

Jesus Walking on the Water-A Picture of the Church

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This story, which I read in your hearing previously, of Jesus going up into the mountain and His disciples going down into the sea, is to be the Scripture tonight for a little talk about the coming again of our Lord.

Now, let me begin by saying that Jesus Christ our Lord, is the Supreme Poet and Artist and Musician of all worlds. All that is beautiful and lovely and gracious and desirable gather themselves up in our Bridegroom, so that our Lord Jesus Christ could never do, and cannot do, a common thing. Our Lord stooped to mortal flesh to be born of the Virgin Mary, but His birth was not a common birth.

Nothing Jesus ever does is common. His birth was uncommon, and He has, by being born, elevated and dignified human birth beyond all possibility of description. Our Lord humbled himself to work, and He worked at the carpenter bench like other men. And yet our Lord never did a common deed, and the work He did was not common work. He elevated all work up unto an uncommon level, and dignified the humblest toil, so that the Christian carpenter, as he saws and planes and pounds the nails, may know that he is doing an uncommon thing, because our Lord was a carpenter, an elevated toil from the level of the common to the uncommon and extraordinary.

Our Lord suffered when He was on earth, and yet His suffering was not the common, tight-lipped, cold-eyed suffering that is going on in the world so much now, suffering that has long ceased to find expression, suffering that destroys the higher regions of the spirit and bestializes us and makes us like the clay from which our bodies were taken. Not that kind of suffering.

The suffering of our Lord was uncommon because he was uncommon, and everything He does and says and said were all infinitely raised above the level of the common. And He raised all of us above the level of the common, if we're His, so that we are not common people and we don't do common things. For the commonest act, which may be done by a sinner and thought nothing of, becomes an extraordinary act when it is done by the child of God.

Our Lord also stooped to die, but His dying was not the common dying of other men. It was not the paying of a debt to nature. It was not the making the last payment on the mortgage that nature had upon Him, for nature never held a mortgage on Jesus Christ. And He never owed a dime to nature. The dying of our Lord, like His own glorious person, was an uncommon, unusual dying. It was the dying of the just for the unjust. It was the sacrificial dying. It was a vicarious dying. It was a paying a debt He didn't owe for others who were too deeply in debt to ever pay out.

That Lord being that kind of Lord, it is therefore to be expected that His words are never common words, that they yield a multitude of meanings to the humble of heart and to the meek that never can be understood by the common, that is, the ordinary vulgar

rank-and-file of unconverted men. This has been the testimony of the saints down all the years. For I always try to preach the Scriptures in line with the traditions of the saints, the testimony of the great souls that have lived. And this has been their testimony, that they have come to the flowers of the Scripture like a bee, and they have gotten all the nectar they could carry away, and then returned again and found that there was as much nectar there as there had been before.

And like the barrel of meal that wasted not and the cruse of oil that did not fail, every text of Scripture yields its precious treasures, and then upon another visitation yields another load, so that the oldest tottering Saint, barely able now to read his Bible, can read a chapter which he has read a hundred or a thousand times before, and say and say truly that he has found new nectar there and sweet honey that he had never seen before. And so also with the acts of Jesus, this meaningful act our Lord did, when He refused the crown and went into the mountain, and saw His disciples go down unto the sea, and then later He went down to them and walked on the water coming to them, and they in fear cried out and He said be not afraid and said it is I, and they invited Him into the ship, and immediately He was at the shore.

Now I am not much of a typologist, as you probably know by this time. I am not what you call a preacher of types. I think there are a few types in the Old Testament, but I think they have been greatly overdone. I think that we have been bound by a slavish conformity to types which were created for us by Bible expositors that should have been knitting at the time and have saved us a great deal of trouble. But while I do not go much for types, though I admit that there are some, and thank God for the ones there are, yet you will find not types so much as poetic overtones and a duality of meaning in the Scriptures. To the needy heart it says one thing, and to another needy heart it says another, and to another needy heart it says another.

And it is the same verse of Scripture, and the same Lord, and the same Word falling from the lips of the same Lord, and yet it has a multiplicity of meanings adapting itself to the need of the soul of the various individuals. So that this story that we have here written for us by divine inspiration is more than merely a story. It is an enacted drama, if you like, as little as I like the word drama. It is nevertheless a divine drama. It is God Almighty in His odyssey through the universe, moving vastly, moving through the universe on His way to His predestined end. And it was not by chance or accident or not casually that our Lord went up into the mountain and disciples went down unto the sea.

But in addition to the plain historic facts which are before us, I believe that there are an infinite variety of meanings which the soul can gather from this. I do not claim to exhaust it, but I do claim to show you that the Lord was giving us a very beautiful object lesson here tonight, or object lesson which we may take here tonight.

Now the first thing I noticed is that our Lord declined the crown and went up into a mountain Himself alone. When Jesus perceived that they would come and take Him by force to make Him a king, He departed again into a mountain Himself alone. The average man would not have declined the crown. Even Caesar declined the crown only that he might postpone it to a more auspicious moment when he might better and more fittingly take the crown. That's why Brutus slew him at the foot of the monument.

But our Lord declined the crown because He knew the crown they wanted to give Him was not the crown He was destined to wear. They wanted a king who could deliver them from the despotic bondage of Rome. They wanted a king wearing their own garments and speaking their own language and having their own physiognomy, that of the Jew upon them. But our Lord knew this was no time for the crown. He knew that there must be a cross out there before there could be a crown.

So, he declined the crown, and He went up into a mountain. If He had stooped to receive the crown they wanted to give Him, Israel would have rallied to Him in a moment. But He took the cross rather in the will of God than to take a crown out of the will of God.

Oh, if we could only see that this is the thing to do, brethren, we would not be losing so many good people from the church to the entertainment world. If you were to go to the entertainment world, the paid trained seals of the entertainment world, and you would find many choir singers there that are now singing borderline sexy songs for money. And half-dressed females at one time sang, The Lord's my Shepherd, I'll not want not. I trust, great God, from this church. But they are nevertheless who have sold themselves out. I know one man with a beautiful voice who even one time sang from this platform who is now singing beer ads for the National Broadcasting Company.

Ladies and gentlemen, if we could only learn that the crown that comes before the cross is a tin crown. It's a gilded crown. And if you will look upon it, you would find stamped, Made in Hell. For it is not a cross or a crown that came down from the glory above, but a crown that came up, a false crown that came up made in hell for the soul that will take it before he takes the cross.

So, Jesus refused the crown and took the cross deliberately, for that was in the will of God. I suppose it's a common thing and almost a religious bromide for me to say it, but I say it tonight, the will of God is always best, ladies and gentlemen. The will of God is always best. Whatever the circumstances, if you can find the will of God, take that will of God. Even if it means postponing the crown and taking the cross first, take that cross and trust God for the crown. But don't try to crosscut and short-circuit your life and go past the cross to the crown. For the crown you receive, I say, will be a stamp made in hell and not made in heaven.

So, our Lord took the Father's will and escaped into the mountain, and His disciples saw Him go. And you know historically that's what happened. He refused that crown that Israel wanted to give Him and took the cross that the Romans gave Him. And then the third day He rose from the dead, and on Mount Olivet He went up into the mountain Himself alone. And going up into the mountain, He sat down at the right hand of the throne, not on the throne of His own, but on His Father's throne as the Heir apparent to that throne. And there He is in the mountain alone.

Now what does Jesus do when He is in a mountain alone? Brethren, I ask you, what does any good man do when he is alone? You don't have to ask that question, and we need not even answer it, though I shall answer it and say that of course he prays. And that praying Man of all praying men, that example of all praying men, that most prayerful of all praying men, Jesus, when He was in the mountain by Himself alone, I wonder what He was doing. We needn't wonder, we know. He was talking to His Heavenly Father.

And about whom was He talking to his Heavenly Father? He was talking to Him about that little group that He had left just a little before. That little, that little misguided group, which in their ignorance wanted Him to become their king and bring about a revolution that should set Israel free, as had happened under Gideon and the rest of the great prophets or great judges of the Old Testament times.

But He knew them too well, and He knew the worst thing you could do would be to put a crown on the head of those carnal folks and bring them into a kingdom and make them have an earthly kingdom. They had to have some changes made there before they dared become sons and daughters of an earthly kingdom.

So, He was praying for them, praying for them in their ignorance, praying for them in their peril, praying to the Heavenly Father for His sheep. And that is exactly what He is doing now. If anybody should ask the question, what is Jesus doing now? The answer is Jesus is in heaven praying for His people. Now I don't mean that our Lord is up there on His knees all the time, because there is a kind of praying that is superior to the kind of praying that we do when we are on our knees.

If you will remember the word I gave you from dear old Dr. Max Reich. Dr. Max Reich was asked one time whether he was a man of prayer. They said, tell us about your prayer life, Dr. Reich. Now Dr. Reich was a Quaker, as you know, and he said, well, and said it with that Oxford accent of his, he said, when you ask me about my prayer life, if you mean about my getting alone and spending long seasons in prayer, then I would have to say that I am relatively a prayerless man. But if you mean when you say pray without ceasing, a continual unbroken communion with God, day and night under all circumstances everywhere I am, and continual unbroken fellowship that prays always out of my heart to God, then I can say that I pray without ceasing.

Now that's the kind of praying our Lord is doing in the glory under that is not necessarily that dramatic, down on your knees, beating the bench type of prayer, though we must do that when occasion requires it. But it was, it's another kind of praying. It's the continual communion of the soul with God. It may even be a wordless communion.

And incidentally, I believe in a wordless communion. I wrote something one time called "Wordless Worship." And I don't remember all I said, but I know that I tried to present the idea that there is a worship that goes beyond words. In fact, whatever can be put in words is second-rate. Always remember, brethren, if you can say it, it's second-rate. Because there are divine spiritual realities that cannot be said. Paul called them unspeakable.

And those unspeakable things are the eternal things that you'll have at last. Remember that God is giving us, letting us live on two planes at once. He is letting us live on this religious plane where there are preachers and song leaders and choirs and pianists and organists and editors and leaders and promoters and evangelists and church spires and all that.

And that's religion. That's religion in its overall. That's the external garb of religion. And we can't and don't want to get along without that. But brethren, inside that and beyond

that and above that and superior to that, there is the spiritual essence of it all. And that spiritual essence is what I'm pleading that we bring back to the church of Jesus Christ again.

Somebody talked about truth, which began and ended in itself, and said that if truth was not given moral expression, it was no good. I fully agree. But we have much theology, much Bible teaching, many Bible conferences that begin and end in themselves. They start here and circle, pull around on themselves and end here with a benediction. And everybody goes home and nobody's any better than he was before. That is the woe and the terror of all this thing, my brethren.

And that is the curse of fundamentalism as we know it today. Evangelicalism is rife with it, this textualism which begins and ends in itself and sees nothing beyond. If you do not see beyond the visible, and if you cannot touch that which is intangible, and if you cannot hear that which is inaudible, and if you cannot know that which is beyond knowing, then I have serious doubts whether you're a Christian really or not. Because the Bible tells us, that eye has not seen or ear heard, neither has entered into the heart of a man the things that God has laid up for them that love him.

But it does say, God has revealed it unto us by the Holy Ghost. My brethren, if we should stop trying to make the Holy Ghost our servant and begin to live in the Holy Ghost as a fish lives in the sea, we should enter into riches of glory that we know nothing about now.

But there are those that want the Holy Ghost in order that they might have the gift of healing. Others want the Holy Ghost for the gift of tongues. Others want the Holy Ghost that they might preach well. Others want the Holy Ghost their testimony might be effective. All that I grant you is a part of the total pattern of the New Testament. But brethren, let us never make God our servant, and let us never pray that we might be filled with the Holy Ghost for a second purpose.

God wants to fill you with the Holy Ghost as an end in your moral life, in order that there might be other ends. There will grow out of that one end, other ends and other secondary things and other byproducts. They all come and they're all there. But the purpose of God is that we might first of all know Him and be lost in Him and enter into the fullness of the Spirit of God.

I listened this morning to that number, Bless the Lord, O my soul, bless thou the Lord, O my soul, that lovely thing. I said afterward to Brother McAfee, after hearing that, I wonder why we ever sing any common songs. I wonder why we ever stoop to the rank and file of cheap things. I wonder why we don't live always in the glory.

I have been reading St. Bernard's "Love of God" lately. That great old Saint, 700 years ago he lived and sang and dreamed and walked with God and was not, for God took him. And he left behind him, Jesus, thou joy of loving hearts, and such songs as that.

And the one we sang this morning, what was it? Jesus, the very thought of thee with sweetness fills my breast. It was not, he was not Bernard of Cluny, not the man who wrote Jerusalem, the Gold and the Celestial City, two different Bernards. This was Saint

Bernard, the man who was canonized 20 years after he was dead. But he was a man who walked with God, and he wrote the love of God, and he wrote sermons on the Song of Solomon, which I've been dipping into. When I read that radiance, and I see the shining glory of that man's life and words, I wonder why we ever stoop to read anything else but that which is elevated and divine and wonderful. Because God has given it to us in the Bible, and then he's given it also to us through the hearts of some in certain other great religious books.

Now, He declined that crown and went up into the mountain, and His presence there is the prayer. His very presence there. It's not everlastingly telling His deeds before the presence of the Father, and saying, Father, bless this woman, Father, bless that woman, endlessly talking, as some of us Christians do, and covering our inward fears by a multitude of words.

But it's His presence at the right hand of the Father that's the prayer. His presence there, the fact He's there at all, is a mighty prayer, and that prayer is for His people. That prayer is for you and me and for the whole Church of Jesus Christ. Then it says, They went down into the sea, and the evening was come.

When our Lord went up into the mountain, and the clouds received Him out of our sight, the light of the world went away, and the night came. For he said, the night cometh when no man can work. He said, When I am with you, the sun is here, and it is daytime. But when I leave and go away for a while, it will be night.

And so, the night has settled on the world, and the Church has worked in the darkness all these years. I don't mean the Church has not had light. I mean to say that the condition of the world has been that of darkness, and the night has lain upon the world all these years.

There's a period in history called the Dark Ages. I respectfully suggest to the historians that we change it from a few centuries, around 8, 9, 10, 11 centuries. We change it and call it all the time since the Son of Righteousness withdrew and left the earth, for it has been dark all over the world.

Now, these disciples that went down into a ship and went down into the sea, what about them? My brethren, it doesn't take a giant intellect to see the church there, for He had not more than reached the mountain yonder, when suddenly they were all filled with the Holy Ghost, and the church of Christ was launched on the sea, the dark sea. And she's been on that sea ever since.

Now what is the relation of a ship to the sea? It is the relation of propinquity, propinquity in contact without merger. And that ought to be the relation of the church to the world. The world is the sea, like the troubled sea that cannot rest. You will find in the Scriptures every place the figure of speech used of the world to mean the sea, the disturbed, turbulent, treacherous, deadly, cruel sea, the sea so rich and so unpredictable, so calm today, so violent tomorrow, bearing her cargos over her bosom today in peace, and tomorrow dashing them to the blue depths.

Mankind is like that. Our men meet at the council tables and shake hands and exchange cigars and drink liquor together and tell jokes together and have their pictures taken laughing together, and the next day a war breaks out and they're enemies, and they would kill each other at the drop of a hat. It's a turbulent, cruel, treacherous, deceitful world in which we live.

And yet the world is here, the Church is here in that world. The Church cannot withdraw from it any more than the ship could withdraw from the sea. But we're here in it. But thank God we're on top of it. We maintain the same relation to the world that the ship did to the lake, the Sea of Tiberias. It is contact without merging. And the woe of it all is that the sea is always trying to get into the church.

The world is always trying to leak in, to splash in, to come in with soft words and beautiful white crests moving in on us and always saying, don't be so aloof, don't be hostile, let us come in. We have something you want, come on, we've got it.

I have a book up here in my study which I use for a prop when I want to get a little more air. And it says, finding God through science. Another one says, finding God through nature and to God through something else, finding God through art. And they're always trying to find God through one backyard window or another, always crawling out some cellar looking for God, when the whole top side of the building is made of sheer crystal and God is shining down if we only knew it.

And instead of looking through science to God and through medicine to God and through art to God, we can open the windows of our hearts and look up and find God without all that nonsense.

So we don't need the world. I know, I know, I stand pretty much alone in all this. I know, and even some of my friends wish I'd get lost. I know that, but I also know that I am telling truth, brethren, which will stand when the worlds are on fire, that the world has nothing the church needs. Except, of course, except in the sense that we are citizens and human beings.

I get my starch from the potato field and my carbohydrates from the stockyards and my milk from the cows and my eggs from the hen. I need that part of the world all right. I travel on her highways and fly in her airplanes and ride in her trains and that's another thing all together.

But even in that, we're not merging, we're only in contact without merging. The church of Christ has to have contact with the world as the ship has with the sea, but without merging. And I am sure that that terrible stormy night when the sea arose and hurled herself against a little boat, that they did some wild bailing out of the water.

I suppose if it had been like it is today, there would have been two or three learned apostles there to tell them, stop bailing. What's the matter with you, man? You belong to the 17th century. Your theology is a 17th century theology. Why don't you get help and come up to the present time and learn to get adjusted to the world. Let the water come in, it won't hurt you. But good old hairy-armed Peter with that tin can or whatever he used, he was getting that water out of there as fast as he could. It was a question of

survival with him. And believe it or not, it's a question of survival with the church of Christ today.

Let us not imagine that we have Abraham to our fathers. Let not the evangelical church say, we have Abraham to our father, let us alone. Jesus said, don't you tell me you've got Abraham to your father. Look, the ax lies at the root of the tree. And if that tree doesn't bring forth fruit, there'll be someone to chop it down, and God will raise another tree. And God will. God isn't worried about your denomination or mine.

I remember one time many long years ago, I guess 20 now, I was quite perturbed, almost angry, as angry as a Christian man ever supposed to get. Because that great missionary statesman, Dr. Robert A. Jaffrey, said to me, talking about the Alliance, he said, why, it isn't God's business to preserve the Alliance, it's God's business to evangelize the world. Whether the Alliance continues to exist or not doesn't matter if God can evangelize the world. Let's dissolve her if we have to and evangelize the world.

That was vision. I didn't have it at the time. But that was vision, gentlemen. God isn't here to preserve your denomination or mine. And the great need of the hour is that the church, the church of Christ, the spiritual church, regardless of what she may call herself, should be saved from the incoming waves. This little bit of the world and that little bit of the world and that other little bit of the world moves in into the church, and pretty soon we'll have no Church at all, but we have a sinking vessel.

Now it says, the disciples went down into the sea, and they were sailing toward Capernaum and home. We are out on the ocean sailing, and we're on our way to Capernaum and home. I told Brother McAfee tonight, I guess I'm getting to be quite an old sentimentalist. I love those good Bible names, don't you? Capernaum, isn't that a good mouth-filling word? Capernaum, where Jesus lived. Capernaum, back home. And the disciples were in the ship on their way from the other side and were on their way back home. It was night, and so the church is on her way home, the dear church of God.

You know, in my heart there are two churches. There's the ideal church that I mean when I sing, I love Thy kingdom, Lord, the church of thine abode. And when I sing, the church's one foundation is Jesus Christ, her Lord. That's one church. That's the ideal church, which I suppose doesn't exist at all. And then there's the real church, not fixed up and garnished and made beautiful, but just as she is.

Those disciples were not ideal men. They smelled of the sea. Their language wasn't as good as Einstein's. They were plain men, and they were sailing home. And there was Somebody on the mountain praying for them while they sailed home. And they were plain men, and they weren't ideal.

And no doubt the conversation that went on between them wasn't a perfect, saintly conversation. There might have been arguments. Somebody might even sulk a little on the way. And one man might even have gone to sleep and not pulled his load. And some were better than others on that ship that night, but they were all sailing home, and they all had Somebody in the mountain looking down, praying for them.

And in this real church, this real church, not the ideal dream church of the hymns, but the real church of Christ isn't a perfect church. I wish it were. If it were, I'd come crawling on my hands and knees and ask for admittance. But we're a long way from being a perfect church.

There are disagreements among the people of God, even among the saints of God. There oughtn't to be, but there are. And there were in Paul's day, there are now. And there's a lot of imperfection. And there are things we wish weren't there, but there are. All that's real, all that's there.

We might as well be realistic, ladies and gentlemen, and call things by their right names. I suppose that we, in the sight of God, don't present—we Christians of the present hour—don't present much a cleaner picture, a nicer picture, than those disciples that night out on the sea, tired and sleepy and weary and homesick, sailing on their way toward Capernaum and home. But we're the apple of His eye, nevertheless, and it's for us that He's on the mountain interceding.

And it was now dark, says the Scriptures, and Jesus was not yet come. Well, brethren, if we would only confess, wouldn't this be our testimony? O Lord Jesus, it's dark and you haven't come. It was dark in the first century and you didn't come. It was dark in the second century, and you didn't come. It was dark in Constantine's time, and you didn't come. It was dark when the Bernards lived, and you didn't come. It was dark when Luther preached, and you didn't come and was dark when Wesley stood on his father's tombstone and preached, and you didn't come. It was dark when George Fox walked up and down the hills and vales of England, and you didn't come. It's dark, Lord, and you haven't come.

Now, we don't want to claim we're disappointed because that we would offend against the generation of thy people, as David said. We don't want to admit we're disappointed, but there's disappointment, nevertheless. It was an eye-opening thing when the World Council of Churches declared as their theme, Jesus or Christ, the hope of the world, and said they were going to emphasize eschatology. And they ran into a theological snag there, because there were those who don't believe that the coming of Christ is the hope of the world.

One layman from London got up and said, gentlemen, I believe that we ought to preach the second coming. It was embarrassing for those old boys with their entrenched privileges and their vested interests and their oaths and chains. They had the world by the tail and the church in their hand, and they thought, and they didn't want to think the Lord should come.

Somebody said to the Kaiser, they tell me, during, he was a religious man, you know, a Lutheran. And they tell me that somebody said to the Kaiser, preach the sermon just before 1914. And the Kaiser got up in a blaze of anger and stared down the man who had dared preach the second coming. He said, don't you preach anything about the second coming in my presence again. It would ruin my plan.

And that's why the World Council could not abide the thought that Christ was to come again, or at least why some were embarrassed about it. It would spoil our plans. Brethren, I don't want any plans that would spoil to have the Lord return, do you?

I don't want to be caught with any secondary plans, any little schemes that have been dreamed up out of my empty head. I want rather to fit into the plans of God so that my plans would not be embarrassed nor in any wise disrupted if the Lord were to come tonight walking on this sea. It was now dark. And no doubt they cried, where are you, Lord? We wanted to make you a king, and now you're not even a helper. And the sea arose, and the great wind blew.

And has the church not, even in our lifetime, has the church not known three wars? Has the Church not known the threat of the atom bomb? Has not Euroclydon arisen that dramatic hour when the apostles on the sea, on their way to Rome, says the south wind blew softly? And they went on sailing, believing that all would be well, when suddenly there came down a tempestuous wind called Euroclydon, and it struck upon the ship and hurled them every direction. And for days and days and multiplied nights and days, they saw not the stars by night nor the sun by day. Euroclydon was upon them. A type again, or a picture at least, of the church on the waters, sailing toward home, but oh so sore beset.

I remember 1917. In 1917, the swift wind Euroclydon swept down, and they called it the Bolshevist revolution. The royal rule was upset, and the Bolsheviks took over. Later they got rid of that ugly word Bolshevik and called themselves Communists. And we have Euroclydon upon us today.

I listened to the news report today, and I learned two things, just no later than today. One is that Radio Peking, this fellow Zhou Enlai, has declared the time is now ripe, and they're going to deliver Formosa. And in the same broadcast I learned that the little island with the unpronounceable name is now under fierce bombardment from the Communists, and there is a small war now going on between the Formosans and the Chinese Communists.

Is this the beginning? Is this the old saber-rattling the Kaiser did, that Hitler did, that Mussolini did before these other wars? Is this it? I don't know. I only know that Euroclydon still sweeps over the surface of the deep. And I know that the Christians are dying, and their churches are being burned, and they're being driven into the woods, and the great steel curtain has been pulled down, and our brethren behind it can't even get a squeak out to us, not even a broadcast, not a carrier pigeon, not a balloon sent by the wind, not a word to know what's happening back there. Knowing communism as we do, we know what's happening.

We know that the swift winds of Euroclydon have caught the ship and are trying to tear it apart. The south wind will blow softly for a little while, but Euroclydon will break the ship. But the church, the church composed of all the saints and the people of God, will never perish.

Changing the figure a little, upon this rock I will build my church, and the gates of hell shall not prevail against it. So, churches can die, but the Church must live. The church in Wuchow can die, but the church still lives.

The church in Columbia, her pastor can be slain, and her people chased into the hills and rocks to hide in fear of their lives, but the church can never die. For there is One in the mountain praying for His Church, and even the sweet saints who must give up their lives for Christ's sake are preserved in the apple of His eye. And their spirit goes to the God who gave it, and there's not a soul that's given his life for Jesus Christ since Euroclydon broke on the world in 1917, or for that matter, in the year 100, not a saint, but one who is safe in the bosom of the Lord Jesus Christ. That great, broad garner into which the sheaves are being taken, the golden sheaves of the Spirit, are being gathered into the great barn, the great beautiful garner, and they'll all shine in their Father's kingdom in that day.

In the meantime, the Church floats on the sea, and the disciples row in distress, and they see Jesus walking on the water. He couldn't stand it any longer. He was seeing them all the time down there, and they didn't know it. He was seeing them all the time, those eyes that never close, those eyes that see through the fog in the night. He was seeing them all the time, and they were held in His hand, but they didn't know it. Brethren, Jesus Christ is still the Lord, and He is still the head of His body, the Church.

Let's not apologize for him. Let's not soften His gospel to make it acceptable. Let's not qualify His statements to make them softer. Let's not argue and defend Him. He needs no defense. He holds the church in the hollow of His hand even while she's being tossed in the sea. And when He couldn't stand it any longer, He left the mountain and hurried down and walked out on the water.

Are you clean enough and pure enough to see and hear Him? He's not here yet, but He's coming, and He's walking on the sea, and He's approaching the ship. We don't know when He'll get within hailing distance, but we know that He can't stand it much longer.

We know that love won't very much longer wait. And we all know that the keen interest He has in His people won't very much longer permit Him to stay at the right hand of God the Father Almighty. But He's going to come walking on the sea, and do you know it? All that is within me, I believe that Jesus Christ, the Sovereign, walks on the sea. I believe He will walk on the sea.

Zhou Enlai, he's got a big mouth now. Why have we always got a big-mouth statement somewhere, with a little heart and a big mouth? In God's name, why don't we get some men with big hearts and little mouths once in our lives? But we always have to get men with big mouths and little tight hearts. Mussolini had a big jaw and a big mouth and a heart the size of a peanut.

Hitler's guttural German gave us the impression that he could shout and be heard on the planet Mars, but he had a heart the size of a walnut. Now comes Zhou Enlai. Why do they always get names you can't pronounce? I'd like to know, too, but that's on the side.

But here they are, Mao Zedong with his big mouth, and Zhou Enlai with his big mouth, and Attlee with his big mouth, and all the rest of them with their big mouths. Brethren, that's the wind that stirs the sea, but there is One walking on the storm, and His name is Jesus Christ the Lord. You ought to be ashamed to be scared.

Never should we be frightened, never for a moment. He's the Sovereign Lord. It wasn't the Calvinists that gave us that expression. It was only the Calvinists that popularized it. But wherever it came from, I love it. The Sovereign Lord. He is sovereign. When an English king is said to be sovereign, they mark out his confines. They used to.

It took them this long. They erect so-and-so, the such-and-such, and then they told what he was the sovereign of, India and Ireland and South Africa and what have you. But it's silly to call him sovereign and then mark out his territory, isn't it? It's silly to say he's sovereign, but he can't cross over there without a passport, and he can't go over here without a visa, and he can't cross over that river without asking permission, yet he's a sovereign and wears a crown.

What kind of crazy use of language is all that? The word sovereign means absolute, infinite, unqualified boss in all realms in heaven, earth, and sea. And that's what our Lord is. He's a sovereign Lord.

In His providential plan for a little while, He's imposing upon Himself certain limitations for the purpose of fulfilling His eternal plans. But any moment He wants to do it, He can walk on the waters of the earth and the fires of hell and the golden streets of heaven, for He is All-Sovereign Lord. And He doeth as He pleases in the armies of the heaven and in the earth beneath.

And no man can hold his hand and say, what are you doing? He answers to nobody, and He takes orders from nobody. And He calls no counselors in for star chamber sessions. He has no assistant lord that He must go and chat with. He has no secretary to the throne that He must call in and say, what do you think of this situation? He knows in one effortless act all that can be known, and He's already lived all our tomorrows, and holds the world in the palm of His hand. That's the Lord I serve and whose I am.

The soft, curly-bearded Jesus of the Italian artist, and the pompous, fast-talking Jesus of the American businessman, I wouldn't stoop to worship Him. I wouldn't get on my knees and call Him Lord. He's as weak as I am, let Him get on His knees to me. Let's do it a turnabout anyhow.

But glory be to God, He is infinitely beyond all men and all angels and all seraphim and all cherubim, and all archangels, and all principalities and powers and might and dominions and things visible and invisible. He's risen above them all, sovereign in His own right forevermore.

So, He walks on the sea. He's there, if you can only see Him, brethren. Are you afraid you'll lose your job? Afraid Eisenhower can't keep us out of a depression? Afraid of John L. Lewis? Who are you afraid of? You ought to be ashamed to be afraid of anybody. He's walking on the sea, and He's coming our way. And our little ship is on its way home, and it's dark and the winds blow loud. But He's on his way here. Now let's do what they did.

So, they invited Him into the ship and willingly received Him. And it says immediately they were at the shore where they were going, immediately. Now you don't have to be technical about the second coming of Christ. I think we have spoiled the hope of Christ's coming by a lot of nonsensical technicalities in the last 50 years. Prophets have been wiser than Isaiah and have known more Scripture than Daniel. And with their charts and their meticulous, detailed plans of the second coming in prophecy, they have frightened decent people away from belief in the coming of Christ.

You haven't frightened me away, brethren. I still believe it. Somebody else with his charts and his red pencils can give me the details, and I'll smile and wait for the coming of Christ. But I believe he's coming. And I believe that He's going to walk down there, and He's waiting for the church to invite Him in, waiting for us to invite Him in.

We don't need Him bad enough yet, brethren. We don't need Him bad enough. When we need Him so bad that we can't get on without Him, He'll come. But we don't need Him bad enough yet. We can still get along without Him. You don't need Him, do you? I mean, you need Him as Savior, but really now we don't need Him in the world, aren't the Republicans doing pretty well? I don't think we need Him as bad as we might. Oh, our politicians are telling us to go to church and be good and pray, because that's a way to fight off communism and curb juvenile delinquency and comic books.

And in other words, it's serving God for a secondary reason—prostitution, gentlemen. Whenever I serve God for any other reason than he is God, I'm prostituting my worship. Whenever I get on my supple knees and cry to my Father in heaven and make him a means to another end, my worship is no better than the worship of Baal.

God is the end toward which we all move. All other things are secondary. I don't get converted to be a good American. I get converted, for Christ's sake, to be a Christian. I don't want a revival to stop communism. I want a revival to glorify God and enjoy Him forever.

I don't want a revival for political reasons. Politicians have always used the church wherever they could, always. And no matter how slimy the politicians are, no matter how crooked, no matter how selfish, no matter how drunk with lust for power, there's always a reverend or two that will grab a black book and appear with a solemn, holy look on his face and mumble some prayers for the politicians.

Here's one little unheard-of preacher the politicians will never buy and will never get me, anything I say or write, ever, to advocate Christianity for any other reason than Christianity's sake. Never Christ for the Republicans' sake, never Christ for the Democrats' sake, never Christ for free men's sake, but always Christ for God's sake. In the meantime, He's waiting to be wanted. He's waiting to be invited inside.