

Jesus Walks on Water

Mark 6:45-52

August 18, 2024 Pastor Jeremy Cagle

Well, good morning, everyone. I want to say, just before we begin, a special thank you to all those who prayed for us these past couple weeks. Last Sunday night Meridian First Baptist Church called me to be the new senior pastor there, and we really appreciate all your words of encouragement and kindness; and we're really excited for Grace Fellowship Church as well and the vote that's coming up. We think you have a wonderful candidate. And I do want to say a word about that because I was sharing with the church down there that I've had an unusual opportunity these past probably 3, 4, 5, months as a pastor to be on both sides of a candidate search. I've been on the side of Grace Fellowship Church, helping the elders kind of establish the process and look for candidates. They've done all the conversation with candidates, but I've kind of been a sounding board. And then, on the other hand, I've candidated there in Idaho and seen kind of both sides of the discussion. I don't know if I'll ever get to do that again as a pastor, but I'll tell you one thing that struck me as interesting is that the questions and issues that come up are the same in both churches. I thought that was very unique to see that because one thing that comes up, that came up in both places was a question, is it too soon to bring on a new pastor. The church there in Idaho had had a pastor for 16 years, he'd been very faithful, and he retired. His last Sunday was the Sunday before I came. And so they were wondering, should we give it more time? And then, since I've been here in Chilliwack, I've also heard some people ask the same question for bringing pastor Jory in as a candidate. You know, is it too soon because pastor Jeremy hasn't left? Let me just address that for a moment because I have again seen it on both angles, and I'll tell you, you find a candidate when you find them. There's really no rule book for this. There's no map or guideline or user's guide to finding a pastor. You just kind of put the word out, and when the right man comes along, you jump on it. And that could be six weeks, it could be six months, it could be a year, you just don't know. And so I think you found an excellent candidate in Jory. I know the elders have as well. I think they're going to say a word about that after the sermon and before the vote, but I haven't had a chance to voice that enough with you. But I've spoken with him on the phone. I've listened to his sermons, his doctrinal statement, all these kinds of things. And so just personally, he has my full support. Just want to let you know that, but I just encourage you to consider that you need to vote according to your conscience as a member of the church. And so it wants you to do that, but just know that the elders are in full united support for him.

And with that said, we want to jump into the Word of God this morning. So please take your Bibles and turn to the Gospel of Mark because that's the book we're in today. Please open your Bibles to the Gospel of Mark, as Adam just read for us. And as you're turning there, in one of his commentaries, the pastor James Montgomery Boyce tells a story of the time, a Hindu guru named Rao, think I'm pronouncing that correctly, announced to his followers that he was going to walk on water. And on the day of the event, several thousand people showed up around a large pool outside Bombay, India to watch. And as he showed up, Rao glanced up to heaven. He stepped near the pool and splash; he fell into the water. Saw that one coming, didn't you? Which caused him to do a curious thing afterwards because he immediately

jumped up and he said that “One of you is an unbeliever!” It caused Doctor Boyce to say this. He said, “That's the way some people look at salvation today. They think it's entirely dependent upon man. One wrong move and splash you fall into the water.”

And I tell you that story because this is what our text is talking about. In Mark 6, Mark's continuing his account of the life of Christ by telling us about a time Jesus walked on water, and He actually did it, amen? But in a very different way than Rao because instead of relying on man to help Him, Jesus did it all by Himself. Nobody helped Him because verse 52 says the disciples' hearts were hardened at the time, which means they didn't really think He could do this. It wasn't on their radar. It's like the farthest thing from their mind because earlier, right above this, it says they were terrified. In other words, they weren't encouraged at the idea of Him strolling across the waves like that. They were petrified. Jesus did it anyway to show that He's sovereign and He can do whatever He wants whether it scares someone or not. The Lord wanted to teach the disciples a lesson on this day, and that is that He is greater than the storms of life, amen? And He is bigger than the winds and the waves you see around Him. When the story begins, the disciples are afraid of all that. When it ends, they're scared of Him.

It's important to remember because we're all guilty of fearing the storms of life too much, right? Just like the disciples, we have a tendency to let them get us down more than we should. If you don't believe me, look at the Olympics and tell me, what did it do for you? Got you down, didn't it? I just wanted to watch a sporting event instead. What do you see? Look at the opening ceremonies, and they're blaspheming God because they're treating the Lord's Supper like this one big LGBT event. It's disturbing. It makes you say, “Is the world out of control right now?” The answer is that it's not because of Christ. This world is exactly where He wants it to be because He is the Lord, and He's the one ruling over it all. So you can trust Him, which is what this is talking about. In this passage, Jesus is going to overcome the greatest power known to man, and that is the force of nature itself to show you there's nothing He can't handle. Storms of life, He can handle it. Wind and the waves, He can handle it. The opening ceremonies of the Olympics where people paint God out to be pro-homosexual, He can handle that because He's the king of the universe. The Bible says all things have been created through Christ and for Christ.

I don't know about you, but I don't know where I would be if I didn't believe it. This world is just too crazy right now. Get up in the morning, you worry about things. Go to bed at night, you worry. It's just worry all day long. This story reminds you it doesn't have to be that way as a believer; Jesus Christ is in control. This is something the Lord showed the disciples earlier in Mark 4 when He stopped the storm over the Sea of Galilee. Now He's going to do it again. In fact, if you're looking at this passage and you're going to tell yourself, “This sounds familiar, Pastor Jeremy.” That's because it is. We've actually covered a similar miracle before because Jesus did the same thing on multiple occasions so He could drive the point home that He's seated on the throne, and nothing can take Him off.

That's what we're going to talk about this morning by looking at several features from this miracle of Jesus walking on water. By the way, isn't it nice that Jesus repeats this for the disciples. Has Jesus in

your life, ever had to repeat a lesson to you multiple times before you've got it? It's encouraging that He does this. If you're taking notes. This is the outline in Mark 6:45 and following, we're going to look at several features from the miracle of Jesus walking on water.

The first one is that it begins with the disciples' dilemma. So the first feature from the miracle of Jesus walking on water is that it begins with the disciples' dilemma because they are in a storm. In other words, it doesn't start with them walking through calm and peaceful waters. They're in turbulent ones. And as we get into that, let me give you some background. Verse 45 says, "Immediately, Jesus made His disciples get into the boat and go ahead of Him to the other side of Bethsaida while He himself was sending the crowd away. Now that's a passage that has puzzled some, because Bethsaida is a village located on the eastern side of the Sea of Galilee. But if you look down in your Bibles, in verse 53 it says they were crossing over to the land of Gennesaret, which is located on the west. If you're trying to figure out what that's about, how they can go west and east at the same time, some scholars have said there could have been two towns given that name at this point in history, one on the eastern side, one on the west, because the term Bethsaida means house of fish, and the sea of Galilee was known for its fishing industry. So it would only be fitting that there would be several places that could have been called by that name, not just one.

But either way, a key word here is the word "made" because it implies that Jesus forced the disciples to go there when they didn't really want to. They had just seen Him feed the 5,000; they had watched the crowds go crazy over that. They wanted more of it, more of the attention, more of the fame that comes with a miracle like that. But Jesus didn't, so he stuck them in the boat to get them away. And it says that

And after saying goodbye to them, He left for the mountain to pray.

When it was evening, the boat was in the middle of the sea, and He was alone on the land. Seeing them straining at the oars—for the wind was against them

I want to stop and say a few words about that for a moment because in order to understand what's happening here, you have to understand the Sea of Galilee, which we've talked about a lot in this series. It seems like every other page we're coming across this particular location, but the Sea of Galilee is a body of water located in the northern part of Israel that the Bible refers to as a sea, but it was more like a lake. In fact, it referred to it as several things. It's called the Sea of Galilee because it was situated in the province of Galilee. It's called the Sea of Tiberius, after the Roman emperor Tiberius. And it's called Lake Kinneret, which is a Hebrew term that means harp because this body of water was laid out in a harp-like shape that's very wide at the top, and it gets narrower as you go down. Does that all sound familiar? We've talked about that before because we've studied this body of water. And as we've done that, we've learned it's pretty safe on most days because it's not too deep. It's about 200 feet deep at the lowest. But the problem with the Sea of Galilee is that it's one of the lowest freshwater lakes on Earth, and it's surrounded on several sides by mountains, which makes it rest in a bowl. So as the sun heats up

the lake and the hot air rises, it would hit the cooler air coming down from the mountains nearby, causing an instant storm to appear out of nowhere on the water, especially at night. If you've ever read the gospels before, you might get the impression the disciples were really bad sailors, right? Because they're always in the midst of a storm. Well, that's not the case. Everybody got caught in a storm on the Sea of Galilee. You couldn't avoid it.

Now to be clear, this passage does not say they were caught in a rainstorm. It was more like a windstorm to the point that they're straining, or, in some versions, it could say literally torturing themselves over the oars, in Greek, because the wind was against them. So the picture is they're just doing this across the lake, trying to make headway. If you want to write the verse down, John 6:18 says that a mega wind was against them. In my studies, I found several scholars describe it as a wind of epic proportions. It was like a tempest out on the water. I've told you before that Todd Bolin, who served as a professor at the Master's University campus in Israel, said this sort of thing was not unusual. Even today, the Sea of Galilee can be transformed into a boiling cauldron. As recently as 1992 a storm was reported with waves on the sea 10 feet high. Can you imagine a storm hitting Harrison lake with waves 10 feet high? It would be catastrophic.

It's made worse when you consider what the disciples are in because verse 47 says they're in a boat, probably a fisherman's boat because that's what several of them did for a living. They caught fish in a vessel that would have been a little larger than two pickup truck's worth in size. In fact, verse 47 doesn't call it a boat, but calls it the boat. You see that word there? It means that this is the same boat Jesus used to go to the place where He fed the 5,000 because the idea is that after the miracle is over, the disciples just pile into it again and set off in the midst of this catastrophe.

At the command of Christ, by the way. And you need to see that. It means that Jesus is the one who put them into the danger because sometimes Christ takes His people through things like this; He puts them in winds of epic proportions. I think this would have been shocking to the disciples because so far, they've had a nice day. They fed the 5,000, they've gotten to pass out the bread and the loaves. By the way, a lot of the disciples were from towns around the Sea of Galilee, so they would have known the people that they're feeding on that day. They might have become Hometown Heroes. Pat 'em on the back. "Way to go, guys. You're following the right leader here in Jesus." And now what happens? The Lord puts them into the jaws of death.

Makes you wonder why, doesn't it? What's going on? Well, the answer is because He wanted to show them you can't expect everything to go easy for you if you follow Christ. There are days when it's going to look like this. I mean, it's easy to follow Christ when the winds of life are smooth, right? It's fun to do it when everything's easy, but it's hard when it's not, and that's what this is talking about. You gotta do both as a believer. One mentor of mine once said, "We don't need any more powder puff Christians who are here today and gone tomorrow because they back down at the first sign of trouble. We need men and

women with a little grit in their grace.” And here the Lord is showing the disciples how to get a little gritty. He’s using this event to toughen them up.

The truth is this will not be the last time they'll suffer as disciples. It'll happen again. Eventually, all these men will be arrested for Jesus’ sake, or killed, thrown out of synagogues, shunned by the community. disowned by friends, and in a sense, this is like a training ground for them. It'll teach them that when this happens, Jesus Christ will take care of you. It's the same way for us. Why are some of you going through a storm right now? It's so you can learn that Jesus Christ will take care of you. Why is He letting you suffer? Why did you have a nice day and then all of a sudden, you're in the jaws of death? It's so you will know that He won't let anything happen outside of His will. It's been said it's not about the size of the storm that matters. It's about the size of the one getting in the boat. He's greater than everything, and that's all that you need to know.

By the way, some people have a hard time getting their minds around all this because they think, if you trust in Jesus, He'll never put you in a storm. And if you follow Christ, He'll make you healthy, wealthy and wise. He'll give you your best life now, that sort of thing If you think that way, I want you to tell me something. Where did the disciples get their best life now, in this story? And as they're straining against the wind and doing this and this, where did they become healthy, wealthy and wise? They just got soaking wet and terrified because sometimes that's what following Jesus is like.

And all this brings you to another feature from this miracle of Christ walking on water, and that is the Saviour’s deliverance. So far, we've seen the disciples’ dilemma. Now the second feature is the good news, the Saviour’s deliverance because after showing us how Christ put the disciples into the storm, Mark now shows you how He got them out of it. And if you've ever read this passage before, you'll know the Lord does the most peculiar thing now in verse 48 when it says that after seeing the disciples straining at the oars for the wind was against them. And about the fourth watch of the night, Jesus came to them without a boat. In other words, He didn't come to them in a boat. He appears on His own without any vessel whatsoever.

Just to show you how He does this when it says, Jesus appeared at about the fourth watch of the night. That would have been somewhere between three o'clock and six o'clock a.m. because in the Old Testament, the Jews divided the night into three watches. Once the Romans took over Israel, they divided it into four. That's why, when you're reading about the watches of the nights sometimes it's a little bit confusing. But for example, in the Roman system, the first watch of the night would have been somewhere between 6 and 9 p.m. The second watch would have been somewhere between 9 p.m. and midnight. The third watch would have been between midnight and 3 a.m. and the fourth watch would have been between 3 a.m. and 6 a.m. Which means the disciples had been straining at their oars for quite a while at this point in time. Verse 45 says that they got into the boat immediately after feeding the 5,000 or immediately after supper time. And now they're still in it in the wee hours of the morning, but they would have been tired. They would have been frustrated. The Gospel of John says they only went a

couple of miles in all that time, all that work for nothing. And it says, now, in order to comfort them, Jesus showed up. It says in the verse here, “walking on the water.” That means that out of the darkness, right in the midst of the storm, with those high waves crashing over Him, however high they were, Jesus set foot on the waves. And He does this across the water.

It says, “He intended to pass them by.” As I studied that phrase, one explanation is that He was not trying to ignore the disciples by passing them by. What's the point in that? He's passing by so they can see Him and invite Him into the boat, which is not how it played out because verse 49 says, instead of doing that, they cried out because they thought they were seeing a ghost. Now, can you blame them? What would you do if you were in their shoes? If you were in a boat after rowing all night, emotionally worked up because again, you had just been through all that feeding of the 5,000, all that excitement, and now you're stuck in the water at three o'clock in the morning and someone came across the waves. What would be your response? “Hey, Jesus, you want to come in?” I don't think so. You would think you were seeing a ghost too. You'd be terrified.

The word “terrified” here is the Greek word *tarassō* which means to be stirred up. That's the kind of impact this had on them. It shook them to the core. They had never seen anything like this before. Nobody had.

That's why the next verse says, “Immediately, Jesus spoke to them and said, ‘Take courage. It's I’”. And that's like Jesus Christ. It means instantly, right away, the Lord spoke up and identified Himself so they wouldn't panic. He didn't wait. He didn't give them time to get even more scared. He talked to them right away and then got in the boat with them, at which point it says the wind stopped.

And that's the second miracle that takes place in the storm. The first one is Him walking across the water. The second one is the wind stopping like that because if you've ever been in a storm before, windstorm, rainstorm, whatever, you know the wind doesn't stop like that. It takes time for it to die, hours, maybe, even quite a long part of the day. But the moment Jesus stepped off the water, everything just went still instantly. In fact, to show you how much power it would take to do this, I looked it up a while ago and found that scientists tracked the creation of storms today through things like satellite imagery and radar data and all that kind of stuff. But the reason storms are so unpredictable is that they can change any moment, and scientists don't really know why. They have some idea because they think it has to do with the rotation of the Earth or maybe the creation of other storms that knock this storm off course. But the point Mark is making here is that in one split second, Jesus Christ overruled all of that to show that He's sovereign. I mean, Christ is Lord over everything here. He's Lord over the boat; that boat could have broken up on the waves. He's Lord over the sea. He's Lord over the wind and the waves and the storm. Everything obeys Him here, and it's a good thing that it does because the disciples are at their breaking point. They just couldn't take this anymore, and Jesus knew it, so He came to them and said, “that's enough.”

There are other times in the Bible when the Lord does this like the story of Job. Remember him? You've all heard of Job. But Job suffered in the Bible. He went through his storms in life, but a time came when the Lord stopped it because He didn't let it go on forever. For Joseph, if you read the Bible, you discover Joseph went through pain as well. He really suffered. His brothers sold him into slavery, but what happened to him? Finally, God put up His hands and said, "That's enough. I'll let it go this far, but no farther, Joseph." That's what Mark is describing here with the 12 apostles. The storm could have gone on longer. Historians tell us storms on the Sea of Galilee could last all night if the conditions are right. Jesus did not let that happen.

If you remember, earlier, it says He saw them straining at the oars. There's no way He could watch that and sit idly by. He was going to move heaven and earth in order to help them. I don't know about you, but I take comfort in this. I don't want a God or a Saviour that's going to look up on a mountain while I struggle on a lake and do nothing. That's not what Jesus did.

When I was preparing for this sermon this week, someone shared with me the story of the time, a missionary lost his wife and daughter because someone murdered them. And at the funeral, "He told the people, I can forgive the culprit because of Christ." He said, "I can't do that on my own. It's too much. But I can do it knowing that He is with me, and I can do all things through Him who gives me strength." Can we all say, Amen to that? The disciples are about to experience this, or they're experiencing it now.

And it brings you to another feature from this miracle of Jesus walking on water, and that is Peter's great display of faith. Gotta talk about that, don't you? The third feature from this miracle of Jesus walking on water is Peter's great display of faith.

I'm not going to ask you to raise your hand to tell me if Peter is one of your favorite people in the Bible, but anytime you talk about that guy, I look out on an audience and people smile. He's so interesting.

And right in the midst of this section that we just talked about, there is another miracle that takes place. If you're keeping count, this is miracle number three, and that is that Peter walks on the water too. I'm sure you've heard of that before. It's a very famous part of the story. It's not found in the Gospel of Mark. It's found in the Gospel of Matthew. So if you want to turn back, just keep your finger in the Gospel of Mark and look back in Matthew 14:26. Yes, good old Peter. It says there in Matthew 14:26

When the disciples saw Him walking on the sea, they were terrified, and said, "It is a ghost!" And they cried out in fear. But immediately Jesus spoke to them, saying, "Take courage, it is I; do not be afraid."

Peter responded and said to Him,

And when you see the name Peter, it's gotta set off alarm bells for you. He was a leader of the 12 apostles. That's why He talks so much in the Bible. His name meant rock. But that's not all he was called. He was also known by the name Simon, which means reed. And those two things basically summed up what Simon Peter was all about. Sometimes he could be a reed; sometimes he could be a rock, depending on the circumstances. He was firm and he was fickle. Anybody relate to that? Do you have your days when you're kind of one way or the other? He would fall asleep in the Garden of Gethsemane and deny Jesus three times. But this is also the same guy that would leap out of the boat and swim to Him after the resurrection because he couldn't wait for the boat to get to shore. Gotta love him. And here you see him jumping out of the boat again. Poor guy couldn't stay in the boat. But before doing that, he says to Jesus, "Lord," if you look in your Bibles here, "Lord, if it's You command me to come."

Because it's dark outside. Can't see very well. Disciples are probably worn out, maybe not trusting their own vision and hearing and all these types of things. They just said that they thought He was a ghost. So Peter says, "Okay, Lord, if it's You, if this is true, let me join You." So Jesus says one word in Greek, it's the word *erchomai*. In Spanish, you would say *vamos*. In Hebrew, you would say *yala*, come let's go, get on with it, Peter. I don't know about you, but in my mind's eye, every time I've read this story, I almost see Jesus holding out His hand for Peter to grab, and Peter just starts going toward it while the storm is still raging. That's the most interesting part of this. We're going back in time for a moment when the wind and the waves have not calmed down. They calm down when Jesus gets in the boat; they don't calm down when Peter steps out of it. But he doesn't care. He rushes towards Jesus anyway. Says so much about his faith. And at first, everything's fine. No problems. Walking on the water. But verse 30 says the moment he sees the wind, he becomes frightened, and he begins to sink, and he cries out, "Lord, save me."

I want you to notice what Jesus does. It's so beautiful. He says, "Peter, you moron. I can't save you because you don't believe anymore." What? He doesn't say that. The word moron is a Greek word for fool, by the way. So if you think that's not biblical, it is a biblical term. Instead, He says, "Oh, Peter, I would love to help you, but I can't. You're not trying hard enough. You need to work harder." He says, "Peter, I would be happy to help you, but you have to be a better person first and go to church and read your Bibles and pray." None of that. It says, "Immediately," before Peter had time to sink further, "Jesus reached out with His hand and took hold of him, and said to him, 'You of little faith, why did you doubt?'" And that means that Jesus delivered him in spite of all of Peter's faults, but not without a rebuke. And the rebuke goes like this, "You can't take your eyes off of Me, Peter because when you do this is what happens. You'll drown."

Personally, I think this is the most moving part of all this because I think this is a rebuke for all of us, and that is that so long as you keep your eyes fixed on Christ, you're fine. The moment you start looking at the wind and the waves and your feet, it's over. You don't overcome the storms of life in your own strength. You do it in His, so you have to keep your mind pointed towards Him.

I think this is something that would have been stamped onto Peter's brain after this. I don't think he ever would have forgotten this. As he crawled back into the boat, the poor man had to be thinking, "What happened? One moment I was fine. The next moment I'm not. One second, I'm heading toward Jesus, and it's great. The next one, I'm plunging underneath the waves. Why? Because I stopped looking at this, and I started looking at that." It never works in the Christian life.

How many of us do this? I mean, we go to church and hear a sermon. What do we do afterwards? We go home and look at our feet. Or we wake up in the morning and have our quiet time with the Lord and what happens next? We sink into the waves because we get so distracted with the Olympics or the news. This is a reminder that you can't do that. It's dangerous. It's been said it doesn't take much effort to sink. All you have to do is sink. Just let yourself go, and you'll fall into the water. The effort comes in not sinking, and that can only be accomplished through the sovereign hand of God.

Because again, if you look back in verse 31 it says God was truly sovereign and gracious in the life of Peter because after he failed, Jesus picked him up. He wanted to show him mercy like He does for you and me, if you cry out to Him.

I mention that because some of you may be listening to this right now and it's convicting you because you say, "That's me, Pastor, Jeremy, I've taken my eyes off the Lord. I'm drowning right now. My love for Him is ebbing away." Okay, I get it. We've all been there. Let me tell you what you do in order to fix it. You need to cry out to Christ. You don't have to earn it. Peter didn't earn it. You don't have to do something special. You throw yourself on the mercy of God. All this man could do was cry. By the way it reads you, you kind of wonder if he could swim. I think he could. Most of the fishermen could. The way they would do their fishing operations, swimming was part of that, but he's plunging down. But he did call out to the Lord, and it was enough to deliver him. Don't ever buy the lie you have to be good enough for God to save you. You just have to be desperate, humble and go to Him.

And that brings us to one more feature from this miracle of the Lord walking on water. That's quite a miracle. I mean, just to review the other ones, so far, we've seen the disciples' dilemma, and we've seen the Saviour's deliverance. We've looked at Peter's great display of faith, and it is a great display. I don't think there's anything else like it in Scripture. In fact, the Bible records a lot of miracles involving water. I think this one's the greatest. For instance, Moses parted the Red Sea, and he brought water out of a rock when he led the people of Israel, but he never walked on water. It's unheard of. That's why the disciples are so surprised by this.

And it brings us to a final feature of the miracle, and that is the disciples' spiritual dullness. So a fourth and final feature from this miracle of Jesus walking on water is the disciples' spiritual dullness because the miracle did blow them away because they still had yet to realize what Christ had come to do, and that was anything He wanted to do because He's God.

And in order to see this one, you need to turn back to the Gospel of Mark with me. You can look at the end of this section in chapter 6:51. So if you look in Mark 6:51 this is how Mark rounds off the story. After all these other events, it says that Jesus got into the boat with them, and the wind stopped, and the disciples were astonished. Now that doesn't mean that the disciples are astonished by the storm because the storm's over. And that doesn't mean they're surprised by the waves. They're surprised by Christ because the power He just displayed.

And I haven't said too much about the disciples at this point in the story, but I want to do that now. We've talked about them before, but it always helps to review who it was that's in the boat with Jesus. Let me tell you a few of them. James and John were in there, to whom He gave the name, Boanerges, which means Sons of Thunder because that's what they were like. They were thunderous individuals who didn't have a timid bone in their body. Then one of the disciples was Andrew in the boat, Simon Peter's brother, who was a fisherman. Doesn't mean he was a recreational fisherman, but Andrew and Peter and James and John, they're commercial fishermen who made a living on this water. They were very familiar with this sea. This was not the first storm they encountered on the Sea of Galilee. There was Philip on the boat, Bartholomew, Matthew, Thomas, James, the son of Alphaeus and Thaddeus. Last of all, there was Simon the Zealot and Judas, who were all a tough people in their own right. This is Simon the Zealot, not Simon the cupcake. He was a terrorist. They were hard men living in hard times.

I tell you that, because you often get the impression of the disciples that they were a bunch of bumbling idiots and cowards who backed down at the slightest sign of danger. They were not. They were people who stared death in the face on a regular basis, most people did back then. But in spite of all this, verse 51 says they are astonished by this. And not just astonished, they're utterly astonished because verse 52 says, "For they had not gained any insight from the incident of the loaves. That means that while they had just seen Jesus do a staggering miracle a few hours before this when He fed the 5,000, it didn't register with them because they were slow to understand what it truly meant. And that is that if Christ can do things like that, He can do anything. There are no limits to His sovereignty.

Earlier in the Gospel of Mark, it says Jesus stopped another storm right after healing the sick, raising the dead, casting out demons, causing the lame to walk again, and the blind again to see. And the disciples saw things like that on a regular basis, but unfortunately, a lot of it just seemed to go right over their heads. The end of the verse here says their hearts were hardened in all this, and that's not because they didn't believe. The Gospel of Matthew says they did believe. They were just slow to come to grips with this.

And before we're too hard on them, let me just say they're not alone in that. Anybody here ever been slow to come to grips with something as far as Jesus Christ is concerned? How many of you have ever been guilty of coming into a room like this and letting things pass over your heads? You read the Bible; it passes over your heads. You pray prayers in the church that does that too. What's the solution? The

solution is to take a cue from this story, and you need to be blown away by the glories of Christ. The Lord wants you to look at the storm. He wanted the disciples to look at the storm and say that it's nothing in comparison to Him.

When the story is over, it's obvious which is bigger: Jesus or the waves. Jesus is. He's always bigger. He's the one who makes everything bow in the passage. The winds bow to Him, the waves bow to Him. By the time you come to the final part of verse 52, nature is bowing to Christ. So are the disciples. By the way, one day every knee will bow to Jesus. You know that? Philippians 2 says that God highly exalted Him that at the name of Jesus Christ, every knee will bow. And that means that one day every saved knee will bow, and every unsaved knee will bow, every Christian need will do it along with every non-Christian, Muslim, Buddhist, and transgender person at the Olympics. That's why we don't have to worry about that so much. It's not because it doesn't matter. It does matter. It's just that this world is not going to submit to that ultimately; it submits to Him. That's what makes Jesus so astonishing here.

But the truth is that He's not just astonishing. He's good and gracious and kind. He's loving and patient and gentle, and He's willing to save and pick up anyone who's drowning beneath the waves.

In fact, that's what you will see in the next story in the Gospel of Mark. If you look down in verse 53 it tells us that after all this trouble, the disciples do eventually cross over the sea of Galilee into the land of Gennesaret. That's where they were trying to get to. They do end up arriving there. And while they're there, Mark goes on to say that Jesus meets lots of people, and He heals every single one of them who comes to Him with their problems, in order to remind us that no matter how deep your problems go, His grace is deeper still. And if you want to know more about that, unfortunately, we won't be able to get into it next Sunday. That will be my last sermon here at Grace. I want to take the time to study something else, but I would encourage you to open your Bibles and read it if you have a free moment; it'd be a real blessing to you to see what Christ does next.

And with that said, going back to the way we started this, I don't know if you could tell this or not, but this passage was really gripping to me. I don't think you can study Jesus walking on the water without being gripped by it. Because I told you the story of that Hindu holy man, Rao, who claimed he couldn't do miracles without people's help. I do think a lot of people approach the Lord that way. They think their salvation is dependent upon them. One wrong move and you're in the water. The Bible doesn't say that. The Bible says salvation is all of God. The Reformers used to say salvation is *sola fide, sola Christus* – by faith alone, in Jesus Christ alone, and the key word is alone. Salvation is not faith plus works. It's not faith plus sacraments. It's not faith plus the Mass, faith plus the Pope, faith plus whatever. It's Faith plus nothing, it's entirely reliant on grace. Do you believe that today? I pray that you would after studying this.

There's no greater message I could leave you with this morning. Let's close our time in a word of prayer.

Heavenly Father, we come to You this morning thanking You for the story that we've just learned about in the life of the Lord Jesus Christ. Father, when we look at water, the one thing that we know about water is that if You put Your foot on it, You would sink. Nobody walks on water. Nobody makes someone else walks on water like Peter did, but Your Son, the Lord Jesus Christ is not nobody. He is the Son of God. This story confirms it undeniably. Thank You for the power of it.

I do pray for any who are here this morning, who are struggling. Struggling with their sins, struggling with anxiety, depression, lust, pride, whatever it is, that they would know Christ is a great deliverer. He is that great of a Saviour. Lord, thank You for that and we rejoice in that.

Father, thank You for what the Lord Jesus Christ has done in the lives of the people here at Grace Fellowship Church. As I look at the faces that have been looking back at me, I think Lord, of all the testimonies of them. Some of them have been baptized in recent years. Some of them were saved many years ago, but by Your mercies, they're still walking with You. That's all because of Christ. That's not because of them, Lord, the power comes from You, not from us. So we want You to receive all the glory.

And as we turn our attention this morning to a vote, we pray Your will would be done, Father, thank You for the time Jory Nunn had with this church, I heard so many good things, but Lord, we commit this to You. We pray that Your glory would be done. I pray that each member would vote according to conscience and glorify You. We pray this in Jesus' name, amen.