

FAITH HAND IN HAND WITH FEAR

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*“What time I am afraid, I will trust in thee.”
Psalm 56:3*

IT must be a very difficult thing to be the first traveler through an unknown country, but it is a much more simple matter to travel where others have preceded us. However difficult may be the road, we discover our path by certain marks which they have left for us, and as we turn to the record of their journey, we say, “Yes, they said that here they came to a forest, and here is the forest. Here they spoke of a broad river and here they forded it. Here is exactly the spot which is marked—we are on the right road, for we are following in the track of those who have gone before.” Now God in His providence has placed us in “the ends of the world” as to time—a long caravan of pilgrims has preceded us, and they have left us marks on the way and records of their journey.

A notable one among the pilgrims to the skies was David, for his pilgrimage was so singularly varied. Some travel to heaven amid sunshine almost all the way there. And some, on the other hand, seem to have storms from beginning to end. But David’s case differed from these, for he had both the storms and the sunshine.

No man had fairer weather than the King of Jerusalem, yet no man ever ploughed his way through soil that was more deep with mire, nor through an atmosphere more loaded with tempest than did this man of many tribulations. He has been a kind of pioneer for us.

I remember seeing, some years ago, the French army going through Paris, and noticing some of the big, tall fellows—old men who had been in the wars of the first Napoleon. These went in front and they seemed to be worth all the rest that were behind. They were the pioneers that cleared the way for the others. Now David, and such as he, of whom we read in the Scriptures, are the grand old soldiers that bear the standard and lead the way—and we are the raw recruits that follow on behind them. Let us be thankful that we have some veterans to lead the van.

Our text is rather an extraordinary one, yet it represents the experience of many of us, and we are comforted by the thought that our feelings and David’s have very much agreed—“What time I am afraid, I will trust in thee.”

You notice in the text, first, *a complex condition*—here is a man afraid and yet he is trusting. Then we will look at *the natural side of this condition*—“I am afraid.” And then we will look at *the gracious side*—“I will trust in thee.”

I. Notice, first, then, that here is David in A COMPLEX CONDITION.

He says, “I am afraid,” yet with the same breath he says, “I will trust in thee.” Is not this a contradiction? It looks like a paradox. Paradox it may be, but contradiction it is not. What strange creatures we are! I suppose every man is a trinity, certainly every Christian is—spirit, soul, and body—and we may be in three states at once, and we may not know which of the three is our real state. The whole three may be so mixed up that we become a puzzle to ourselves. Though certain mental philosophers would say that I egregiously err in asserting that such a thing can be, yet nevertheless I am quite certain that it is a very common experience of the child of God.

It is even quite possible for us to find two minds and two wills—two sets of faculties within ourselves clashing and jarring and warring and contending with one another. In a record of some very notable experiences of doctors who attend upon the insane, there is a very singular case described of a

man who was always sane regularly one day, as clear in the intellect and intelligent in judgment as any man—but the next day he was always insane.

On the day on which he was sane, he used to talk about how the doctor ought to treat him on the morrow, and to express his surprise that he entered into such a state, reasoning in the most practical manner. He seemed to be two men. There is a record of another case, even more remarkable, of a man who would act and speak and think as an intelligent full-grown person, but after sleeping two or three days he would wake up a child, to learn like a child, to walk like a child, to speak like a child, and to all intents and purposes, to lead the life of a child. Then he would fall asleep, again, and wake up as an adult person.

To us it seems a most marvelous thing that this should happen—but perhaps it is even more marvelous to find ourselves perfectly sane, with no mental malady upon us, and yet at the same moment the subject of two opposite sets of feelings—afraid, and yet trusting.

I am sure that every Christian here will follow me while, for a moment, I speak upon this singular duplex condition of *Christian experience*. You remember how the women returned from the sepulchre. They had seen a vision of angels, they had also seen the Lord, and it is said they departed quickly “with fear and great joy”—very fearful, trembling at what they had seen, but very joyful—never so fearful and yet never so joyful before.

And you remember that the disciples, when the Lord Jesus stood in their midst, “believed not for joy.” Extraordinary thing! They did believe, or they could not have had the joy. And yet the joy seemed, when it grew out of the belief, to cut away its own roots and “they believed not for joy”—strange, marvelous state of mind, yet common to the Christian.

The same thing is true as to *our attitude to sin*. Have you not found yourself, beloved believer in Jesus Christ, drawn towards an evil thing for a moment, fascinated by it, finding a tendency in the carnal corruption of your nature to go after evil, and yet, at the very same time, you hated yourself that you should give way even for a moment to a thought so vile?

You have felt the desire to go after sin, but yet another self, as it were, struggled with greater force not to go after it. One faculty seems to say, “How sweet that sin would be,” yet you have said, “It is gall and bitterness itself.” The flesh has loved it, but the spirit has said, “I abominate it, I loathe it,” and has cried out to God to prevent the possibility of our being allowed to indulge ourselves in it.

Thus warring and contending with us, the prince of the power of the air, uniting with our own evil nature, has endeavored to drag us down, while the Holy Ghost, co-working with the incorruptible seed which He has imparted in us, has sought to draw us upwards towards holiness, purity, and perfection. It is a wondrous warfare which only the elect of God can understand.

So, too, you have been the subject of another phase of the same phenomenon *in reference to faith*. You have seen a precious promise or a glorious doctrine, and you have believed it because you have found it in God’s Word. You have believed it so as to grasp it and feel it to be your own, yet, perhaps, almost at the same time certain rationalistic thoughts have come into your mind and you have been vexed with doubts as to whether the promise is true.

You remember, perhaps, the insinuations of others, or something rises up out of your own carnal reason that renders it difficult for you to believe, while at the same time you are believing. You battle with yourself—one self seems to say, “Is it so?” and yet your inner self seems to say, “I could die for it, I know it is so.” You are tormented because you cannot answer arguments against it, but yet at the same time you feel that you have answered them, and that they are no arguments at all. Your heart repels all attacks upon the truth of God, and yet, somehow or other, for a while, you are staggered by the assault which Satan has made upon you.

I might go on to mention many other ways in which these two states of mind will come. I have found it frequently so *in prayer* when I have sought to draw near to God. An idle worldly spirit will bring ten thousand distracting thoughts to bear upon the soul and the heart will seem to say, “I cannot pray just now, I have other things to do, I must think of them.”

What is worse, the mind will persist in thinking of these things and they will come crowding in—some work that you have to do, perhaps some friend that you have to call upon, something you have forgotten—these things will come pouring in upon you as if in your own heart you said, “I do not want to pray.”

Yet at that very same time you have felt a holy craving, an insatiable longing, to draw near to God in prayer and you have said, “I must pray, I cannot live without it. I must now have a period of fellowship with God, cost me what it may.” These two things will be here—the praying and the unpraying, the faithless and the believing struggling one with another, and your poor spirit will be like ground that is trampled upon by two armies that are fiercely contending as to which shall get the mastery. You see that in David’s case, when in the text he says, “I am afraid,” yet adds, “I will trust in thee.”

II. Now, secondly, let us look at THE NATURAL SIDE OF THIS CONDITION.

David says, “I am afraid.” Admire his honesty in making this confession. Some men would never have admitted that they were afraid. They would have blustered and said they cared for nothing. Generally, there is no greater coward in this world than the man who never will acknowledge that he is afraid. But this hero of a thousand conflicts, this brave scion of the sons of men, honestly says, “I am afraid.” Why was he afraid?

First, *because he was but a man*, and we men cannot rule the elements, we cannot overcome those who are mightier than ourselves. “They are many that fight against me, O thou Most High,” he cries. And then he adds, “I am afraid.” We cannot expect, therefore, that we should be free of fear when powers greater than our own are set in array against us. We are afraid because, at the very best, we are but weak and feeble men.

He was afraid, again, *because he was a sinful man*. It is this that makes cowards of us more than anything else. We know that we deserve the rod of our Father and though, by faith, we feel assured that He will never use the sword of justice against us, yet we are often afraid that the correcting rod will be brought out and that we shall be sorely chastened. Well, then, while we are men, and sinful men, it is no wonder that we should be afraid.

Besides, David was something more than that—he was afraid *because he was an intelligent man*. He knew his position and could rightly estimate its risks. Now, with some persons, bravery arises from utter ignorance. They do not know the danger to which they are exposed and therefore do not fear it. The unsaved sinner, if he did but know in what peril he is, would not be as quiet as he is. Unconverted men and women, if they did but know who and what and where they are—if they did but remember that “God is angry with the wicked every day”—would be very ill at ease, they would be full of alarm and terror.

But the Christian knows his position. He is not blind, his eyes have been opened, he has been brought to the light, he does not shut his eyes to the strength of his spiritual adversaries, nor to his own internal weakness, nor to the awful guilt of sin. He sees all these and therefore it is not to be wondered at that, with so much intelligence, a Christian man he should have some misgivings. “I am afraid,” says he.

And then he is afraid, again, *because he is no stoic*. The heathen tried as far as they could to turn their flesh into iron, and harden their hearts into steel, but such is never the process through which the Christian passes. The Christian, when his sinews are most braced and he is most heroic for his Master, is still as tender and as sensitive as a little child. The grace of God does not take away from us feminine tenderness, though it gives to us masculine courage.

In fact, it blends the two in a perfect man, putting strength and sympathy together, and making us like Christ who, with all the force of the majesty of holy determination and courage, had all the tenderness and gentleness that the fondest love could bring. Therefore we are afraid because we do not boast of insensibility of the Red Indian, but we still strive to be gentle and tender-hearted—the grace of God keeps us so.

But when is it that the saint should expect to be most afraid? Is it not when enemies around him are many? The psalmist, therefore, is afraid *because he is compassed by foes*. The Christian man does not

like having enemies. If he could help it, he would not have a single one. He never willingly makes an enemy and if he could destroy his enemies by turning them into friends, he would be delighted to achieve so great a victory. When, therefore, he sees that he has many enemies, and they are very cruel and very determined—then he is afraid.

We are afraid, sometimes, when we think of the old enemy, our spiritual enemy, for we know his cunning. He has been so long tempting the saints that he knows his business well. We know what poor, foolish birds we are when he is the fowler—how soon we are taken in his net, and therefore at the prospect of being tempted again by him, we bow our knee to our great Father and we cry—“Lead us not into temptation, but deliver us from the evil one.” We are afraid at the thought of having to fight Satan. Who has read John Bunyan’s description of Christian fighting Apollyon in the Valley of Humiliation but will not be fearful at the prospect of such a fight as that?

The man of God may be afraid, too, *because he sees want surrounding him*. The Christian must eat and drink, and though he is not to make this the great question of his life, yet he cannot look upon his little ones and think that he will not have sufficient bread to fill their mouths without being somewhat afraid. The natural side of the question must come up. He is not so hardened that he does not feel it—and when he sees want staring him in the face, for his own sake and for the sake of those about him, he is afraid.

If, in addition to all this, there comes upon him the remembrance of past sin, and with especial vividness some transgression into which he has lately fallen, he is afraid *because of the memory of the past*. Though he may look to Jesus—and he will do so, though he may see his sin laid on Christ, yet, even while he is looking, he will often be amazed with a sore amazement and an agony of soul will come over him—not so much the fear of being finally cast away if indeed he is a child of God, but a fear lest, after all, he should turn out not to be what he hoped he was.

If you are never afraid about the condition of your soul, I am afraid for you. If you never had a fear about your state, I think I may remind you of Cowper’s lines,—

*“He has no hope who never had a fear;
And he that never doubted of his state,
He may perhaps—perhaps he may—too late.”*

Under a sense of sin, it is but natural, nay, I will add, it is but right, that a trembling should come over the soul and that we should fall down in the presence of God humbled before Him.

The like is the case, too, with the man who is afraid *because of the thought of approaching death*. We have seen some, when they have actually come to die, rejoicing with unspeakable joy, and it has strengthened our faith when we have heard their bold declarations as they have felt the Master’s presence in their final hour.

But if, as a rule, you and I can think of death without any kind of fear, if no tremor ever crosses our minds, well, then, we must have marvelously strong faith, and I can only pray we may be retained in that strength of faith. For the most part, there is such a thing as terror in prospect of death—the fear is often greater in prospect than in reality. In fact, it is always so in the case of the Christian. But yet, when we give ourselves up to fear for a time, we are grievously afraid.

This, then, is the natural side of the question. A man may be a true believer, he may be a very David—and yet be afraid.

III. Now take THE GRACIOUS SIDE OF IT—“What time I am afraid, I will trust in thee.”

“I will trust in thee.” How glorious is this confession of faith! It is not the expression of nature—*it is a sign of grace*. No man trusts in God unless there has first been a divine work upon his soul. At least no man who is afraid can trust in God unless the Lord has taught his timorous spirit to fly like a dove to the sure dovecot cleft by divine grace in the Rock of Ages. Happy soul that has been taught the sacred art

and mystery of believing in Jesus! It is the highest and noblest of all the practical sciences. God grant us grace, what time we are afraid, to exercise ourselves in it!

It is a sure sign of grace when a man can trust in his God, for the natural man, when afraid, falls back on some human trust, or he thinks that he will be able to laugh at the occasion of fear. He gives himself up to jollity and forgetfulness, or perhaps he braces himself up with a natural resolution—

*“To take arms against a sea of troubles,
And by opposing end them.”*

He goes anywhere but to his God. Only the gracious spirit—only the soul renewed by the Holy Ghost, will say, “‘What time I am afraid,’ my one and only resort shall be this, ‘I will trust in thee.’” The thoughtless, as I have said, try to laugh off their fear. The naturally thoughtful try to invent some scheme by which they may pass through the difficulty, but he who is truly believing leaves schemes and frivolities alike, and applies to his God with the burden of his care, and finds from Him an instantaneous and effectual relief.

And after all, *is it not the most reasonable thing in the world* that a soul that is afraid should trust in God? Where can there be a firmer ground of reliance than in Him whose power never can be defeated, whose wisdom is never at a nonplus? If I have God’s promise that He will help me, to whom or whither should I go, but unto the God who has so promised?

If, in addition, He has given me His oath, “that by two immutable things, in which it is impossible for God to lie,” I might have strong consolation, where shall my timid spirit go but to the shadow of the wings of the God of the covenant who, by promise and by oath, has guaranteed my safety? What are my circumstances? Has He not given me a promise suitable to them, a special promise for each special time?

So I need never be afraid because of my circumstances. Has He not, indeed, given me one text which covers them all with its broad expanse? “We know that all things work together for good to them that love God, to them who are the called according to his purpose.” With a God who is almighty and eternally faithful, with a God who promises, and seals the promise with His oath, that He will help me when I call upon Him—what can be more reasonable than that, when I am afraid, I should come and put my trust in Him?

Ah! my brethren, and as it is reasonable, *it certainly proves itself to be most effectual*, for he who trembles from head to foot does but begin to trust in God, and behold, he grows calm at once. Have we not seen minds so distracted as to be almost bereft of reason grow quiet and peaceful when they have learnt to do the work they could do and then left the rest to God?

Oh! it is sweet waiting at the posts of JEHOVAH’s door. It is well to tarry till His promise becomes ripe and then in all its sweetness drops into our hands. “I will never leave thee, nor forsake thee,” so has He declared. My soul, lay hold upon that, and the next time you are afraid, seek a safe shelter beneath that promise. “No good thing will he withhold from them that walk uprightly.”

When I am afraid lest I should be in want, I will come and go beneath that promise. If it be a good thing, God has bound Himself by His Word to give it to me. “Fear thou not, for I am with thee; be not dismayed, for I am thy God; I will strengthen thee; yea, I will help thee; yea, I will uphold thee with the right hand of my righteousness.” My God, when at another time I am full of alarm and dismay, I will come to You, for You are bound to strengthen and help and uphold Your servants who place their confidence in You.

Dear brethren and sisters, let me exhort you—and may God’s Holy Spirit back up the exhortation!—to the exercise of a holy trust in God, not only when you are happy, but when you are afraid. *Faith in God is a seasonable thing* as well as a reasonable thing. Fruit is always best in its season, and the time for faith is the time of trial. Faith is never so full-flavored as when it is produced beneath cloudy skies. Other fruits need the sun to ripen them, but this is one of the precious fruits put forth by the moon.

You shall, when your experience is most trying, honor God the most if you can then trust Him. Surely it needs little faith to believe in providence when the purse is full. What sort of faith is it that believes in the merits of the precious blood of Jesus when it feels its own sanctification to be complete, if such can ever be the case? What kind of faith is that which leans on the Beloved when it can stand alone?

But that is true faith which, when it cannot stand by itself, which sees death written upon all its own power, which sees almost all its hopes withered and blasted with the East wind, yet cries, “My God, it is enough! My soul waits only upon You. My expectation is from You.” This is the way to honor God indeed.

Observe the graduation there often is in Christian experience. You will sometimes find believers in so low a state that their heart is full of fear. By and by they are enabled to exercise the faith that God has given them, but it is mingled fear and trust. But they do not stop there, they get a little further—as David did in this Psalm, as you can see if you will read a word or two further on—there it gets to be trust and no fear. “In God have I put my trust: I will not be afraid what man can do unto me.” May you climb the steps of that gracious ladder! May you, if you have fear, also have faith with your fear, and then afterwards have your faith without any fear! When faith gets strong enough, fears are expelled.

Let me, however, return to my point that, when you are afraid, then is the time to trust the Lord. When you are very poor, then is the time to believe the doctrine of divine providence. When you feel the guilt of your sins, then is the time to lay hold on Jesus Christ, and to wash in the fountain filled with His blood. Who cares to wash when he is clean? The time to wash is when the filth is felt. Then fly to the all-cleansing blood.

You say, “I feel so dead and cold, I have not the spiritual vivacity and warmth and life that I used to possess. I used to come up to the Tabernacle and feel such joy and rejoicing in worshipping on God’s holy day, but now I feel flat and dull.” Oh! but do not be tempted to get away from Christ because of this. Who runs away from the fire because he is cold? Who, in summer, runs away from the cooling brook because he is hot? Should not my deadness be the reason why I should come to Jesus Christ?

Now is the time for Him to show His power. Now my Master, if indeed You are a friend that sticks closer than a brother, and blessed be Your name, You are such a friend, behold, here is one of Your friends. prove that You can forgive and still stick to him—cause him to trust in thee and let him find You better than all his fears.

I have done when I have made an application of my text to those of you who have not believed in Jesus and yet desire to do so. I know your fears, your doubts, your tremblings. Let me whisper in your ear this word—“Now that you are afraid, put your trust in Jesus. Christ came to save sinners such as you are with all your fear. Now, while your fears toss you to and fro, go to Jesus—

*“While the raging billows roll,
While the tempest still is high.”*

Hang all your weight upon the Lover of souls now. Do not wait till you get rid of your fears and then go to Him—go now.

A lady was once walking in a field and a bird flew right into her bosom. She wondered why the little lark came nestling there, but looking up, she saw a hawk in the air. It had pursued the little bird, which, though it would have been quite afraid at any other time to find a shelter where it did find it, had by the greater fear of its enemy been driven out of the lesser fear. She to whom it fled for refuge cared for it, cherished it, and set it free. So be it with you.

Let your great fears of hell overcome that fear that you have sometimes had, that perhaps Jesus may reject you. Fly into His bosom. “Oh! but I fear that He will reject me.” Well, then, I trust that your other fears will get so great as to overcome this fear. John Bunyan says that his fear of hell at last became so terrible that if Jesus Christ had stood with a naked sword in His hand, or if He had held a pike to him, he

would have run on the point of the pike, and would always rather go to an angry Christ than be cast into hell.

But believe me, Christ is not angry. He holds no pike and no sword in His hand. This is His word of promise, “Him that cometh to me, I will in no wise cast out.” Aged sinner, you who have been a great transgressor, whoever you may be, if you come and simply cast yourself upon the blessed Savior who on the cross offered up Himself for human guilt, you shall be saved.

“What time I am afraid, I will trust in thee.” I dare to say these ancient words tonight from the depths of my soul. I am afraid of my sins. I am afraid of my unworthiness. I never live a day but what I see reason to be afraid. If I had to stand all by myself, I should be afraid to stand before God. If I had never done anything in my life but preach this one sermon, there have been so many imperfections and faults in it that I am afraid to place any reliance upon it. But my Lord Jesus, You are my soul’s only hope, I trust entirely in You.

Beloved, have this same faith. May God work it in you and then your fear shall only drive you closer to your Lord, and so the fear and the faith shall go on hand in hand together for a while, till at last perfect love shall come in, and take the place of fear, and then faith and love shall go hand in hand to heaven.

May the Lord bless every one of you, for Jesus’ sake! Amen.

EXPOSITION BY C. H. SPURGEON

JOHN 6:1-21

Verses 1-2. *After these things Jesus went over the Sea of Galilee, which is the Sea of Tiberias. And a great multitude followed him, because they saw his miracles which he did on them that were diseased.*

Many of them curiosity-mongers wanting to see more wonders wrought, others of them sick themselves, and anxious to be healed. Wherever Jesus went, a throng went with Him.

3. *And Jesus went up into a mountain, and there he sat with his disciples.*

That was His frequent posture when His disciples were gathered around Him. He sat at His ease and talked to His hearers. He was not very demonstrative in His oratory, but spoke calmly and quietly, and left the truth to find its own way into the minds and hearts of men.

4-5. *And the passover, a feast of the Jews, was nigh. When Jesus then lifted up his eyes, and saw a great company come unto him, he saith unto Philip, Whence shall we buy bread, that these may eat?*

They were in a lonely place out in the wilderness, where the people had no means of obtaining food, and Jesus knew that they would soon be faint with hunger, so He consulted with Philip as to what was to be done. It is great kindness and condescension on our Lord’s part to consult with His followers. He often did it, not that He needed their advice or help, but because they needed to be taught how to think and how to act for the good of others.

6. *And this he said to prove him: for he himself knew what he would do.*

Observe the complex character of Christ—as man, He consulted with Philip—as God, He knew beforehand what He will do.

7. *Philip answered him, Two hundred pennyworth of bread is not sufficient for them, that every one of them may take a little.*

Two hundred pennyworth must have seemed an enormous amount to poor Philip, for all Christ’s disciples had made themselves poor by following Him. The bag that Judas carried probably scarcely ever had as much as that in it. If it were all spent, it would not go far towards feeding five thousand men, beside the women and children.

8-9. *One of his disciples, Andrew, Simon Peter’s brother, saith unto him, There is a lad here, which hath five barley loaves, and two small fishes: but what are they among so many?*

These small fishes were commonly cured and dried by that lake—little fish very much resembling sardines or anchovies—and they were eaten dry as a relish with bread. This lad had five barley cakes and a couple of these little fish, that was all.

10. *And Jesus said, Make the men sit down. Now there was much grass in the place. So the men sat down,—*

Jesus would have everything done decently and in order. The people obeyed Christ's command and sat down, we are told by Mark, "in ranks, by hundreds and by fifties."

"There was much grass in the place." Our Lord has a carpet in His banqueting hall, such a carpet as Solomon in all his glory could not have made. "There was much grass in the place. So the men sat down"—

10-11. *In number about five thousand. And Jesus took the loaves; and when he had given thanks,—*
[See Sermon #2216, The Lad's Loaves in the Lord's Hands]

Among the Jews, it is always the master of the house who gives thanks. They do not call upon a child to say grace, but the father of the family, like a priest in his own house, stands up, and pronounces a blessing upon the food. It is a beautiful thought that Christ thus made Himself, as it were, the Father of that large family, the Head and Provider for those many thousands of people.

11. *He distributed to the disciples, and the disciples to them that were set down; and likewise of the fishes as much as they would.*

"As much as they would." That is Christ's measure for those who gather at His table—it is only your own will that limits the amount of grace that you may have.

12-13. *When they were filled, he said unto his disciples, Gather up the fragments that remain, that nothing be lost. Therefore they gathered them together, and filled twelve baskets with the fragments of the five barley loaves, which remained over and above unto them that had eaten.*

I am sorry to say that it is a mark of very poor people that they are often very wasteful people. These beggars who had come only to be fed, were not satisfied to eat till they were satisfied, but they threw down pieces of bread, just as I frequently see, in the streets of London, great pieces of bread thrown away. It should not be so, for bread is the staff of life.

Among the Egyptians, they are always peculiarly careful that never a portion of bread should be wasted, nor should it ever be as in a city like this where there are so many persons who are starving for lack of bread. But while I see the carelessness and wastefulness of the crowd, I also notice the carefulness and economy of Christ. He who could make food enough to feed the thousands at His will yet would not waste a crust.

I think a large-hearted liberality should always be consistent with a strict economy. I have heard of one who called at a rich man's door to ask for a subscription, and he heard him scolding the servant for wasting a match. "Ah!" he thought, "I shall get nothing out of him." Yet he received from that very man a larger subscription than from anybody else upon whom he called during that day. Christ would give anything, but He wasted nothing—let us imitate His example.

14. *Then those men, when they had seen the miracle that Jesus did, said, This is of a truth that prophet that should come into the world.*

But the faith that comes by the way of the stomach is not worth much. If people are converted by loaves and fishes, bigger loaves and bigger fishes will make them go the other way—converts made thus are of small worth.

15-17. *When Jesus therefore perceived that they would come and take him by force, to make him a king, he departed again into a mountain himself alone. And when even was now come, his disciples went down unto the sea, And entered into a ship, and went over the sea toward Capernaum. And it was now dark, and Jesus was not come to them.* [See Sermon #2945, Night—and Jesus Not There]

Then it was very dark. Ah, my dear friends, perhaps you know what it is to be in trouble and to mourn an absent Lord. This is a direful description of an especially dark night for the disciples—"It was now dark, and Jesus was not come to them."

18-19. *And the sea arose by reason of a great wind that blew. So when they had rowed about twenty-five or thirty furlongs, they saw Jesus walking on the sea, and drawing nigh unto the ship: and they were afraid.*

Do you wonder that they were filled with fear? It seemed so strange a sight—a man walking on the waves of the sea.

20. *But he said unto them, It is I; be not afraid.*

Then they must have felt at ease at once as soon as they knew that it was Jesus who was walking towards them upon the water. Lord, if it is You, fear would be foolish on our part. We are only too glad to have Your company.

21. *Then they willingly received him into the ship: and immediately the ship was at the land whither they went.*

No sooner was Jesus with them than they were where they wanted to be. The presence of Christ works wonders for us. We are soon at our haven when the Lord of heaven comes to us.

Taken from The Metropolitan Tabernacle Pulpit C. H. Spurgeon Collection. Only necessary changes have been made, such as correcting spelling errors, some punctuation usage, capitalization of deity pronouns, and minimal updating of a few archaic words. The content is unabridged. Additional Bible-based resources are available at www.spurgeongems.org.