

Jesus, the Son of God

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- [0 : 00] Please turn your Bibles to Matthew chapter 14.! Matthew chapter 14 verses 13 to 36.
- ! We have gathered because we have trusted in your Son, Jesus Christ, as our Lord and Savior.
- And we ask that in our present gathering, in this time when we hear from you in your Word, that you would increase our faith to behold your Son, Jesus Christ, in all of His glory, majesty, power, and love, and grace.
- That you would exalt His name and that you would humble us. That we might be more dependent and more prayerful on you as we leave from this place.
- And we ask that you will amaze us afresh. That you have given to us in Christ the bread of life.
- [1 : 26] That nourishes unto eternity. Fill us with more of Yourself. Your Spirit.
- And with the love of Christ. Right now, Lord, in the reading and preaching of Your Word. In Jesus' name we pray. Amen. Please stand if you are able.
- So that we can honor God as we read. Amen. Matthew 14, 13 to 36.
- Now when Jesus heard this, He withdrew from there in a boat to a desolate place by Himself.
- But when the crowds heard it, they followed Him on foot from the towns. When He went ashore, He saw a great crowd, and He had compassion on them and healed their sick.
- [2 : 24] Now when it was evening, the disciples came to Him and said, This is a desolate place, and the day is now over. Send the crowds away to go into the villages and buy food for themselves.
- But Jesus said, They need not go away. You give them something to eat. They said to Him, We have only five loaves here and two fish.
- And He said, Bring them here to Me. Then He ordered the crowds to sit down on the grass, and taking the five loaves and the two fish, He looked up to heaven and said a blessing.
- Then He broke the loaves and gave them to the disciples, and the disciples gave them to the crowds. And they all ate and were satisfied. And they took up twelve baskets full of the broken pieces left over.
- And those who ate were about five thousand men, besides women and children. Immediately He made the disciples get into the boat and go before Him to the other side, while He dismissed the crowds.
- [3 : 27] And after He had dismissed the crowds, He went up on the mountain by Himself to pray. When evening came, He was there alone. But the boat by this time was a long way from the land, beaten by the waves, for the wind was against them.
- And in the fourth watch of the night, He came to them walking on the sea. But 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 heart, it is I. Do not be afraid. And Peter answered Him, Lord, if it is You, command me to come to You on the water.

He said, Come. So Peter got out of the boat and walked on the water and came to Jesus. But when he saw the wind, he was afraid.

And beginning to sink, he cried out, Lord, save me. Jesus immediately reached out His hand and took hold of him, saying to him, O you of little faith, why did you doubt?

[4 : 37] And when they got into the boat, the wind ceased. And those in the boat worshipped Him, saying, Truly, you are the Son of God. And when they had crossed over, they came to land at Gennesaret.

And when the men of that place recognized Him, they sent around to all that region and brought to Him all who were sick and implored Him that they might only touch the fringe of His garment.

And as many as touched it were made well. This is God's holy and authoritative word. Please be seated. Acts chapter 8 records that in the first century, there was a man named Simon.

He says that he practiced magic in the city and amazed the people of Samaria. And he claimed to be somebody great. People all paid attention to what he said and they said of him, This man is the power of God that is called great.

And so they called him Simon Magus. Simon the Magician. This is the same man who, in Acts 8, 18-20, was amazed by the power of the Holy Spirit falling upon God's people as the apostles laid hands on them, that he sought to buy that power with money, offer the apostles money, give me also the ability and power to do that.

[6 : 02] And Peter, of course, rebuked Him, saying, May your silver perish with you because you thought you could obtain the gift of God with money. And so his name has come down in infamy now because that practice of seeking to or buying a sacred thing like an office of an elder or pastor with money is now called simony.

Later tradition says that Simon Magus tried to prove that he is divine by staging a flying demonstration. But then he fell and broke his legs and then died shortly thereafter.

This later story is told in a sensationalized account in an apocryphal book that's not part of the biblical canon, so it's possible that that never happened. But nonetheless, Simon Magus fits the stereotype of many throughout history who have claimed to be God but were exposed later on.

There have been other powerful men throughout history who have claimed divine status like Roman Emperor Domitian in the first century AD who told people to dress him as Lord and God.

Or Alexander the Great of fourth century BC who claimed to be the son of Zeus. But neither of these men garnered any enduring worship after their death.

[7 : 24] And today, no one claims that these men were God or worshiped them as such. No magical ability, no political authority or power, no military dominance or charisma could sustain these men's claims to divinity.

How then did Jesus Christ, whom we saw in the preceding chapter in chapter 13 as a carpenter's son whose mother was called Mary, who had common ordinary brothers in James, Joseph, and Simon, and Judas, who hailed from a small, unremarkable town of Nazareth and was born of a conquered and subjugated people, the Jews, how did he sustain his claim to be the son of God?

People believed him. During his generation and right up to our present generation, millions upon millions, billions upon billions have proclaimed that Jesus is the son of God.

If you think of it in a historical sense, it really is a remarkable phenomenon. In our passage this morning, we see Jesus' disciples worship Jesus saying, truly you are the son of God.

We've seen up to this point in the Gospel of Matthew, spiritual beings, demons acknowledging that Jesus is the son of God. But we have yet to see humans acknowledge that Jesus is the son of God.

[9 : 00] This is the first time. And that acknowledgement poses to us in the 21st century the same question. What say you? What do you make of Jesus?

Who do you say that he is? Do you believe that Jesus is the son of God? And on this third Sunday of Advent, that's the main point of my sermon, to trust in Jesus, for he is the compassionate son of God who saves us.

First, we're going to look at how he is the bread in the wilderness. And second, we're going to look at how he is the tamer of the sea. Verse 13 begins, now when Jesus heard this, he withdrew from there in a boat to a desolate place by himself.

We took a break from Matthew last week, so you might not remember what it is that prompts Jesus to remove himself to a desolate place by himself. But he's referring to Herod Antipas, a beheading of John the Baptist in the preceding passage.

Earlier in chapter 12, verse 15, when Jesus noticed that the Pharisees were conspiring against him how to destroy him, he also withdrew from there. And we're seeing now the same pattern. It's not yet the time for Jesus to go to the cross and die.

[10 : 11] It's not yet the time for Jesus to have that overt confrontation with the Jewish religious authorities or with the kings of the earth. Herod Antipas killed John the Baptist, and now he has heard about the fame of Jesus, he said in Matthew chapter 14, verse 1.

He fears that Jesus is John the Baptist raised from the dead, and he believes that's why miraculous powers at work in him. And so that doesn't bode well for Jesus.

Jesus avoids the overt confrontation at this time. He withdraws to a desolate place. That's another translation for a desert or the wilderness.

So it may not be the exact same place. It's probably not the exact same place that John the Baptist ministered in. He ministered in the wilderness, in a desolate place in the desert. But the verbal parallel still hearkens that parallel, the connection between John the Baptist's ministry in the wilderness and Jesus' withdrawal now into the wilderness.

The servants and prophets of God are often found not in the palaces of kings, but in the desolate wilderness. Marginalized.

[11 : 23] Persecuted. So don't be surprised if in the future you find yourself in a similar place. But like a celebrity who can't get away from the paparazzi, Jesus cannot get away from the adoring crowds.

He says in verse 13, but when the crowds heard it, they followed him on foot from the towns. And they must have been very fleet on foot because they get there before Jesus does with the boat.

He says that when he gets there in verse 14, there's a great crowd already waiting for him there. Imagine being in Jesus' shoes for a moment. He has been traveling all over the place.

He's an itinerant preacher. He's teaching and healing all over the place. He's probably exhausted. On top of that, he has just heard that his friend and forerunner, John the Baptist, was murdered.

He wants some time away from the crowds to be alone. So he withdraws to a desolate place where he can be alone.

[12 : 28] But these unconcerned, heedless people just will not leave him alone. They follow him even to that desolate place.

What would you feel if you were in that situation? Annoyance? Frustration? Perhaps even anger at people's selfishness and lack of consideration.

But that's not what we see in this portrait of Jesus. He says that when Jesus saw a great crowd, he had compassion on them and healed their sick.

When people see others in need, they can respond with a cold indifference. It's none of my business. Or they can respond with presumptuous judgment.

Oh, they're needy because it's their fault. They deserve what they got. But a compassionate person doesn't respond in either of those ways. A compassionate person feels sympathy.

[13 : 34] He feels pity for the person in need. He desires to meet that need. This is a wonderful attribute of our Savior Jesus Christ that we see over and over again in the Gospel of Matthew.

Early in chapter 9, verses 35 to 36, when Jesus saw the crowds that were helpless and harassed like sheep without a shepherd, he says that Jesus had compassion on them.

Same word. Later in Matthew 15, verse 32, when Jesus sees a crowd that is hungry, he says that they had nothing to eat. And he says that Jesus had compassion on the crowd.

In chapter 20, verse 34, when two blind men cry out to Jesus, saying, please open our eyes, it says that Jesus had compassion on them, and therefore he healed them. It's translated pity there in the ESV, but it's the same exact word in the Greek.

And then in the parable of the unforgiving servant that Jesus tells in Matthew 18, God is represented as the master who then has compassion on the servant who owes him a large debt and forgives his debt.

[14 : 38] This is what God is like. The Lord, the Lord, the compassionate and gracious God. And that's what Jesus is like. But because we're used to dealing with people who are not compassionate, who are sinful like us, we are conditioned not to expect God and Jesus to be compassionate as they actually are when we are needy.

When we come to God as empty-handed beggars, when we come to God as impoverished debtors, debtors, when we come to God as sorry sinners, seeking his forgiveness, God does not scoff or scorn.

He has compassion on us. When we acknowledge our weakness and turn to him in prayer and seek his power in prayer, God does not turn away and tells us to figure it out on our own.

When we acknowledge our sinfulness and seek God's forgiveness, he does not condemn us. He has compassion on us. And because of his compassion, Jesus continues to interact with the crowd and it says in verse 14 that he healed their sick.

We see Jesus doing this later in verses 34 to 36 as well after he has crossed over to Gennesaret. It says that they hear of his coming and they bring all their sick. It's quite the welcome, right?

[16 : 04] Bring all the sick people. Let's go see Jesus. And they're so eager. They just want the sick people to touch the fringe of his garment, knowing that even then they will be healed.

And it did happen that way. It's similar to what happens in Acts 19 when people touch the handkerchiefs and aprons that Paul had touched and then they're healed through that as well. It seems that when God is so powerfully at work in and through someone, even that kind of indirect contact can lead to extraordinary healing.

But let's return to verse 15. As Jesus is healing and ministering to people, the day wears away and his disciples anticipate a very practical problem. He says, Now when it was evening, the disciples came to him and said, This is a desolate place.

And the day is now over. Send the crowds away to go into the villages and buy food for themselves. With the sun setting, the disciples think Jesus has surely lost track of time.

Jesus, this is a desolate place. There's no place to get food around here. So before it's too late, you better send them off so that they can disperse into the villages and buy food for themselves, lest they be stranded without food in the middle of the nowhere, in the middle of the night.

[17 : 25] It's a thoughtful and sensible concern. But Jesus responds in verse 16, They need not go away. You give them something to eat. The sentence structure is actually emphatic.

So you can read it exactly the way I read it. They need not go away. You give them something to eat. But the disciples object in verse 17, We have only five loaves here and two fish.

The meager portions of food that they have is not quite enough even to feed Jesus and his 12 apostles. How can it possibly feed 5,000 men besides the woman and the children?

In 2 Kings 4, we see a similar situation when prophet Elijah needs to feed 100 men and it says that they only had 20 loaves of barley and fresh ears of grain.

And Elijah tells his servant, Give to the man that they may eat. And then the servant responds, How can I set this before 100 men? 20 loaves for 100 men, not enough.

[18 : 33] 5 loaves for 5,000 men, how can that be possibly enough? It says specifically 5,000 men and women and children besides.

It was common in the ancient world to estimate the size of large crowds by simply counting the men and then you can guess how many women and children there might be in addition to that. So conservative estimates say that this is in the tens of thousands of people.

The math is insurmountable. Jesus' command, You give them something to eat, must have sounded to the disciples like a joke. You're funny, Jesus.

Me? But as they look into Jesus' eyes, they realize, Oh, he's serious. And then they become incredulous.

You're kidding, right? You're kidding. We have one loaf of bread for every thousand men. How can we possibly set this out before this great crowd?

[19 : 43] But this is how God likes to work, isn't it? He gives us missions with their odds stacked against us. In Judges 7, God takes the 32,000 soldiers of Gideon and then he whittles them down and down and down until there's 300 left before he sends them out in war against the Midianites.

In 1 Kings 18, why does God send Elijah by himself to confront the 450 prophets of Baal? To show that nothing can hinder the Lord from saving, whether by many or by few.

As God tells the Israelites in Deuteronomy 7, 7, it was not because you were more numerous, more in number than any other people that the Lord set his love on you and chose you, for you were the fewest of all peoples.

God didn't choose the Israelites because they were a great enumeration. He chose them even though they were the fewest. Compare that to 1 Corinthians 1, 26 to 29. For consider your calling, brothers.

Not many of you were wise according to worldly standards. Not many were powerful. Not many were of noble birth. But God chose what is foolish in the world to shame the wise.

[20 : 59] God chose what is weak in the world to shame the strong. God chose what is low and despised in the world, even things that are not, to bring to nothing things that are. Why?

So that no human being might boast in the presence of God. God often sends his people out with intentional defects and deficits so that they have no choice but to depend on him and so that in the end, no human being might boast in the presence of God.

At the end of this event, no disciple is going to say after feeding of the 5,000, wow, look at me. I really underestimated! I really underestimated how gifted I am at dividing bread.

But, we are sent out with needs that only God can fill so that in the end, only God receives the glory.

Do you remember what Pastor Ed said last week at the ordination service? That this is what he feels like? He feels like a disciple with five loaves and two fish in his hand being commanded to feed a multitude.

[22 : 13] His resources and abilities like that of any other pastor, it's meager compared to the great task before him. But that deficit is intentional.

Likewise, when some of you return to your unbelieving family members this Christmas, wondering how you're going to bear witness to Jesus and share the good news of Jesus Christ with them, and feeling inadequate, remember that the deficit is intentional.

It is an invitation to come to Jesus in your weakness and in need and to plead for his help and power. Look at what Jesus says in verse 18.

Bring them here to me. Jesus doesn't say, okay, send them out into the villages in that case so that they can buy bread for themselves. There are many shops not far from here so go quickly and buy more bread for the crowd and come back.

No, Jesus does not expect the crowd to feed themselves nor does he expect his disciples to rely on their own resources and their own resourcefulness. No, he invites them to depend on him.

[23 : 28] Bring them to me. Bring those loaves to me. As the hymn famously says, what a friend we have in Jesus.

All our sins and griefs to bear. What a privilege to carry everything to God in prayer. Are we weak and heavy laden cumbered with a load of care?

Precious Savior still our refuge. Take it to the Lord in prayer. Imagine that you're in a pottery studio and you just shaped a nice concave bowl and you told your friend, hey, look at my bowl and then your friend goes, oh, that's misshapen.

That's a misshapen, useless ball. What's up with that hollow cavity in the middle? Let me help you. And then he remolds it and turns it into a ball. Right?

He has profoundly misunderstood your intent. But that's what we often do with God. God put the cavity there.

[24 : 38] He put that empty spot there intentionally. He put that deficit there. It's there because God intends to fill it with himself and with his grace and with his power.

Our need is there because God intends to meet it but we run ourselves haggard trying to be self-sufficient. trying to be self-righteous. Trying to prove ourselves to ourselves and to all those around us that we are not as needy and weak and sinful as we actually are.

But we must stop living like that. Don't try to fill the deficit that God has put inside your life. So the disciples bring the five loaves and the two fish to Jesus and he says in verses 19 to 20 then he ordered the crowds to sit down on the grass and taking the five loaves and the two fish he looked up to heaven and said a blessing.

Then he broke the loaves and gave them to the disciples and the disciples gave them to the crowds. Notice the sequence of events here. Jesus is still requiring by doing this requiring and asking and inviting his disciples to put their trust in him.

After Jesus prays the five loaves of bread do not start multiplying by themselves and overflowing the baskets like the treasures in Lestrage's vault in Gringotts or something like that.

[26 : 03] Every time Jesus touches one bread it turns into ten more bread. That's not what happens. It's the same five loaves of bread that Jesus hands to his disciples to distribute to the crowds.

So imagine yourself in the disciples' shoes. He just took it he just prayed for it and then wait for it wait for it wait for it oh it's still five loaves of bread. Okay? And then he hands it to him.

Alright go. Okay. Alright. I mean if I'm one of the disciples I'm not giving away very much you know?

It's like it's like it's like most churches communion sized wafers you know? It's like but it's in the act of in their act of faith and obedience as they trust Jesus and start distributing this bread the meager portions of bread that the miracle happens.

And as they're giving this out soon any remaining doubt and unbelief turns into disbelief what?

[27 : 20] We're still going? And then as they keep obeying as they keep believing they grow in confidence they grow in faith and now they're giving out big chunks of bread here you go. There's still more there's still more it says in verse 20 they all ate and were satisfied and they took up twelve baskets full of the broken pieces left over.

Jesus didn't just wet people's appetites just enough to stave off their hunger until their next meal no Jesus satisfied them. And how kind is it of Jesus to use his disciples in this setting?

Jesus could have cut the disciples out of the equation altogether. He could have distributed the bread himself. He asks instead his disciples to distribute the bread.

To have the privilege of being employed in God's service. To experience the joy of seeing God work powerfully and in doing so building up their faith. And how kind also of Jesus to use the five loaves that his disciples had to begin with.

Jesus could have cut that out of the equation too. He could have just prayed and then he could have rained manna from heaven like he did in the wilderness. He didn't have to use the disciples five loaves of bread but Jesus doesn't do that.

[28 : 43] Instead the disciples experienced the privilege of having their meager ordinary resources multiplied by God to accomplish extraordinary things.

Isn't that what God does with every single one of us? God used my stumbling mumbling gospel witness to draw that person a little closer to Christ?

God you used my imperfect example to challenge a brother or sister in Christ onto greater obedience? You used my five loaves of bread to feed the five thousand.

How kind is our Lord? I mentioned to you that this miracle mirrors the one performed by prophet Elijah but there is a still older miracle that the feeding of the multitude in the wilderness alludes to a millennia and a half before this event at the time of Israel's exodus!

God used Moses to to rain bread down from heaven to feed his people in the wilderness likewise here in a desolate place in the wilderness Jesus provides bread for his people and I don't think it's coincidence that they end up with twelve baskets full of leftover broken bread why why twelve because of course there's twelve apostles and because there's the twelve tribes of Israel this is God's way of showing us that in Christ he satisfies all of his people!

[30 : 21] Jesus is gathering together a people of God to himself and sitting at the head of that dining table in a parallel passage of this account in John 6 after performing this miracle Jesus says truly truly I say to you it was not Moses who gave you the bread from heaven but my father gives you the true bread from heaven for the bread of God is he who comes down from heaven and gives life to the world then Jesus says something remarkable he says I am the bread of life whoever comes to me shall not hunger and whoever believes in me shall not thirst we spend our lives working and working and working for what Jesus calls the bread that perishes Food that perishes!

But he tells us to seek the food that endures to eternal life which the Son of Man will give you John 6 27 and this bread of life is nothing less than the eternal life imparting Jesus Christ the Son of God himself note well the sequence of verbs used to describe Jesus actions in verse 19 what does he do first he took the bread what does he do next he blessed he said a blessing this is probably him giving thanks to God for his provision and then third he broke the bread and fourth he gave it to his disciples it is also no coincidence that this exact sequence of these exact four words are used in every single one of the synoptic gospels Matthew Mark and Luke during the Passover meal during Jesus last supper when he is instituting the Lord supper he takes bread and after blessing it he broke!

it! and then he gave it to the disciples and said take eat this is my body the Lord's supper points to Jesus as the spiritual bread of life that gives us sustenance unto eternal life we are all desperate sinners woefully!

inadequate in our own righteousness but God in his love sent his only son Jesus Christ to die on the cross to appease the just wrath of God the father and to atone for our sins and then he was raised from the dead on the third day for our justification Jesus gave himself his very life his own body to be the spiritual food the bread that nourishes us unto eternal life that is the ultimate miracle that this relatively small miracle compared to that is pointing to and they all ate and were satisfied apart from the two instances of the feeding of the multitude that we find in the gospel of Matthew there's only one other place in the gospel of Matthew where we see that word satisfied you might remember if you've been with us through this series in the gospel of Matthew in the Beatitudes Matthew 5 6 blessed are those who hunger and thirst for righteousness do you hunger for righteousness a hunger implies two things first a lack of something you don't have food so you're hungry and it implies a second thing you're longing for something you long for food so you are hungry you need both in order to be hungry do you recognize your hunger for righteousness you lack righteousness you and

I lack the righteousness that God requires of us we cannot be righteous enough we cannot satisfy the standards of God's law and having recognized that hunger do you long for do you hunger for that righteousness not your own righteousness but an alien righteousness righteousness that comes from God the righteousness that Christ imputes to us because of his substitutionary death on the cross on our behalf that's the promise implicit in this miracle that if you come to Jesus and if you take hold of Jesus by faith and faith is the hand and mouth of our souls by which we consume the bread of life Jesus Christ if you do that if you come to Jesus if you trust in Jesus because he is the compassionate son of God who saves us you will be satisfied so

[35 : 13] Jesus is the bread in the wilderness and we also see that he is the tamer of the sea he says in verses 22 to 24 immediately he made the disciples get into the boat and go before him to the other side while he dismissed the crowds and after he had dismissed the crowds he went up on the mountain by himself to pray when evening came he was there alone but the boat by this time was a long way from the land beaten by the waves!

Jesus still wants some time alone to be by himself in prayer toward God his father so after feeding the multitude he says that Jesus immediately made the disciples get into the boat and to go ahead before him to the other side while he dismissed the crowds the disciples are not leaving on their own accord they're leaving because Jesus made them then after the crowd dispersed Jesus went up on the mountain by himself to pray so the fact that Jesus intentionally sent them out ahead of time is illuminating and has some important lessons for us in this passage it says in verse 25 that at the fourth watch of the night Jesus came to the disciples walking on the sea in Jewish reckoning the night is divided into four watches four sections 6 to 9 p.m.

the first watch and then 9 to 12 9 p.m. to 12 a.m. and then 12 a.m. to 3 a.m. and then 3 a.m. to 6 a.m. so the fourth watch is 3 a.m. to 6 a.m. is around the time that Jesus comes to them walking on the sea and we know that the feeding of the multitude happened in the first watch between 6 p.m.

and 9 p.m. because that's from about you know at least 9 p.m.

to 3 a.m. that's 6 hours 6 hours Jesus is praying to God the Father if the Son of God sees fit to pray to his Father for six hours throughout the night how much more desperately do we need to pray how much more should we be aware of our own need for God's help and if Jesus has been praying for six hours his disciples have been rowing for six hours if you've never rowed before is Annabella here she's probably traveling already you guys could talk to Annabella one of our church members who rows it's something that requires entire bodily exertion you could go on the ERG machine and do it for two minutes I guarantee you you'll be spent maybe not all of you sorry for you know imagine doing that for six hours you could take breaks you could take turns it doesn't matter by the end of six hours you're done you're spent it's such a this is really not the point of!

[38 : 34] this passage but it's just such a helpful contrast and illustrative contrast to me I try sometimes like oh I'm so busy I can't pray right now I have so much work to do I need to get ahead on my work and you try to get ahead on your work and you know what happens you just run into headwind and you don't get ahead at all would have much better spent praying seeking!

God first but I don't blame the disciples because Jesus made them go in there Jesus made the disciples get into the boat and go before him to the other side Jesus is the one who is sovereignly orchestrating this he knows they're going to run into the headwind he knows he's going to come to them and he's!

going to! Again this illustrates what I was saying earlier that God sends us out with intentional deficits so that we must depend on him and so that no man may boast even the headwinds that we face in our lives resistance opposition persecution hardship and suffering none of it comes outside of the sovereign hand of our heavenly father do you believe that God says in Isaiah 45 7 and 9 I form light and create darkness I make well-being and create calamity I am the Lord who does all these things shower heavens from above and let the clouds rain down righteousness let the earth open that salvation and righteousness may bear fruit let the earth cause them both to sprout I the Lord have created it woe to him who strives with him who say to him who forms it what are you making where your work has no handles where do you see the headwinds of your life where in your life do you find yourself rowing against the wind and against the current trust in

God trust that even your unfavorable circumstances he will work together for your good as it says in Romans 8 28 that you might be conformed!

to the image of his son it was through this event that the disciples came to see Jesus as the tamer of the sea it was through this event that the disciples came to declare that Jesus is truly the son of God all the headwinds that come into your life into your way will serve to magnify Jesus Christ the son of God before your eyes that you might see him for who he really is how big he really is and how small we really are this is no trite platitude it is a profound life transforming truth if you believe it when Jesus comes over to his disciples walking on the sea imagine that that's they're understandably terrified they cried out in fear it's a ghost but Jesus calms them in verse 27 take heart it is

[41 : 44] I do not be afraid and then in verse 33 the self same disciples that had just called Jesus a ghost starts worshipping him saying truly you are the son of God how does that dramatic shift happen in their perception of Jesus there are a couple things first walking on water is no ordinary miracle because in the Old Testament only God is described as walking on water describing how God split the Red Sea and rescued the Israelites at the Exodus it says in Psalm 77 verse 19 of God your way was through the sea your path through the great waters yet your footprints were unseen and here if you know your Bible if you know Old Testament like some of these disciples did Jesus just did what only God does according to the

Bible second the phrase translated it is I is rendered more literally an emphatic I am the other significant occurrence of this emphatic formulation I am occurs in the Gospel of Matthew 22 32 where Jesus cites Exodus 3 I am the God of Abraham and the God of Isaac and the God of Jacob and that's the very same chapter of Exodus where God reveals his name as Yahweh I am who I am tell them that I am has sent you to them and what the Lord God himself uses as his name Jesus implicitly claims that for himself when he says do not fear take heart I am that's why in a similar instance in

John 8 58 59 when Jesus says to the Jews truly truly I say to you before Abraham was I am what did the Jews try to do they try to stone him to death saying that he just blasphemed no wonder the disciples worship him in verse 33 say truly you are the son of God this word worship occurs in the infancy narratives in the Christmas narratives of the early chapters of Matthew when the wise men come to what to worship Jesus and then in his temptations in Matthew chapter 4 Satan tells him I will give you all these things if you will bow down to me and worship me and then Jesus rebukes Satan and he says be gone Satan for it is written you shall worship the Lord your God and him only shall you serve every good Jew knows you're only supposed to worship

God what are they doing they worship in Jesus because he is God because truly he is the son of God and what is the intended effect of Jesus saying I am it's the two phrases that proceed and succeed that take heart take heart to do not be afraid that's the exact same reason why God revealed his name to Moses in Exodus 3 take heart do not be afraid I will be with you I am who I am so when we are afraid when we feel weak and inadequate when we're facing the headwinds of life when God sends us into missions and situations where we feel our deficiencies keenly God's answer is always this it's always the same he said in verse 18 bring them to me here in verse 27 Jesus says I am it's not the change in the present circumstances that should calm our souls or assure us but it's of the living

God I am that transforms our perspective Peter's experience in verses 28 to 31 serve as a helpful illustration of this spiritual reality Peter works up the courage works up his faith and he answers to Jesus Lord if it is you command me to come to you on the water he said come so Peter got out of the boat and walked on the water and came to Jesus but when he saw the wind he was afraid and beginning to sink he cried out Lord save me Jesus immediately reached out his hand and took hold of him saying to him oh you of little faith why did you doubt it's so true to our experience isn't it when we fix our eyes on the wind when we fix our eyes on how the wind in our lives are turning up the sea around we in fact that little faith that phrase is almost like a refrain that occurs again and again throughout the gospel of

[47 : 36] Matthew early in chapter 630 God said if God so clothes the grass of the field which today is alive and tomorrow is thrown into the oven will he not much more clothe you oh you of little faith again in Matthew 8 26 he said to the disciples in the midst of a storm why are you afraid oh you of little faith and then in Matthew 16 8 Jesus says oh you of little faith why are you discussing among yourselves the fact that you have no bread some Christians struggle in their Christian walk because they believe they have such little faith some people doubt even their own salvation because of their little faith I have such little faith look at that man over there look at that woman over there they have great faith I have such little faith am I even a Christian I have such little faith and my obedience is so meager how can

I even be a Christian do I even have faith am I even saved I just want to remind you all if you are like that this morning that that faith is something that grows over time in 2 Thessalonians 1 3 it says we ought always to give thanks to God for your brothers as is right because your faith is growing abundantly and the love and the love of every one of you for one another is increasing your faith is meant to be growing constantly and will grow and grow and grow until the day we die other passages of scriptures speak of God testing our faith and us having a tested genuineness of faith in our lives don't be disheartened that your faith is little even the apostles started exactly there when their faith was little and remember that it's not the strength of our faith that saves us but the strength of our savior

Jesus Christ when you are in a pit of the debt of sin and then you in faith reach out your hand in faith ask Jesus to save you it's not going to be the strength of your grip that makes sure that you are coming out of that pit I assure you it is the almighty hand of God who grabs you and does not let go and no one can take you snatch you out of his hand so brothers and sisters remember when you are prone to doubt when you are discouraged in your walk with God don't fix your eyes on the unfinished work of the Holy Spirit in giving you more and more faith that work will continue till the day you die fix your eyes on the finished work of Jesus Christ on the cross on your behalf let that breathe fresh faith into your life let that help you to persevere and strengthen you as you roll in your head winds let's pray pray for this together oh

God we delight and rejoice and we give thanks to you that you are a compassionate God thank you God that even as you that even as your son Jesus chided Peter for his little faith he didn't leave him there to drown or cut him off from the roster of your twelve apostles no you grabbed him you overcame his little faith you overcame his doubt and so you have done for all of us over and over again because you are a compassionate God so Lord we do believe help our unbelief increase our faith increase our love increase our hope in you every day that until that day when all will see

Jesus is the great I am and confess his name and bow their knee before him in Jesus name we pray amen