He Treads Upon the Waves

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Preacher: Chris Trousdale

[0:00] Immediately he made his disciples get into the boat and go before him to the other side, to Bethsaida, while he dismissed the crowd.! And after he had taken leave of them, he went up on the mountain to pray.

And when evening came, the boat was out on the sea, and he was alone on the land. And he saw that they were making headway painfully, for the wind was against them. And about the fourth watch of the night, he came to them, walking on the sea.
He meant to pass by them, but when they saw him walking on the sea, they thought it was a ghost and cried out, for they all saw him and were terrified. But immediately he spoke to them and said, Take heart, it is I, do not be afraid.
And he got into the boat with them, and the wind ceased, and they were utterly astounded, for they did not understand about the loaves. But their hearts were hardened. When they had crossed over, they came to the land at Gennesaret, and moored to the shore.
And when they got out of the boat, the people immediately recognized him, and ran about the whole region, and began to bring the sick people on their beds to wherever they heard he was, and wherever he came.
[1:09] In villages, cities, or countryside, they laid the sick in the marketplaces, and implored him that they might touch even the fringe of his garment. And as many as touched it were made well.

Father, take your word by your spirit, and apply it to our hearts over the next few minutes. We pray in Jesus' name. Amen. The whole Bible is meant to bear witness to Christ.
It's meant to help us to understand who he is, and how we are supposed to respond to him. From the first verse of Genesis to the last chapter in the book of Revelation, this entire book is really about Jesus.
But when we come to the Gospels, we come to accounts of the life and ministry and death and resurrection of Jesus that help us to see him in ways that the rest of the Bible does not.
It doesn't necessarily paint a clearer picture of Christ than, say, the letters of Paul do, or the letters of John. But we're able to see who Christ is through stories about him as he walked upon the earth.
[2:19] And one of the things that we've seen as we've been walking through the Gospel of Mark is that Mark takes great pains to help us to see not just the things that Jesus did during his life.

Mark wants us to understand out of those things who Jesus is, who he claims to be, and what that claim demands of us. And this passage that we're looking at this morning is no different than that.
The main purpose of this passage is for us to have an encounter with Christ, for him to reveal himself to us, to make known to us who he is.
And in fact, that's exactly what he does for his disciples here. He reveals himself to them. He shows himself to them. Not only that, but in the previous story, he had revealed himself to the crowds.
And if you read the account of this story in the Gospel of John, which we will read some of in a few minutes, if you read the account from the Gospel of John, it becomes clear that Jesus is not only interested in showing himself to his twelve disciples, but he reveals himself to the larger crowds of people.
[3:30] Not just the people that he fed along the shores here, but the people that he came into contact with that are mentioned here at the end of chapter 6 of Mark. Mark tells us that when Jesus got to the other side, the people heard that he was there.

They came to him demanding healing. But what Mark does not tell us is what Jesus did immediately after landing upon the shore near Capernaum here in the land of Gennesaret.
John tells us that Jesus got out of the boat and he began to teach the people. He began to teach them about the true bread of life, that he was the bread of life that had come down from heaven.

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And so in all that Jesus is doing here in Mark's account and also in John's account, Jesus is showing the twelve disciples and he's showing the other people who are coming to Christ.
He's revealing himself, showing them who he is. And in the end, there are only two ways to respond to this revelation of Christ. You can either rest in who he is and accept it and acknowledge it and trust in him, or you can resist him and walk away.
[4:39] But what all of the people do that surround Jesus in these two accounts of this event, what they all do, what the twelve disciples do, what the crowds do, they all initially have to wrestle with the claims of Christ.

So that's what I want us to do this morning. I want us to walk through this passage. I want us to wrestle with what Jesus tells us about himself and what Mark helps us to see about Jesus. And then we're going to have to respond to that wrestling.
We're going to have to respond to that revelation. And you can either rest in it and take heart in it and be joyful because of it, or you can fight against it and you can resist it.
You know the story pretty well. Most of you do. If you grew up going to Sunday school and spent time in church, you know the story. It's the story in which Jesus walks upon the water. It comes, as I said, immediately after he's just fed the 5,000, or more accurately, we said last week that it was probably 20,000 or 25,000, or maybe even more when you add in the women and the children.
His story comes immediately after that. Jesus has just performed one of his greatest miracles, a huge spectacle in front of thousands. He has multiplied a measly amount of bread to feed all of these people and had baskets full left over afterwards.
[5:55] It's an obvious, visible display of the power of Jesus. And in the Gospel of John chapter 6, we are told that the people understood that. They knew about it.

They understood what that power was, and they had it in mind to make him their king. And Jesus becomes immediately resistant to that and pushes the crowd off and goes away.
Well, Mark tells us about Jesus dismissing the crowd because in verse 45 it tells us, immediately he made his disciples get into the boat and go before him to the other side to Bethsaida while he dismissed the crowd.
And after he had taken leave of them, he went up on the mountain to pray. So Jesus is apparently not interested in being these people's king. He's not interested in being a kind of puppet king.
He's not interested in being a military commander to lead them against the Romans and establish their earthly kingdom. Jesus has come to do something greater than that.
[6:54] Jesus has come to set up a heavenly kingdom. Jesus has come not to overturn human governments. Jesus has come to bring God's government into the world, into a people that he is building up and creating for himself that later on he will call the church.

So Jesus is not interested in their offer for him to be a king. Instead, he sends them away, and rather than go with them, he goes alone by himself to spend time in prayer.
And meanwhile, he has compelled, he has literally, the text says that he forced the disciples, he made them get in the boat to go out into the water.
He wants to be alone for a while. But, of course, his plans to spend a great deal of time alone are interrupted because of the disciples' distress.
Now, if you notice, it says that he sent them to go to Bethsaida. Bethsaida is not very far from where they already are. This miracle of feeding the 5,000 was on the northern shore, most likely, of the Sea of Galilee, and the city of Bethsaida is not far from the northeastern shore of the Sea of Galilee.
[8:07] So he's not sending them all the way across the lake. This isn't like the trip that they went on earlier when he fell asleep in the boat and they were going from Capernaum all the way to the other side of the lake to the Decapolis.

This isn't like that journey at all. This is a short little trip that he's sending them on. It makes perfect sense. If he wants to be alone, he'll send them in the boat over there. He will spend some time alone, and then he will walk around and meet them on the other side.
It's not a far journey, but immediately they run into trouble. The winds begin to blow. They're not making any headway. And before you know it, John tells us that they're four miles out in the ocean, out in the sea, out in the lake.
Four miles. All they had to do was sail right along the coast, and they would be at Bethsaida in no time. And yet here they are because of the wind, because of the trouble that they're in, and they're four miles from the shore.

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And eventually they end up going to Capernaum on the western side of the Sea of Geyes. So they're way off course. They're in serious trouble. They can't get to where they're trying to go.
[9:10] And Jesus knows it. He sees them. And Mark tells us that he begins to walk upon the water. Now imagine yourself in the place of the disciples at this point.

They are struggling to get where they want to go. They're rowing and rowing and giving all of their energy to it. And nothing's happening. And in the middle of that, you look in the distance, and somebody, something, is just calmly walking across the water.
It would make absolutely no sense to you. And it makes no sense to them either. Take a look at verse 48. It says, And Jesus saw that they were making headway painfully, for the wind was against Him.
And about the fourth watch of the night, so probably around three o'clock in the morning. This is late at night. It's dark. It's the middle of the night. About the fourth watch of the night, He came to them walking on the sea.
And then here's a strange little statement. It says, He meant to pass by them. But when they saw Him walking on the sea, they thought it was a ghost.
[10:23] And they cried out, for they all saw Him, and they were terrified. Jesus walking towards them on the sea terrifies them. And yet that's not, I believe, Jesus' intention at all.

And we come to this strange little statement where Mark says that Jesus intended to pass by them. It just stands out. That doesn't make any sense. Why would Jesus on the shore somehow miraculously be able to see that they are in trouble four miles out of sea and He begins walking towards them and yet it's His intention to just pass by them?
What sense does that make? That's like a paramedic in a crowded room full of people seeing a man across the room choking and he begins to push and shove his way and he gets through the crowd and as he nears close to the guy, he says, Hey guy, how you doing?
And just continues on. What sense does that make? It doesn't make any sense at all unless your ears are really finely tuned to hear the echoes from the Old Testament that I think Mark wants us to hear.
Because when Jesus begins to walk upon the waters, I think that it may be possible that He incends for His disciples to recall passages like this.
[11:40] In Psalm 77 it says this, verse 16, When the waters saw you, O God, when the waters saw you, they were afraid. Indeed, the deep trembled.

And then a couple of verses later, verse 19 it says about God that your way, that is, your path, is through the sea. Your path is through the great waters, yet your footprints were unseen.
The Old Testament presents God as He who rules over the waters and over the seas and He commands and they obey His word. But not only that, but God makes His paths through the water. He can just walk through the waves. Probably even more so in mind would be this passage from Job chapter 9 that we read part of earlier.
In Job chapter 9, verse 4, Job says this, that God is wise in heart and mighty in strength. He says, Who has hardened Himself against Him and succeeded?
[12:47] And then he says, He who removes mountains and they know it not, when He overturns them in His anger. He who shakes the earth out of its place and its pillars tremble, who commands the sun and it does not rise, who seals up the stars, who alone stretched out the heavens and treads upon the waves of the sea.

This is who God is. But probably even more telling, three verses later, Job says about this God who treads upon the waves of the sea, he says, Behold, He passes by me and I see Him not.
He moves on, but I do not perceive Him. Job, Job, in his description of God, describes Him as one who walks upon the waves of the sea and one who passes by me.
Now that phrase, passes by, it should catch your attention because this is how God often reveals Himself to His most faithful servants.
This is how He reveals Himself to Moses in the book of Exodus when Moses says, Show me your glory. God says, You can't see My glory and live, but here's what I'll do. I'll put you in the cleft of the rock.
[14:01] I will cover over your eyes and I will pass by you. And as I pass by, I'll remove my hand and you will see the backside of me. In other words, I will pass by and let you have a small, tiny glimpse of My glory just before I finish passing by.

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The same phrase is used to describe God's revealing of Himself to Elijah, that God passed by Elijah. And so, when you read in the Gospel of Mark that Jesus, walking upon the waves of the sea, intended to pass by the disciples, I don't think Mark is saying that Jesus intended to ignore them and move past them and let them try to work it out on their own.
I think the point is that Jesus, like God had done in the Old Testament, intended to pass by His disciples and make Himself known to them. He wanted to reveal, He wanted them to see something of who He is.
And it's far, far more important for these men that they see Christ for who He is than that they be rescued in the moment. It's far more important for you and I that Jesus make Himself known for us than that He perform some miracle in our lives.
It matters more that you understand who He is than it does that He heal you of your diseases. You know the old saying, you all have probably heard it, that if you give a man a fish, you feed him for a day, but if you teach a man to fish, you feed him for a lifetime.
[15:40] I think the same thing applies here. If Christ heals you or if Christ performs a miracle for you, He solves the problem of the day for you. But if He reveals Himself to you, He gives you everything that you need to endure every problem that's going to come.

If He heals you of cancer today, then tomorrow it may be heart disease. Tomorrow it may be who knows what that's going to come your way.
What you really need is not deliverance from the moment that is upon you. What you really need is to see Christ for who He is. And I think that in the midst of this difficult moment where the disciples are fighting against the water and they're off course and they can't get to where they need to be, the most important thing is that they see Him for who He is and trust in Him.
And so Jesus intends to show them something about Himself. He intends to show them that He is the one who walks upon the waves. He intends to show them that. And so take a look where Jesus reveals Himself clearly to these disciples.
It says that they thought that Jesus was a ghost and they cried out for they all saw Him and were terrified. But immediately He spoke to them and said, Take heart.
[16:58] It is I. Do not be afraid. Now, this is a little bit difficult to see sometimes in our English translations. But literally what Jesus says is, is take heart.

I am. Do not be afraid. I am. Do not be afraid. I am.
It is emphatic in the original language. It is I am. In fact, this is the same phrase that we see Jesus use over and over in the Gospel of John to describe Himself.
So that very well-known passage in John chapter 8, Jesus says to the people, Before Abraham was, I am. In other words, I am not just a teacher.
I am not just a prophet. I am Yahweh. I am Jehovah. I am the great I am. I am He who said to Moses, I am that I am.
[18:01] I am, Jesus says to these disciples. I am. I am. I am. I think probably of all the things that we might see and understand about Christ, more important than understanding His character, His love, His compassion that we saw displayed in the feeding of the 5,000, more important than that, more important even than seeing the displays of His power in the Gospel is simply to understand who this is.

Now you can say a lot more about Christ than to say that He is Yahweh. You can say that He is fully man as well. He is fully God and He is fully man.
Otherwise, He couldn't make propitiation for our sins. He couldn't make atonement for us on the cross. He is fully man. So there are other things that we could say about Christ and if we were doing a study of the person of Christ, we could say a lot of things about Jesus.
But this is probably where we would start if we wanted to understand Him. We would start where Jesus starts with these disciples, afraid and alone in the water. Jesus looks at them and says, don't be afraid because I am.
You have to understand that. You have to begin there. Because there are a thousand voices in the world that would tell us who Jesus is.
[19:20] That Jesus was a revolutionary of His day. A non-violent revolutionary. or that Jesus was a great moral teacher.

Or even that Jesus was a powerful man in might and deed. Or even that Jesus was a powerful angelic being or something like that. There are as many versions of who Christ is as there probably

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are cultures in the world.
Everyone has an opinion about who Jesus is. And I'm not overly concerned with all those opinions. I want to know what He says about Himself. And He says about Himself right here, He says, take heart, I am.
Take heart, I, I, am. So add that all together. He's going to pass by them as God passed by Moses, as God passed by Elijah, as Job says, He passes me by and I do not see Him.
He's going to pass by these disciples and as He passes by them, He says to them, I am. So He reveals Himself once to Moses by passing by Moses and allowing Moses to see a bit of His glory.
[20:36] But He revealed Himself previously to Moses in the burning bush by saying to Moses, tell them I am that I am sent to you. Jesus wants the disciples to see and understand who He is.

Because despite all the good things that they've done so far, despite all the work that they've done in the name of Christ, they haven't yet fully arrived. They don't yet get, they are, they are still wrestling with who He is.
Imagine that. They have seen Jesus raise people from the dead. They have seen Jesus cast out demons. They've not only seen Jesus do miraculous things, they've seen Jesus have the power to empower them to do miraculous things.
That's power. And now they've just seen Jesus perform one of His greatest miracles. They've seen Him feed all of these people and supply their need. And they're still wrestling.
Now Jesus openly says to them, you want to know I am? Stop being afraid. I am. And yet their wrestling is not finished. It's not over with. Take a look down.
[21:49] We read in verse 51 that He got into the boat with them and the wind ceased and they were utterly astounded. Now that word means not only that they were amazed, it does mean that, but it also means that they were confused.

Have you ever seen somebody do something that's amazing, but at the same time you're scratching your head asking yourself, how in the world did they do that? There was a guy, it's kind of a silly example, but there was a guy on America's Got Talent who, and I don't watch that show very often, but it's one of those where you're flipping by and sometimes it catches your eye.
And I paused on it for a second and there's a guy who's dancing and he looked like he was floating across the floor. His body moved and twisted and bent itself in ways that I'm not quite sure the human body is meant to move and bend and twist.
And it was really impressive, but the thing that I really kept thinking is how did he do that? I mean, how did he move across the floor and it looks like his feet are not even touching the floor?
How is that even possible? There are times when you see something and it's amazing, but at the same time it just doesn't make any sense. And I think that that's the disciples' response to the miracle of the feeding of the thousands.
[23:08] They see it, they've participated in it, they've obeyed what Christ has said, they've trusted in Christ to do whatever he tells them to do and they've passed out the bread and they keep coming back for more and more. But at the end of it, even though they're amazed by it, even though they do what Christ wants them to do, they don't understand it and now they still don't understand.

They don't understand how is he doing this? How is he walking upon the sea? Verse 52 explains why they didn't understand how he could walk on the sea.
It's because they couldn't understand yet the loaves. For they did not understand about the loaves, but their hearts were hardened. In other words, throughout this entire process of Christ revealing himself to them, throughout this process of Christ displaying his power right before them, they still haven't quite fully understood who he is and what he's come to do.
They're still wrestling with it. And in fact, two chapters later, in chapter 8 of the Gospel of Mark, they're still wrestling with it. Jesus performs a very similar miracle at the beginning of Mark chapter 8 where he feeds thousands again.
This time it's 4,000 men, but he feeds thousands once again in Mark chapter 8 at the very beginning of it. And then, just a few verses later, his disciples are having a discussion amongst themselves because now they're off by themselves and they haven't brought enough food.
[24:40] They only brought one. They didn't bring enough loaves of bread to feed all of them and they're a little bit concerned about it. They're a little bit frustrated about it and Jesus begins to talk to them about the leaven of the Pharisees and some other bread issue and they don't get it.

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They're arguing about bread to eat. Jesus is trying to help them to understand the dangers of the Pharisees and finally Jesus gets frustrated with them.
In verse 17 of Mark chapter 8 it says, Jesus, aware of this, said to them, Why are you discussing the fact that you have no bread? Why are you even talking about that, guys? Do you not yet perceive or understand or are your hearts hardened?
Having eyes do you not see? Having ears do you not hear? Do you not remember? Do you not remember when I broke the five loaves for the 5,000 and how many baskets full of broken pieces did you take up?
They said, Twelve. And the seven for the 4,000 how many baskets full of broken pieces did I take up? And they said, Seven. And He said to them, Do you not yet understand?
[25:47] So that they still, two chapters later, many miracles later, days of teaching later, and they still don't quite understand it. They're arguing over how they're going to have enough bread and Jesus says, I just multiplied bread for thousands twice and you're concerned that you don't have any bread and your concern over that is keeping you from listening to what I'm trying to tell you?

What's wrong with you people? Don't you understand? Don't you get this? And He says, No, they don't get it. They don't quite understand. But they do understand some things.
They do understand that they need Him and that need to be close to Him. They just don't quite understand everything about Him that He wants them to understand just yet.
They're wrestling with who Christ is, but ultimately, 11 of these 12 will come to rest in who Christ is. But that's not the case for everyone.
So I want you to turn over. Just keep your place there in Mark. But I want you to turn over to the Gospel of John, chapter 6, where, as I said before, we find this story of the feeding of the 5,000.
[27:03] We find this story of Jesus walking upon the water. But then John tells us some of the things that Jesus said and did right after He arrived there near Capernaum, right after He and the disciples arrived.

And the crowd has regathered. I imagine that some of the crowd that we're seeing here are people, if you remember, the people had followed Jesus. They ran around to the northern shore of the sea as Jesus and His disciples sailed there from Capernaum.
They followed Him. So I think probably some of this crowd that meets Jesus back here, and Mark tells us He did more miracles among them, some of that crowd is probably some of those who came back down and then others who didn't make that journey have heard that Jesus is back.
And so once again, you have a large crowd of people, some of whom are probably made up of just bystanders, people who are curious, some of whom are made up of people who have been pursuing Jesus for quite a while now.
They've been following Him and listening to Him and tracking with Him for quite a while now. And Jesus, Jesus has something to say to this sort of disparate group of people.
[28:14] in John 6, verse 25, it says, When they found Him on the other side of the sea, they said to Him, Rabbi, when did you come here?

Because they knew that He wasn't on the boat. Jesus answered them, Truly, truly, I say to you, you are seeking Me not because you saw signs, but because you ate your fill of the loaves.
In other words, I know why you're here. You're here for food. You ate your fill. Now you've followed Me around and that's what you're after. And Jesus says in verse 27, Do not labor for the food that perishes, but for the food that endures to eternal life, which the Son of Man will give to you.
For on Him, God the Father has set His seal. So He's saying to the crowd, I know that you've come here for more food. I get it. Many of you were there when I fed you, and you ate, and you received your fill, and you followed Me around here, and now you're here for more.
And what I want to say to you is, Stop worrying about that kind of food. I have something better to give to you. I have food that endures forever. And then they say in verse 28, What must we do to be doing the works of God?
[29:28] What do we need to do to get this food? What do you want us to do to get this eternal food? Jesus answered them, This is the work of God that you believe in Him whom He has sent. In other words, you don't do it.

Just believe in Me. Trust in Me. And then move down to verse 32 where Jesus starts to show them who He is and help them to see. He says, Truly, truly, I say it to you.

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It was not Moses who gave you bread from heaven, but My Father gives you the true bread from heaven. So remember in the wilderness, when the people were following, when Israel was following Moses through the wilderness, and they're in the desert, and they don't have any food, and every morning they would wake up to manna, some sort of bread-like substance on the ground that God was providing for them, literally just raining it down from heaven, and it's there every morning along with the dew, and they have food every day.
And Jesus says to them, That's not the real food from heaven. God has provided something better now. The true bread from heaven. Verse 33, For the bread of God is He who comes down from heaven and gives life to the world.
He's talking about Himself, trying to help them see who He is, and they still don't get it. Sir, give us this bread always. They want more of it. They want more food. I think maybe what they are after here is sort of the ultimate welfare program.
[31:00] Alright? It's one thing to say we'd like some food stamps. It's another thing to say, Jesus, why don't you just make this miracle food for us every day? Dinner was really good last night.

We'd like breakfast this morning. Let's go. Let's get the bread working. I need some of the miracle bread. That's exactly what they're doing here. And they don't understand at all. Jesus is revealing Himself to them, and they're kind of wrestling with it.
But they're about to really wrestle with it. Verse 35, He just tells them straight, I am the bread of life. Whoever comes to Me shall not hunger, whoever believes in Me shall never thirst.
But I said to you that you have seen Me, and yet you do not believe. All that the Father gives Me will come to Me, and whoever comes to Me I will never cast out. For I have come down from heaven.
So He's the true bread that's come down. Not to do My own will, but the will of Him who sent Me.
And this is the will of Him who sent Me, that I should lose nothing of all that He's given Me, but raise it up on the last day.
[32:00] For this is the will of My Father, that everyone who looks to the Son and believes in Him should have eternal life. Then I will raise Him up on the last day. Look to Me, He keeps saying. But instead of looking to Him, they get angry.

So the Jews grumbled about Him because He said, I'm the bread that came down from heaven. I think when John here refers to the Jews, I don't think he means all the Jewish people who are present.
I think these are the onlookers. These are the people on the fringes here in this particular instance.
The Jews grumbled about Him because He said, I am the bread that came down from heaven.
And then again in verse 52, the Jews disputed among themselves saying, how can this man give us his flesh to eat? And so, so Jesus is showing Himself to them.
He's revealing Himself to them. I am the bread that gives life. Believe in Me. Trust in Me. And these sort of on the fringes are getting frustrated with it. They're getting irritated with it.
[33:04] And then Jesus crosses the line. Absolutely crosses the line. Verse 53. Remember, He's speaking to a Jewish audience. Verse 53, So Jesus said to them, Truly, truly, I say to you, unless you eat the flesh of the Son of Man and drink His blood, you have no life in you.

Whoever feeds on My flesh and drinks My blood has eternal life and I will raise Him up on the last day. For My flesh is true food and My blood is true drink.
He has just crossed the line. What, what could be more offensive to the Jewish people than to say to them, eat My flesh, drink My blood? You see, we read that and we automatically hear it with our sort of Christian listening ears on.
That's how we hear it automatically. We start thinking of things like the Lord's Supper and all, because we're so familiar with this language of the body of Jesus being our bread and the blood of Jesus being our wine and life coming.
We're so familiar with that language that it doesn't shock us. But Jesus is talking now to people for whom drinking any kind of blood is the height of uncleanness.
[34:19] you don't, you do not have anything to do with blood. You just don't. So that when the law tells them how to prepare their food, always the law emphasizes that there's to be no blood in the food.

And not even in the law, but even before the law was given to Moses, when God spoke to Noah, God told Noah, here are some things that are important for you to know and tell everybody. And one of the things he says is, don't eat meat that's been strangled or that has blood in it.

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What? This is a big deal for an old covenant people who are thinking with an old covenant mindset. They are offended by this.
This is one of the most offensive things that Jesus could say to them and yet he just crosses the line without a thought and he says it directly to them. Eat my flesh and drink my blood and then you will live.
You want food? I'll give you food. And then we're told in verse 60, when many of his disciples heard it. Now here, it's that closer group.
[35:26] It's not the twelve, but it's not the fringes. I think this is probably the people that have been following him. They've probably gone up north, now they're back down west. These are the people who have been clamoring over and over to hear Jesus and see him work great.

These are the people who wanted food from him. When many of his disciples heard it, they said, this is a hard saying. Who can listen to it?
So even these, they are wrestling with who Christ is. They're trying to come to terms with it. They clearly not understood because they wanted to make him king earlier. But they're wrestling with it and they're kind of working their way through it.
They're having trouble. This is hard, Jesus. Verse 61, But Jesus, knowing in himself that his disciples were grumbling about this, said to them, Do you take offense at this?
Then what if you were to see the Son of Man ascending to where he was before? It is the Spirit who gives life. The flesh is no help at all. The words that I've spoken to you are spirit and life. But there are some of you who do not believe.
[36:36] In other words, Jesus says, you don't get it. This is not about flesh. This is not about literal flesh and blood. The Spirit gives life. The problem with you people is that you don't believe.

You don't believe. You're amazed by me. You follow me around. You want me to provide for you. You want me to give you more bread and food. You want me to perform miracles.
You want me to do the dance for you. But you don't know who I am. You don't understand me. You don't believe. You don't believe. Move down to verse 66.
After this, many of his disciples turned back and no longer walked with him. And there it is. You can rest in who Christ tells you that he is.
You can cling to him even if you're still wrestling to a certain extent. You can cling or you can reject him and walk away.
[37:41] Many, many, many of Christ's supposed followers and supposed disciples walked away from him when they began to see and understand the kinds of claims that he was making about himself.

All of us have to wrestle with this. All of us are confronted with Christ and who he says that he is. And all of us have to, at some point in time, set aside our preconceived notions about Jesus and what he's like and what he expects of us.
At some point, we have to set that aside and hear what he says about himself and wrestle with it and then eventually we either have to rest in him or we're going to have to reject him.
Those are the two options. In fact, Jesus presents these options to the twelve. Verse 67, right after many have walked away, Jesus said to the twelve, do you want to go away as well?
Here's your chance. Do you want to go? And then Simon Peter, who I know still does not fully understand who Christ is because I've read the rest of this gospel and the others.
[38:51] I know he doesn't fully understand but he's made some progress. Simon Peter answered, Lord, to whom shall we go? You have the words of eternal life and we have believed and we have come to know that you are the Holy One of God.

I don't think that Peter fully understands yet all that Christ has revealed about himself. I'm not quite sure that Peter fully understands what it means for Jesus to say to him, do not be afraid, I am.
I don't know that Peter understands all that but in the middle of Peter's wrestling with all of those things, one thing that he does get so far is, you have the words of eternal life.
Where else would I go? I have nowhere else to turn but to you. Jesus, in this story of walking upon the water, he does everything that he does in order to show himself to his disciples and ultimately through the writings of Mark and Matthew and John who record this story, ultimately through their writings to show us who he is.
And the reality, you may be where the twelve disciples were and you may at this point say, I'm trying, I'm trying to understand, I'm trying to get it but I'm not letting go.

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[40:32] I'm not going to stop wrestling with it. I'm not going to turn away from it because you, Jesus, you have the words of life from nowhere else to go that may be where you are.

And if that's where you are, know that the day is fast approaching and may be on you now when you have to decide, I'm going to rest in who he says he is or I'm going to reject who he says he is. All of us have to come to that point at some point in time. We all must make a decision. When he makes himself known, when he reveals himself to us, when we wrestle with the revelation, at the end of the day we either rest in him or we reject him.

And that happens in the middle of life, I think. Just like the disciples are in the middle of a tragedy, of trouble, and Jesus reveals himself to them in the midst.

I think this happens in the middle of life. I don't think that we, most of us don't get an opportunity to just take time out and figure all this stuff out. It happens in the middle of life. And sometimes what we really want Jesus to do is we want him to solve our problems.

[41:46] And we really picture Jesus as the ultimate problem solver. So that we want him to heal us or we want him to heal our loved ones. We want him to heal our relatives and our friends.

Or we want him to turn this situation at work around and fix it. Or we want him to fix these relationships that are messed up and are broken in our lives. And he has the power to do all of that and he may do all of that.

But in the middle of all of that he makes himself known to us. And if all we're looking for is the miracle, if that's all we ever look for from Christ is fill my need, give me what I want, then we will miss the revelation that he gives to us.

we'll miss it completely. The disciples, I think, almost missed it. He's passing by.

He's showing himself. He's walking upon the waves. That's what the Old Testament says God does. He's showing them and they think it's a ghost. They almost missed it. So Jesus goes out of his way.

[42:57] Stop being afraid. I am. And the very fact that you're here to hear this text means that Jesus has now gone out of his way to say in the middle of whatever's happening in your life, I am.

Now. Do you believe in me? Or do you want to walk away also? Let's pray.

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