



## BELIEVERS CHAPEL

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The Sermons of S. Lewis Johnson

John 6:15-21; Matthew 14:22-33

"The Walking on the Water"

TRANSCRIPT

[Message] We're turning for our Scripture reading to John chapter 6 verse 15 through verse 21. And I'd like to also read the parallel account in the Gospel of Matthew chapter 14 as part of our discussion. In John chapter 6 and verse 15 through verse 21 the apostle gives us his account of our Lord walking upon the water. And the subject for the message this morning will be "The Walking on the Water". Will you give attention as we read first the account in the Gospel of John and then we will turn to Matthew chapter 14 and read verse 22 through verse 33?

"When Jesus therefore perceived that they would come and take him by force to make him a king he departed again into a mountain, himself alone. And when evening was now come his disciples went down unto the sea, and entered into a boat and went over the sea toward Capernaum. And it was now dark and Jesus was not come unto them. And the sea arose by reason of a great wind that blew. So when they had rode about five and twenty or thirty furlongs they see Jesus walking on the sea and drawing near unto the boat and they were afraid. But he said unto them, 'It is I. Be not afraid.'"

Now John only gives two points to our Lord's message. We know that all good sermons have at least three points. Matthew tells us that he said, "Be of good cheer. It is I, be not afraid." Although for budding homeliticians they are not alliterated and therefore not nearly so effective as some think

they ought to be. "Then they willingly received him into the boat and immediately the boat was at the land to which they went."

Now, will you turn over to Matthew chapter 14. And will you listen as I read beginning at verse 22 through verse 33?

"And straightway Jesus constrained his disciples to get into a boat and to go before him unto the other side while he sent the multitudes away. And when they had sent the multitudes away he went up into a mountain privately to pray, and when the evening was come he was there alone. But the boat was now in the midst of the sea tossed with ways for the wind was contrary. And in the fourth watch of the night Jesus went unto them walking on the sea. And when the disciples saw him walking on the sea they were troubled saying, 'It is a ghost,' and they cried out for fear. But straightway Jesus spoke unto them saying, 'Be of good cheer. It is I. Be not afraid.' And Peter answered him and said, 'Lord, if it be thou bid me come unto thee on the water.' And he said, 'Come.' And when Peter was come down out of the boat he walked on the water to go to Jesus. But when he saw the wind boisterous he was afraid and beginning to sink he cried saying, 'Lord, save me.'"

A prayer that is obviously greatly in contrast with the prayers that we pray Sunday morning out of the pulpits across our land and the Christian churches. You can see I'm a bit feisty this morning.

[Laughter] We pray, "O, thou great God that dwellest amidst the cheribum, etcetera, etcetera, etcetera." And someone has said if better had prayed a prayer like we pray Sunday morning he would have been six feet under before he had gotten out his petition. [Laughter]

Short prayers are very useful and therefore we should not disdain short prayers.

"'Lord, save me.' And immediately Jesus stretched forth his hand, and caught him and said unto him, 'Oh, thou of little faith. Why didst thou doubt?' And when they were come into the boat the wind

ceased. Then they that were in the boat came and worshipped him saying, 'Of a truth thou art the Son of God.'"

That's one of the important goals that God has in the experiences that he gives us to bring us to the place where we respond in that way. May the Lord bless this reading of his word.

The subject this morning is "The Walking Upon the Water". I think if I were to try to sum up what is being taught in this section it would be very simply summed up as our Lord as the source and support of life, as not only the giver of life but the God of life as well. When we look at the context in which the account is found both here and in the Gospel of John, the passage that we read in our Scripture reading, and then in the Gospel of Matthew, the other passage that we reading our Scripture reading, we notice that the account of the walking and the water is given just after the account of the feeding of the five thousand in both places. And since the passage that has to do with the feeding of the five thousand is expounded by our Lord in the sermon that follows in John 6. And he lays great stress upon the fact that he's the bread of God which has come down from heaven to give life to the world. It seems that the emphasis that he put is upon our Lord as the source of life and as the giver of life. But also in the account there are some indications of the fact that he is not only to be regarded as the source of life and the giver of life, but as the support of which he gives and the guide of the life which he gives. And one notices that in John chapter 6 and verse 53 when he addresses the men with whom he's speaking he says to them, "Verily, verily I say unto you except ye eat the flesh of the son of man and drink his blood ye have not life in you." And he uses tense for eating and drinking that refer to these acts as events. And that would be very suitable for the saving eating of his flesh and the saving drinking of his blood.

But he goes on to say in verse 56, "He that eateth my flesh and drinketh my blood dwelleth in me and I in him." And since the tenses change here from the past tense to the present tense, which speaks of continual action, it just be may be that he's talking about the Lord as now the

support of life, and the guide of life, and the sustainer of life so that in being the bread of life he is the bread of life by which we come into the experience of salvation. But as we feed upon him constantly thereafter he is the sustainer of our life as well.

Now, these two incidents beautifully illustrate that for the feeding of the five thousands suggests him as the one who is the giver of life, and then our walking upon and saving the disciples in the midst of the extremity in which they found themselves in the midst of that storm illustrates for us the fact that the Lord Jesus not only simply saves us for heaven but cares for us in the meantime. And this also is, I think, supported by the fact that we have special attention directed to the great multitude. And the first sign of the sixth chapter we read in verse 2, "And a great multitude followed him because they see his miracles which he did on those who were deceased." So that miracle is a miracle that has relationship to the multitudes of men whereas the second miracle, the walking on the water, is specifically a miracle directed toward the disciples. So one of the signs illustrates our Lord as the Savior who is the bread of God, and when we partake of him we have eternal life. The other miracle, the one we are to look at now, is one that illustrates the fact that having come to know him as Savior we can count upon caring for us in the midst of the experiences of life for in verse 16 we note that this is something that concerns the disciples alone.

There is an old proverb to the effect that man's extremity is God's opportunity. That is quite true because when we are in the extremities of our life it is an opportunity for God to finally speak to us. We don't give him much opportunity to speak it seems until we are in the extremities of life. But we could turn that proverb around and put it this way, that man's extremity is man's opportunity for finding God. And the apostles I'm sure would say, "Well, there is certainly truth in that and when we learned it when we were in the midst of that storm because our extremity was our opportunity for finding out something else about Jesus Christ that we had not fully comprehended to that point -- and it was that he was truly the Son of God."

Well, the situation is very plain. Our Lord has performed the miracle of the feeding of the five, or the fifteen thousand as we have been saying. At the conclusion of the miracle and a great

impression was made upon that multitude so much so that some of them said, "This is of the truth, that prophet that should come into the world." Others said, "Well, it may be that he's that prophet that should come into the world but it's possible that he is the messianic king that we have been anticipating." And so some of them wanted to come and take him by force and make him the king of the Jews. Now, they did understand, of course, the kind of king that he would be and that's why our Lord refused their coming to him to take him to be a king. He knew that they thought of him at this point only as a king who would give bread to everybody or as a king who deliver them from the Roman yolk. They did not yet understand that it was necessary for him, in order to become king, to die as the atoning sacrifice for sinners. And so our Lord, perceiving that they did not understand and that they wanted to make him the wrong kind of king, forced or constrained. Matthew says, "Constrained the disciples to get into a boat and to go over towards Capernaum." They were evidently on the northeastern side of the lake up on the hill where the great multitude had been. And then he sent the multitude away and sent the disciples back by boat, and he himself went up into a mountain to pray. And I'm sure that he must have gone up into the mountain to pray that the things that were transpiring in his ministry would continue to transpire. And particularly that some in the multitude and the disciples, I guess especially, would come to understand that he would be a king true but a king by virtue of the saving work of the cross.

After the cross took place he said, "Oh fools and slow of heart to believe all that the prophets have written, ought not Messiah to have suffered these things and then to enter into his glory." Those who think that our Lord came to offer a kingdom apart from a cross sadly misunderstand the biblical record. Those, on the other hand, who say that our Lord came to offer himself on the cross and did not ever intend that there should be a kingdom of God upon the earth are just as sadly mistaken. Our Lord came bringing a kingdom but his kingdom was a kingdom that would come by means of a cross. And since they did not understand that, and when they wanted to make him a king he refused the offer and went up into the mountain alone to pray.

Now of course, the Lord Jesus knew everything that was going to transpire on that little Sea of Galilee while he went up into a mountain to pray. And so the darkness of the night came and the storm began to arise on the Sea of Galilee. You can, I think in reading the accounts of men who spent a great deal of time in the holy land, understand what must have taken place. One of the authors of a book on the geography of the holy land describes experiences that he had while he was there. He camped out in the midst of the *Wateshucalyef* [phonetic] which slopes to the north and east of the Sea of Galilee. And he describes what happened one evening when the sun had scarcely gone down. The wind began to rush down toward the lake. The reason for this is that the breezes off of the Mediterranean came across that part of the land and due to the different temperatures of the wind currents caused storms to come down those wadies on the lake and they would strike the lake with tremendous force. It's not a very big lake, as all of you who have seen it know. But nevertheless there can be some tremendous storms and one of these men describes it saying that, "The wind began to rush down toward the lake and it continued all night with increasingly constant violence so that when they reached the shore the next morning the face of the lake was like a boiling caldron. The wind howled down every wadi from the northeast and east with such fury that no efforts of oars of boats could have possibly brought those boats to land. So you can imagine something of the experience that the disciples had.

Now, they were individuals who knew that lake like the back of their hands. In fact, many of them made their livelihood by fishing on that lake. And so when they become afraid from fishing on the lake in the storm you know that it was a tremendous storm. Why did the Lord Jesus send them out in it? Well, there is a time when he must make us learn what it is to trust him. Earlier he had been in the boat with them in the midst of a storm, and remember he had stood up in the midst of it and calmed the storm. When they came back and appealed to him, "Master save us or we perish," he had brought calm on the sea. But he had been with them and they learned that there was no sinking as long as Jesus was on board. But now he's going to thrust them forth into the danger by

themselves like some loving mother bird thrusts her fledglings from the nest that they may find their own wings and learn to use them.

A few weeks ago in our backyard we heard a lot of squawking of jays, and discovering what was transpiring -- one of the little jays was learning to fly. And so all of the other jays were around making all kinds of jaybird noise, and evidently perhaps to protect the little bird, perhaps to encourage it. They were saying, "Come on. Come on. Don't do that. Do this." I translated for Martha. [Laughter] She doesn't know jay language. But anyway, that's what they were doing. The little bird was not trying to fly, to make its way by itself. And in a much deeper sense, of course, this was what was happening to the disciples. The Lord has gone up in the mountain to pray for them and he had thrust them out to give them what someone has called "threshing fuse that throw the world," which means something like "muscles that enable you to get along in the experiences of life". Difficulties make men of us. Some are sailors yachting in smooth water, have neither the joy of conflict nor the vigor that it gives. And consequently God, desiring that we grown in spiritual life and spiritual experience, sends tests and trials to us.

Well, it's interesting that he left them out on the lake for a considerable period of time because our text says that it was -- well, let's see, "When they had rode about five and twenty or thirty furlongs they saw Jesus walking on the water but there had been a storm coming and it was in the third watch of the night that Jesus finally came to them." Now, I said third. It was the fourth watch of the night. Mark tells us that. It's not in this account but in Mark chapter 6 and verse 48 Mark says it was in the fourth watch of the night. Now, the fourth watch of the night was from three in the morning to six in the morning. And so evidently the winds had come down those wadies on the lake and they had been in the midst of that storm for a number of hours. And then finally reaching, perhaps, the point at which they were just about to fail to make it the Lord Jesus comes walking on the water. One might ask, "Why does Jesus delay?" Well, that's one of his characteristics. One might have asked that when the news came that Lazarus had died. Jesus knew he had died. He told the apostles that before they went see Mary, and Martha and the family. But he waited until Lazarus

not only was dead by actually had been buried. He did not go because there were certain things that they had to learn and they had to learn that he was the resurrection and the life, as the account points out.

So he often delays. That's why when you pray in the midst of your difficulties there does not seem to be any answer. It's not that he is not answering your prayer. He's answering it in the way that you need it to be answered and so he delayed. One might ask, "Why was Peter put in prison?" Well, he was put in prison that he might learn some things about the Lord God that he was kept by the power of God through faith unto salvation. And later on he writes about the experiences in his epistle that he learned from some of these very experiences that we read about in the Gospels. So the Lord came walking on the water.

Now, Jewish people did not like the sea. That's because they were landlocked people and consequently there are all kinds of stories about the popular belief of Jewish people concerning unusual apparitions on the sea. So I think you can see that when the apostles in the midst of the storm which was trying all of their skills and probably had brought them to the place where they thought, "There is probably no more hope and we're sure to go under." They look off in the distance and there is the Lord Jesus walking to them. Evidently he had on white flowing robes because when they looked out they thought it was a ghost. And the text says they cried out or they screeched. The Greek word may be translated, "They screeched, 'It's a ghost.' And they thought, 'Surely we are heading for Davey Jone's locker.'" [Laughter]

But the Lord Jesus called out to them with that three-point sermon. "Be of good cheer. It is I. Be not afraid." And I notice the order of those words. I'm not going to expound his sermon. It's too plain and obvious. It's like a good sermon ought to be; plain and obvious. "Be of good cheer. It is I." Literally simply – *ego eimi* "I am." or, "I am he." In fact, it is likely -- there is some debate over this and some justifiable debate -- it is likely that it means, "I am he, the Yahweh of the Old Testament, the one who said to Moses centuries before, 'As for my name, I am who I am.'" By the way, the reason that that is likely is that the time of the year was the Passover and in the Passover



ritual of that time great stress was made in the Passover ritual of the Jews upon the fact that they were celebrating the messianic king. And further, Isaiah chapter 43 and verse 1 and verse 2 -- verse 2 particularly was part of their ritual and in Isaiah 43:2 we read, "When thou passes through the waters I will be with thee." And this is the chapter and in which we have a reference to, "I am he" as the name of Yahweh. "When thou passes though the waters I will be with thee, and through the rivers they shall not overflow thee." So here is our Lord passing through the waters and he is going to be with them, and it is a visible illustration of that which they celebrated in the Passover ritual at that time, "I am with you." And when he said, "Be of good cheer, I am (or I am he)" it was his way of saying, "I am the Messiah therefore because of that do not fear." I don't know whether the writer of the Epistle to the Hebrews had any of this in mind but he said something very similar when he said concerning the Lord Jesus Christ. He said that he has said, "I will never leave thee nor forsake thee so that we may boldly say therefore, "The Lord is my helper and I will not fear what man shall do unto me." Because he says, "I will never leave thee nor forsake thee we can say, 'We don't have to fear what men will do unto us.'" So the Lord said, "Be of good cheer. It is I. Be not afraid."

Well, Peter got a lovely idea at this point. "He's off in the distance there. Why don't I walk to him and meet him?" And so he said, "If it be thou bid me come on the water to thee." And the Lord Jesus called out, "Come." And Peter clamored out of that boat and began to walk on the water. And mind you it was still storming. It was not until our Lord came in the boat, we read in the other accounts, that things became calm. So he got out and he walked in the midst of these waves that must have been of considerable height. He walked so close to our Lord that when he began to sink all Jesus had to do was just to reach out his hand and take him. So it was a magnificent miracle on Peter's part brought about by the fact that he looked to the author and finisher of this faith, the Lord Jesus.

Now it's very striking, of course, that Peter was able to do this. But there are some lessons in it that perhaps we miss if we don't think about it for a little bit. You know, this is a wonderful little description of how believers may still doubt. Some believers occasionally have disturbed about

their salvation because they find that after they become a Christian they have problems with doubt. Well, he lovingly deals with doubt. He never approves of it. He will in a moment talk about the fact that they had little faith, and we ought to have great faith. But nevertheless, the facts are we have to grow.

Now, Peter's little incident here is a kind of sermon on doubt in a believer's life. And will you notice that it is Peter who produces his own doubt. Because he said, "Lord, if it be thou bid me come on the water to thee." Jesus said, "Come." He got out of the boat. He walked to our Lord. He performed a tremendous miracle. But when he got very near the presence of the Lord, the Bible doesn't tell us this but knowing human beings incidentally I disagree with what the pope said yesterday. He said, "I believe in all mankind." Well, I believe in all mankind too but just the opposite way. All mankind are sinners. And evidently the Lord Jesus does too because he said that he would not commit himself. The apostles say, "He would not commit himself to anyone because he knew what was in the heart of men."

Well Peter, when he got close to our Lord, must have thought, "You know? Here I am soon to be the Bishop of Rome and I'm doing very well thank you. Look at me right out in the midst of this tremendous storm and I'm walking on the water. This tremendous storm -- and when he looked out and saw the winds and the waves boisterous fear struck him immediately and he began to sink. And that's when he cried out, "Lord, save me."

Now, who created Peter's doubt? Why, he created his own doubt. He look at the waves. Incidentally, the Lord Jesus didn't say to him as if to provoke this, "Now, Peter you've done very well but look out." Then he would look and sink. It was not our Lord that brought this about. It was Peter. He brought it about himself. Much of the doubt that we have we bring upon ourselves, we bring upon ourselves by not reading the Scriptures, by not paying attention to what the word of God says, by avoiding the Christians, by doing things we should not be doing, by thinking things that we should not think, by reading things that we should not read, by companying with people we should not company with. And it's not surprising that if we neglect the word of God which is the source of

faith that soon we will develop doubt. And will you notice too that doubts are not necessarily incompatible with faith?

Peter had a basic trust in the Lord; his trust was just not strong. And so our Lord must say as the other accounts put it, "O thou of little faith, why did you doubt?" So he had faith but his faith was little. He had knowledge of the Lord's power. He used his knowledge by walking on the water, but he made a mistake and it's an illustration of what we ought to do and that is to refuse afterthoughts. Now, had already won the battle of the waves once because he won it when he said, "Lord, bid me come to you." And the Lord said, "Come." Peter had seen the storm. "And so in spite of the storm he clamored out of the boat," it said, "and stepped out on the water and began the walk. He had won the victory over the waves. But winning a victory once doesn't necessary mean that we have won it finally and so we should refuse afterthoughts. Think again over the things that we have already come to be victorious over.

And in this I think we can learn one of the characteristics of weak faith. Characteristics of weak faith is a victory and then a defeat, and a victory and a defeat, and a victory and a defeat, and often over the same issue. That was Peter's experience.

And I think we also learn what faith consists in as far as our Christian life is concerned. It consists in steadily looking unto Jesus, the author and finisher of our faith. That was Peter's mistake. What he had begun he had not continued in. We need to realize that what our Lord has done he can finish and will finish. And of course, we need to understand without him we are hopeless. We cannot live on initial faith. We need to grow. We need to feed on the word of God. We need to minister to the faith that he has put in our heart through the Scriptures. If you think because you have won the victory over eternal death by believing in the Lord Jesus Christ and therefore your life will be characterized by victory thereafter -- well, you're going to have some experiences like Peter had in the midst of storm, and thus learn that the faith that we exercise initially in our salvation is to be followed by a steady trust in him as he brings us by his sovereign grace to conformity to the Lord Jesus Christ. But it's hardly likely that that will happen without experiences such as Peter had.

Well, we read that he said unto them, "It is I. Be not afraid," and then they willingly received him into the boat. That's the result of our Lord coming. "And the boat," John says, "was immediately at the land to which they were going." I guess if we were to look back over this we would say that what this illustrates is that contrary elements yield at the divine presence, that he Lord Jesus is the Lord both of the bread and he's the Lord of the billows. He can multiply the one and he can mollify the other. It's one of the greatest things in life to learn to trust in the Lord Jesus Christ and to find a kind of satisfaction of heart in one's relationship to him.

George Morrison, one of the best known of an older generation of Scottish preachers, has told a beautiful story of a friend who used to collect charities in Scottish villages. She went out to collect money for various welfares. And one of the cottages that she had to visit was a cottage of a pious and reverent old woman. Her name was Betty. She was in straightened circumstance but she would have been insulted if the collector of charity had not knocked on her door. And so one day when the girl called -- this had happened before -- Betty was sitting at tea. And when the knock came on the door she got up, she realized what this was about, and as she got up to get her widows might out of the chest she threw an apron hastily over her teacup and invited person in. And as she went to get the money the young lady who was there to collect just out of curiosity lifted up her apron over the teacup. And she look at it and she said, "Why Betty, it isn't tea you've got here. It's water." And she said, "Ay, my dear. It's just water but he makes it taste like wine." Well, that illustrates the fact that he relationship with the Lord Jesus Christ is the important thing, and they have come by this experience to the worship of our Lord.

Let me say just a few words about the significance of this sign. As I look at it one of the things that immediately comes to me is this: it was Jesus who sent the disciples across the sea. I think we can reason from this and conclude that storms are often within the will of God. That is the things that happen to us are things that are sent by the Lord. Mark says he sent them over and this storm is one of the things that was intended by God to come to us. Now, I thought you could bear it I would say that all things that happen to us are sent by him. But I realize that there are some of

you in the audience that might find it very difficult to accept the idea of all things being determined by a loving and merciful God.

Yesterday a young Southern Baptist pastor in this city who has listened to the radio broadcast for about five years off and on, for at one time he listened very intently and then he said due to his own troubles he didn't listen for a time. But he listens every Sunday morning now. And he called me asked me to come by and chat with me. And yesterday I spent two hours with him. A very fine young man, and if you're in the Pleasant Grove area at any time you ought to attend the Oakcrest Baptist Church out there where he is a pastor. He's just a young man. He's a third generation Southern Baptist preacher. His grandfather was a Baptist preacher. His father is a Baptist preacher. And he is a Baptist preacher having graduate from Southwestern Baptist Theological Seminary. He told me yesterday, he said, "You know, you are my pastor." And I had met him previously just briefly, but he said, "You're my pastor because I listen to you every Sunday morning." He said, "We preachers often don't have any pastors and I consider you my pastor."

And he told me an interesting experience. He said in his congregation that have been some who have had difficult accepting the doctrine of the sovereignty of God, and he's been concerned about whether really how he should respond to this. And he told me his experiences. He said that he had studied at Dallas Baptist College in his undergraduate work and there he had come under the influence of a mutual friend who is a very excellent Bible teacher in this city. And when he graduate from the Baptist College here he was given a copy of Spurgeon's lecture to his students. And he said, "I'm a pretty good reader." He said, "I read constantly." He said, "I went home that night after graduation and read half of the book, and the next morning finished it but became very disturbed over the things I read in that book," because of Mr. Spurgeon's stress on the sovereignty of God, which was he had not been taught and something that he did not at that time accept. But it stirred him quite a bit and he said, "I went on to theological seminary and when I was theological seminary at a certain point in my studies I had to take a church history course. And there was only one course available and it was a course on medieval church history." And so," he said, "I signed up for the

course in medieval church history. And the professor of the course was a man by the name of Dr. Tom Nettles." And some of you in the audience will recognize him as an outstanding Southern Baptist Church Historian who also is a very strong believer in the sovereignty of God. So he said, "I just happened to take that course it seemed. But there I was exposed again to that." And said, "On top of that I had to write a paper and I was assigned to write a paper on," this is a medieval church figure, a Roman Catholic man who was because of his belief in the sovereignty God, in difficulties with the Romans Catholic Church. His name is Goshawk [phonetic]. And some of you who are students will recognize the name. So he said, "I had to write a paper on that." And he said, "Believe it or not, when I graduated from Southwestern Baptist Theological Seminary my family gave me a set of books and they were the works of Jonathon Edwards." [Laughter]

And as we talked I said to him, "Why Tom, it just appears to me that God at particular stages in your life has just providentially guided you so that you would come to the knowledge of these truths that you are talking to me about." Well, I feel sure that that is true, and he too felt that the hand of God evidently was in this because it seemed so contrary to everything that he was seeking. The storms that we have in our lives are sent by a God who wants us to learn certain things.

I think also it's evident from this incident that there may be slow going within the will of God. It may seem that things are going very badly, we may seem to be having defeats and constant inability to do the things that we want to do but that too may be the will of God for us. And as they worked to get to shore with the wind contrary to them they labored, or "they toiled in laboring" the text says with reference to trying to get to the shore. That too is within the will of God. But safety amid the storm is certain because the Lord Jesus will never leave nor forsake us. He is always with us and at the proper time supernatural help will come. Just as Isaiah said in chapter 43 and verse 2, "When thou passes through the waters I will be with thee." These are some of the things that immediately appear in this story to me.

I think also there is an interesting symbolism in this scene, and I put this out just as a suggestion. I think this story is not only history and it's not only parable in the sense that we find

spiritual principles in it, but it may also be designed to be something of a prophecy of the course of this age. The disciples are on the sea toiling in the midst of difficulties, the Lord Jesus is in the mountain praying, but there is a climactic triumphant conclusion. Well, if you think for just a moment that's characteristic of this age. We are in the boat in the midst of the storms of life. The Lord Jesus is at the right hand of the Father, therefore living to make intercession for the saints of God; guaranteeing that they are all going to reach the predestined determination that the will of God has set for us. The church is in the midst of the nations of the world and in a tremendous struggle. We are in the world but not of the world, engaged in the struggle for the souls of men. But the Lord Jesus is going to return at the fourth watch when things appear to be very difficult and as if there's no true conclusion to be reached. He is going to come. And sad to say some are not going to recognize him when he does come. Some are going to think perhaps that it is a ghost. But he's going to come and he's going to still the storms of this human existence and he's going to establish his kingdom upon the earth.

The thing the Lord Jesus Christ was interested in in this whole incident is described by Matthew for when the Lord Jesus came in the boat they fell down at his feet and they worshiped him. And they said, "Truly, thou art the Son of God." May I say to you my dear Christian friend that he storms of life will come to you. They will come. You who are young; perhaps they may not come now, perhaps they will. But sooner or later the storms of life will come. And may they draw you to him. May as a result of those storms of life you come to a deeper relationship of worship with him.

Now one thing I like about John, the apostle who wrote this book, is the fact that John is the mystic. John is the lover. John is the man who talks most about fellowship with the Lord. And it's John who tells us in the 21st verse, "Then they willingly received him into the boat and immediately the boat was at the land in which they went." The other writers do not tell us that. Out in the midst of the water the Lord Jesus with the disciples. But when he came in the boat John says, "immediately the boat was at the land". Now, I don't think that was true. If you were just timing it.

What John is saying, "It seemed like we were immediately there." And I suggest to you that anybody who has ever been in love understands exactly what he's talking about. Let me say a word to you young people.

Have you ever been out with a young lady whom you love and you're not married yet and she says, "It's time for me to go home." Do you ever notice how quickly that time passes? Immediately you're home. Now, some of you are looking very blankly. You haven't been in love. [Laughter] There is nothing more wonderful than the company of someone that you love, and when there must be a termination of it time flies. That's one of the great blessings of married life. There is none of that. Well, unless you travel like I do. [Laughter]

But everyone who has ever been in love understands that. That's what John means when he says, "Immediately we were at the land. They had come to a new appreciation of him as the Son of God and in coming to understand that he was the Son of God they were worshiping him and enjoying the relationship, that new fresh relationship into which they had come. May God give you who are believers something of that too.

If you are here in this audience and you have never believed in the Lord Jesus Christ, well we invite you to participate your trust in him who has offered the atoning sacrifice for sinners. In spite of that great religious figure has said, "I believe in all mankind." The Scriptures say that all mankind are sinners and all mankind need the salvation of the Son of God. All mankind is under guilt and condemnation, and that is inclusive of you. But there is a remedy in the work of the Lord Jesus and you may flee to him and find that he is sufficient for your need.

Come to Christ. Believe in him. Enjoy the experiences that the apostles enjoyed as they lived their life in the fellowship of the Lord Jesus Christ. That's what you may live today in 1982, fellowship with him. Maybe just as truly and really with him as those apostles were in that little boat when they received him into it. My God help you to come. May you confess before him your sin and receive the salvation by grace that he offers, and cling only to him for now and for eternity, and



enter into the Christian life with all of its excitement, all of its experiences, all of its trials and tribulations. But it's certain, and sure, and gloriously triumphant end -- the presence of God.

[Prayer] Father, we are grateful to Thee for these magnificent accounts that the apostles have given us of their own experiences with the Lord Jesus Christ. And we thank Thee that we are no poorer than they for we have the Holy Spirit as a constant companion who makes real the presence of the Lord Jesus in our lives. Lo, I am with you always, even to the end of the age and all of the hours of everyday. The Lord Jesus is with us.

We thank Thee Father for this glorious promise. And if there are some here who have never believed in Christ, O Father by the Holy Spirit bring them to the knowledge of him whom to know is life eternal. And through the experiences of life give them that growth in grace and in the knowledge of the Lord Jesus that will give them the sense of the greatness of God and also enable them to be fruitful in service.

**[RECORDING ENDED ABRUPTLY]**