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Substance of Prayer Meeting Address

given by our Pastor on September 10. 1974.

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Lesson. Matthew 14. vv, 22-33.

Several of the evangelists narrate similar experiences known by the Lord's pleasure in the path of His disciples. It is obvious to those who fear God that we have before us the analogy of faith. You are not thinking of the Sea of Galilee, though it is right to think of it, but of your own spiritual voyage and coming into these storms. In fact in the hymn, life itself is a storm; the storm of life. Certainly, I do not know if it is a matter of age, but life never seemed to be so stormy almost every day as it is now. So it will be wonderful if the Lord Jesus brings us through the storm of life, safe to land on the happy shore of eternal life. We have known recently of ships wrecked and sailors have lost their lives, and this makes us anxious concerning the spiritual voyage of our souls. We hope the boat will not be overturned and never go to the bottom and we never reach reach the land we set out for.

There <sup>are</sup> a few salient points I hope to make. Why should the Lord constrain His disciples to get into the ship and go before Him? and why was it His will that they should come into a violent storm? why? Then He came to relieve them.

"Though they suffer for a season,  
For the Name of Christ, their Lord;  
And at times may know no reason  
Why such sorrows are endured; —There is a blessed  
issue;  
Soon He'll teach them,  
That the whole has worked for good." (615)

What then was the chief purpose of God in this voyage? I think it will be clear to those who fear God and know the experience that is revealed to us in the last verse, that it was in order that under the prevailing dangerous circumstances Christ should reveal to them more abundantly His eternal power and Godhead; that we should come where there is only One can do anything for us. The Lord comes, and there is a further revelation

of His glorious power and Godhead, so we can say personally; "Of a truth thou art the Son of God." Those of you who know tempest and tossing, I hope this will be a salutary word for your souls in extremity and in the fear of drowning. Christ will come. It was in 'the fourth watch of the night', not in the middle; in the last, between 3 and 6 am. So there may not be a quick deliverance for you: there may be fearing, praying, hoping, watching, and in the last watch of the night the Lord comes, and there is a great calm.

There are one or two other points. You will notice how Jesus constrained them to get into a ship and go before Him to the other side. The Lord has a special method with His own sons and daughters. What is it? He draws, not drives; He constrains! Whatever it is in your life, in reference to suffering, affliction, following the Lord, taking a step in providence, the Lord by His grace will constrain you; not drive. Whatever is the will of God concerning His dear people, this is His divine method; by love constraining you. If the Lord has constrained <sup>you</sup> by His love, it is a path He will support you and be with you in. He will never forsake you. This is very sweet. A prevailing, eclipsing power sweetly draws your spirit. He comes in the fourth watch of the night. The disciples had entered tossing; the wind was blowing against them, and Jesus went to them. In what way? Walking on the sea.

I felt to bring this before the family of God to night. What does it demonstrate? It proves that Jesus is in control of everything. He does not appear to be sometimes. He was walking on the sea. He is in control. This is a sweet realisation. If I use a word of the Psalmist's, he said; "For I have heard the slander of many: fear was on every side: while they took counsel together against me, they devised to take away my life." He was in an awful ~~state~~ plight. Suddenly the Lord directed the eye of faith to heaven; out of the troubles of the world, and he could see his times were in the hand of God, His undisturbed affairs in heaven. Immediately his fears had gone; his distress was gone. Jesus reigns; He is in control. You will prove it. He walks on the sea.

I hope that just this sweet spiritual meditation will be of great avail to you to remember,- in the tempest, in the storms of life, in trials, difficulties, great anxieties concerning finance, and in providence.

We little know how low we shall sink before the Lord appears, but Jesus is in control. Peter wanted to walk on the sea. As far as we are aware this is the only time where it is recorded in Holy Scripture that a poor sinner walked on the sea, and Peter at first did. You say; "What does this prove to me?" The power of faith in Jesus, and when you get that degree of faith in Jesus, tribulations and storms are beneath your feet. It is a poor child of God walking on the water. Let this thought sweeten your bitter cup. When he saw the wind boisterous, he began to sink. It is a terrible feeling. He wanted the Lord to save him, "and immediately Jesus stretched forth his hand, and caught him". The wind ceased, and there was a great calm. Look at y-our own experience: in the last fourteen days there has been great turbulence in the atmosphere,- the Autumnal equinox. You opened your eyes in the morning, and everything was blown about: now it is quiet. You have been in the tempest, tossing, temptation. The dear Lord has come and whispered peace,- a word of divine power. There is a great calm, and you say; "This is a little foretaste of eternal rest in heaven with my precious Saviour. Amen.