

Jesus Walks on the Sea!

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Preacher: Rev James Maciver

[0 : 00] A very good warm welcome to you, a very good morning and a warm welcome to you today. We're grateful to you for joining with us in this service from Stornoway Free Church on this new Lord's Day.

We pray that God will sanctify his day to us, that we will sanctify him in our hearts today as we worship him together. We're going to begin our worship today singing in Psalm 98.

That's in the St. Sam's version of Psalm 98 and singing to the tune Sheffield. O sing a new song to the Lord for wonders he has done.

His right hand and his holy arm the victory have won. The Lord declared his saving work and made it to be known. To all the nations of the world his righteousness is shown.

Psalm 98 singing the verses marked 1 to 3. The first four stanzas, tune us Sheffield. O sing a new song to the Lord. O sing a new song to the Lord for wonders he has done.

[1 : 14] His right hand and his holy arm the victory have won.

The Lord declared his saving work and made it to be known.

To all the nations of the world his righteousness is shown.

His steadfast love and faithfulness he has remembered well.

The covenant he made with them. The house of Israel.

[2 : 21] And all the nations of the earth have seen what God has done.

Our God who brings deliverance by his right hand alone.

Let's now read God's word. We're reading firstly in the Gospel of John and in chapter 6 verses 14 to 21. John chapter 6 and beginning at verse 14.

This refers to the sign that Jesus had done which is John's word for describing the miracles of Jesus where he had just fed the multitude. So John 6 verse 14.

When the people saw the sign that he had done they said, This is indeed the prophet who is to come into the world. Perceiving then that they were about to come and take him by force to make him king, Jesus withdrew again to the mountain by himself.

[3 : 36] When evening came, his disciples went down to the sea, got into a boat and started across the sea to Capernaum. It was now dark and Jesus had not yet come to them.

The sea became rough because a strong wind was blowing. When they had rowed about three or four miles, they saw Jesus walking on the sea and coming near the boat and they were frightened.

But he said to them, It is I, do not be afraid. Then they were glad to take him into the boat. And immediately the boat was at land to which they were going.

I pray God will bless this portion of his word to us. Now let's engage in prayer and call upon the Lord together. Lord our gracious God, we come to you today as one who is at all times worthy of our worship, of all elements of our worship in praise, in prayer to you, in seeking your blessing.

We thank you for your word that guides us at all times into your presence. We thank you that your word does not change whatever circumstances we are in, however much they may change from time to time, even from day to day.

[4 : 55] We thank you, Lord, for your word that is constant for us and already sourced not only of teaching, but of comfort as you use it for our encouragement. We thank you today for this gathering of worship and for every gathering of worship throughout the world today.

We give thanks, Lord, for the desire you place in our hearts to come before you in order to sing your praise and to read your word and to pray to you and to hear what you will speak to us through your word of truth.

Today, Lord, we pray like the psalmist that you would send forth your light and your truth, that they might be our guides even to take us into your presence.

We pray that we may know your presence with us. We thank you, Lord, that while we are apart in terms of distance, yet, Lord, your presence can be made known to us, each one of us where we are.

We can be bound together with that sense of your presence through the Holy Spirit, and this, Lord, is what we pray for today. And we ask that you would take those things of Christ that your word sets forth and show them to us.

[6 : 07] Open up our understanding, we pray, that we may understand more of your ways and be taught in more of your paths, to be led and instructed by you today in these great avenues of your truth and providence.

Lord, we need this at all times. We need that you should teach us and teach us about your ways and teach us about the way in which you provide for us at times things which mystify us, things which we cannot explain to ourselves or to others, things in which we know your purpose is set, and yet we cannot at all times discern the detail of that purpose.

We thank you for the assurance that your word gives us that all things work together for good to those who love the Lord, to those who are called according to your purpose.

Lord, we ask today that you would grant us that blessing that would enrich our lives further. Help us to rely on those things that we have already known of you, but not in such a way that would not seek further information and teaching and guidance from you.

We bless you today that you are the one who forgives our sins, that it is a great aspect of your redemption and your dealings with us, that you pity us and outlight us sinners, that you have provided for us, O Lord, a glorious redemption, a salvation in which the forgiveness of our sins is so central.

[7 : 42] We bless you that that is why you came into the world in the person of your Son. You sent your Son, O Lord, so that his name would be called Jesus, for he would save his people from their sins.

We pray today that you would give us a renewed sense of our need of that forgiveness and of that cleansing from our sins. We sin against you daily. We thank you that though in your forgiveness, our sins are entirely forgiven, that we are justified completely and given the righteousness, that is, Christ's own righteousness, to be placed on our record.

Yet we are conscious, O Lord, that we come short every day of that standard of holiness which you require. So we come to you again for your forgiveness. We pray, Lord, today that you would restore our souls as the great shepherd of our lives.

We pray for all that we commit to you today of our friends, our families, our homes, our communities. We pray for any, especially, Lord, today who may be going through very difficult times, whether through illness or sorrow, bereavement, or challenge, who may feel lonely and who may at this time, especially in our circumstances in the world with the pandemic, who may be very anxious even about the thought of going back out into public again.

Gracious Lord, still our hearts, we pray, and give us, Lord, to have our confidence in yourself, even as we take measures for our protection and for the safety and protection and welfare of our fellow human beings.

[9 : 25] Lord, we pray that you would nevertheless give us the confidence even in observing these, the confidence that you know all things about this pandemic.

You have the purpose for it in your own mind and plan from all eternity. Lord, we pray for grace to bow in your presence and to submit ourselves every day to you, to be willingly ruled by you and guided by you in your truth.

Remember us here as a congregation, we pray, and grant that as we hear of further easing of our lockdown restrictions at this time, Lord, may this continue and enable us once again to gather physically in our buildings as we would love to be.

Help us, we pray, to pray towards that and help us, we pray, to recover from this time as a nation, as a people. We ask that you would direct those who are in government over us to that end.

We pray that you would guide their hearts and their minds and their considerations and those who give them advice from a medical perspective. We thank you for that and we pray, oh Lord, that you would continue to be our guide and our stay during these anxious times.

[10 : 41] Remember again those who have lost loved ones. We know that there are many who have lost loved ones through the COVID pandemic itself. We pray for every family, so many of them, Lord, that we don't know, so many of them that we know are going through difficult times.

We pray too for those in the process of recovery from the illness, for those who have long-term effects of it and are given to know that that will continue for some time yet. Remember them, Lord, we pray, and those who look after them and their families. Continue, we pray, to bless those who care for us at these times, our medical staff in hospitals and hospices and care homes.

Remember them, Lord, we pray, and all others who are involved in medical care. We thank you for them and thank you for their skills that you have given them and for their dedication. We pray once again that you'd be with them, help them to look to you at all times, that they may find their sufficiency in yourself.

Be pleased again to bless our young people as they learn once again today of those things of your gospel and we pray that you would bless their young hearts so that they be established in your ways and that they do not experience years of spiritual desert wandering but rather, Lord, that they be brought to yourself to know you at a young age and to serve you the whole of their life's journey through this world.

[12:13] We pray for those of them that confess you already as their saviour and their God. Lord, protect them, we pray, and make them to be a ready witness to their own contemporaries and give them, we pray, to be encouraged in the way of the Lord and in serving him.

Remember the youth fellowship tonight, O Lord, as they meet together. We pray for them and pray for Marianne and all our youth leaders and our Sunday school teachers. We give thanks for them and we pray, Lord, that the work that they do in such a dedicated way might be blessed and owned and bear fruit not only now but in days and years to come and we ask for them that they may know your own presence and your own encouragement in their own hearts.

So remember us then, Lord, we pray now and continue with us as we further read your word and wait upon your spirit. Hear us and accept us and cleanse us from all our sin.

For Jesus' sake. Amen. Well, again, children, we're looking today at Jesus in the book of Psalms and today I want to read from Psalm 80, the beginning of Psalm 80.

This is a psalm by a man called Asaph. Some of the psalms are by Asaph. Some are by David. Some are unknown. But the first verse of Psalm 80 says, Give ear, O shepherd of Israel, you who lead Joseph like a flock.

[13:40] You who are enthroned upon the cherubim, shine forth before Ephraim and Benjamin and Manasseh. Stir up your might and come to save us.

Now the Bible, as you know, many times speaks about the Lord as a shepherd. And just like a shepherd, the ordinary shepherd, looks after sheep in his job in this world, so the Lord looks after his people as a shepherd looks after his flock.

And of course, you see, in the New Testament, especially how Jesus is described or describes himself in John chapter 10, especially, as the good shepherd. He loves his sheep to the extent that he goes and gives his life for them in order to save them.

Now one of the things that a shepherd does is gather his flock. You'll see on television, now in various programs, documentaries, and so on, you'll find some of these are about shepherds. You'll find them going out at times to gather in the flock, whether it's for feeding or to take them to another fresh pasture or to have their shearing done, whatever. There's so many different ways in which a shepherd gathers the flock.

[14:55] And sometimes a shepherd gathers a flock by having new lambs added to the flock, having other sheep that he buys from outside or she buys from outside and they are added to the flock.

So the flock is kept and expands sometimes or sometimes maybe reduced in size. But a shepherd looking after the flock looks after them in a way especially that gathers them.

And you've often heard, I'm sure, or seen even, a shepherd gathering the flock and very often it's by calling them because every shepherd knows his sheep and the sheep know the shepherd that cares for them.

It's one of the wonderful things about the relationship between a shepherd and his sheep that he knows the sheep as Jesus says in John 10 and his sheep know his voice and they're able to recognise his voice.

I remember one time my father who kept some sheep had a sheep which went blind and that sheep was still perfectly healthy apart from the fact that it couldn't see anything. And it was a wonderful thing when you could call the sheep and you could try and gather the sheep that sheep would not

move much until it heard my father's voice because that was the shepherd as far as she was concerned.

[16 : 12] Whenever my father called she would follow the rest of them. And that's a demonstration of how wonderful the relationship is between the shepherd and his flock. And Jesus calls his sheep through his word through the Bible and through his Holy Spirit.

The Holy Spirit is the way by which Jesus uses his word and calls us to himself and gathers us together to be a flock.

And the sheep respond because they know his voice. Now in Psalm number 80 it's a very sad Psalm in some ways because all the way through it the Psalmist is praying to God as the shepherd of Israel to come and restore them.

It's saying that a number of times restore us O Lord restore us O God of hosts turn again to us O Lord of hosts restore us because they have gone astray just like sheep sometimes do and we all do that and you may do that too even though you're very young sometimes you may not read your Bible as often as you should sometimes you maybe stop praying as often as you know you should be praying sometimes you maybe just don't attend to your Sunday school lesson with quite the same attention that you maybe did in the past and there's different ways in which we as adults as well even if we've been Christians for many years we can still go astray we can still stop doing things we should be doing our hearts can go cold and we don't maybe have the same element of love for Jesus that we once had that's when Jesus needs to restore us and Psalm 23 remember that's one of the things that Psalm 23 says about the Lord is my shepherd he restores my soul a good shepherd will always see when his sheep need to be cared for to restore them to clean them to shear them and to give them their annual or biannual wash and dipping all of these things as a shepherd cares for the sheep are ways by which he's restoring them and keeping them in good health we need to come to God sometimes for that in fact we need to come to him often and say Lord restore my soul give me back the love that I once had for you

Psalm 51 has the same thing where David had so badly sinned against God and Psalm 51 is his prayer of repentance where he says Lord restore to me the joy of your salvation so if you're not today as an adult or a child enjoying God the way that you once did the way that you would like to the way that you should and myself here's a prayer for us today shepherd of Israel he's saying to him come give ear listen to us come and restore us and come and save us use your might and your power to do that for us so God the shepherd there's so much else that we could say about that but we'll leave it at that just now our restorer one who cares for us and restores our soul so let's now say the Lord's Prayer let's 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 and lead us not into temptation but deliver us from evil for thine is the kingdom and the power and the glory forever

[20 : 07] Amen let's read once again this time it's in Mark's Gospel the Gospel of Mark chapter 6 and at verse 45 Immediately Jesus made his disciples get into the boat and go before him to the other side to Bethsaida while he dismissed the crowd and after he had taken leave of them he went up on the mountain to pray and when the evening came the boat was out on the sea and he was alone on the land and he 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 he meant to pass by them but when they saw him walking on the sea they thought it was a ghost and cried out for they all saw him and were terrified but immediately he spoke to them and said take heart it is I do not be afraid and he got into the boat with them and the wind ceased and they were utterly astounded for they did not understand about the loaves but their hearts were hardened when they had crossed over they came to land at Gennesaret and moored to the shore when they got out of the boat the people immediately recognized him and ran about the whole region and began to bring the sick people on their beds to wherever they heard he was that wherever he came in villages cities or countryside they laid the sick in the marketplaces and implored him that they might touch even the fringe of his garment and as many as touched were made well

I want to follow on from where we saw last week the previous part of this passage the feeding of the 5,000 and look at these verses 45 to 52 especially where we find the miracle of Jesus walking on the sea now all four gospels actually keep the close connection between these two events the feeding of the 5,000 and this event where the storm overtook the disciples at sea where Jesus walked on the water towards them there are many contrasts between the two events one took place

in the daytime this one that we're looking at today took place in the middle of the night right in the middle of the night the fourth watch of the night and there are many other contrasts that you could see in the two events but they're actually very much the same in terms of the message that they give us and the message is primarily Jesus coming to intervene to get himself involved to actually meet and to relieve human need and human distress the need of the five thousand to be fed the need of the disciples rocked about in the boat at sea to be calmed and to be assured by Jesus being with them in other words to put that in other terms both of these passages are reminding us of something really important and that is that the grace of

Jesus the power of Jesus the presence of Jesus everything that you could say is built into the grace of Jesus as he ministers to his people that grace is suitable for every situation in our life what could be more different than sitting on a nice grassy hillside eating the food that Jesus had miraculously prepared what could be so different to that than being in a little boat tossed around on a stormy sea the same Jesus the same grace the same ability meets both events both sets of circumstances now here are four precious facts in this passage and they are facts we're taking these as factually accurate we say that so often about the events that are described in the bible for us they are actual historical events that took place just as they're described in the gospels here and the four precious facts that we find in this description in this passage are to encourage us in regard to Jesus and our understanding of him and our relationship with him first of all you find in this passage the praying Jesus immediately he made his disciples get into the boat to go before him to the other side to Bethsaida while he dismissed the crowd and after he had taken leave of them he went up on the mountain to pray why did he send them away why did he dismiss the crowds well it was as we'll see so that he could have time to pray but there was also something else in the situation that really needed his prayer and that was that in John chapter 6 verse 15 we read that there was a movement beginning that wanted to make him king they were wanting to establish an earthly kingdom with Jesus as their leader as their political leader as their king to throw off the Roman empire's yoke the power the way in which they were ruled by them and they were longing for the day when that would end here was that opportunity for some of them that Jesus could be made their king and they would just establish the kingdom and once again be known as people independent and ruling themselves under his kingship well Jesus of course knew that that could not be the case and so he needed time himself to pray about the situation but also to take the disciples out of that situation and protect them from that increasing momentum of those who wanted to make him a king and he met that crisis and it was something of a crisis he met that as he met every crisis with prayer he went up to the mountain to pray and he was there all day and on into the night we find the same in chapter 1 verse 35 where Jesus prayed there after the first events of his ministry and you remember there in chapter 1 of Mark after his baptism and temptation and he went and called the first disciples that he then went up rising early in the morning to preach in Galilee while it was still dark he departed went to a desolate place and although

Mark doesn't describe the choosing of the disciples as such we find in Luke's gospel chapter 6 before Jesus actually came to choose the 12 apostles he prayed all night a deliberate specific time of prayer for a specific need that he had and for a specific important event the choosing of the 12 apostles he met that with prayer and of course that's really our example for prayer every event of life ought on our part to be prepared for in prayer even before the stormy parts of life not just while we are like the disciples in a little boat as it were being tossed around and have difficulty in God's providence and things happen which causes pain and distress and anxiety before all of that while it's calm weather as it were we should then be praying to

[28 : 01] God not just in case we get into some difficulties but just because it's the right thing to do and here's another important point before these men ever experienced the storm Jesus was already praying for them it wasn't just about himself that he was praying he was obviously praying about these disciples that they would not be caught up in this movement to make him a king on earth and so before the storm ever broke Jesus prayer had gone before them like what God said to Elijah about him leaving where he was and going to go to the brook Kareth behold he said I have commanded the ravens there to feed you before Elijah took a step towards Kareth the Lord had gone before him and prepared things for him the same when he went to the widow of Sarephath leave where you are he said go to this widow woman in Sarephath for I have commanded that for you you see

Jesus command has gone ahead of these disciples Jesus prayer they are already within the intercession of Jesus before the event ever breaks how precious is that in your life and mine today that before tomorrow comes or even the later parts of this day whatever they may contain the petitions of Jesus in his intercession for his people if you are one of his today that's always going ahead of you that's always something that's there before you reach the event it's the praying Jesus he went onto the mountain to pray and that is such a precious point as we come to face the issues of life when you place yourself in the hands of Jesus by faith when you entrust yourself and your life to him this is what in fact it means you are within you are inside the praying of Jesus the intercession of Jesus for his people goes ahead of you into all the events of your life he is the praying Jesus secondly in this passage he is the perceptive Jesus there they were out at sea and he was alone on the land and he saw that they were making headway painfully for the wind was against them they were toiling but they were toiling painfully in other words it wasn't just sheer physical energy sheer physical pain in their toil there's an element of distress in this as well they were really anxious they were toiling painfully there was something there that caused them to be anxious and distressed within their souls and you see it wasn't from disobedience that this happened we know another occasion the case of Jonah for example where his disobedience took him away from God's commandment to go to Nineveh and he found a boat and things seemed to be going well and he went off in the boat out to sea in the ship until the Lord came and the literal word is just like you see in a bowling alley the Lord hurled out a great tempest caught up with the ship and of course we know the story after that but that's because Jonah was out of the Lord's way and God was as it were sending this in order to bring him back into the way of obedience to God these disciples had obeyed Jesus they were in the right way they were in the Lord's way they were in God's path and yet they're in the midst of a storm well it's like that isn't it because sometimes being a Christian and even being in the right path being in obedience to Jesus following Jesus following his word sometimes means rowing against the wind it sometimes means experiencing the storms of life and there's always a purpose in that but you see he saw them and these two words are so wonderful he saw he saw that they were making headway painfully it was still dark it was still stormy he was at a considerable distance from them but he saw them they were never out with his eye they were always in his vision as a Christian you or I may be struggling you may be far from familiar land as it were miles out at sea in a spiritual sense like these were literally out at sea you may be toiling against whatever difficulty you have or problem you have in your life and God's providence at this time far from familiar land and it seems so dark and you're not making much progress as he as Lewis said once following his bereavement of his wife why did nobody tell him and teach him and tell him that this was going to be so painful he was not prepared for the depth of pain that bereavement in his case brought and in many other cases and maybe you're like that today maybe you're saying that you just didn't expect the storm to be just quite as strong the pain to be quite as deep the anxiety to be quite as long standing as it's been but he sees you you're never outside of his eye you're never out with his vision his eye follows you he's got his eye upon you as much in the middle of the storm as in the middle of the greatest moments of peace and you know sometimes you might find people who really don't like the Christian life and accuse us of just following blindly and believing things that have never been established and so on you know the kind of the kind of opposition opposition that's there in the world today it's always been there and those observers of your life today even as they're seeing you really going through difficulties and trials in your life and they know that's in your life they may say well what's the point of following

[34 : 27] Jesus what's the point of just being a Christian if it's not going to really make your life any easier than it was beforehand well the point is this that you are within his prayers and you are within his vision his eyes upon you and his prayers have unfolded you and closed you within all this intercession for you you see that's so precious isn't it for yourself today I can't say what your life is like at the moment sometimes perhaps maybe it's the case with you just now that there are things in your life that you just feel you cannot describe to anyone else and that you don't even necessarily want to share with anyone else but if his eye is upon you even in the midst of the storm and he's praying for you as he is for his people you're as safe in the middle of that storm as you would be on dry land because this is the praying

Jesus and this is the perceptive Jesus he prayed for them and he saw them in the midst of the storm thirdly because these are steps that take us further into these wonderful facts about Jesus it's

not just the praying Jesus and the perceptive Jesus thirdly he's the powerful Jesus it wasn't enough for the Lord just to view them from land and be able to pray for them from a distance next thing you see is he saw that they were making painful progress for the wind was against them and he came to them walking on the sea what wonderful words he came to them walking on the sea he brought himself near them he brought his presence out onto the sea to be with them he came in a way that was completely unexpected a way that we in the bible at least there's no record of him ever doing this previously or again he came to that boat tossed around in the stormy sea walking on the surface of the sea now some people will say well that's just impossible you try and walk out onto the sea and immediately you start sinking unless you're able to swim but you can't walk on the surface of the sea people will tell you that's ordinarily the case it's against the laws of nature the laws that God has built into the creation the law of gravity for example means that you fall you fall to the ground you sink into the sea you try and walk on it and people will say well this is just not right you can't actually believe this stuff surely because nobody's able to walk on the sea and Jesus couldn't have walked on the sea because the law of gravity would have taken him down and he would have begun to sink well this is not just about a contradiction of the law of gravity it's more than that it's a superseding of the law of gravity it's not just that

Jesus is doing something different to the law that usually controls these sort of situations he's actually going above them in other words what you find here is really fascinatingly is actually an anticipation of Christ's resurrection and of Christ's resurrection body where he was able to come into the midst of our locked room into the midst of the disciples though the doors were locked he was able to arrive and he was able to leave again his physical body after the resurrection his resurrection body has attributes and qualities about it that were not obvious before his resurrection that's going to be the same for our body because it's patterned on his and therefore it's not something that you should see or agree with the argument that says this contradicts laws of nature it supersedes it's above laws of nature because the law of nature will tell you nobody rises from the dead nobody has that capacity when you place a body in the tomb it's a dead body but Jesus resurrection shattered the grave he rose above that law of death if you like and now he stands above it and he's above it forevermore and so this is an anticipation just as in fact the transfiguration was and it also happened instantly interestingly while he was praying he was transfigured and his glory broke out for a moment at least through his physical body in other words he was really it was really an anticipation there as well of his resurrection his being above the law of death but let's leave that it's a point that's important but it's it's much more important just now as we look at the passage and the purpose for it yes that's true it was an anticipation of his resurrection body but it was not for show he didn't actually walk out on the sea so that he could then turn to the disciples to say look at me look at what I can do look at how great I am look at the greatness of my power watch this this is going to be spectacular he came because he wanted to help them in their predicament that's why he walked on the sea here you are you see with the whole world around him and these few struggling ordinary fishermen and yet he does this for them he walks on the sea because he sees them toiling and because he sees that they're making headway painfully and even in danger perhaps of the boat being overwhelmed and what does he do not only has he prayed for them and included them in his praying not only has he actually seen them and seen every detail of that need and what's happening to them and how they're toiling so painfully against the wind that's not enough for him he goes out and he walks on the water he does a remarkable thing he shows remarkable ability he engages in a miracle to actually go to be present with struggling fishermen how that gladdens my heart today and yours that Jesus for all his greatness doesn't use his greatness to show off he brings his greatness into our predicament into our situations into your toiling into your struggles into your anxieties into your your way of trying to cope with the difficulties of life it's the praying

Jesus and the perceptive Jesus and it's also the powerful Jesus that you find involved in these situations his power and his presence are needed for all our struggles but here's the point not only are they needed for all our struggles but they are available it's available for all our struggles his power and his presence are in his commitment to his people they are there for us and part of our problem is that we don't turn to it and to him with the conviction that we should here's the praying Jesus for your encouragement here's the perceptive Jesus for your encouragement here's the powerful Jesus for your encouragement for your salvation and fourthly here's the pacifying Jesus he spoke to them and said take heart it is I do not be afraid you see it wasn't just the waves the wind that needed dealt with their hearts needed dealt with their minds needed dealt with their

anxieties needed to be taken away the pacifying of their heart was on his mind as well as the stilling of the storm around them and of course they were terrified we'll just end on a point that picks that up again which really means they should not have been terrified having seen what he had done before with the previous miracle let's leave that for the final point they were terrified they thought it was a ghost of course they hadn't ever seen anybody walking on the sea before so it's understandable from that perspective that they would be terrified they thought this was something just from another world someone from another world an apparition someone from the dead someone well just that sort of thing and so they were terrified really really terrified but immediately he spoke to them he didn't leave it for a certain time he spoke to them immediately but you notice there in verse 48 he meant to pass by them really something that he made as if he was going to pass by them it wasn't that he meant to pass by them but somehow they just changed his mind this is something similar to

[44 : 14] Luke 24 and verse 28 the two that were on the way to Emmaus and when he joined them and when he made that he would go further on they appealed to him so that he would stay with them and he did that something similar to that here and it brings us really to one of the main strands and the purpose of Jesus in doing this with these disciples and it is this he is showing them that they need to believe and depend upon him when he's not physically present with them just as surely as when he is you see so far they've really been placing a lot of trust a lot of confidence in his physical presence in the way that physically being with them he's able to work these miracles for example even at times for their benefit as he is now but he wants to teach them something deeper he wants to teach them that when he has gone from them as he eventually will in his ascension to heaven they need to continue believing and trusting in him just as before in other words he's teaching them all the time and this is part of the passage here certainly he's teaching them and he's teaching us as well that we must live by faith and not by sight

John chapter 20 remember the reaction of Thomas when the disciples told him they had seen the Lord he refused to believe he wasn't there when he came into the room with them first time a week later there he is with the disciples Jesus comes into the room and he says to Thomas don't go on disbelieving believe Thomas says my Lord and my God one of the great confessions of the Bible and Jesus turned and said to him Thomas because you have seen me you have believed blessed are those who have not seen and yet believe there it is you see that's you and I today I trust you and I today are believing in the unseen Jesus the Jesus you can't see physically and yet who is just as surely with his people as he was with these disciples he isn't as it were in the little boat with us as we go through life anymore he's gone to heaven he's there he's ministering through his spirit but he's not gone away his eye is still on us his petitions are still including his people his power is still there for our benefit and he comes to pacify our hearts and to assure us as still himself he's not changed he's not gone away he's not going to leave us to the storm and he comes to say these words to them take heart it is

I do not be afraid and of course there's a lot of truth into that as well it isn't just that we need to learn about Jesus wonderful though that is it's also that we need to hear for ourselves the voice of Jesus speaking to us through his word by his spirit to take heart and to believe and to trust in him now you see it's still stormy the wind didn't cease until he had joined them in the boat he's still outside he's still on the sea it's still stormy but he is there and he's speaking into their situation he's speaking into the anxiety of their hearts while they're still in the middle of the storm you see that's the wonderful thing isn't it that Jesus doesn't wait until the storm of your life is over before he then comes to address you and then tells you to calm down he speaks into you through his truth he speaks into your storm into your situation into your circumstances into your fears because he sees you he knows the detail of your need and he comes and says take heart it is I don't be afraid whatever event is in your experience today as a

Christian however much it's brought things into your life that you didn't want or didn't expect here are words that are so powerfully addressing you in the need of your soul in the deepest need of your soul it is I take heart don't be afraid and he came into the boat with them and the wind ceased his presence calms the situation for them the pacifying Jesus today you may not have peace in your heart today you may not be a Christian yet you may not have given your life to Jesus you may not have responded positively to his call come to me and I will give you rest all you who labor heavy laden whatever your labor is about even if you find yourself spiritually and mentally and morally toiling and struggling in your life with things that you would dearly want to get rid of and things you

want to overcome and things you want help with go to the praying

Jesus the perceptive Jesus the powerful Jesus the pacifying Jesus because you can be right in the midst of a storm and have the calmest heart in the universe when the presence of Christ is with you and assured and when he speaks to you through his word and spirit and says it is I take courage don't be afraid and we all need that and we need that regularly just to wait and listen for him and he comes walking across the seas of our distress speaks into our anxiety and assures us that because he is there all will be well and you see then they were utterly astounded for they did not understand about the loaves but their hearts were hardened and that's remarkable they were absolutely astonished at what had happened and yet there was something very lacking in their lives even at that point because they had not learned from the previous miracle to be prepared to see

[50 : 51] Jesus in this remarkable way as their remarkable saviour and as their remarkable leader they were hardened in their hearts they did not understand about the loaves you'll see more detail about it in John chapter 6 read that through later and just follow on from this study you can see there in John 6 that it came to the point where many of his disciples followers walked no longer with him they weren't prepared to follow him anymore they did not understand the significance of the miracle of the loaves and the fish and so they did not understand the significance of this one either at that point they were astounded not through the strength of their faith but through the lack of it really or the weakness of it or they did not understand about the loaves but their hearts were hardened so what is that point for ourselves it's this pray for increasing understanding of God and of his ways like the psalmist in Psalm 25 show me your ways

O Lord teach me your paths lead me in your truth therein be my teacher these few verses are so appropriate to cap to cap this wonderful passage of scripture about the praying Jesus the perceptive Jesus the powerful Jesus and the pacifying Jesus the Jesus you and I need today and always Lord our God we thank you for your understanding of us we thank you for the way in which you have come to be involved in the issues of our life in this world we thank you especially for your overcoming of all that was against you in the powers of nature itself and especially the powers of sin the powers of the devil we thank you today that you stand above them all as the triumphant Lord of your people speak into our hearts Lord today by your truth guide us in your way and show us your way give us increased understanding we pray that our following of you may be all the more committed and that we may all the more be determined that we will not be deflected from following you as our Lord hear us we pray for Jesus sake Amen we're going to conclude now in some verses from Psalm 93 that's Psalm 93 in the Scottish Psalter version the last three verses and we'll sing to the tune Glasgow the floods O Lord have lifted up they lifted up their voice the floods have lifted up their waves and made a mighty noise but yet the Lord that is on high is more of might by far than noise of many waters is or great sea billows are so on to the end of the Psalm the floods O Lord have lifted up they lifted up their voice the floods

O Lord have lifted up they lifted up their voice the floods have lifted up their ways and made a mighty noise but yet the Lord that is on high is more of might by far the noise of many watershairs or great sea billows are

I testimonies everyone in faithfulness excel and holiness forever Lord thy bow to become and well well once again thank you very much indeed for joining us it's very encouraging to us to have so many prepared to join with us online for these services meantime and please be encouraged God's word as you do this with us if you can please join us again this evening at 6.30 when the service will be conducted by Reverend Kenny I.

[55 : 58] MacLeod meantime please keep safe and may God continue to bless you and your lives thank you