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GOSPEL STANDARD BAPTIST

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Prayer Meeting address by Mr. J. Delves on Saturday evening
10.11.73 at "Ebenezer" Clapham

Hymns 303, 396

Reading: Matthew 14 from v.22

These verses record some circumstances in the days when the Lord was upon earth but no Scripture is of private interpretation. There are one or two points to notice in connection with the reading - His disciples got into a ship. It was not their own choice, for it is said "Jesus constrained His disciples to get into a ship", which may indicate they felt somewhat hesitant about taking a step of that kind, but He constrained them to get into a ship and to go before Him unto the other side, while He sent the multitudes away. One might have assumed they would have a pleasant, quiet voyage, being constrained by the Lord Himself, as much as to say in our language - we have got the best authority to go, we shall be all right now, no harm can befall us, for the Lord constrained us. I wonder if there is a point of teaching in this in the lives of the Lord's people, when they have felt constrained, feeling it to be of the Lord to take a certain step, and may have anticipated things would go very smoothly; but instead of that when the ship was in the midst of the sea it was tossed with waves for the wind was contrary. This was when the evening was come and the Lord was on the mountain praying; just when they needed Him the most He was not there, but He came to them.

We read He constrained them, but there was a storm; it may have been a surprise to them, so it may have been with some of you. You may have felt a direction in a matter, and a right one too, and had anticipated smooth things and the Lord's blessing in it, and instead of that there has been a storm and a contrary wind. This is rather expressive, the wind contrary, not just a strong wind but blowing right in the face of them so as to make it very, very hard going. Perhaps you know something about this; although you have been in a right way, and have felt a right constraining, it has been very hard going, storms have come up and the wind is contrary. Is not this the experience of the Lord's

people? Who is there that does not know something about this contrary wind?

The third thing is, there was a quieting voice. The Lord came to them in the fourth watch of the night, not apparently as soon as the storm began to look threatening, but in the last watch before the morning. When the disciples saw Him walking on the sea they did not know who it was, they thought it was a spirit, "But straightway Jesus spake unto them, saying, Be of good cheer; it is I; be not afraid"; this was a quieting voice, like a still small voice in a storm, and the storm ceased, all was well because the Lord was there. "It is I; be not afraid". This may link up with what we read in the Gospel of John, "Let not your heart be troubled" - although the wind is contrary and storms may arise - "Let not your heart be troubled: ye believe in God, believe also in me".

Psalm 43

Additional copies may be obtained from 9, Sibella Road, SW4 6JA