

# Obedience of Faith - Illustrated by the Disciples on the Stormy Sea

by Ed Miller

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*The sermon teaches that we need to rely on God's Holy Spirit to understand the Bible and that obedience by faith is essential, as illustrated by the disciples on the stormy sea.*

**Duration:** 1:07:06

**Scripture:** Matthew 14:13-33, Mark 6:32-52, John 6:1-21

**Topics:** "Faith And Obedience", "Holy Spirit Guidance"

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## Description

In this sermon, the speaker focuses on the story of Jesus feeding the 5,000 and walking on water as recorded in Mark chapter 6. The speaker emphasizes the importance of understanding the message and lesson behind these miracles. The first key is the lack of insight gained from the miracle of the loaves, highlighting the need for deeper understanding. The second key is the struggle and exhaustion faced by the disciples as they rowed against the wind, symbolizing the challenges and difficulties we face in life. The speaker encourages reliance on the Holy Spirit and the study of God's Word to gain a deeper understanding of these passages.

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## Transcript

Good afternoon, brothers and sisters in the Lord. I'll ask you to open, please, your Bibles to Mark chapter 6, if you would. Mark chapter 6. As we come to the study of God's Word, I want to remind you and my own heart of a principle of Bible study that is absolutely indispensable.

And that principle is total reliance upon God's Holy Spirit. The Bible is like our Lord Jesus. There's a human side and there's a divine side.

We cannot neglect the human side. We need to study. We need to know what a paragraph is and we need to know how to relate different things.

We need academics. But if that's all we get, then we're in trouble because there's a divine side as well and only the Spirit of God can put the light upon the Lord Jesus in such a way that we can walk in that light. We need Him to show us the Savior.

He's promised He would. He's promised if we would come with our mouths opened wide that He would feed us, that He would fill us. He's told us that all the treasures of wisdom and knowledge are hidden in the

Lord Jesus.

We know the hiding place. He's told us that He has hidden these things from the wise and from the prudent and He reveals them to babes. Now, I can't work up a childlike attitude and you can't work up a childlike attitude, but God can create in us that kind of a receptive heart that receives from Him.

Job chapter 12, verse 22 says, He reveals mysteries from the darkness and He brings the deep darkness into light. I'm going to ask you to bow with me please as we commit our time unto the Lord and I remind you what I know you know and that is that we do not come into the presence of the Lord by bowing our heads. We're already in the presence of the Lord before we bow our heads, but in a special way we acknowledge that presence as we bow before Him.

Will you join me please as we commit this time unto Him? Our Father, we do thank Thee so much for the Holy Spirit who lives in our hearts, whoever turns the eyes of our heart unto the Lord Jesus. We pray that we might have a revelation of Him this afternoon, that we might behold Him according to our capacities as you know them. Minister the Savior unto us in a living way.

Open our eyes. Open our hearts. We thank you in advance that you're going to meet with us because we ask and we claim it in the all-prevailing name of our Lord Jesus.

Amen. Yesterday afternoon we meditated for a little bit on heavenly obedience or obeying by the grace of God or supernatural obedience or New Covenant obedience or whatever you want to call it as long as you understand that it's the obedience that comes out of abiding in the Lord. It's a by-product of our union with Him.

And we illustrated that wonderful truth by Noah, God's revelation of Himself to Noah. We saw how God gave Noah a vision of the Lord Jesus as the ark of His salvation. And how that vision captured his heart and he became consumed with that revelation and totally occupied with that revelation.

So much so that that revelation which was at first inside began to be manifest on the outside in the terms of that great picture, the ark. And at first all that his neighbors could see was the man, Noah, with a vision in his heart, but they could just see Him. And as days passed and weeks passed and months passed and years passed, the revelation got bigger and bigger and bigger.

And by contrast, He got smaller and smaller and smaller. And though they could see the ark and the man, the ark was getting bigger and the man was getting smaller. And came the glorious day when God gave the command, Enter into the ark.

And the man disappeared inside of that which pictured the Lord. And in that glorious moment, that command that God had given Noah, the great commission to go out and to gather them in. Now Noah found himself a spectator as he was abiding in the ark.

And God began to supernaturally perform that which He commanded Noah to do. And they began to come. Great miracle of migration.

Animals and birds and insects by twos and by sevens. And Noah in amazement watched as he got credit for obedience by abiding in Christ. Obedience by the grace of God.

This afternoon I'd like to continue that same theme with a different illustration. Yesterday we looked at that truth in terms of obeying by the grace of God. By what He does.

By abiding in Christ. This afternoon I'd like to take a slightly different view of the truth. And just say obedience by faith.

In other words, obedience by trusting in the Lord Jesus. This time I'd like to take a New Testament illustration of that great truth. It's a very familiar story and I deliberately tried to choose a familiar story so that we can all begin in the same place.

And it's the story about the disciples on the stormy sea. There are three records of this in the Bible. Mark chapter 6 is where we'll use that sort of as our text.

Mark chapter 6 verses 32 to 52. It's also recorded in Matthew. Matthew chapter 14 verses 13 to 33.

And it's also recorded in John chapter 6. John chapter 6, the first 21 verses. Now before we just roll up our sleeves and dive into the passage, let me give you a couple of keys that I think will help you get the maximum benefit out of this passage and help press us toward the heart of the Lord. A little donkey work.

The first key is in verses 51 and 52 of Mark chapter 6. But let me begin reading from verse 49. Follow along if you would. And when they saw Him walking on the sea, they supposed that it was a ghost.

And they cried out, for they all saw Him and were terrified. But immediately He spoke with them and said to them, Take courage, it is I, do not be afraid. Then He got into the boat with them and the wind stopped.

And they were utterly astonished. Now here's the verse that I say is a key. For they had not gained any insight into the incident from the loaves, but their heart was hardened.

Very clearly the Holy Spirit connects this story, the disciples on the stormy sea, with the story that preceded it, the feeding of the five thousand. They were supposed to learn something by the feeding of the five thousand. And they were supposed to apply that something when they were out on the stormy sea.

They didn't. They failed the task. They flunked.

But clearly that's the key. Mark 6, verse 52, They had not gained any insight from the miracle of the loaves. And so if we're going to understand God's heart, I think it's important to home in on what was the principle, what was the message that they were supposed to learn and apply.

That they failed to learn and apply on the stormy sea. Hold that for a moment, please. The second key that I think will help us get to God's heart in this passage has to do with the disciples' relationship, the way they related to the Lord Jesus.

It's easy to picture in your mind's eye, because there are three scenes in this story. The disciples don't move. In every scene, they're in the boat in the middle of the stormy sea.

But the Lord Jesus moved. The first scene, the disciples are out in the middle of the stormy sea, and the Lord Jesus is on the distant shore on a mountain, praying. Glance, if you would, at verse 46 and 47.

After bidding them farewell, 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. In this first relationship, Jesus was on the mountain praying.

He was out of sight to them. He was invisible. They couldn't see Him.

They were here, and He was there. And He was praying on a distant mountain. In the second scene, the disciples are still on the boat in the midst of the stormy sea, but this time, Jesus has moved.

This time, He's walking on the water and intending to pass by them. Look at verse 48, if you would. Seeing them straining at the oars, for the wind was against them, at about the fourth watch of the night, He came to them, walking on the sea, and He intended to pass by them.

Now it's not Jesus on the mountain. Now it's Jesus on the sea, walking on the water, intending to pass by. In the third scene, Jesus moves again.

Verse 51, please. Then He got into the boat with them, and the wind stopped, and they were utterly astonished. Now, in Matthew's account of the same story, He includes the part where Peter walks upon the water.

We're not going to have time to develop that, but in effect, what God was doing there was reteaching the message of the miracle of the loaves. He gave them another lesson, and it was the same one. That's scene three.

The Lord Jesus on the ship, on the boat, with the disciples. I like the way John records it in chapter 6 and verse 21. They willingly received Him onto the boat.

Well, exactly so. So those are the three possibilities of relating to the Lord Jesus. From the stormy sea.

I can relate to the Savior on the mountain praying. I can relate to the Savior on the sea as He passes by. Or I can relate to Jesus on the boat as He works many wonderful miracles.

Those are the two keys. If we understand the message of the loaves, if we understand how they related to the Lord Jesus, I think God can unveil His precious Heart and Son to our spirits. May God help us.

Let's take those two keys and see if they fit the lock. And we'll try to look at this passage. The first key is from chapter 6, verse 52.

They gained no insight from the miracle of the loaves. I'm quite sure all of us are familiar with the whole story of the feeding of the 5,000. And so to save time, let me just sort of tell the story again in terms of the facts that tie into the great principle.

What's the lesson? What's the message? It all begins in verse 37 with this wonderful command. He answered them, You give them something to eat. That's the command.

Like Noah was commanded, go get them. Impossible. God gives a command.

Simple enough. Feed them. Impossible.

Impossible because there were 5,000 men without counting women and children. And as you know, there was a paucity of supply. They just had five breads, five biscuits, two fish.

They were inadequate to fulfill the command. Feed them. Impossible from every point of view.

And then our Lord Jesus comes into the picture. Now this is another one of those stories that we're so tempted to just read la, la, la and miss the heart of God. I hope God helps you as you study the Bible to go slowly through and sense the Holy Spirit and how He's unveiling the Lord.

Even when our Lord showed His sufficiency in this marvelous miracle, He did it in such a way that they had to trust Him. In other words, as He performed the miracle, they could not feel His sufficiency. Try to picture it and it helps, I think.

Picture these 12 disciples and our Lord Jesus and according to the record, He divided that little boy's lunch 13 ways. He gave each of the disciples some and He kept some in His hand. Twelve fishermen.

Big boys. Big hands pulling ropes and pulling nets. Big, powerful fishermen hands.

And as this whole thing begins to unfold, picture them as Jesus says, Come now. And He prays and He breaks the bread. And He gives them one-thirteenth of a loaf in that big paw of Peter.

The Bible tells us that they gathered in groups and the smallest group was 50. In fifties and hundreds. Can you picture Andrew? Can you picture James? Can you picture Peter getting his piece? Beat them.

And the smallest group is 50. Which group would you go to? And how would you give it? Would you give the whole thing to the first person? Or would you break it? And as Peter stood there with that morsel in his hand, that was to represent the sufficiency of Christ, the bread of life. And he was to learn that day a lesson that He's enough, even when He doesn't feel like He's enough.

And certainly it didn't feel like He was enough. He was to learn the lesson that He's enough, even when it doesn't look like He's enough. And certainly it didn't look like He was enough.

It looked so insufficient, so inadequate. How often God gives us impossible commands or brings us into some stormy sea. And somehow it never feels like we have enough Jesus to go through that.

And it doesn't look like we have enough Jesus to go through that. And so the Lord laid out this glorious object lesson that they might understand the principle of the loaves. He set up a situation to teach them a glorious truth.

And the glorious truth was the all-sufficiency of the Lord Jesus Christ that He is enough. Mark 6, verse 41, He took the five loaves and the two fish, and looking up toward heaven, He blessed the food, broke the loaves, and kept giving it to them, to the disciples, to set before them. He divided up the two fish among them all.

They all ate and were satisfied. They picked up twelve full baskets of the broken pieces and also of the fish. That's the miracle of the loaves.

The Lord Jesus engineered a situation so that they had to keep coming back to Him. And as they came to Him, He gave to them. And there was always sufficiency.

I've called you to an impossible task. Feed the people. You're not adequate to feed the people, but if you keep coming to Me in union with Me, you can do what I've commanded you to do.

You know, it was more exciting for them to come to the Lord Jesus and draw from His sufficiency than it was to feed the people. Just like those who study the Word sometimes find it more pleasant to receive from the Lord than even to hand it out. It's a great pleasure to hand it out.

But oh, when God begins to dawn Christ on you, the glory, the thrill, the wonder of coming to the Lord and drawing from His sufficiency, that's the lesson of the loaves. It didn't feel like enough. It didn't look like enough.

But if they had to carry what they handed out, it would have broken their backs. In the distribution, what they gave out was phenomenal. They could have never even begun to carry what they handed out.

That's the sufficiency of Jesus. To put all the facts together, here's the truth of this great lesson of the loaves. At the end of the day, because it was the end of the day, at the end of the day, you will find that the Lord Jesus is more than enough for you and thousands like you, no matter what it feels like and no matter what it looks like.

That's the lesson of the loaves. As we draw from His sufficiency, at the end of the day, He's enough. At the end of the day, He's adequate.

He's sufficient. At the end of the day, He's enough for you and thousands like you, no matter what it feels like, no matter what it looks like. Alright, that's the lesson of the loaves.

Now let me show you the transition and we'll move out to the sea. We know immediately something spiritual is going on here because the Holy Spirit records that our Lord Jesus did something here that He had not done before this and according to the strict record, He never did again. There's something unique in this passage, something our Lord Jesus did which is almost out of character for the Lord.

Let me quote Matthew's account of it and then read Mark's. It's really the same thing. Matthew 14.22 It says, Immediately He made the disciples get into the boat and go ahead of Him to the other side.

Strong Greek word there. He made them. King James says He constrained them to get into the boat.

Brother Darby translates it, He compelled the disciples to go on board the ship. Listen to Mark 6.45 Immediately Jesus made His disciples get into the boat and go ahead of Him. He never forced anybody to do anything.

But the Greek word here is so interesting. It implies resistance. He made them.

He compelled them. He forced them. For some reason, they resisted that.

Maybe it was a good reason. Jesus says, Get into the boat. And they said, no, that's alright.

We'll wait for you. He said, get into the boat. No, that's okay.

We'll help you clean up. Get into the boat. Well, you know these people are trying to make you king.

You might need a little protection. We'll just sort of wait around. Get into the boat.

We don't want to be alone. Get into the boat. Don't have to get testy.

Then Jesus gives a command. Sounds simple enough. When they were with the loaves, He said, feed them.

Impossible. Matthew 14, 22. Here's the command.

Get into the boat and go ahead of Me to the other side. I'll meet you on the other side. Mark 6, 45 gives the same idea.

Immediately, Jesus made His disciples get into the boat and go ahead of Him to the other side to Bethsaida while He Himself was sending the crowd away. Get into the boat. Go just a little bit north of Capernaum.

Sounds easy enough. You know, they probably had done that a thousand times before. So simple to obey Jesus.

Well, you know the story and how God engineered things here. Let me read a couple of isolated texts from Matthew and Mark and John so that you get this sense, the picture of what's happening. John 6 and verse 18 says, And the sea began to be stirred up because a strong wind was blowing.

Don't forget now, this is a test. They had already sat in on the lecture and now it's lab. They've got to go to the lab and they've got to see if what they've learned is real in life.

Matthew 14, 24, The boat was already a long distance from the land, battered by the waves, for the wind was contrary. Don't confuse this story with the other storm story. There was another time there was a stormy sea and Jesus was out.

He was sleeping actually that time in the boat. This is the second storm. The first time it was a matter of life and death.

It was a matter of survival. There's nothing here in this storm that would suggest it's life threatening. It's just frustrating to the nth degree.

There's a contrary wind. I don't think the issue here is survival. I think it's overcoming.

And they're going to have to learn a lot. According to John 6, 19, they had already rowed about 3 or 4 miles. If we can believe the scholars, they tell us it was about a 7 mile trip altogether.

And what that means practically is they were about halfway there. Matthew says that it was the fourth watch of the night. You know, the Jews divided up the night into four 3 hour watches.

Beginning at 6 o'clock and ending with 6 in the morning. From 6 to 9 was the first watch and from 9 to 12 the second and from 12 to 3 was the third watch. And then from 3 o'clock to 6 in the morning was the last watch.

What that means practically is these boys were tired. These disciples were exhausted. They'd been up all day.

That whole feeding of the 5,000 began early in the morning. And it went all through the day. And then at night they began to go out.

And the Bible says that they rowed through 3 watches. That's 9 hours, folks, of rowing. Minimum.

Because it was somewhere in the fourth watch Jesus came. Did you ever row through 3 watches and find yourself not even halfway there? Well, that's exactly what they did. They had almost worn themselves out in their attempt to obey the Lord.

Simple command, go to the other side. We'll meet you on the other side. Go ahead of me to the other side.

And they were finding that that simple command was not so simple after all. Do you have the picture in your mind's eye? The night is dark. The night is long.

The Master is absent. The sea is boisterous. The wind is contrary.

The men are tired, and they're not halfway there. Or just about halfway. The Bible tells us that when Jesus looked off from the mountain on which He was praying, He saw them.

Verse 46, After bidding them farewell, we're in Mark 6, After bidding them farewell, 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. At about the fourth watch of the night, He came to them walking on the sea, and He intended to pass by them.

And from His mountain where He prayed, He looked off and He saw them struggling at the oars. Now, I'm not going to take time to try to prove it now, but I think there's more included here than physical exhaustion. Struggling at the oars.

Straining at the oars. I think it's more than tired muscles, and aching joints, and limp limbs. I don't doubt that's included, but it was more than that.

Our Lord was testing them as to whether or not they had learned the message of the loaves, that at the end of the day, He is adequate. He is enough. If they would continually come and draw from His sufficiency, they would find that He was enough for them, and thousands like them, no matter how it felt or what it looked like.

After nine hours of rowing, I don't think they were thinking about what a marvelous lesson we learned at the feeding of the 5,000. I don't think that they were thinking about the sufficiency of Jesus. They had become storm conscious.

They had become self-conscious. They were thinking about their muscles and their aches and their pains. They were enveloped in their circumstances.

That expression, struggling at the oars, is more a description of a hard attitude than it is of a physical thing. I can't prove it, but you put 12 fishermen in a boat after working all day and then getting them rowing all night and not making much headway. I don't know.

My Bible doesn't tell me what they were thinking and what they were saying. But I don't believe they were singing, row, row, row your boat gently down the stream, struggling at the oars. As I understand it, it was their attempt to obey the Savior in their own strength, in their own energy.

And the whole story illustrates the frustration of their failure and the exhaustion that comes with repeated attempts to be successful trying to obey God apart from a miracle. Well, that's the first key to understanding the passage has to do with the incident of the loaves. They're not adequate to obey the Lord.

The command is an impossible command and without a miracle, they'll never obey that command. The second key I suggested was that there are three possible ways for a Christian to relate to the Savior when he's in the storm, in the boat on a stormy sea. He can relate to the Lord Jesus on the mountain praying.

He can relate to the Lord Jesus on the water as He passes by. Or he can relate to the Lord Jesus in the boat as He's invited in to do mighty miracles. Let me suggest the heart of each of these and then trust the Lord with you that God will dawn His Son upon us.

The first way it's possible to relate to the Lord Jesus from the midst of the stormy sea is to relate to Him as He is on the distant shore on the mountain praying. Matthew 14.23, after He sent the crowds away, He went up to the mountain by Himself to pray. And when it was evening, He was there alone.

Mark 6.46, after bidding them farewell, He left for the mountain to pray. The disciples are out on the storm-tossed sea and Jesus is far away somewhere on a mountain. Out of sight.

Out of vision. We don't know what He prayed for that night. The Bible doesn't tell us.

Maybe He was praying that they would pass the test. Maybe He was praying about the ministry that He had with the crowds that very day or what was coming up in His life. Maybe He was just having fellowship with His Holy Father God.

He had done that many, many times. We don't know. What we do know is as He prayed, He watched.

And somewhere between 3 and 6 in the morning, He saw them struggling at the oars. He saw them straining. He saw them trying so hard and so exhausted.

And the Bible says He came down to rescue them. I like to call this relationship between the disciples and the Lord on the mountain because at that time, Jesus is invisible. They can't see Him.

I think that's the relationship of faith. Trusting an invisible God. Trusting a God that you cannot see.

In this first scene, He's invisible. With these eyes, He can't be seen. He's still there.

He's still watching. He's still praying. He's still present from the storm-tossed ship.

God intended them to apply the lesson. No doubt by now, they knew they were inadequate for the task. They could not obey in their own strength.

No doubt by now, they saw the impossibility of the command. But as we read the record, they missed the glory of coming to the Lord over and over again to draw from His sufficiency. He's gone.

He's out of sight. Where's the Lord? And they rode and they rode and they rode. And somehow they felt like they were on their own.

They didn't understand that though the duty was theirs, the power was not theirs. Though the responsibility was theirs, the power and the life was not theirs. And they sort of felt like it was up to them to obey and get to the other side.

If they had only learned the lesson of the loaves, they would have come to Him over and over again to draw from His sufficiency. And at the end of the day, they would have discovered that He is enough for them and for thousands like them, no matter what it feels like and no matter what it looks like. According to

the record, they missed Him on the mountain.

Now instead of looking at the second way, walking on the sea, I'm going to ask you to set that aside. And you'll see why in a moment. We see Him on the mountain.

I want to take you to the third one. Let's look at Him on the boat. John 6.21, they willingly received Him into the boat.

Mark 6.51, and He got into the boat with them and the wind stopped and they were utterly astonished, for they had not gained any insight from the incident of the loaves. Their hearts were hardened. I understand that this is the exact opposite of Jesus on the mountain.

Jesus on the mountain is invisible. I can't see Him. Jesus on the boat is visible.

I can see Him. I can see Him. I can touch Him.

I can handle Him. I can talk to Him. He's right there in person, right in front of these eyes.

It's the exact opposite of Jesus on the mountain. If Jesus on the mountain is trusting an invisible God, Jesus on the boat is sight. It's going by sight and not by faith.

When He got on the boat, they saw some wonderful miracles. God mentions two of them. Matthew 14.32, When He got into the boat, the wind stopped.

If you've ever tried to serve the Lord in your own strength, and you've rowed and you've rowed and you've rowed until you've worn yourself out, and I think every child of God has experienced that. Isn't it a glorious thing when the wind stops and the Lord finally rescues? Only John mentions the second miracle. I know some read it differently, but they're wrong.

John 6.21, So they were willing to receive Him into the boat, and immediately the boat was at the land to which they were going. I don't have a problem with the fact that God raptured the boat. And as He got in, immediately they were at their destination.

That's the third possibility. Sight. It left no room for faith.

He clearly identified Himself. He clearly removed their fear. He clearly calmed the storm.

He clearly brought them to their destination. I can relate to Jesus on the mountain, the invisible God. I can relate to Jesus on the boat, the visible God.

What's in the middle? Chapter 6, verse 48, please. Seeing them straining at the oars, for the wind was against them, about the fourth watch of the night He came to them walking on the sea and intended to pass by them. When they saw Him walking on the sea, they supposed it was a ghost.

And they all cried out. They saw Him and were terrified. Immediately He spoke with them and said, Take courage.

It is I, be not afraid. Verse 49, they thought it was a ghost. What's a ghost? Faith.

Invisible. Sight. Visible.

And in the middle, mixture. A ghost. A ghost.

He's visible. He's invisible. I'm not sure.

Is it material? Is it spirit? Half way. Half visible. Half invisible.

Half spirit. Half flesh. It looks spiritual, but is it spiritual? And so on.

The middle road sort of leaves you on the deck scratching your head saying, Is it the Lord? Or some enemy trying to hurt us? Let me try to tie all of this together by a principle that has become, for my heart, one of the most precious in all the Word of God. And the principle is this, that God always deals with us as we are and where we are in order to make us what He wants us to be and to bring us to the place that He wants us. I wouldn't trade all the stars in heaven ten times laden gold for that precious truth that God deals with me where I am and as I am.

And if He doesn't have an ideal situation to work with, He'll work with a situation that's not ideal. Glorious, glorious truth. Think of it in terms of these three possible ways to relate to Him.

God wants me to trust Him. He's my high priest and He's praying. And sometime I'm out in the storm and my heart cries out, where's the Lord? And He wants me to know that as I keep coming to Him and drawing from His sufficiency, that at the end of the day I will discover He's enough for me and thousands like me no matter what it feels like and no matter what it looks like.

He wants me to trust Him even though I can't see Him. He wants me to trust Him even though I'm in the storm and rowing against the contrary wind. That's His desire.

That's His pleasure that I trust my high priest. He's enough. He's adequate.

What if I don't? What if I struggle at the oars? What if my faith fails? What if I lean in an unhealthy way on the arm of the flash? What if I become frustrated and tired and exhausted? Will He forsake me? Brothers and sisters in the Lord, God always deals with us as we are and where we are in order that He might make us what He would have us and bring us to the place that He would have us be. And so our Lord Jesus from the mountain looks out and they fail to pass. And in His great grace, He sees them struggling at the oars and so He comes down and He begins to walk on the sea.

Did you notice how God tells us that it was His intention to pass by? He wasn't planning to get aboard. He wasn't planning to calm the sea. He wasn't planning to take them to their destination by a mighty miracle.

That wasn't His intention. His intention was to come into the picture because they had left Him out of the picture. They forgot the miracle of the loaves.

They forgot that He's enough, that He's sufficient. And it was His intention to pass by so that they might learn two things. Number one, that He's there.

And number two, that it's under His feet. That He's on top of it. That He's Lord.

That He's sovereign. And that should have been enough. That should have been enough.

It should have been enough that He had called them to do it. I'll meet you on the other side. The Word should have been enough.

And they should have drawn from His sufficiency so that at the end of the day, they didn't come to the end of the day. They only went halfway to the end of the day. If they had drawn from Him, they would have seen at the end of the day that He was enough for them and thousands like them.

No matter how it felt or what it looked like. But now He walks by so that they will know He's there and it's under control. How many times, friends in Christ, has our faith begun to falter and we don't trust an invisible God and by His grace, He comes into view just so that we'll know He's there.

He's in control. I don't know anything else. I just know He's there and He's in control.

That should be enough. Brothers and sisters, what if that's not enough? Will He forsake us? Will He abandon us? Will He say, oh, stupid people, I knew I couldn't trust them to trust Me. Oh, brothers and sisters in Christ.

He wants us to trust Him on the mountain, but if we don't, He'll come walking on the sea intending to pass by that we might know He's there and that He's in control. But if we fail there, what if we look out there and we see mixture? We're weak. We stumble.

We see second causes and we see circumstances and Satan and some failure on our part. I know it's the Lord, but you know, if I'd only taken my pills, I can see God in it, but if He had only buckled His seatbelt, I know it's the Lord, but that guy is so violent and the way he invaded my life and my family and so on. What if we don't have Joseph's faith to see just the Lord and no second cause? You sold me.

God sent me. You meant evil. God meant good.

What if we don't have Job's faith to say the Lord gave and the Lord took away? We say Satan's doing it and we're in trouble and all that kind of thing. What if we mix up God's part and our part and grace and faith and works and we get it all mixed up and He's a ghost and we supplement Christ and it's Christ plus my wisdom and Christ plus my program and Christ plus my fasting and Christ plus my devotions and Christ plus my faithfulness and all of that. We mix it all up.

What then? Oh, glorious truth. God always deals with us as and where we are in order that He might make us into what He wants us to be and bring us to the place that He wants us. He wants me to trust Him on the mountain, but if I fail and I struggle on the oars, He'll walk by on the sea and if I look out there and I get confused and afraid, He'll do three things.

He doesn't mock us, brothers and sisters in Christ. And the first thing He'll do is identify Himself. He'll let us know who He is.

It's me. Don't be afraid anymore. And then He'll come aboard and He'll do the most amazing miracles that you'll ever behold in all of your life.

He'll calm your storm and He'll take you to your destination. It's an amazing thing. This is the stuff testimonies are made of.

Oh, I want to tell you about what the Lord did. How He calmed the storm. How He did a mighty miracle.

How He delivered me from fear. Many times. I'm not judging.

I'm not saying all the time, but many times. He does not do those mighty miracles in answer to faith. He does those miracles in answer to unbelief.

He does those miracles because we need it. And if we need it, God is faithful to give it to us. In His love, He expresses Himself.

We love that relationship. I want Jesus on the boat. I want to see Jesus do signs and wonders and miracles and shake things up.

I want to arrive at my destination. I want the storm to be calm. I'll tell you, friends, sometime with all the wonders and the miracles and the signs and God doing great things, you miss out on the very point that He was trying to teach.

And that is what it means to draw from the sufficiency of the Lord. Arriving at your destination is sort of incidental to drawing from Him and His life and His sufficiency. There is no miracle.

There is no sign. There is no wonder. There is no deliverance.

There is no success that can substitute the joy that you will have as you keep coming to the Lord to draw from His sufficiency. And as you come to Him and draw from His sufficiency, you will find at the end of the day that He's enough, more than enough, for you and for thousands like you. No matter how it feels.

No matter how it looks. Well, He'll not only identify Himself. He'll not only come aboard and work miracles.

In passing, let me just say this. Some of you might in your life have experienced I failed to see Him on the mountain. My faith struggled.

And He came by walking. And I saw that it was Him in control. But you might think, I've failed so much.

I've been such a failure. How come He didn't come aboard and stop my storm? How come He didn't finally rescue me? I'm ready to give up. I'm ready to faint.

I'm ready to throw in the towel. I'll tell you this, friends. If He hasn't come aboard and stopped your storm, it's because you didn't need it.

You didn't need it. If you needed it, He would have done it. Some of you think that you're that weak and, oh, I just want Him aboard.

If He hasn't come aboard, it's because He knows you don't need it. Hang in there, brothers and sisters in Christ. At the end of the day, the testimony will be that He's enough for you and for thousands like you.

There's one other thing He does when He comes aboard. I won't develop it. I'll just mention it.

He sort of gives a mild rebuke. You know, He did that to Peter for not looking to Him. He was teaching the same lesson when Peter walked on the water.

The Holy Spirit tells us that they didn't learn from the miracle of the loaves and their heart was hardened. You know, when you read it, you wonder about the way it's worded because it says, and they were amazed at Him and they marveled at Him because their heart was hardened. You say, well, I thought they should have gotten out a boy.

If they are amazed and they worship and they marvel, who is this that does such wonders? And they marveled because their hearts are hardened. I know my wife and I have tasted the faithfulness of the Lord through the years. Over and over again, He's come through and He's come through.

Then a little storm comes and oh, what are we going to do? And then God answers and we're amazed. Shame on us. Shame on us for being amazed that our God comes through.

He wants us to trust Him on the mountain, the invisible God. If we fail, He'll walk by. He loves us.

He'll walk by and let us know He's there. He's in control. And if we still fail, He'll come aboard.

He'll do a marvelous miracle. I tell you, friends, we have a wonderful teacher in our Lord Jesus Christ. And if you didn't learn the miracle of the loaves, guess what? You're going to repeat the course.

He's going to teach you again. And if you fail, guess what? You got it. He's going to teach you again and again and again until we're conformed into the image of Christ.

We obey by faith. We trust the Lord by faith. He's off there on the distant shore.

Your high priest is praying for you. You say, sometime I hold His love in suspicion and I wonder where He is. He's there.

He's watching. And if you struggle, down He'll come and He'll rescue you. And if you struggle more, He'll get on the boat and do some great thing for you.

He'll rebuke you and start again. He's called us to trust Him. Brothers and sisters in Christ, let me close with this.

Your Lord Jesus is enough. Your Lord Jesus is sufficient. And if you trust Him, and if you keep coming to Him and drawing from His sufficiency, at the end of the day, you will see that He has been enough for you and for thousands like you.

No matter how it feels. No matter what it looks like. Let's bow.

Father, we thank Thee so much for Your great patience in Your instruction in our lives. We pray, Lord, that as never before we might learn to continually come to the Lord and draw from His wonderful sufficiency so that there might be a name and a testimony of that sufficiency to the world. We thank You that You're working this in our hearts this moment and that You're going to continue to work it in us in an ever-increasing, rising tide of blessing throughout the days of this conference.

Burn these things into our hearts indelibly. We ask in the precious name of our Lord Jesus. Amen.

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