

Fearing Jesus

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Preacher: Rev Calum M Smith

[0 : 00] We're going to begin our worship by singing to God's praise. We're going to sing in Psalm 23, the Scottish Psalter version, page 229 of the psalm books, Psalm 23.

! The Lord's my shepherd, I'll not want. He makes me down to lie in pastures green. He leadeth me the quiet waters by. We'll stand to sing the whole of this psalm to God's praise.

I'll not want. He makes me down to lie in pastures green.

He leadeth me the quiet waters by.

My soul he doth restore again, and he to work the name.

[1 : 14] Within the paths of righteousness, before his soul may sing.

Hear, though I walk in death's dark hill, yet will I hear not ill.

For thou art lift me on thy own. I'm standing on for still.

My devil, thou hast furnished, in presence of my foes.

My devil, thou hast with oil anointed, and my cup overflows.

[2 : 41] To death's and mercy, O my life, shall surely follow me.

And in God's eyes forevermore, my dwelling place shall be.

Let's bow our heads in a word of prayer. Let us pray. Our Father in heaven, we thank you to be able to sing these words together, to offer up worship to you in song, and to sing these words that perhaps we've sung so often in the past, words that we maybe even know without looking at the pages of our Bibles.

We can repeat them, but help us today to know the wonder of them, the wonder of the Lord, our Lord Jesus as our shepherd, the one who leads us and guides us, the one who helps us in all our lives.

Every one of us today are dependent upon you, young and old alike. And we do ask, Lord, that together you will bless us, that you will be with us as we come to hear of you, to hear your word and study it together.

[4 : 11] Bless the young ones in the Sunday school, in the creche, the tweenies, in the Bible class. We thank you for every one of the children here and the families together as well.

And together as a people, Lord, that we would have hearts filled with a sense of joy in coming to you and knowing that you are with us, that you meet here with us.

We thank you for even the Lord's prayer as we say it week by week. It reminds us of how we are dependent upon you as our Father in heaven.

And we pray that even as we say these words together in a moment, that there will be words that we may be familiar with as well, that help us to know who it is we are praying to and what you are able to do for us.

And so may we all together know what the power of prayer is, and we especially think of our young people going through exams at this time, that they would do so with that knowledge that they can ask you for help, that they can ask you for guidance, and that you are there for them.

[5 : 13] And we do pray for them, for all our children, and we just pray for exam periods ahead. Just now, Lord, that you would give clarity and help in all that they have to do.

Bless us and we pray and watch over us as we ask all with the forgiveness of our sins. In Jesus' name. Amen. Well, I was just praying there about exams, and maybe it's the last thing you want to hear about just now when you're going into May and the exams are starting for those who are older in the higher classes.

But every one of us has to face tests at different points in our life. And especially as we're going through school, we do different kinds of tests as we're going through school.

And one of the tests we often have is listening tests. So who's good at listening? Hands up if you're good at listening. Many people say, what?

You weren't listening, were you? Listening is a skill. It's something we have to learn and to pay attention to things that we are hearing. But it's often a difficult thing for us to do because we're easily distracted.

[6 : 23] So I want to give you a little test just now. I'm going to read some verses from Psalm 81. And I want you to listen out for words that are related to hearing.

And I think the teachers, when they're in school, they do this, do they? So that you have to listen in. You have to listen carefully to these words. I'm going to read Psalm 81 at verse 8 down to verse 13. Hear, my people, let me warn you, if you would but listen now. No strange God shall be among you. To a false God do not bow.

I have brought you up from Egypt, from your own God, the Lord am I. Open wide your mouth towards me, and your food I will supply.

But my people would not listen, would not do what I required. So I gave them up to follow what their stubborn hearts desired.

[7 : 19] If my people would but heed me, Israel follow my command. I would soon subdue their enemies and against them turn my hand.

So, how many times there did you hear something related to listening? It comes up quite often there, doesn't it? The word listen is there twice.

The word hear is the first word that was mentioned. Hear, my people. And then there was the word heed in verse 13 as well. So four times at least you could say there's a word there that's to do with listening.

And so God is speaking there, and so it's important, as he says, hear, listen, heed, all of these things to us. And that's what's important for us as we come to God's word, as we're hearing it here, as we're hearing it in our Sunday school classes too, that we listen.

Now, what do we need in order to listen? Listen, first of all, we need to stop. Stop what we're doing and just pause so that we're sitting ready to listen.

[8 : 29] The other thing we need is quietness. If there was loads of noise going on around us, if there was a building site or something outside and people were working away there, and there's so much noise around, we wouldn't be able to hear, so we need quietness to be able to hear.

And the third thing we need is focus. To listen is to listen as it's going on. I mean, when you're in the house, do you listen to everything mum and dad say to you?

At what point do you stop listening? They'll shout your name, so they maybe shout, Callum, come and do, and that's when you stop listening. Do, no, I'm not going to listen anymore.

I don't want to do anything but what I want to do myself. We need to focus. And God is calling us all today to come and to stop and to focus and to listen and to do.

And so today we have to stop, hear, listen, and heed the word of God. May he give us that skill, that ability to listen and to hear what he is saying to us.

[9 : 39] We're going to say the Lord's Prayer together now. 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, the power and the glory forever. Amen. We're going to sing together again to God's praise this time in Psalm 107, the Scottish Psalter version, page 384.

Psalm 107, and at verse 23, page 384 of the psalm books. And then we're reminded of the passage that we're looking at today, how Jesus is able to bring calm into the midst of a storm.

And in verse 29, it says that the storm is changed into a calm at his command and will. We're going to sing from verse 23 to 30 to God's praise. Thank you.

[11 : 06] Thank you.

Thank you. Thank you. Which makes the sea with roaring wings I want to swell and rise If unto heaven and to the dead They do all come again Their soul of pain can melt away With love alone with fear They relapse stagger like wonder At their waves in daily Then they do come in trouble cry Who then from straits are free The storm is changed into account At his command and will So that the waves which raged before Now quiet and still Then are they not because of rest And quiet the

lady So to the lady I will turn to read God's word together now in the gospel of Mark
And chapter 6 Mark chapter 6 We take up our reading at verse 30 You find it around page 1015 Of
the church Bibles Mark chapter 6 at verse 30 The apostles returned to Jesus And told him all that
they had done and taught And he said to them Come away by yourselves To a desolate place and
rest a while For many were coming and going And they had no leisure even to eat And they went
away in the boat To a desolate place by themselves Now many saw them going and recognized
them And they ran there on foot from all the towns And got there ahead of them When he went
ashore he saw a great crowd And he had compassion on them
Because they were like sheep without a shepherd And he began to teach them many things And
when it grew late His disciples came to him And said This is a desolate place And the hour is now
late Send them away to go into the surrounding countryside and villages And buy themselves
something to eat But he answered them You give them something to eat And they said to him Shall
we go and buy 200 denarii worth of bread And give it to them to eat And he said to them How many
loaves do you have?

[15 : 41] Go and see And when they had found out They said five and two fish Then he
commanded them all To sit down in groups on the green grass So they sat down in groups by
hundreds and by fifties And taking the five loaves and the two fish He looked up to heaven And said
a blessing And broke the loaves And gave them to the disciples To set before the people And he
divided the two fish among them all And they all ate and were satisfied And they took up twelve
baskets full of broken pieces And of fish And those who ate the loaves were five thousand men
Immediately he 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 evening came The boat was out on 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 And so on And may God bless that
reading from his word We'll again come to God in prayer Let us pray Our Father in heaven As we
approach your word We do so Recognising Our own lack of understanding

And even As the disciples here Were seeing and hearing The wonders of Jesus It says Their hearts
were hardened And we know ourselves That that can be true At times in our own experience
Perhaps even we come in here today With that sense of Of hardness Of not coming to listen But
maybe just coming And just to show Our face here And to put others at ease That we have come
But we thank you That as we come We come under What is your word A living And an active word
And a word that is powerful A word that we see there That is still through to this day That Jesus as
he spoke Had the power to calm Even the wind itself And the waves of the sea And we thank you
That that is true for us today as well That you are the one Who is able to calm us And to change out
every situation

That seems so powerless to us That we have no ability To change anything In and of ourselves But
your word reminds us That you are the one Who is able And so we come in prayer to you
Depending on you Depending on you For all things From the beginning of a day To the end And
even through the watches Of the night When we may Be unaware of everything Going on around
us When we are in the depths of sleep We thank you That you are one Who is constantly awake
Never slumbering Nor sleeping As the psalmist says But that you are always Watching over your
people That your presence is near And in all our cares And all our anxieties And all our
thanksgivings We thank you That we can come And bring them all to you As the one who hears us
That you hear us Through the name of your son Our Lord and saviour Jesus Christ And as we have
read of him And how he prayed To you himself We thank you That even as he was dependent
In all things That we too are as well And so Lord We thank you That we come Through a name
Above every name That we offer up our prayers In and through The name of Jesus And so hear us
Lord we ask And may your will be done And may all be To your glory And we do ask Oh Lord For all
our different needs today And the needs of those around us We thank you That again You are the
one The one who is able to comfort The one who is able to heal The one who is able to help In any
and every circumstance And we know Lord The many around us Who need you In particular ways

And especially Oh Lord In times of Of grief and sorrow As in our own midst Lord There are Those who grieve And those Who we know Even in our own denomination Who are grieving today In the midst of loss We thank you That you are A God of all comfort And so throughout Our communities today

[20 : 47] May that comfort Be evident In special ways That people Would know The everlasting arms Underneath Upholding And strengthening We do remember Even those In our own denomination Who have been servants To you And who have been Taken to glory As we have heard Of the passing Of the Reverend Ian Allen In these days We thank you For his life And for his ministry In different places And over many years We do Lord Give thanks For the word That he preached So faithfully And pray Lord That even It would still Continue To bear fruit We do pray Lord For comfort For his family That you will Surround them In these times We thank you Of the Macpherson family The Reverend John Macpherson And his wife Catherine In the sad news Of the sudden loss Of a son Malcolm We pray Lord That you will Surround them

And comfort them As only you can And Dave Macpherson As well The Reverend Dave Macpherson And his brother In Govan too Lord We just pray Lord For him and his family As well And in this time Of grief Lord That you would be one Who is very near And we know too Lord That there are those Who are going through Ill health And so many different trials And we just commit Each one to you And Lord When they cannot pray That they would feel That they could ask For prayer Or that they would know That there are people Praying for them And we do ask Oh Lord That you will Just go before us In all of these things We thank you Lord Of our nation And all that's going on As we know The various issues Going on in parliaments At this time We thank you For your hearing of prayer And so many different things To do with the gender recognition And we thank you Lord

For the way that you are able To turn the tide in that And we thank you Of the upcoming Assisted Suicide Bill And we pray Lord For wisdom And for your intervention And those who maybe have Leanings towards it That they would be convinced Otherwise For we know that Life is precious And life is in your hands And we know that Although there can be So much that will be Painted as intended for good That we see it Oh Lord In the wider picture That it can be used Oh Lord In so many wicked ways And so we pray Lord That you would come In a day of your power And heal our land And pour blessing upon us To see your goodness And your mercy with us In all of these things We pray that for the world In which we live in as well A world in so much turmoil A world with so much conflict And hatred being showered

Upon so many In so many different ways We see Lord A stirring of anger In so many places And we just pray for peace May your peace come And so Lord Hear our prayers And give our people Ears to listen To hear what you are saying to us As you call us To bow the knee before you May you open hearts and minds To receive the wonder of the gospel That we would be astounded Even as the disciples were In this passage that we've read That people would be astounded At what you are able to do And to do for good So hear our prayers Continue with us And go before us In the rest of this day That's all we ask We ask for the forgiveness Of our sin In Jesus' name Amen Well before we come back To look at this passage We'll sing again To God's praise In Psalm 62 In the Sing Psalms version

Psalm 62 On page 79 Of the Psalm books We're going to sing From verse 1 Down to verse 8 Psalm 62 On page 79 My soul finds rest In God alone From him comes my salvation sure My safety fortress Sheltering rock In him alone I am secure We'll sing from verse 1 to 8 And we stand to sing To God's praise In the Sing Psalms And we stand to sing To God's praise In God alone From him comes my salvation sure My safety fortress Shelter secure In the Singwasser And his hope

[26 : 21] And his hope And his hope From his high place They take delight In spreading eyes With force And fighting Clouds may bless But in Thy hearts Are times Despite I rest My soul And brought Alone In him My hope Is ever Burture My safety forecast shall be brought, in him alone I am secure.

I own the land's salvation rest, on God my rock and my deep heart.

O people, trust in him always, to him alone for a pure heart.

We can turn back to a reading in the Gospel of Mark, chapter 6. I'm reading again at verse 48. Mark, chapter 6, at verse 48. 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.

[28 : 33] 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. Are you afraid to follow Jesus? You may have come in here today just thinking, I just want to come and go and maybe not truly hear what the Word of God is saying, because you may be afraid of what it might say to you, what difference it might make in your life.

Are you afraid to follow Jesus, to hear what he says? Well, you're not alone. It's not a new thing. It's there from the beginning of time.

It'll be there till the return of the Lord Jesus. There'll be a sense of fear in terms of what Jesus means. And sometimes it's a good thing to be afraid.

It's a good thing to be afraid because it can make us look for what the right answer is and where help can be found in our fear. And as you're reading here in the Gospel of Mark, as you're looking at the first half of the Gospel of Mark, it's full of accounts of Jesus revealing himself to the people in so many different ways.

[29 : 56] You see there's many miracles that he's done, so many teachings that he's given, and people were marveling. And you think to yourself, well, the more they're seeing, the more they'll believe, the more people that there will be that will believe.

But yes, there were some who believed, but there was many who turned away and many who were afraid because he was preaching a truth to them that they couldn't fully understand.

So truth and fear are often things that go together. There can be anxiety in the midst of hearing truth and you're wondering, is it true? You think even of this coming week, it marks 80 years since VE Day, Victory in Europe Day, when the Second World War came to an end, when peace came. And you can imagine the differing emotions that would have been throughout the country at that time. So many mixed emotions, so many tears flowing, tears of joy and tears of sadness mixed together.

Joy and fear just there in abundance. And for some, it was probably a moment where they would actually ask, is it really true? Do we really have peace?

[31 : 14] It would have been hard to believe after all that they'd gone through. Was it actually a day when peace had come? Can we believe what we're hearing?

And as we come to the Word of God, sometimes we read through it and we think, can this really be true? Does this really matter to my life?

It can make us turn away and reject it. It can make us afraid and it can also fill us with joy. And you see here that just mixture of emotions.

The disciples terrified and astounded just in a short space of time. And you see it again and again as you're going through Scripture. This is often what the truth of God does.

And especially when it comes to seeing Jesus and who He is. You just think back a couple of chapters to chapter 4. And there was, Jesus was with the disciples in a boat on another occasion in the middle of a storm.

[32 : 18] And they're afraid. And they asked, do you not care that we are perishing? Do you not care that we are dying here? And Jesus is able to calm that storm.

Peace, be still. And the wind and the waves ceased. And they're asking, who is this? They're afraid of this Jesus. And you see it in chapter 5 as well in verse 15 to 17.

Another time when Jesus did a miracle. He healed a demon-possessed man. And you see the crowd's reaction. They're afraid. And what do they do? They beg Jesus to go away.

To leave us alone. And is that what we need when we hear about Jesus? Just beg him. Just go away. Leave me alone. I'm too afraid of these things.

Well, fear often keeps us from recognizing Jesus and who he is and what he wants for us. Fear paralyzes us. But we need to hear what he is saying to us.

[33 : 21] We need to overcome that fear and come to be a people of faith instead of fear. We are being paralyzed by fear. We've all got maybe different fears and we're afraid of certain situations and it leaves us kind of paralyzed.

If you're afraid of heights, you start climbing a ladder, you look down, the fear can just paralyze you. You're stuck. You cannot go up. You cannot go down. Fear of spiders leaves you afraid of going into any room where you've seen when you close the door and you're afraid to go in there again until that spider's gone.

Fear of the doctor. You just say, I'm not going. I'm afraid what he might say to me. We can be afraid in so many different situations. But are you afraid here?

Are you afraid as you're hearing the word of God? Fear stirs us up to see we need faith. And somebody once said, I am inwardly fashioned for faith, not for fear. Fear is not my native land. Faith is. I am not made for fear and worry. They are the sand of the machinery of life.

[34 : 38] They're there to grind away and to damage the machinery. But faith is the oil. Faith is the oil that keeps machinery lubricated, that keeps our lives going in the right direction.

fear and worry leaves me grasping for breath. But faith and confidence helps me to breathe freely. We are not designed for fear, but we are a people of fear.

But we are to be a people of faith. So is fear keeping you back today? Are you afraid of Jesus? Are you afraid of what might happen if you commit to Jesus? Are you afraid that you'll let him down? Are you afraid of what people will think? Are you afraid maybe you're sitting at home watching online? Are you afraid to come to church in case something happens?

We should be more afraid of what will happen if we don't come to Jesus. We should be more afraid of not listening to Jesus because the day comes when we have to appear before him.

[35 : 46] And we need to be a people of faith, believing in him. William Garnall once said, we fear men so much because we fear God so little.

What are we more afraid of today? What people will think, what people will say, or what God the Lord will think? Are we afraid of Jesus?

Well, the disciples here, they were learning. and there was a mix of fear and faith all intermingled.

And I want us to look at three things from this passage today.

And they help us to see our own lives as well. And the three things are the Lord's paths, the way the Lord leads us. And then you see the Lord's presence and then the Lord's prompting.

And there are three things, situations that can leave us afraid, but that can also give us assurance. And the first thing we see is the Lord's path.

[36 : 49] We can focus, first of all, on the disciples here. It's late at night and we've seen they've fed the 5,000 men there.

And Jesus has instructed them to go before him to the other side, it says in verse 45, to Bethsaida, while he remained with the crowd to dismiss them.

And so they've listened. The Lord's told them what to do and they've gone and they've done it.

They've gone out in the boat. But once more they find themselves out on the lake and a storm rises, the wind is against them.

And it almost seems to happen so often whether they're away from the Lord, that they're presented with a challenge. They're left in a situation where what are you going to do here?

And so often in these early days, it seems that fear is what overwhelms them. Fear is what almost overcomes each time. And it's so similar to the situation where they were in chapter 4.

[38 : 00] The Lord had instructed them to go out in the boat and to make their way and they're caught up in a storm. the Lord was directing them. It's not like a Jonah situation where they're running away from the Lord.

When the Lord's told him to do something, to go one way, and he goes the completely opposite, that's not the situation here. They're doing exactly what they've been told. And still a storm comes. They're listening to Jesus and a storm arises and they're afraid in the midst of this storm. And it would be easy for them to blame him.

You've sent us this way. You told us to do this and we're doing it and yet still here we are caught in a storm. But what you find with the disciples is that so often in these early experiences they're obedient to the Lord but the Lord is testing them.

The Lord is discipling them and the Lord is reminding them of their need to depend on him. And the same is true for ourselves. If we are to be a people of faith there are going to be times of fear, times of doubt, times of worry, times of testing.

[39 : 17] They're always going to come. Even when we're doing exactly what the Lord has told us. We can be obedient to God and doing everything in his will and the way he wants us and yet still testing comes.

And we are thinking am I wrong? Have I done the wrong thing? Yes, there are times when we do and the Lord will teach us in that as well but sometimes when we're obedient testing comes.

But it's how we respond in that testing. Hardships and trials will come but it's not to misunderstand that we're on the wrong path. The Lord's paths aren't always easy and the Lord is here testing the

disciples testing them to see how they respond and how they react and what they'll learn in the midst of it but the Lord is with them and we'll come to that in a moment.

But it's the reality of a life of faith and fear together is how we respond but the Lord is often teaching us. And if you think of different career paths in life, if you want to be a pilot, an aircraft pilot, if you want to go into space or if you want to go to sea, work on ships, there's often times in the training where you have to be in a simulator and you go into a simulator and it simulates a certain situation. It may be you're flying a plane and a bird strike comes. How are you going to deal with it? Well, the simulator is a safe place to learn and you'll get all kinds of issues being thrown at you.

[41 : 01] So maybe it's not just one issue. It'll be two or three things coming all at once. And how do you respond? In a simulator, it's a safe environment. Training you to do the right thing if it happens for real.

And many of the situations go beyond anything you'll ever see. But it's still good to know how to respond. And you could almost look at this simulator in Jesus' experience with his disciples. He's there in a safe environment with them. It's almost like they're learning to ride their bike but the stabilizers are on and the parent is alongside just there to catch when we fall.

Well, Jesus is here putting them on these paths, putting them through these testing times because he's preparing them for when he's not there with them, when he leaves them to it.

Jesus is going to go away from them. He'd be at a distance and when he's not there, how will they respond? Of course, he's always there as we'll see in a moment as well.

[42 : 07] But we are to learn in every situation that we're going through. Trusting Jesus is what we need. As we go on our own paths, as we go our own way, as we live a life of faith, doing what the Lord wants, obedient to him, know that testings will come, that we need to lean on the Lord and be prepared through learning through his word, through experience, through the experience of others.

Even as James says in his letter, consider it pure joy, my brothers, whenever you face trials of many kinds because you know the testing of your faith develops perseverance.

And perseverance must finish its work so that you may be mature and complete, not lacking in anything. It's there for us. We're going through the fire, testing, but it's for our good.

To make us mature and complete, not lacking in anything. are you afraid of what Jesus might put you through?

Are you afraid of what path Jesus might take you down? Well, whatever it is, it's to be obedient to God. It may be a hard path, but be obedient to God and follow the way that he's showing.

[43 : 34] The Lord's path is one filled with testing but also teaching. but above all is the path to salvation and to eternal life.

So the Lord's path. The second thing we see is the Lord's presence. And we have this great assurance here as well, the Lord's presence. And when we look at this, we do so first of all looking at the situation where we find the Lord.

As he sent them on, he sent them ahead to the other side to Bethsaida, he's dismissed the crowd, and he's gone up the mountain to pray. Jesus lets the disciples go, and he goes to pray.

Is he leaving the disciples? Has he just left them to go? Or is there a reminder to us here of where he is even now?

praying? In the gospel of Mark, there are three times when Jesus is mentioned praying. In chapter one, at the beginning of his ministry, here in this chapter, and in chapter 14 in Gethsemane, in each he is alone, in each the disciples are in the vicinity, and in each they do not understand, or they're afraid.

[45 : 00] And yet he's praying. I wonder, was he praying for them? We know in John 17 that Jesus prays for his people, he prays for us.

And you wonder here if that prayer that he was offering up was, Father, teach these disciples through this experience. May they see your glory.

May they know your presence. We don't know, it's not recorded for us. But that prayer in John 17 certainly makes it clear to us that he prays for his own.

And here we have this reminder too for ourselves that even we are going through times of trial and challenge. Where is he now?

He is at the right hand of God, and what is he doing? He's making intercession for his people. Even as we offer up our cries and our prayers, Jesus is the one who is interceding for us.

[46 : 06] And so he was one who prayed, showing us our need to pray, that we are dependent on God for all things. It's a lesson and a reminder to us, a lesson to have our own times alone with the Lord because we do face all these trials.

But it's to be in the presence of our Lord as we do so. And it's a reminder too that as Jesus was dependent on the Father, so are we. We do nothing by ourselves.

And that's a reminder, but it's also a blessing. We don't have to face up to anything by ourselves. Whatever it is, we go through it knowing that there is prayer there to the Father in heaven who is able to help.

help. And so it seems he was at a distance, but he was close, and he is close to us as well. And even though he had sent his disciples, he had not forgotten them.

And you see that in verse 48. He saw that they were making headway painfully for the wind was against them. He was aware. He knew what was happening to them.

[47 : 21] He knew their situation. like he knows yours and mine too. He knows everything that's going on. And he was aware they were in trouble, and he came to their aid.

But isn't it strange what it says? 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. It seems a bit odd. He meant to pass by them. Had he changed his mind?

Had he thought they're being disobedient, they're not listening, I'm just going to go past them? What was he doing here? Was he not concerned about them? Or was there more to this?

He made to pass by them. There was revelation in this. they were to see who he was and what he was doing.

[48 : 22] Some people have tried to put this down as the walking on the sea, that the disciples were tired, it was late at night, they thought they saw him walking on the sea, but he was actually on the land.

No. Others have said, oh, there must have been a shallow part, a sandbar, the water was very shallow, he was just walking on that. No. He was walking on the sea, and he made to pass by. What was he doing here? He was showing who it was that was with them. When you go back to the Old Testament, to Exodus 33, verse 19 to 23, there you see the word pass by used again, and the phrase is used to describe God revealing himself to Moses as he passed by.

And here is Jesus making us to pass by, that they might see his glory, that they might know who it is that is with them, that it's not just on the land he's walking on, on a sandbar, that Jesus has power and authority over all things.

He is walking on the water, and he is there for them, and then he comes into the boat with them. It's a reminder to the disciples, they won't always have Jesus in a physical way, but that he's always going to be with them.

[49 : 49] We have God the Lord on our side. Even as we sang in Psalm 23, there's these great words of the Lord being with his people. Verse 2 gives that image of the green pastures and the calm waters, and a lovely calm setting.

But then you have verse 3 and 4 that remind us that even in the valley of the shadow of death, he is there for his people. His rod and his staff, they comfort. So the Lord is there.

God is with us. That's his promise. Never will I leave you, never will I forsake you. Thomas, when he saw the risen Lord, he said he would not believe unless he saw the marks on his hands and the side.

But what did Jesus say to him when he believed? Because you have seen me, you have believed. Blessed are those who have not seen and yet have believed.

Do these things make you afraid of Jesus? He can't walk on water, he can't feed 5,000, he can't calm a storm, the wind and the waves.

[50 : 59] Well, he can. That's the truth we hear. But do we believe it? That's the question. So the Lord's presence is there for us.

What a wonderful assurance we have that he is there for his people. And he is there for you. Do not be afraid, but believe.

Believe in the Lord Jesus. Jesus. Well, the third and final thing we see here is the Lord's prompting. The Lord's prompting.

Fear can often lead us to missing what's important. And the disciples here, yes, they were terrified, but Jesus spoke to them there in verse 50 saying, take heart, it is I, do not be afraid.

The Lord prompts them here. You fear so much, you're afraid even of me. Do not be afraid. See who it is. It is I. I am.

[52 : 03] I am the Lord who is with you. And he's prompting them in their hearts to believing. Take heart. And they were astounded, utterly astounded, it says there in verse 51.

And they were growing in their knowledge of Jesus and their understanding of who he is. we may be believers in our hearts, but our hearts are still hardened at times, as we see here in verse 52. Our hearts are hardened by things that go on and our experience and our own sinfulness. All of these things leave us hardened, but we should be utterly astounded by what God is saying to us. We don't always understand, but here is Jesus, the Son of God, revealing himself to us. He had come to them, as it says here, by walking on the sea.

And Psalm 77, verse 19, it says there, your way was through the sea, your path through the great waters, yet your footprints were unseen. It's almost like for this occasion, that Psalm footprints they couldn't see, but he was there with them.

[53 : 21] The Lord is prompting them, prompting them through his word and through his presence to lean upon him, to not be afraid, but to listen to him.

And this was not just a word for this one occasion. Take heart, as I do not be afraid, was for this day onwards. And his promise to always be with them and to be with all his people, for all their future, all their eternity, he would be there with them.

But when we look at Jesus, he has our future proofed entirely. For any change, for anything that comes our way, he's got it covered. He is ever enough.

There is no situation that arises that's out of his control. There's no time in our life that we go through that he's not there for us. Everything is there, whether it's personally, collectively, even as we think of the world in which we live in, the chaos that we see all around us, he is still enough. He is all we need. He alone is to be our hope, our refuge, our security, all of these things.

[54 : 43] And yet still, we're afraid. We're afraid what people might say, what people might think. We're afraid of letting him down.

We're afraid of going forward in faith because we're fearful. It's better to be afraid of the consequences of naught and to come and follow him.

He says, take heart at his eye. Do not be afraid. And he speaks that word to us today as well. Don't be afraid to follow Jesus.

The paths may not always be straightforward, but it's better to be on his path, the narrow way that leads to eternal life and the broad road that leads to destruction.

You have the promise of his presence. presence. He sees, he knows, he prays, and he's with you. And that is what he is prompting us with today, to go his way, to follow him, not to be afraid, but to have faith and to go with him.

[56 : 02] Are you good at listening? Because God the Lord is speaking, and we are to follow him. Let's pray. Lord, our gracious God, we thank you that your word is a living word, and we pray that you will take it to our hearts today, and that you will apply these truths of our need to listen, even in the midst of our fear and our anxieties and all that troubles us, that, Lord, we would come to recognize that you are with us, and that you are for us.

So help us to be a people of faith, leaning upon you for all of these things, as we ask it in Jesus' name. Amen. We're going to conclude by singing in Psalm 34.

We'll sing from verse 8 to 11. Psalm 34. Come taste and see the Lord is good, who trusts in him, is blessed.

Oh, fear the Lord, your saints with need, you will not be oppressed. Then verse 11, it says, come here, my children, gather round and listen to my word, and I will help you understand how you may fear the Lord.

We'll sing from verse 8 to 11, we stand to sing to God's praise. Amen. The Lord is true, you trust in His best.

[57 : 48] Oh, fear the Lord, you saints with me, you will not be offended.

And thy odds may grow weak and faint and hunger for their good.

But those who wait upon the Lord will not lack any good.

Come here, my children, gather round and listen to my word.

And I will help you understand how you may fear the Lord.

[58 : 56] Amen. After the benediction, I'll go to the main door. We'll close the benediction. Now may grace, mercy and peace from God, Father, Son and Holy Spirit rest upon and abide with you all now and forevermore.

Amen. Amen. deth■ Amen. Thank you.

Thank you.