

Faith Mission - Guest Preacher

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Preacher: Rev. Andrew Quinn

[0 : 00] Well, it is nice to be back on the island again and to be working in South Lauges these couple of weeks. And nice to be with you here in Barvis this morning.

And if you're tuning in online from your own home today, may God speak to you and encourage you as well. So when I was last here, I was working with the Faith Mission based in Edinburgh.

We lived for seven years in Edinburgh as a family. And then we felt God calling us to a congregation over in Northern Ireland. And so I just met one or two of the people from the congregation, only met them in passing as part of a work team.

And so whenever I headed over there, I had to get to know them all. And before I could trust them or before they could trust me, we had to get to know each other.

The same sort of a thing that happens in any relationship. You don't just trust a person or you maybe trust a person a little bit. If you walk into a chip shop or whatever, you trust a person to provide chips for you, but you don't trust them with the rest of your life.

[1 : 17] And you could apply that sort of general principle with all of the people that we interact with in life. As we get to know them more, maybe we trust them more.

Or as we get to know them more, maybe we trust them less. You know, that sort of general principle that shapes our lives. Now what we have here, if I was given a title to this, it would be, Who is this man?

And what we have in Mark's gospel is a revelation of who Jesus is and then a call to trust him. You can see the book splitting in two.

If you were to flick ahead a couple of pages to chapter 8, you would see that by chapter 8 and verses 27, Jesus was on the way with his disciples, and he asked his disciples, Who do people say that I am?

And they told him John the Baptist, and others say Elijah, and others say one of the prophets. And he asked them, Who do you say that I am? And Peter answered him, You are the Christ. And so, all throughout Mark's gospel, we've been, or he has been building up the picture of who Jesus is.

[2 : 36] And he comes to a kind of a high point with that in this confession of Peter's in chapter 8, verse 29.

And then the whole emphasis and the movement of the book changes. For you see in verse 34 and 35, If anyone would come after me, let him deny himself and take up his cross and follow me.

So, having come to understand who he is, then comes the call, Will you follow him? And so, all through these early chapters in Mark's gospel, he has been revealing who he is.

And these verses that Myrdo has read to us, I want to focus in on them, and I want to ask a question, What is being revealed about Jesus in these chapters?

And then as we understand, or in these verses, and then as we understand what's being revealed about him, then I'll ask you if you're willing to trust him.

[3 : 42] With your life. So, I just want to kind of package my message in three points. First of all, a revelation. Thinking about what is being revealed here. Just take a moment or two after we have seen the revelation to revel in what we're seeing.

And then I'll ask you about a response to see if we're all on the same page with regards to what we understand about Jesus. So, a revelation, first of all.

You see verse 52 of chapter 6. It says, At the end of these two stories, the feeding of the 5,000 and the walking on water, it says, For the...

And verse 51, They were utterly astounded, for they did not understand about the loaves, but their hearts were hardened. And so, we can get the suggestion from that that they should have understood something about Jesus from the feeding of the 5,000 that they didn't understand.

But then having seen him walk on the water, they were able to understand something about his walking on the water and about his feeding of the 5,000. And so, I just want to start with the second story first and see what they should have been getting or what they did get from that story.

[5 : 07] And then we'll go back into the feeding of the 5,000 to see what they should have been getting from that story. So, what were they supposed to see in these stories? First of all, in the second story, Jesus comes walking on the water.

So, he had been feeding the 5,000 the previous day, and they were on the far side of the Sea of Galilee.

And then he dismissed the crowd, and he dismissed the disciples. The disciples got into the boat and started to make their way across the lake while Jesus went up on the mountainside to pray. And it tells us in the middle of this passage that by the fourth watch of the night, they were making headway painfully.

So, they had left the shore before sundown after the event of the feeding of the 5,000, and they had started to make their way across the Sea of Galilee.

[6 : 07] So, they had been at it right through till the fourth watch of the night, which is between 3 a.m. and 6 a.m. So, they had been at it at least 12 hours, rowing in a rowing boat, trying to get across the Sea of Galilee.

They're making headway painfully, it says, for the wind was against them. And then at the fourth watch of the night, you've got this divine figure coming, walking over the waves to rescue them. So, they had been out there, as I say, for over 12 hours, or at least, or maybe approaching 12 hours. And then Jesus comes walking on the water.

What are they supposed to see through that? What's the significance of Him coming walking on the water? Well, chapter 9 of the book of Job in the Old Testament speaks of God, and it says about God that God is wise in heart and mighty in strength.

He alone stretches out the heavens and the waves of... And so, sorry, He alone stretches out the heavens and treads on the waves of the sea.

[7 : 14] It goes on to say that He makes the bear and the Orion. And so, the first thing that they might see as this divine figure comes walking on the waves is that there's only one who is able to walk on the waves.

And that is the one who made the waves. Not only does He come walking on the waves, but He comes walking on the waves to save them and to rescue them from the peril of the sea.

I'll come back to that in a minute or two. So, that's one thing that they might have seen. Who can walk on the waves? Only He who made the waves. And then, as He comes to them, as they're struggling in this boat rowing and pulling at the oars for all they're worth, He comes to them as they're struggling and He says, Take heart.

It is I. Do not be afraid. That little phrase in the Greek that is translated, it is I, is ego, I, me, which is identical to the I am.

That the Lord revealed Himself with when He was speaking to Moses in the burning bush. And this, It is I. Take heart. It is I.

[8 : 33] Or take heart. I am. It's another clue for them as to who He is. Hopefully, jogging in their memory the Old Testament God who revealed Himself as the I am.

So, He's coming, walking on the waves and He reveals Himself as the I am. And then, there is a strange part in the story where as He came to them, it says, just at the end of verse 48, He meant to pass by them.

It's the strangest thing because if He's coming, walking on the waves to save them, what sense would it make for Him to kind of shimmy or smirk at them and then seemingly pass by?

And so, there's something strange in that detail. Why would He mean to pass by them whenever they were needing His help? And I think that also is supposed to recall in their memories an Old Testament story where Moses was asking to see God's glory and God had to explain to Moses that He couldn't see Him face to face.

But then He explained if He would stand in the cleft of the rock, God's glory would pass by. And I think that too is intended to be an echo of the Old Testament God.

[10 : 11] And so, what we have here in this story of Jesus walking on the water is various echoes of the Old Testament, of Old Testament moments where we see a rescue from the sea just like God did for His Old Testament people.

And we see the great I Am revealing Himself again. And we see a God who passes by and something of His glory is seen. So, if you put those different little events together, it focuses your mind back to the Exodus story.

And Jesus seems to be revealing to these people that the God of the Exodus is back again. And what does the God of the Exodus do? You go back into the Old Testament story of the Exodus. The key event of the Exodus is that God rescues His people from Pharaoh's bondage, brings them through the sea, and provides for them during their wilderness wanderings, and then takes them to the promised land.

As these disciples and others that are gathered and watching the life of Jesus, trying to understand who Jesus is, He is revealing to them bit by bit through this gospel that He is the same God that was revealed in the Old Testament.

[11 : 42] He is the God of the Exodus being revealed in this story. A God who rescues His people, brings them through the water, provides for them through the wilderness, and takes them to the promised land.

So that's the first part of Revelation that we should be getting, I think, from this passage. And then the feeding of the 5,000. So they should have recognized Him in the feeding of the 5,000, but it says that their hearts were hardened, and they were not able to recognize Him.

So what should they have seen? Well, the kind of main image here is of a massive group of people being fed in the wilderness.

Just in its basic components, He has 5,000, maybe 10,000 if there was a woman and children there, but at least 5,000 people in a wilderness or a desert as it's described here, and they're being fed by one man.

You see how the story unfolds when He takes this meager portion of five loaves and two fish, and as He takes them, He looks up to heaven, and He breaks the bread and blesses the bread, and then distributes the bread among them.

[13 : 06] And just as He's looking up to heaven, it seems like the bread is coming down from heaven. And again, I think what they're supposed to see here is an echo and a reminiscence and a reminder that the God who provided bread for His people in the wilderness in the Old Testament is the same God that is being revealed in the person of the Lord Jesus here in this story.

Back in the story of the Exodus, God said to Moses, Behold, I am about to rain bread from heaven for you. And I think that is what is being revealed here.

And another detail that's worth picking up, Mark tells us that the grass is green. None of the other gospel writers when they're telling the story of the feeding of the 5,000 bother to tell us that the grass is green.

But I think Mark tells us that intentionally because these people would have been like, as I was trying to describe to the children, maybe not very well, they would have been like white blobs of linen sitting on green grass.

They didn't have all the fancy dyes to color their clothes the way we do. They just had the bog-sander linen clothes. And so if you were standing at a distance looking at this scene, you would see one person providing bread for them.

[14 : 44] You would see green grass for the carpet on which they were sitting. And if you were up on a mountain looking down on it, what you would see would just be a whole lot of little groups of white blobs.

And I think the picture there that is being painted is of Jesus as a shepherd looking after his people. And so putting all that together, thinking of what is being revealed here about Jesus is that he is the God of the Exodus, the God who rescues and the God who shepherds his people.

Yeah. Thinking back to that. And so, as they're discovering who Jesus is, and as I hope you are discovering who Jesus is, the Old Testament stories and the New Testament stories go together to reveal to us that the God who rescued and shepherded his people in the Old Testament is the same God who is with us today in the form of the Lord Jesus Christ.

He would be our rescuer. He would be our savior. And he would be our shepherd if we would trust him. Looking forward from the Old Testament, Isaiah 40 looked forward to the coming of Jesus and it said, see the sovereign Lord comes with power and he rules with a mighty arm.

He comes and his reward is with him. And his, he goes on to say that he tends his flock like a shepherd. He gathers the lambs in his arms. He carries them close to his heart and gently leads those that are young.

[16:41] Ezekiel 34, the sovereign Lord says, I myself will search for my sheep and look after them. As a shepherd looks after his scattered flock, so I will look after my sheep.

I will rescue them from all the places where they were scattered on days of clouds and darkness. And I will bring them out from the nations and gather them from the countries and bring them into their own land.

Jesus is being revealed as a rescuer and a shepherd. He has, he has history of being able to do this.

As he rescued Israel of old, so he is able to rescue us. As he shepherded and provided for Israel of old, so he is able to shepherd and provide for us.

That's the revelation. As we revel in that or just as we take a moment to reflect upon that, that he is a rescuer, it's helpful for us just to pause and remind ourselves that there is no other rescuer.

[17:49] There is no other way out of this world and on to glory. Only he can rescue us. Only he can pay the price of our sin. Only he can set us free from sin's power and its penalty and take us on to glory.

I think there is an interesting little contrast that we can make from this story. So these guys, these disciples, are straining at the oars, making headway painfully across the Sea of Galilee.

And they've been at it for 12 hours and they're not making much progress. And rather than standing on the shore and yelling out at them or using a megaphone to yell out at them to row harder, Jesus comes walking on the water to rescue them and to take them to the other side.

All the other religions in the world are like self-help manuals that do the opposite, that tell us as human beings struggling through the messiness of life to row harder, to try harder, to do this, that, and the other, to try and help yourself and save yourself.

But Jesus, rather than yelling out at us just to keep trying in our own strength, comes to us as we're floundering on the waves and on the torrents of life to rescue us and to take us to the other side.

[19:38] Psalm 130, out of the depths I cry to you. and He would come to forgive us and rescue us. Without God, without Jesus as our rescuer, one day the darkness will envelop us, one day we'll go under in the floods of life, but with Him we have a rescuer who would come to save us and to take us to the other side.

But not just as a rescuer, He is a shepherd for His sheep. These disciples in this story are tired and weary. Maybe you're tired and weary.

They've been out on mission and it's been taking its toll on them. And Jesus' response for them, Jesus' answer to their tiredness, His remedy for a recuperation and renewal is for them to take time out with Him.

and to enjoy His teaching. And as He teaches them, He feeds them bread and fish until they're full and satisfied.

And it would seem that the parallel for us is that we will find bread for our bellies, we will find satisfaction, we will find strength for the journey as we take time out with Jesus, as we listen to His teaching and as we feed on His Word, as we fellowship with His people, as He will shepherd us through life and on to glory.

[21:23] I used to work as a young fella and as a student when I was at university on a farm feeding sheep and looking after cows and that sort of thing, but to focus in on the idea of feeding sheep this time of year or maybe a little bit earlier than this whenever the yews had their lambs at foot, I would zoom in on a quad bike maybe to where the troughs were in the field and we'd have some meal on the back of the quad and all the yews would come running to get this food that would nourish them and help them to provide milk for their lambs.

But there was a strange thing that happened almost in every flock of sheep where one or two yews would stand back from the trough and when you provide meal they wouldn't press in to get it and you could see it in their constitution and you could see it in their lambs that they hadn't been feeding and that they weren't pressing in to take the meal and so they weren't as well nourished.

Jesus is a shepherd he looks after us as his people but his primary means of feeding and nourishing his people to lead us through the wilderness of this world and on to glory is through his word is through fellowship with his people around his word and if you will not press in to read the Bible and to enjoy the fellowship of God's people you'll be malnourished as a Christian for this is his way of providing for us.

So what are we saying? Revelation Jesus is being revealed here as the rescuer just like the Old Testament God who rescues his people from a watery grave in the Red Sea he rescues his people from loss in the Sea of Galilee to take them to the other side and he is also a shepherd just like the Old Testament God who provided for his people in the wilderness so Jesus is the Son of God with us to shepherd his people through.

And so just as I finish and as I ask you about your response I just want you to get first of all that your response doesn't change who he is he is a rescuer and he is a shepherd many Christians alive now and and and and in our and our ancestors have proven him to be a rescuer and a shepherd but the key question is will you allow him to be your rescuer and your shepherd for your life have you recognized him as your as your rescuer as your savior does your life look like straining at the oars in your own strength trying to find your own way of salvation trying to say enough prayers to get your way to heaven trying to dress up well enough for enough

[24 : 59] Sundays to get yourself to heaven trying to do enough for your neighbors that that might prove to be beneficial in the final assessment of your life all of that just amounts to to to to straining at the oars making little headway frustrated with yourself and your lack of ability to live in a way that even pleases yourself never mind God but just as in the old Exodus story where God says I have seen the affliction of my people who are in Egypt so in this story Jesus sees that we would never be able to make it on our own we would never have enough strength these disciples seemingly would never have made it to the other side of the sea of Galilee so he comes to rescue them to get in the boat with them to take the weight off of them and to take them to the other side so for us he would take your sin upon him if you would trust him he would be your savior and your rescuer and he would take the full weight of dealing with your sin and providing what you need to live this life if you would trust him and he would be your shepherd just comparing this with

Psalm 23 that we have just sung together here in this story we see Jesus as the shepherd who provides for his people through their desert wilderness experiences until they get to the promised land a bit like what I've suggested to you we are we are we get enough nourishing and nourishment through the word of God and the word of God within the fellowship of God's people to see us through the wilderness and there is a satisfaction provided for these 5,000 people as they're fed and it's enough to see them through the wilderness but I love what what is revealed here of Jesus as a host and what Psalm 23 does to shift our focus from Jesus as a host providing what we need in our time of necessity to looking forward to the day when we will dwell with him and he will be the host of heaven and this idea of 12 basketfuls left over and the hearty satisfaction of these people as they have received one meal from Jesus I think should excite our imagination that one day when we get to glory it will not just be a little bit of bread and fish to see us through the wilderness but it will be a full and rich satisfaction and delight when we get to glory we see him face to face and he is the host forever in heaven providing for his people that sense of a great banquet that is described in some of

Jesus parables and we read of in Isaiah 25 6 on this mountain and the Lord Almighty will prepare a feast of rich food for all people a banquet of aged wine the best of meats and the finest of wines so in summary what I'm saying is that Jesus is being revealed here it's the Old Testament God come again to rescue his people and to shepherd his people revel in that for yourselves but make sure that you have responded to him and that you are trusting in him and in him alone to save you and to take you to the other side I'll finish with the lyrics of an old hymn that you'll recognize guide me O thou great Jehovah pilgrim through this barren land I am weak but thou art mighty hold me with thy powerful hand bread of heaven bread of heaven feed me till

I want no more feed me till I want no more just a word of prayer our loving heavenly father we thank you for the for the great I am who revealed yourself to Abraham of old who revealed yourself to Israel as a nation as a God who could rescue them out of Egypt through the Red Sea to Sinai provide for them through the wilderness and take them on to the promised land and we praise you Lord for the coming of the Lord Jesus and for how he is revealed in Mark's gospel and each of the gospels as a God who has come to shepherd his people and as a God just hinted at in this story who would be a host for his people throughout all of eternity and so our father we pray that we might trust in you to rescue us trust in you to shepherd us and we look forward till that day when we're gathered together with our fathers around your banqueting table to delight in the finest of fare in the greatest of company with the saints feasting at the table of the one who provides basket fools and full satisfaction in

[31 : 36] Jesus name we pray amen well we finish our service by singing Psalm 119 verses 172 to 176 you'll find it on page 415 of the Scottish Psalter yeah thank you my tongue my tongue of thy most blessed word shall speak and it confess because all thy commandments are perfect righteousness to God's praise my tongue of thy most blen word shall speak and it confess because all thy commandments are perfect righteousness let thy strong heart make health to me thy precepts charm my choice

I long for thy salvation Lord and in thy glory rejoice O let my soul live and shall give praises unto thee and let thy just rest great patience be helpful unto me I like a lost sheep when us live thy servants seek and find for thy command thy command

I suffer not to slip out of my mind now to him who is able to keep you from stumbling and to present you blameless before the presence of his glory with great joy to the only God our Savior through Jesus Christ our Lord be glory majesty dominion and authority before all time and now and forever amen