

It Is I, Don't Be Afraid

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Date: 14 July 2024

- [0 : 00] We'll begin our worship this evening. We're going to sing to God's praise in Psalm 103. Psalm 103, the Scottish Psalter version, page 369.
- We're going to sing from verse 1 to verse 5. The tune is Kilmarnock. O thou, my soul, bless God the Lord, and all that in me is, be stood up his holy name to magnify and bless.
- Bless, O my soul, the Lord thy God, and not forgetful be of all his gracious benefits he hath bestowed on thee. We'll sing from verse 1 to 5 to God's praise.
- He's steadfast. He's steadfast. He's steadfast.
- He's steadfast. He's steadfast. He's steadfast. He's steadfast. He's steadfast.
- [1 : 29] Of all his gracious benefits, he hath bestowed on thee.
- All thy iniquity to the most gracious be forgiven.
- Through thy diseases, all that things, thou heal and be re-eating.
- Could thou redeem thy life after, to death which sought for done?
- Through thee with loving kindness of and tenderest he's come.
- [2 : 47] Through thy abundance of good things, thou satisfy thy love.
- So that he must be evil, saint, trade you with his thy youth.
- Let's come to God in prayer. Let us pray. Amen. Our gracious Father in heaven, as we come once more to worship, to sing praise together as your people, to come and hear your words speak to us, to come and offer up our prayers to you.
- We thank you that you alone are God, you are the one who is able to hear all that comes from our hearts and our lips this night. Even the very groanings that we utter in our hearts, Lord, they are known to you.
- For you know us in that great way. You know us as our Father in heaven. You know us as our Lord and our God. And we pray that you will stir us up in our time of worship.
- [4 : 12] That you will help us, Lord, to worship you in that right spirit. Even with the words that we have just sung. That from our very souls we would bless the Lord with all that is within us.
- That you would stir us up by your holy name to magnify and bless you. That you would become more and more of our focus in this time of worship.
- That you would take away the distractions that so often fill our minds. Even the thoughts of what may lie ahead for us in this coming week. The things that may be cluttering up our inboxes.
- The things that can be important in their own self. But as we come just now, Lord, we just ask that in looking ahead to the week and the days that lie ahead.
- That you will help us in this time to be refreshed through your word. To be strengthened by it. To be encouraged through it. To be built up in our faith. So that whatever the challenges that come in this week.
- [5 : 12] Whatever the joys we have. Whatever the lows we may experience. That you would be with us, Lord. And that we would know you as our God. As the one who never leaves or forsakes.

The one who is a refuge and a strength for all our different needs. And so, Lord, we ask that you will, as you so often do, remind us of your great promises to us.

As you so often do, remind us through your word who you are and all that you have done for us. Even as we have sung from this psalm, we are reminded of the great forgiveness that there is with you.

That even in the midst of our forgetfulness, when we forget so much that you have done for us. When we forget that we depend on you for all things. That, Lord, you are gracious towards us.

And that all your gracious benefits are there for us day after day. And so, may you give us that sense of thankfulness. That sense of rejoicing in you.

[6 : 16] That sense of coming anew each day. And receiving, Lord, your great mercies anew each day. And may you help us to fill our hearts with thankfulness even anew this night.

That as we come to the close of a day. As we come to the close of your day. And as your word reminds us that the time moves on. The sun rises.

The sun sets. The days move on. That we are reminded of your constant faithfulness. Your steadfast love that is unchanging. And we pray, Lord, that to be known as your word is proclaimed.

Not just here, but through all the pulpits of our island here. And throughout your church, Lord, near and far. We thank you for your word that is proclaimed in so many different languages.

To so many different people. All worshipping the one God. And we thank you that we join in with that worship this evening. That we are reminded, Lord, of what a taste of heaven would be.

[7 : 18] To know that we enter into praise with one another here. We enter into praise with your people near and far. We enter into praise with saints past and present.

And we thank you, Lord, that that praise is at the very throne of heaven. That our praise is offered through that name above every name. In the name of our Lord and Savior, Jesus Christ.

And we thank you that in him we have reason to rejoice and to hope. That in him we have so much to give thanks for. And again, this evening as we open up your word, we pray that as we read and as we hear from it, that you will remind us of that wonder of just who you are.

Even in these few words as we read of I am. That you are God. And that in Jesus we have God incarnate. We are the one who has come to draw near to us in all our needs.

And Lord, we may we know your peace and your presence in that way. We do pray, Lord, for your people who journey in life and find themselves in so many different places and situations unexpectedly or through no choice of their own.

[8 : 38] We think of your persecuted people far and wide. Those who suffer for their faith. Those who are believers in Christ. Those who love the Lord with all their hearts.

And yet for that, for that very simple faith that they might have. That they are persecuted and experience so much harshness in so many different ways.

We do pray, Lord, that you will surround them. We thank you for your word that reminds us of how in wonderful ways you were with your people as they proclaimed you as their Lord.

As we think of Daniel in the Old Testament or Shadrach, Meshach and Abednego as they were cast into the fiery furnace.

We think of all these experiences that your people have suffered down through so many generations. And yet the one God, the same God, who was near to them is there for all your people even this night to help in every experience and every challenge.

[9 : 40] And we know, Lord, that we need you in all of these different ways. There are many trials that will come our way. There is grief that comes into our life and sorrow.

There are hardships in so many different ways. There is illness. As we hear so many around us, Lord, who are going through times of illness, both old and young.

We think of those who may be on the very verge of eternity. Those who are laid aside in different ways at this time, Lord. Who are thankful for those who know you and have that great assurance that you are with them.

That you will see them home. We pray for those who maybe have no thought of you. Those who are strangers to you. That your spirit will work. That your spirit will lead and draw people to know the comfort and the comforter.

We ask these things, Lord, recognizing that you alone can do it. And so we plead with you, Lord, that you will remember us in mercy. We do pray, Lord, for our governments at this time.

[10 : 47] We think of situations near and far. We think of our own MP and MSP for our islands here. We pray for you to guide them and to uphold them.

To give them your strength and above all, to give them a faith in you. To give them to know that you are their God. That any authority and perceived power that might be had in the hands of man in this world, it is all from above.

We pray that for all our MPs and MSPs in Westminster and Holyrood, in our council buildings, and all who deal with us in so many different ways, making decisions for us.

We pray for your blessing to be upon them. For you to minister in these places of power, to know your power, to know your greatness in their midst.

We again think of situations throughout the world, situations that shock us and leave us just seeing the wickedness in this world. As we again remember America, a powerful nation in so many ways.

[11 : 53] But yet we see the fear and worries that are so often there. We think of the events of last evening. We just pray, Lord, for your peace, for your calm, for your spirit to work.

We think of that for nations in turmoil, where there is war and terror, famine, natural disasters, where we see so much grief all around us.

We pray, Lord, to have mercy, to heal, to heal the broken hearts, to heal the suffering, to heal the wickedness of man, to bring us to see ways of peace instead of war.

We pray, Lord, that you will remember us then and do us good. Continue with us as a people here, Lord. Guide us by your mercy. Help us in all that we seek to do for you as a congregation.

Help us as we open our doors to visitors into our town. We commit the breakfast next Sunday morning that will be open here for many who will be visiting our town.

[12 : 56] We pray to see people coming in through our doors, not just to receive physical food, but that there will be a word in season for them, that they would come and hear the gospel, that they would come and hear the good news of Jesus Christ.

We pray your peace over our town in these coming days, in a busy week. As we see so many visitors coming, Lord, we ask your protection, your safety upon all who will be coming and going.

We pray, Lord, all these things, acknowledging our need of you, acknowledging our weakness and frailties, but acknowledging the strength that you give and the grace that is always sufficient.

May we know it more and more. So hear our prayers and continue with us now. Bless us and go before us as we ask all things through the forgiveness of our sins. In Jesus' name, amen.

We're going to sing again to God's praise, this time in Psalm 34. The Sing Psalms version, page 40 of the psalm books. The tune is St. Stephen.

[14 : 02] Psalm 34. At the beginning of the psalm, we sing from verse 1 to verse 9. At all times I will bless the Lord.

I'll praise him with my voice. Because I glory in the Lord, let troubled souls rejoice. Together let us praise the Lord, exalt his name with me. I sought the Lord.

His answer came. From fear he set me free. We'll sing from verse 1 to 9 to God's praise. That's all.

At all times I will bless the Lord. I'll praise him with my voice.

Because I glory in the Lord, let troubled souls rejoice.

[15 : 05] Together let us praise the Lord, and exalt his name with me.

I sought the Lord. His answer came. From fears he set me free.

He'll lift the heavens and shine with joy. They are not good to shame.

Lest suffering man cry to the Lord, from him deliverance came.

The angel of the Lord, and guides continually.

[16 : 25] He sets his people free.

In the midst of the Lord, O hear the Lord, who stays with me.

You will not be oppressed. We're going to read God's word together now.

Our first reading is in Exodus, and then we'll read in the Gospel of John. So we're first reading in Exodus chapter 3, and we read from verse 1 to verse 15.

Exodus chapter 3, I'm reading from verse 1. Now Moses was keeping the flock of his father-in-law Jethro, the priest of Midian.

[17 : 52] And he led his flock to the west side of the wilderness and came to Horeb, the mountain of God. And the angel of the Lord appeared to him in a flame of fire out of the midst of a bush.

He looked, and behold, the bush was burning, yet it was not consumed. And Moses said, I will turn aside to see this great sight, why the bush is not burned.

When the Lord saw that he had turned aside to see, God called to him out of the bush, Moses, Moses. And he said, Here I am.

Then he said, Do not come near, or take off your sandals of your feet, for the place on which you are standing is holy ground. And he said, I am the God of your father, the God of Abraham, the God of Isaac, and the God of Jacob.

And Moses hid his face, for he was afraid to look at God. Then the Lord said, I have surely seen the affliction of my people who are in Egypt, and I have heard their cry because of their taskmasters.

[19 : 02] I know their sufferings, and I have come down to deliver them out of the hand of the Egyptians, and to bring them up out of that land to a good and broad land, a land flowing with milk and honey to the place of the Canaanites, the Hittites, the Amorites, the Perisites, the Hivites, and the Jebusites.

And now, behold, the cry of the people of Israel has come to me, and I have also seen the oppression with which the Egyptians oppress them. Come, I will send you to Pharaoh, that you may bring my people, the children of Israel, out of Egypt.

But Moses said to God, Who am I that I should go to Pharaoh and bring the children of Israel out of Egypt? He said, But I will be with you, and this shall be the sign for you that I have sent you.

When you have brought the people out of Egypt, you shall serve God on this mountain. Then Moses said to God, If I come to the people of Israel and say to them, The God of your fathers has sent me to you, and they ask me, What is his name?

What shall I say to them? God said to Moses, I am who I am. And he said, Say this to the people of Israel, I am has sent me to you.

[20 : 27] God also said to Moses, Say to the people of Israel, The Lord, the God of your fathers, the God of Abraham, the God of Isaac, and the God of Jacob has sent me to you.

This is my name forever, and thus I am to be remembered throughout all generations. And we'll turn to the Gospel of John, chapter 6.

We're going to read a few verses there. John 6 from verse 16 down to verse 21. This is just after the events of the feeding of the 5,000.

As we take up our reading in verse 16, John 6 verse 16. When evening came, his disciples went down to the sea, got into a boat, and started to cross 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.

[21 : 46] 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 the land to which they were going. And so on. Well, let's again sing to God's praise before we come back to the passage in John.

We're going to sing in Psalm 99, in the Sing Psalms version, 99a. The tune is Peter's Ham, 99a, page 130 of the psalm books.

We'll sing from verse 1 to verse 7. The Lord reigns from his throne on high. Let all the nations quake. He sits between the cherubim, so let the whole earth shake.

Great is the Lord on Zion Hill, exalted over all. Upon his great and holy name, let all the nations call. We'll sing from verse 1 to 7 to God's praise.

[22 : 48] The Lord reigns from his throne on high.

Let all the nations quake. He sits between the cherubim, so let the whole earth shake.

Great is the Lord on Zion Hill, exalted over all.

Upon his great and holy name, let all the nations call.

The King of truth and equity, established by his might.

[23 : 54] In Jacob you have done for us all that is just and right.

Exalt the Lord our God with us. Let all the world of God before his boots to worship him, for holy is the Lord.

Moses and David and where his priests Samuel called on his name.

They called upon the Lord their God, and he replied to them.

He spoke to them and gave his law out of the cloud from heaven.

[25 : 07] They kept the stout to some degrees, where she to them had given.

Let's turn back together to a reading in the Gospel of John, chapter 6, and reading at verse 20.

John, chapter 6, and reading at verse 20. But he said to them, It is I, do not be afraid.

It is I, do not be afraid. There have been many landmark moments in our history, in the history of this world.

Big events that have a massive, a huge and lasting effect in our world. And we can think of them in different ways. We can think of, perhaps, things that have changed the way in which we live.

[26 : 16] Think of inventions, for example. Things that have come into being, that have been made life so much easier, that have transformed lives. The invention of the wheel.

A wheel seems such a simple thing now, but how much we rely on it. The industrial revolution, how it changed the landscape of our land, and indeed the world.

Telecommunication, how that came in, and how it opened up new avenues of communication all over the world. We think of transport, how aeroplanes just changed the way we live.

The space race, how people ventured outside our own sphere of life here in this world, and travelled to different parts of space, to the moon, to different places.

Things that would have seemed unimaginable at one point, but that have come into being. You think of the internet, and how that's transformed our lives, how we rely on it for so many things now, for good and for bad, unfortunately.

[27 : 19] We think even of how we're able to broadcast worship services to all ends of the earth. Things that 20 years ago would have seemed impossible.

There are so many things that have happened, landmark moments in our history, and that they still impact the way we live in our day, and in our age.

They are major events. They don't happen every day, but are they the main impacts that we should see in our lives? Are they the greatest landmark moments that our world has known?

We are thinking of one of the greatest, if not the greatest, this morning, as we looked in Philippians, as we were thinking of Jesus, who did not consider equality with God a thing to be grasped, but made himself nothing, of how he came into this world, how he gave his life and obedience to death, even death on the cross.

What a landmark moment in our history that Jesus came to die for sinners. We look at it this evening, we come to see a little more of what Jesus, of who he is.

[28 : 39] The greatest landmark moment in your experience, in my experience, should be to see and understand who Jesus is.

Who is Jesus? How would you answer that question? Who is Jesus? You might think that as you read in the Bible, in the Gospels in particular, that everyone who met Jesus knew exactly who he was and knew immediately, but far from it.

In the Gospel of John earlier, it says that he came to his own and his own received him not. They didn't want anything to do with him. They didn't know who he was. They didn't believe who he said he was.

There were so many who saw him. They saw him doing miraculous things, and yet still, they didn't understand who he was. Do you know who Jesus is today?

Do you know what he can do in your life and in your experience? There are many here who can say, yes, I've known Jesus. I've known his help.

[29 : 52] I've known his blessing. I've known his transforming power in my life, and yet still, we only know him in part. We only understand in part.

You think even of those who were closest to Jesus as you read in the Gospels. The disciples, even they, didn't understand fully who Jesus was. Early on in the Gospel of Mark in chapter 4, there's another occasion where they're in a storm in a boat with Jesus, and they're fearful for their very lives, and they ask Jesus, do you not care that we are perishing?

And Jesus gets up. He rebukes the wind and the waves, and they are still. And what do they say? Well, they say, who then is this that even the wind and the waves obey him?

They just couldn't. understand who he was. We see so many things, and do we really understand who Jesus is? Later on in the Gospel of Mark in chapter 8, Jesus was having a conversation about who people were saying he was.

Some were saying, Elijah or one of the prophets, but he turned to them and he said to them, but what about you? Who do you say that I am? And Peter answered, you are the Christ.

[31 : 13] Did he understand? Did he fully understand what he was saying? Probably not at that point. He didn't fully understand.

And even we can use Jesus on our lips and our prayers and our worship, and do we fully understand who he is and what he can do for us?

In both our readings this evening in Exodus and here in John chapter 6, we see landmark moments. Landmark moment, a moment for Moses, hearing God speaking to him, reminding that he has not forgotten his people, that he is about to do a great work of salvation for them.

And what does he say to him when he asks that question, who will I say has sent me? I am.

Two words. It seems to make no sense. I am. And yet what power there is in these words.

[32 : 18] And we're reading here in Gospel of John chapter 6. Again, it's a landmark moment for the disciples. There is this realization almost of who he is.

He declares in verse 20 as they are so afraid. It says there in English, it is I. Do not be afraid. But it is I is actually I am.

These two words, I am. Do not be afraid. The same words that Moses heard in the book of Exodus. These two words are powerful.

We are hearing of the great Redeemer. We are hearing of the great God who is able to save. He is with us. The people were looking for a Savior then, just as so many are looking for a Savior, for someone to help today.

You think of earlier in John's Gospel in chapter 4. When Jesus met with the woman at the well, the woman said to him, I know that Messiah is coming who is called Christ.

[33 : 32] When he comes, he will tell us all things. And what did Jesus say to her to comfort her, to assure her? He said, I who speak to you am here.

He was there. He was there with the disciples as he came to them walking on the water. I am was with them.

And that is a great assurance that we have this evening. That as we look to and trust in him, he says, don't be afraid. I am.

And do we need to hear these words ourselves? when we think of the lives in which we live, when we think of all that goes on in our hearts, when we think of all that concerns us and troubles us, things that make us afraid, do we not need to hear these words?

I am. Do not be afraid. He is here. And when we know Jesus, maybe not in his fullness, but when we know him more and more, we understand more about him, we see just what he is able to do for us, who he is and what he is able to do for us.

[34 : 52] And in these two passages so closely connected in Exodus and John, I just want to think of three things this evening that these words give to us. I am.

Do not be afraid. It gives us first hope. Then it eases our fears. And then thirdly, it answers our doubts.

So the first thing we want to see is it gives us hope. He is here. In both our readings, we see something miraculous happen. With Moses, there was the burning bush that was not consumed.

This bush, it caught his attention, it made him turn towards it because there was something unique about it. A burning bush would have not been unique in and of itself in a hot desert and a hot climate.

But the bush that went on fire would be consumed. But not this one. It was not consumed. There was something about it.

[35 : 54] There was something miraculous about it. And here in the Gospel of John, what we see is Jesus coming to the disciples walking on the sea.

in verse 19, Jesus walking on the sea and coming near the boat. It's not normal. It shouldn't happen. There's something miraculous here.

But is our focus on the miracle or the one behind it? You see, the purpose in both was not to show something miraculous in the sense of the bush not burning or Jesus just walking on water.

The greatest emphasis behind it was making himself known. Showing himself. His identity to Moses and to the disciples.

That they would see more of who he was. And what it means to have this God with us. It gives us hope.

[37 : 01] it reminds us that he is here. As Jesus says there in verse 20, he sees that they were frightened in verse 19, at the end of verse 19, but he says, I am, it is I, do not be afraid.

It's about the one who was there. Not the miracle itself, but the one who was there because who is it that has come to them? Yes, we say Jesus came walking on water, but in what he says to them, in these two words, I am, do not be afraid.

He is saying more, he is saying God is here with you. God of heaven, God of earth, our maker, and the maker of the whole universe, he is here, do not be afraid.

For only God can go beyond the realm of what is possible to the impossible. I am is here.

The same as what Moses experienced in that burning bush as he turned towards the burning bush, and he asked that question, if I come to the people of Israel and say to them, the God of our fathers has sent me to you, and they ask me, what is his name, what shall I say to them?

[38 : 28] God said to Moses, I am who I am, and he said, say to this people of Israel, I am sent me to you.

What assurance there is given in these words. He is here, he is with us, and the children of Israel would have been thinking as they were, God has forgotten us, he has left us in this land, in Egypt, to suffer, to die, but I am has not forgotten.

And as the disciples are in this boat once again, as they see Jesus walking, their fear is helped by the words, I am.

It is God. And do you have that assurance today? Do you have that comfort today? That in everything that you face, that I am is here.

That that is the one that you are looking to. That that is the one who is saying, do not be afraid, it is I. One of the most common crimes today is identity theft.

[39 : 51] Maybe you've been a part of it. Maybe someone has stolen your identity. In some ways it can be quite just an inconvenience. Someone clones you on Facebook.

Someone's copied your profile. It's more of an inconvenience. But in other ways it can be more serious. Your identity is taken and used and it makes you lose money.

It means that you maybe have credit cards in your name that you don't even know about and people steal from you in that way. It's a serious thing and we're always encouraged to guard our passwords, to guard everything about us.

There is that side of identity theft. But what about a greater crime committed in terms of identity theft where we have tried to take the identity of God for ourselves.

To steal away from God who he is and make a God that suits ourselves. Taking his authority, taking his power, taking his ability and just putting it into ourselves and what we can do.

[41 : 05] We're making God something small, something he's not because we don't see who he is. We don't see him as the I am.

the God of the whole universe. We don't see him in what he can do. And so we're stealing his identity.

We're stealing his identity when we think of what we do with Jesus if we're not trusting in him and his finished work. That he has taken our sins, that he has humbled himself, that he has taken death on the cross for us.

And we say, but there must be something I can do to save myself. Jesus can't be the only answer. We're taking that identity to ourselves, an identity that's not ours.

We need to see who he is, that he is here. And who he is, he is the I am.

[42 : 12] we won't know his hope, we won't know his power, we won't know his reality while we are making him into something that he's not.

We're taking away from the fact that it is him, I am, and not giving him the glory that he is due. It is I, do not be afraid.

Not it is me, not someone else, it is I. He gives us hope.

That's the first thing we see because he is here. The second thing he does here is he eases our fears. And what we see here is that he speaks.

In both our readings what we see is the great I am, he eases the fears of Moses and his disciples. The disciples in John 6.

[43 : 17] And how does he do it? How does he ease their fears? Well, the great assurance is not what they see, but what they hear. He speaks.

He speaks to them. And it is these words that are just so powerful. It is I do not be afraid. Just a few words.

I am do not be afraid. but what's behind that is recognizing. Recognizing who it is.

Because you see in verse 21 it says then they were glad to take him into the boat. They knew who it was at these words. Moses was glad when he heard who it was.

I am and the assurance that he was giving to him. Do you ever get a phone call? And you lift up the phone or you listen to an answer a message left on the phone and the person who is at the other end just says it is me.

[44 : 25] How do you know who it is? There are some times when I just I don't know. I don't know. I don't recognize the voice so it is not enough to say it is me.

I need more. But if you recognize the voice, if you know the voice and the person who says it is me, you know exactly who it is.

And that leads us here to think about do we know this God who is speaking? Moses did. The disciples here did.

But do we know this voice? Do we understand who it is saying who is speaking to us here when he says it is I do not be afraid.

I am do not be afraid. Do we understand who it is? In both these situations for Moses and for the disciples here in John, they were afraid.

[45 : 30] But what gave them comfort and assurance was the one who was speaking. And is that the case for you and I tonight?

As we hear the word of God, do we know who is speaking? Do we understand who it is that is speaking to us here?

It is not me. It is not me who is speaking to you through this. It is the Lord. It is I. Do not be afraid.

Is there any greater comfort that we can have than these words? To know that God himself is speaking. That God himself is giving comfort.

That God himself is giving assurance. Don't be afraid. I am. The presence of God.

[46 : 29] Do we know it? Have you ever experienced that sense? God is here. And God is speaking. There are moments in our experience, I'm sure, every Christian will have had it at some point.

Not all the time. But in certain moments, you're just aware, God is here. It's a power. There's something about it that you just cannot put into words.

That experience that he is here. That experience that no doubt Moses and the disciples here in John were experiencing for themselves as they heard these words, I am.

The very voice of God speaking to them. You see it through scripture. You see it in moments.

In the Old Testament you have Joshua who was taking over from Moses later on. And he was afraid. And what gave him peace was the presence of God.

[47 : 36] God said to Joshua, have I not commanded you be strong and courageous? Do not be frightened, do not be dismayed, for the Lord your God is with you wherever you go.

Isn't there a power in that presence? When you're afraid of what lies ahead, when you're not sure, when you're anxious, when you're worried, but you know God is with you. You know God is there.

And there is a power. But do we see the value in the one who is speaking to us? Do we see his worth?

Do we understand who it is that was with us? There's a story of an American man who was clearing out his loft. And he came across a gold coin.

He couldn't remember where it had come from, but he found it and he was quite impressed. It was a beautiful, well-conditioned coin. Not knowing much more about it, he decided what he would do was just put it in a frame and hang it on his wall.

[48 : 39] A few months later, a friend came to visit him. And as he was walking into the house, he noticed this coin on the wall and went to have a closer look and he gasped.

He was stunned to see this coin because he knew a little bit about coins. And he said, where did you find this? Where did you get this? And he said, I just found it in my loft.

And then the man asked him, do you know what this is worth? I'm not sure. Maybe a few hundred dollars, maybe a thousand dollars. He says, oh no, this is worth much more.

This is worth around two hundred, two hundred and fifty thousand dollars. And the man was gobsmacked that he had this thing of value in his house that he didn't realize.

we have something much more worth, of much more worth for ourselves. And you think of God speaking to us.

[49 : 39] how many of you have a verse of scripture hanging on the wall at home? Perhaps you walk past it every day. Perhaps you know it off by heart.

But do you realize its value? Or are you like that man walking past the coin every day until he understood its worth, not realizing the value that was there?

Are we like that with the word of God? We have it maybe hanging on a version of the house or we have our Bibles in our homes and yet we don't see the value.

We don't understand the worth of what it's saying to us, of the promises, the assurances, the comforts that there are there for us. When we look everywhere else apart from the word, our greatest comfort, our greatest assurance is here before us.

As he said to the disciples, I am, do not be afraid. They had to hear the voice, they had to recognize the voice and who it was that was speaking.

[50 : 49] May we hear and recognize the voice of I am, the I am who says, do not be afraid, put your trust in me.

me. The third thing and the final thing we see here is how he answers our doubts, how he gives reassurance to both Moses and the disciples.

All their fears, all their doubts are answered. And that's what God does for us. When you think of the experience of both Moses in the Old Testament and the disciples in the New, not in these exact moments but as they went forward from here, do you not think they would have come back to these moments and reminded themselves of who spoke?

Moses was afraid to take the children of Israel out of Egypt. But God had said, I am. I am has sent you.

I am is with you. And so he would go on in the journey of taking the children of Israel out of Egypt and to the edge of the promised land, always knowing that experience of I am with them.

[52 : 13] Making the way plain, taking all the challenges, feeding them, opening up the Red Sea, protecting them, guiding them all the way. He was there for them.

There are many other moments in the Old Testament that you can look at and see fearful situations that were landmark moments for God's people. Think of Noah.

How would he have felt building an ark when there was no sign of water? How inadequate, how stupid in many ways. Yet I am was with him.

David must have felt pretty small looking up to Goliath, the giant. man, yet I am was with him. The three Hebrews, Shadrach, Meshach, and Abednego, as they were about to be put into the fiery furnace, there would have been no hope for them.

How inadequate they would have seen against the fiery furnace. But I am was with them. Daniel must look pretty pathetic beside the lion's den as he was about to be thrown in.

[53 : 22] But who was with him? I am. And so it goes on. There are always doubts and fears and worries and anxieties and yet I am Yeshua.

He gives us so many promises in his word. And as we think ourselves of going forward, as we think ourselves of a service to God, we think of the disciples here.

I am. Do not be afraid. And they would go on to serve the Lord in so many ways. Many of them gave their lives in serving the Lord.

But they were still assured of I am with them. And we are never without that God as we look to him. In these two words, we are reminded of his power.

We are reminded of his presence. We are reminded of all that he can do for us. We need him.

[54 : 37] We need him every moment of our lives. But these words assure us there's not a situation. you will ever find yourself where God doesn't keep you.

Where God is always there. I am. Do not be afraid. He is the one who is able and he is the one who enables in all that we do.

But the question so often is, do we know who it is? Do we see I am?

Do we hear I am? Does he help you? Does he comfort you? Does he assure you?

Praise God he does. There are times when we can have our doubts. There are times when we have our fears. But that's nothing new for the Christian.

[55 : 52] There was a man called George Campbell Morgan, a famous preacher. He preached his first sermon when he was aged 13.

And by the age of 19 he had preached many times. He was becoming well-known as a preacher, an evangelistic preacher. But then for a number of months, he had his doubts.

He had his fears. He started hearing various scientists and atheists and agnostics debating and discussing the things of God and putting doubts into people's minds.

things. And he decided this day, in his fears and his worries, that he had to come near to God. So what did he do?

He bought himself a new Bible. Not that he didn't have a Bible, he did, but he wanted a new Bible. And so that he could start looking at the Word of God almost anew, almost afresh, with no notes or marks on the pages, but just to go through the Scriptures.

[57 : 08] And what he said afterwards was this. He said the result was this. The Bible found me. He turned to the Word of God in all his doubts, in all that he was hearing at a young age and then he went on to serve God with all his heart.

The Bible found him. I am was there. And you know we have the Bible before us.

We have the Word of God before us. Do we understand the power that there is? Do we understand God?

I am. Do we understand Jesus? Do we understand what he has done? Do we understand the Holy Spirit? And how the Spirit leads us closer to this great I am.

May we be helped by God to seek his Word, to know his presence, to find the hope that there is here, that eases our fears, to see the way that he speaks, that he speaks to us in power.

[58 : 27] It is I. Do not be afraid, and that he answers our doubts, and gives us that reassurance that he is with us.

We all have fears and worries, but we have the Word of God. We have God himself, and we have I am saying, do not be afraid.

Let us pray. Our Father in heaven, may we know the wonder of the power of your Word. May we know it finding us even in our hearts this night.

May we understand the one who is speaking to us. May we hear that voice that calls. It is I, I am. Do not be afraid. May you help us to find our comfort and our reassurance in you at all times and in all ways, as we ask it all in Jesus' name.

Amen. We are going to conclude by singing to God's praise in Psalm 36.

[59 : 41] The Sing Psalms version, Psalm 36, in page 44, we will sing from verse 5 to verse 7. These wonderful words remind us of the great steadfast love that is so great from the Lord.

Your steadfast love is great, O Lord, it reaches heaven high. Your faithfulness is wonderful, extending to the sky. Your righteousness is very great, like mountains high and steep.

Your justice is like ocean depths, both man and beast. You keep. We'll sing from verse 5 to 7 and the tune of Strapiting. Thank you. Thank you. Thank you.

Thank you.

Thank you. Thank you.

[61 : 51] Amen. Amen. Amen. Amen. After the benediction, I'll go to the door to my right. We'll close with a 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.