's the authority of Jesus, the Lordship of Jesus over the Sabbath, he puts it there. And then you find chapter 2, and verses 10 and 28, you'll find the same thing there.

Sorry, chapter 1, 27 is different. I went to the wrong reference there. Chapter 1, verse 27, they were all amazed and they questioned among themselves, what is this?

[20:20] A new teaching with authority. It commands even the unclean spirits and they obey him. And then chapter 2, as we've said there in verses 10, verse 28. So his authority is shown along with his power, which is never detached from his authority, but the authority of Jesus is shown, shown in displaying it against demons, against disease, against the powers of nature, as we'll see here.

And that fits in very much with verse 35 in this chapter, where you find that where you find that Jesus is saying, Jesus is actually saying, on the day when evening had come, he said, let us go across to the other side.

So it's Jesus is actually initiating the movement that begins here across to the other side, which means they have to go across the sea. He's the one who's initiated that.

He's the one who's in charge of that. And it's interesting, if you look at the way Matthew actually records the same event, sometimes you'll see subtle differences that help us to just bring things together.

In Matthew chapter 8, and at verse 18, and then verse 23, Matthew 8, verse 18, now when Jesus saw a great crowd around, he gave orders to go over to the other side.

[21 : 40] So Matthew is making it even clearer that it's the authority of Jesus that lies behind what begins this event, what leads to this miracle. And then not only does it say there, he gave orders to go over to the other side, but also in verse 23, when he got into the boat, his disciples followed him.

And that's really the order, isn't it? With the Christian life as well, he gives the orders and we follow him. He takes the initiative and we are then in the position of his servants.

That's how it is throughout the Christian life. We don't take charge of our own lives. We don't decide what is and isn't right for us. We apply it to him. We go to him for his direction.

And when his direction comes to us through scripture like this, it's something that we ourselves follow through on. They followed him when he had given the order to go through to the other side, to go to the other side.

And that's really what it is in all of life. That's what it is for yourself tonight. If you're a Christian and you're looking to Jesus, well, this is what you're looking to. You're looking to his authority.

[22 : 49] You're looking to his order. You're looking to his lordship, to his governorship, to his presidency over your life. And it's with a view to obeying him. With a view to, you're knowing that his will is best for you rather than your own.

So that you follow wherever he comes to call you, to lead you. And really, that's essentially what it is in order to actually become a Christian, to actually enter into the kingdom of God.

It's through the call of God, through the call of Jesus, your Savior, through the Holy Spirit, that he calls you into his kingdom, calls you into salvation.

It's not your own decision to begin with. It's not something that you've made up for yourself. It's not something that you've come to the conclusion this would be a good idea. It's not something you're doing just because you saw somebody else doing it.

It's you're doing it because you're obeying the call of God, the call of Christ, into the possession of his salvation. So the two things following on from that has been a bit of a longer introduction than I intended, and I don't want to keep you too long.

[23 : 57] It's difficult enough with the masks, as you know. Two things. First of all, the reality of the incarnation. That's very much before us in this passage, the incarnation being the coming of the Son of God into our human nature, taking human nature to himself, becoming human, but not by losing his deity or his godship.

So the first thing is the reality of the incarnation. And you'll find that in the reference here that Jesus was actually asleep on the pillow. This would be a cushion or a pillow that would be kept in these boats at times, either to sit on or to get rest on.

And when the storm broke up and they broke out and the disciples were filled with fear, this is what it says about Jesus. He was in the stern of the boat, asleep on the cushion.

Why was he asleep? What caused him to be asleep, especially in such circumstances as these? You'll find different opinions about that. If you read books about this passage and the gospel or these miracles, you'll find different ideas.

You'll find people saying, well, it was because he wanted to test the disciples. He wanted to see what their reaction would be when they found him asleep. Things like that.

[25 : 14] Well, this is not really the main reason why he fell asleep, why he was asleep. He was asleep because he was tired. He was asleep because he was human.

He was asleep because he had been, with all that had been happening in his life up to now, exhausted. And remember, the exhaustion of Jesus, the tiredness of Jesus, is part of his sinless humanity.

It's not something that mitigates against him being a perfect human being. And as he slept here, it really shows us just how human he was.

Isaiah 53 verse 4 says that he took upon him our infirmities, our sinless infirmities. The fact that you need rest and I need rest is not itself something that is sinful.

It's simply meaning that you're giving refreshment to your body and to your mind. Jesus needed sleep as a human being. But there, you see, there is the great miracle.

[26 : 19] Before you ever come to the miracle where he stilled the waves and the sea, you have this greater miracle, the greater miracle of God as a human being, God in our nature, the Son of God, asleep on the stern of a boat.

And who can fathom that? But it's true. There is the great miracle, the great miracle of the incarnation, of Jesus, the Son of God, the second person of the glorious trinity that God is. Where is he here? He's asleep. And you might say, well, yes, but that's just his human nature. That's the human nature of Jesus. But whose human nature is it? The human nature of the Son of God.

And it's quite proper to say the Son of God through his human nature is asleep. Asleep. Remember that this person is not defined by his human nature.

He's defined in terms of his person by being the Son of God. That's who he is. He is the divine Son of God who took upon himself to become human as well as divine in order to enter into our circumstances as sinners and provide salvation for us.

[27 : 37] And that's something that's important in terms of the way that Jesus deals with us pastorally, because he's the great pastor. And when he pastors your soul and your life, this is something that he brings into his pastoring, his sympathy with you.

Let me remind you of what Hebrews chapter 4 says in verse 15. Remember, friends, the enthroned Christ did not leave his humanity when he ascended to his throne.

He remains God and man in two distinct natures and one person forever. And from that humanity that he has and that through his humanity he experienced on earth these things that are recorded in the Bible for us, he ministers to us with the sympathy that he has for our weaknesses, for our circumstances, for our situation in life.

You don't go to Jesus with all your concerns and your worries and your woes and your tiredness and everything else that belongs to your weaknesses and expect to meet someone who doesn't really understand you or understand you because you are a human being and he is the Son of God. Glory of his pastoral ministry to his people is that he takes from all that he is as human, has been through as human, and ministers to us.

[29 : 32] Whatever it is makes us weep. This world that we're in is filled with weeping tonight. Your life has the element of weeping in it, of sorrow, of loss, of pain, of suffering.

It's not lost on Jesus, far from it. He brings from his own experience of suffering, along with the divine strength that he exercises from heaven, he brings that wonderful compassion and sympathy with our weaknesses to bear upon your condition.

And nobody else can do that for you. However much we are able to help each other, and that's such a crucially important thing, no one else can do this for us.

No one else can lend us the sympathy that Jesus has. No one else has the understanding he has of our human condition. No one else has the capacity he has to deal with us in our need as human beings.

Is he not your precious, precious Savior tonight? Aren't you expressing, again, your thankfulness to God that tonight you have such a Savior on the throne of the universe who has not left us sympathy behind, who has not left us humanity behind, but one to whom you go, whom you know as one like yourself, in terms of being human.

[31 : 08] So the enthroned Christ continues to be the incarnate Son of God. And that incarnation, that humanity of Jesus, is such a firmly, such a wonderfully emphasized point in the passage where you find there that he was asleep in the boat.

Secondly, let's look at the authority of Jesus. Now the disciples here displayed their fear, first of all. And that's understandable because these disciples knew this sea very well.

And they knew when storms that were very often or could happen very suddenly, apparently, on the Sea of Galilee, it could just rush down from the countryside and straight out onto the sea.

And very soon, vessels could be caught up in a squall and be in danger of sinking. And that's exactly what was happening here. The waves were beginning to fill the boat.

The boat was already filling. In verse 37 there, you find that that's the circumstance described for us. So they knew that the danger was real. They knew what this meant.

[32 : 17] They knew what this could lead to. And so they went to arouse Jesus. We'll come back to the question they put to him near the end of our study tonight where they said, do you not, Master, do you not care that we are perishing?

Do you not care that we are perishing? So he awoke and then he rebuked both the wind and the sea. And it's interesting, well, he rebuked the wind and then said to the sea, peace, be still.

So both elements both elements that made up the storm, he actually dealt with them together and individually as well. He dealt with the wind and he dealt with the sea.

Both of them connected, of course, in the way the storm had broken out. And as he displayed his authority, notice the word that's used there, he rebuked the wind. He rebuked this wind.

In other words, he showed his mastery over the elements of nature, of the creation, by actually being in a position to rebuke the wind. You try rebuking the wind and see if it makes any difference the next time there's a strong gale.

[33 : 24] It makes no difference at all. You have no control over it. And here is Jesus rebuking this wind. And very interestingly, the word he uses is the same word in the Gospels that's used of him rebuking the demons.

At times when he rebuked devils that were in the likes of Legion, for example, sometimes like that, he would rebuke the devil and show his authority over demons by doing that.

Here the same words used of the power of the wind. He rebuked the wind and he said to the sea, peace, be still. Imagine going out in a ferry and all of a sudden you realize it's much more stormy than you thought it was going to be and it's being tossed about quite a bit.

You can't actually go out and stand and say, peace, be still and expect anything to happen. But this is what happened with Jesus. Once they woke him and he was aroused and he woke up, this is what he said, he rebuked the wind and he said to the sea, peace, be still, complete mastery over these great elements that no human being has control over.

You see, the authority of Jesus and that authority as it's brought out over these forces of nature is deliberately telling us tonight that's what we need in charge of our life.

[34 : 48] That's what we need in charge of life circumstances. That's what we need in charge of the development of our individual lives. That's what we need to refer to as we come to think of such things as pandemics and matters that affect our homes and our families and our national life.

Who can bring peace into turmoil? He can and only He can. In fact, if you go to chapter 5 here in verse 15, it's pretty much the same thing in a different context.

Here was Legion, the man who had these devils in him. We've seen this miracle already some two or three weeks ago and in verse 15, the people, when they came out to see what had happened, they came to Jesus and saw the demon-possessed man, the man who had had the Legion sitting there, clothed, and in his right mind.

And they were afraid. You see, just imagine the turmoil that had been in this man's life. Well, it's described there earlier in the chapter. He'd often been bound with shackles and chains and he'd just wrenched them apart.

Nobody had the strength to subdue him. Night and day he lived among the tombs, always crying out and bruising himself with stones. Imagine the turmoil as far as you can that was going on in this man's life.

[36 : 11] Imagine how that was so frustrating, I'm sure, to himself when there was absolutely nothing that human beings could do to calm this. Jesus calmed it instantly.

When he allowed these devils to go out, he gave them permission and of course he entered into the herd of pigs. But the result of that was here's a man who's now at peace.

There's no turmoil. He's a completely changed character. What has made the difference? Jesus has. See, it doesn't matter what kind of turmoil people's lives are in.

With the power of Jesus, the authority of Jesus, it can be put right and it often is put right. Where tonight is there something in your own life that needs his attention?

Something causing you tension, causing you anxiety, causing you pain? Something of a turmoil to whatever extent in your life or in the life of someone that you know?

[37 : 21] Here is the Son of God, the Son of God in our nature, the Son of God now in his exalted humanity, the Son of God through his divine power too.

And he's dealing with the turmoil of the sea and the wind. And there's an instant calm. You see, that's so different to what usually happens.

Again, if you look as we are very much aware of in our own locality, when there's a couple of days of very strong gales, you don't find the sea all of a sudden when the wind starts to abate and even once become calm.

The sea isn't calm instantly. It continues to actually be agitated with the waves still crashing on until eventually it does calm down. Well, here you have the thing instantly.

And again, that's a feature of Christ's miracles. Go back to chapter 2 and verse 12 and you'll see exactly the same thing happening there, where you find this man who had been brought and laid down in front of Jesus, having been led down through the roof.

[38 : 30] He was lying on a bed, he was a paralytic, and Jesus said to him, I say to you, pick up your bed and go home. And he arose and immediately picked up his bed and off he went.

He didn't need physiotherapy, he didn't need any other program of exercises to get him on his feet and to get him moving because the power of Christ instantly healed him.

what a great power that is for your life and mine. What a great power it is that says to a paralytic, get up, pick up your bed and go.

What a great power it is that says to the wind and the sea, peace, be still, and there's an instant calm. What a great power that can come into your life and mine and has come into the life of most if not all of you, to actually say peace, be still, to the agitation of your soul.

What a power that can say to the power of sin, be gone. That can say to the guilt and the defilement of sin, that's an end to it. It's done.

[39 : 29] I've paid for it. Well, that's the Jesus that you find here. The Jesus that we all need. The Jesus that's freely available to us tonight and continues with us in the course of life to show us his pastoral care and authority.

But then, from that on, from that onwards, he went on to rebuke them. And this too is very interesting how he actually dealt with them as they saw all this taking place.

The wind ceased, there was a great calm, and he said to them, why are you so afraid? Have you still no faith? These are very strong words. This is undoubtedly a rebuke.

Why had the Lord spoken to them in this way? Why did he speak in this way? Why such strong terms? Well, because they had Jesus with them, they had the Lord with them in that boat, and they failed to see the implications of that.

They failed to exercise their faith, which they undoubtedly had, saving faith in him, they had come to believe in him, to trust in him, but they didn't exercise that faith for that particular instance, for these particular circumstances.

[40 : 46] their faith had not been called into action, if you like, to deal with that instance. They had failed to see the implications of having Jesus with them in that little boat, and it's very often like that.

In my life and in your life too, I'm sure you'll agree, because even if we know that Christ is with us in the vessel of our lives, if you like, that he is in the boat with us, there are sometimes we come across things and we fail to realize the implications that Christ is there, that Christ is with us, that he's not going to depart from us, that he's going to be true to his promise.

Let me just quote again from the book by John Laidlaw, written in the late 1800s, a book on the miracles, which I've been using a lot in preparation for these messages from these passages.

And on this particular one, this is what he says with regard to these disciples. And he says to an application of that, in a way that when you're reading the book, it comes across to yourself, because he's speaking to us as we are tonight.

Your knees fail and your hands hang down. Believers, why is this? Where is your face? You believe in his almightiness as the Christ of God, to whom all things in providence are entrusted for his people's sake.

[42 : 09] Is there anything in your lot or life he cannot master whom the winds and waves obey? You believe in his wisdom. Are not your times in his hand?

And your times of storm, you have found before this to be his times of help and healing. You believe in his love. And his love is never more active toward you than in the tempest of trial.

And then he goes on, you believe in his faithfulness. That his promise stands sure, I will never leave you, nor ever ever forsake you.

And then he finishes by this, by saying this, we are all voyagers on the sea of life, and we shall not get across any of us without storms.

The weather on this voyage is a secondary question, he says. And then he says, let the first question be, is Christ with us in the ship?

[43 : 17] It matters little how calm the sea is if he be not with us. On the other hand, if he be with you and in you, it matters little how the waters range.

See, there it is. If he's in the boat with us, what does it matter what the sea conditions are like, and how much they may make us afraid in the sea conditions of life, in the voyage of life, if he's with us

in the boat, that little matters.

As Laidlaw put it, the weather on the voyage is a secondary question. And really what he's saying is, God will not keep the storms from us in our lives, but he will keep us in them and through them. That's true of yourself as you trust in the Lord Jesus Christ, as your life goes on, as you learn from what has happened in the past, as you draw from your experience of Christ before now, as you look forward to drawing more from him in the future, you know that he's not going to change.

You know that he remains the same. You know that he's going to sympathize with you in your weakness, in your need. And so the weather on the voyage is a secondary question.

[44 : 40] Now go back to what the disciples said in verse 38. Do you not care that we are perishing?

Teacher, Master, do you not care that we are perishing? Do you not think they must have felt very small and very embarrassed in the way that they remembered this question now in light of what they've seen?

His being asleep in the boat, on the pillow, at the stern of the boat, had nothing to do with his not caring for them. And what he's really rebuking him about is this, I am with you in the boat.

Even when I'm asleep, I'm looking after you. What he's saying is my care, this is what at the most my care goes on. My care never ceases.

My looking after you never ceases because my lordship never ceases. My control of the elements of your life never ceases. I'm sure they must have felt quite embarrassed.

[45 : 47] And yet you and I would have probably said the same thing had we been in that position in these circumstances. Teacher, do you not care that we are perishing? It's not a matter of whether or not Jesus cared.

What matters is that we trust and put our life and entrust our life to him. And that's why they came to the conclusion, who then is this that even the wind and the sea obey him?

You see, they saw this as an act of the creator. That's the kind of language that's used here, like Psalm 106, verse 9, he rebuked the Red Sea and it became dry. He led them through the deep ass, through a desert or on dry land.

And that's exercised always in the help of his people. Here's a great point. The lordship of Jesus, the power, the authority of Jesus, is always exercised for his people in their help.

Psalm 18, for example, I think is one of the great examples of that. Here's what it says, the cords of death encompassed me. The torrents of destruction assailed me.

[46 : 54] The snares of death confronted me. In my distress I called upon the Lord. So to my God I cried for help. From his temple he heard my voice and my cry to him reached his ears.

And that's what he says about his prayer out of his circumstances. And the next bulk of the psalm, the whole bulk of the next passage in the psalms, all these verses, have actually to do with the Lord's answer to his prayer.

And this is how he says, the earth reeled then and rocked. He bowed the heavens and came down. He sent from on high, he took me, he drew me out of many waters.

You look at that psalm tonight. There's the prayer at the beginning verses 4 to 6. And then look all the way through the following verses of the Lord's answer and how it is answered in terms of earthly cataclysms.

the movement of creation in answer to this prayer of this one psalmist. There's one poor soul crying out of distress. Do I understand tonight what my prayer connects with?

[48 : 05] Do you understand tonight when you pray or anytime you pray what exactly you're connected with as you're praying? Do you understand the potential that is in God to act even destructively if need be for your help?

Do we really appreciate what it is we're doing when we're praying to this God? The master of the universe, the master of the waves, the master of the wind, the master of your life, the master of his providence, the master of everything.

Well, that's what it says to us. And tonight that's where I'm encouraged to place my life and where you're encouraged to place your life to because this really removes, dismisses any reasons you or I may have not to entrust yourself to him.

Look into the passage. You don't need to go further than this passage itself. Is there any evidence at all in it that suggests for a moment it would not be fitting or proper or beneficial to you to entrust your whole life to him?

Of course not. So it's really imploring us to continue to trust in Christ if we've done so and if we've not to begin now to do so.

[49 : 33] And this miracle also silences the critics that often are heard shouting such things like if God exists then surely he doesn't care.

With a pandemic over the world where is the care of God? Where is the evidence that God cares? It's in his son. In his son as the master of the waves and the wind.

In his son coming into these circumstances to look after and to rescue a small boat full of distressed disciples, human beings. The question is not, the question is not, if God exists, why doesn't he care?

The question is, why don't people trust him? Why don't they believe what he says about himself in the scriptures? Because this is the God that's revealed in Jesus, a God for you and for me, for all the circumstances of life.

May he bless these thoughts on his word to us tonight. Now we're going to conclude our service tonight by a singing. This will be a recorded singing.

[50 : 55] For as long as we're not able to engage in congregational singing, we'll just use some of the recorded singings. This is Psalm 104 and verses 1 to 9 to the Chinheifer doll.

Psalm 104 verses 1 to 9. It's on page 136 of the Blue Psalm books if you're using these. Praise the Lord my soul, O praise him. Lord my God, you are so great, wrapped in light as with a garment, clothed in majesty and state.

And so on down through these verses. Praise the Lord my soul, O praise him. praise the Lord my soul, O praise him, O praise him, Lord my hope, you are so great, wrapped in light as with a garment, love, holy majesty and state.

Like a tent he spreads the heavens, and above the waters there, sets the framework of his dwelling, making it an upper there.

he makes floods of death his chariots, on the winds of wind he rise, he makes flames of fire his sermons, winds o'er what he decides, he set earth on his foundations, so that it should never move, then the deep submit the mountains, till the waters stood above.

[53 : 43] But when you reviewed the waters, as your thunder they took fight, they receded to the valleys, flowing down the mountains height, to the place that you appointed, you set bounds to their domain, so that never will the waters overcome the land again.

after the benediction friends, if I can just remind you to leave by this door to my left, there are nobody upstairs tonight of the congregation, so if you leave by the door to the left, but please remain in your seats after the benediction until those who are directing the traffic, as it were, can actually call you from the seat.

And please maintain social distancing outside, if you do stand talking for a while, which is allowed socially distance as required. These are all directions.

And please use the sanitizer as well on your way out. Let's stand for the benediction. Now may the grace of the Lord Jesus Christ, the love of God the Father and the communion of the Holy Spirit be with you now and ever more.

Amen.