

# Absolutes - Part 2

by David Adams

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*The sermon emphasizes the importance of absolutes in life, highlighting Jesus Christ as the ultimate absolute, and encourages listeners to trust in Him during life's storms.*

**Duration:** 35:53

**Scripture:** Matthew 6:33

**Topics:** "Jesus Calms", "Divine Control"

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## Description

In this sermon, the speaker begins by acknowledging the challenge of speaking to a congregation and the feeling of being caught in turbulent waters. He emphasizes that even in the midst of distress, Jesus is in control and everything is under his feet. The speaker then refers to the story in the Gospel of John where Jesus walks on water and calms the storm. He highlights the disciples' fear and confusion, but also their willingness to receive Jesus into the boat. The sermon concludes by mentioning the ongoing attempts to arrest Jesus, but noting that his hour had not yet come.

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## Transcript

We only have a specified length of time for you to endure me. You two have to look at you. You have no idea what it is to stand up here and look at some of those glowing, glorious faces.

Now, you didn't expect that comment, no, did you? Turn with me, please, to the Gospel by John, Chapter 6. Pardon me. Louder. That's working, right? Very well.

I'm not to speak so quickly. I'm not to mutter. And I have to speak louder.

I'm going to get this straight if I stay around here long enough. It'll take a while, though. I'm quite sure of that.

Let's read the passage first of all in John's Gospel, Chapter 6. We read concerning the miracle of the loaves and fishes at the early part of the chapter, then to verse 14. Then those men, when they had seen the miracle that Jesus did, said, This is of a truth of that prophet that should come into the world. 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. And the sea

arose by reason of a great wind that blew.

So when they had rowed about five and twenty or thirty furlongs, they see Jesus walking on the sea and drawing nigh unto the ship, and they were afraid. But he saith unto them, What did he say? I am, be not afraid. Then they willingly received him into the ship, and immediately the ship was at the land whither they went.

Now, turn over. I also heard another little piece of instruction since I came, and that is that the speaker should read his portion all first and then come back and speak about it, and not speak for a little while and then read another portion. I'm telling you, if I come here often enough, I'm going to learn how to do things.

You see, there is a certain inhibition that is imposed upon a speaker when he comes here, having been told before he came that, you know, what I told you, that they have heard it all at Park of the Palms, and they know it all, so why are you going? Now, that was relayed to me before I came up here from the south. So I'm learning just as I go, and you must bear with me, because it takes youth a while to get things straight. Let's turn to chapter 18 now.

Then I shall read the other portion that I want to consider, and then we will go back to chapter 6. When Jesus had spoken these words, he went forth with his disciples over the brook Cedron, where was a garden into which he entered and his disciples. And Judas also which betrayed him knew the place, for Jesus oft times resorted thither with his disciples. Judas then, having received a band of men in offerings from the chief priests and Pharisees, cometh thither with lanterns and torches and weapons.

Jesus therefore, knowing all things that should come upon him, went forth and said unto them, Whom seek ye? They answered him, Now, we don't know how they said this. There were no CDs, and there were no tape recorders, and so some of these passages of Scripture, if we have a little sanctified imagination, we may suppose how some of these words were spoken. I'm sure I don't know.

There are several passages like that, and I would like to know just what the inflection was. But I have imagined for myself, at any rate, knowing just what this band were composed of, who they were, how they had come, how long it had taken them to get to this place in order to do what they had planned to do sometime before. I imagine they were rather brutal in their reaction, in their response.

In verse 5, They answered him, Jesus of Nazareth. Jesus said unto them, What did he say? I am. And Judas also, which betrayed him, stood with them.

Soon then as he had said unto them, I am, they went backward and fell to the ground. Then asked he them again, Whom seek ye? And they said, How did they say it that time? I don't know, but I do believe it was in a much more subdued tone than they said it the first time. Jesus of Nazareth.

Jesus answered, I have told you that I am. If therefore you seek me, let these go their way, that the saying might be fulfilled which he spake, Of them which thou gavest me have I lost none. Then Simon Peter, having a sword, drew it, and smote the high priest's servant, and cut off his right ear.

The servant's name was Malchus. Then said Jesus unto Peter, Put up thy sword into the sheath, the cup which my father hath given me. Shall I not drink it?" And that is our reading for this morning.

You recall that we began a little study for the mornings, and a different study for the evenings for this week, and in the mornings we are considering the absolutes. And some of you probably wondered

afterwards just why I had chosen this subject, and just the reason why I have taken it up the way I am taking it up, and also the change for these studies tonight. Well, if it is so, and we have noticed that it is said so, that there are no absolutes, then we are certainly adrift morally, intellectually, theologically, secularly we are adrift.

If there are no absolutes, then we have no sure place upon which to hang our activities or also to place our trust. Now, what happens when a doctrine like this is proclaimed in our universities, our colleges, our high schools? What happens when the psychologists and the philosophers are insisting that there are no absolutes? Then we must resort, and we will resort, we will revert to something else. If there are no absolutes, what comes in to take their place? And the answer to that is relativism.

Relativism is the consequence upon the assumption or the assertion that there are no absolutes. And relativism, very simply, is just this, that if you don't have any sure point of reference, if you don't have any standard, if you have nothing definite, definitive, or eternal to go by, then how do you come to a conclusion about anything? And I suggested to you as well that the statement, there are no absolutes, is absolutely ridiculous, because we are using absolutes all the time. We are using points of reference.

But what relativism is, really, it means that you come to a conclusion about everything you believe and everything you say because of the way it relates to you. Not necessarily the way it relates to anyone else but to yourself. For if there are no absolutes, everything is relative.

There is no such thing as an absolute good. There is no such thing as absolute truth. There is no such thing as an absolute standard.

So, the result of that is everything is relative. If it is good to you, then it is good. If what is good to you is bad for me, then I do not accept it as being good.

That's relativism. There is no other standard by which to judge anything. And there is no basis upon which to come to any conclusion.

So, relativism is what is happening today. And yet it is not consistent, as you will notice, and as you will notice you have seen and heard, oftentimes in statements that are made by people who say there are no absolutes. And I suggested a very evident one to you.

These people who say there are no absolutes will also say that something you have said is a lie. And there can be no lie, no such thing as a lie, if there is no standard by which to classify it as a lie. And, of course, a lie is a lie because it is a violation of truth.

And if there is no absolute, there is no truth. Therefore, you cannot say something is a lie because there is nothing by which to call it a lie. But there must be truth, and truth is absolute.

So, what we did in the beginning of our study is we came to the ultimate absolute, and that was we found in John's Gospel, chapter 8. So, the Lord had said, you remember, when He was speaking to His Jewish audience that day, finally, when they said, Were you greater than our father Abraham? And He said, Your father Abraham rejoiced to see My day. And then the Lord made a statement which is very intriguing, and I don't know if you've come to the conclusion as to what He meant or not, but you remember that the Lord said, If a man keep My word, he shall never see death. That's an absolute statement.

And they said back to Him, We know that thou hast a demon now because Abraham's dead, the prophets are dead, and thou sayest, If a man keep Thy word, then he shall never see death. Who art thou? Who makest thou thyself? Abraham's dead, the prophets are dead. And our Lord said, Your father Abraham rejoiced to see My day.

And he thought and was glad. And they said, Thou art not yet fifty years old, and hast thou seen Abraham? And then our Lord made that dramatic, startling, marvelous statement. He said, Verily, verily, I say unto you, Before Abraham was, I am.

Now, unfortunately, our language does not convey to us the real meaning or the nuance of the verb which our Lord used, Before Abraham was. We use that in our English language, and yet it is not a proper verb form, but we've shifted a lot of our good verb forms and our verb conjugations now in English, and I often hear over the radio and elsewhere people who are public speakers and they are using a past tense as though it were a subjunctive past tense, which it really should be, but we don't use it anymore. If I was to go, we say.

If I was to go. Well, if you was to go, you had gone. And you know, of course, that is bad English.

We should say, If I were to go. Right? It's surprising how our English language has been chopped up, mutilated, and ground up, and suffered all kinds of indignities because of the way it is used today. I have some grandchildren, as some of you know, and some of them are university grads, and they amaze me sometimes the way they use our good English language.

For instance, a little while ago, I heard my granddaughter say, This isn't going on tape, is it? Oh, well, just don't send them notes, that's all. I heard my granddaughter say, Well, when me and Stephanie go, we're going to do such and such. And I hear this all the time.

I hear these university grads and these high school intellectuals, and they say, Well, me and Joe, you know, we went and did such and such. Me and Joe. Me and Stephanie.

It's a startler when you stop to think about it. It's a double violation of the English language. Number one, it's morally wrong because I put myself first.

Right? Why should I say me? It's me and Joe. Me and Joe go. That's morally wrong.

It's grammatically wrong because me is no subject of the verb go. Right? No, me doesn't go. It's I who goes.

And then we say, Well, if I was there, I would have done such and such. If I was there. Was is a past tense of a verb to do or to be.

And, of course, that's incorrect. If I were. Now, here we have a verb.

Before Abraham was. It's before Abraham should come to be. It's an indefinite subjunctive tense which is built into it the possibility of an uncertainty.

Before Abraham should come to be. Or before Abraham were to come to be. Now, there are other languages that are much more accurate than our English in this matter.

And our Spanish is one of them. Antes de que Abraham fuese, yo soy. Before Abraham should come to be.

Jesus said, Yo soy. I am. And that we concluded in our previous study is the ultimate absolute.

He said, I am. His eternal deity, his timeless existence. He goes back beyond Abraham.

He goes back beyond time. He goes back beyond the beginning. And the beginning was the word.

The I am always was. Always is. I'm using now our English language.

And always will be. But he is not one who was. Nor is he one who will be.

He is the I am. He is eternity in himself. He antedates all time.

And he outlasts all time. He is the I am. He is the absolute.

And as we notice from some quotations as well in our other study, he is the one who remains when everything else goes. He is the one who is the same. One of his marvelous titles, the same.

When everything else changes, there's mutation written into everything. We all change. But he never changes.

Now, I want you to look at some of the other times in the Gospel by John when the Lord Jesus said that. And sometimes when he said it with modification. But the two we've read this morning have really no modification.

They stand alone. The first time in John 6 is the occasion of the storm at sea. Our Lord had fed the 5,000 and he had gone down to the sea level and he constrained, says another Gospel, he constrained his disciples to get into the boat and to go to the other side.

The multitude were going to come and take him by force and make him a king because of his ability to turn a few loaves and a few fish into sufficient for an almost numberless multitude. If you're clueless, the women and the children. When they saw what he had done, and it was evident what he had done, then they were going to come by force and make him a king.

So our Lord sent the multitude away. And after he sent the multitude away, he constrained, he persuaded his disciples to leave him and go off in a boat to the other side. While he himself retired into a mountain to pray.

And then as they were traveling across the sea, the Lord is in the mountain. He is praying. The multitude is dispersed.

The disciples are alone in the boat. And it says, Jesus was not yet come to them. And as they're traveling, there's a great storm arises over the Sea of Galilee.

Something evidently was quite frequent in those days. And we read of another storm, you recall, when he was asleep in the boat. All storms or geological disturbances, may I suggest to you, are not divinely inspired.

Now, some of you are looking at me as though that was heretical to say that. Don't you know, Brother Dave, that the Lord is behind everything? That's not what I said, was it? And all inclemency of weather does not proceed from the hand of the sovereign Creator. Would you suppose now that when the wind came out of the wilderness and smoked the house where Job's ten children were partying and killed them all, that God sent that wind? You don't want to nod your head this way or that way.

So you hold it rigid. I have difficulty with a rigid audience. Well, you know very well that that wind came because of permission that God had given to Satan to test and to try Job.

And the Thabeans came. And they carried away the herds. And they slew the servants.

And the fire of God, which is a Hebrewism, came down because it was something dramatic and very sudden. The fire of God, it's called, came down from heaven and destroyed something. And it wasn't God who sent the fire.

And it wasn't God who sent the Thabeans. And then the wind comes out of the wilderness and destroys the house and murders Job's ten children. Who was the author of the wind? Who was the author of the fire that came down? Who was the author of the murderous bands that came and completely destroyed all Job's financial support in one dramatic blow? Satan was the author of all these.

Who do you think was the author when our Lord is lying asleep in the boat because of the great fatigue that overcame Him after His work that day and the crossing of the sea and the storm come down and the disciples are not wanting to disturb Him? He was so weary. So they left Him and they staid and they strived to fight against the elements and they couldn't and finally they went to Him and they woke Him and they said, Master, Master, carest thou not that we perish? And the Lord stood up. And what did He do? He rebuked the wind and the waves.

Did His Father send that storm, do you suppose? Did He ever at any time in His life rebuke anything the Father sent Him? Never. Never. He did rebuke those who tried to get Him to violate some conditions that the Father imposed on Him.

But He never did Himself. And I can't possibly picture my Lord standing in the boat and rebuking something that the Father had said to Him. No.

Geological disturbances, understand my friends, are not the product of a loving Creator's hand. And on this occasion, disciples are going across the sea and the Lord is up in the mountain praying and then there's a great wind arose and they're fighting once more a storm like this at sea. And after they had rowed about three, three and a half miles, and wondering exactly what the outcome would be, they see a figure walking on the waves.

Who is this? This is Jesus of Nazareth, my friends. This is the one who carried the stigma all these days. And as we commented, He carried it into heaven as well.

Jesus of Nazareth. He's walking on the waves and they see Him coming. And they were afraid.

They were startled. What does this phantasma mean? What is this? And as they cried out, the Lord answered them, What did He say? Be not afraid, I am. Now, to our English minds and to our English language and our English tongues, that doesn't convey the actual thought that it would convey to disciples because we're not accustomed to using this expression this way.

We always have to add something to it. We have to modify it. We have to supplement it with something else.

We don't say, I am. We say, I'm going. Or, I have this.

Or, I am expecting. Or, I am going to say. We add something to it.

But the Lord just said, Be not afraid, I am. That's all He said. Who is this? This is the absolute.

This is the ultimate. This is the one who was watching them from the mountaintop. This is He who knew what their condition was.

And He comes walking on the storm. And certainly, we must learn something from this in the little tempests that assail us in life. We all have them, don't we? At times.

Sometimes it's a tempest in the teapot. I never actually saw one of those, but I've heard about them. I just hope it was a decaf tea, but I'm not sure.

But you hear about them at any rate. I remember my wife and I took a trip one time over to Niagara Falls from our home to visit an uncle of mine. An uncle and aunt.

My father's brother and his wife. And we walked in the back door. I can see them sitting, the two of them.

They were well up in their eighties, sitting at a little table in the kitchen. And we stepped in the kitchen and I said, Well now, how are you doing, you folks? And my uncle said, We're just sitting here like Darby and Joan quarreling with one another. Well, if you're English, you know who Darby and Joan were.

If you're not, you probably don't. If you're Scottish, it would be Cameron and MacDonald that were quarreling with one another. And if you're Irish, it would be Murphy and McGillicuddy, I suppose.

And if you're from the south, it would be a Hatfield and a McCoy. I don't know. But anyway, this is what my uncle said.

He said, We're sitting here like Darby and Joan just quarreling with one another. They weren't a quarrelsome pair, really. But this was his expression.

We have little situations like that in married life, don't we? I think I heard a voice say yes. I was nearly going to be startled by that. Well, some of you have been married for quite a while, I know.

Some of you go beyond 45 and some of you go beyond 50 and some of you go beyond 55 and I don't know how many are 65. But we've all been here married. Those of us who are, long enough to know that there are tempests in teapots.

There are little storms that come and we create a lot of them ourselves, don't we? And some of them aren't at all very vicious or ferocious and they certainly don't last very long, fortunately. They are just little tempests. But then, along the pathway of life by divine direction and by divine permission, it seems that things get dark and there's a storm blows and fears arise in our hearts and anxiety about the future.

And we wonder, why has this taken hold of us? And we can't see through the darkness. It says here, Jesus was not come to them. But He was coming.

He was coming. And in coming, actually, He was walking on their trouble. Or He's walking on the waves.

Now, they hadn't stirred up the sea, but they were certainly being made the object of it. And they were in fear of it. And they'd gone three miles or three and a half miles already.

I'm not sure of the trajectory, but I understand by the statement here, 20 or 30 furlongs, they had gone that far. And Jesus was not come to them. Did you ever feel like that? Did you ever feel you're caught in some wild water, some turbulence, some distress, and you don't know where He is? He has not come to them.

That's what it says. But as they look through the wind and the rain and the rising sea, they see this figure walking on the waves. Did we but know that that which most fiercely assails us is under His feet? Who? Why? Because He is the ultimate absolute.

He is the I Am. Everything, brothers and sisters, everything is under His feet. Everything is under His control.

That which is turmoil to us, that which makes us afraid, that which tosses us here and there, over which we have no control, it seems. We don't know which way it's going to go. How many times as we look back over life have we not been in this kind of a situation? We can't see our way out.

We can't see whether it's north, south, east or west. For the wind is such and the rain is such and the fury of the waves is such that nothing makes any sense and there seems to be no direction to it either. And Jesus was not come to them.

Did they only know how it was going to turn out? But they didn't at that point. Have you never been like that? Then they see Him coming through the storm. He's walking on the water.

They're cried out and they're afraid. And He said, Frank, fear not. I am.

That's all they needed and nothing more. And after we will just skip the little experience of Peter at this point about walking on the waves. And then what happens was they received Him gladly into the ship and immediately miracles performed.

And as much a miracle as the fact that He was walking on the water. They were at the land where they were going. They couldn't see land.

They had no idea perhaps the direction they were going. And yet as soon as He steps into the boat, they're at land. That's the solution to the whole problem, isn't it? Jesus in the boat.

See, I am in the midst of our storms. I want to hurry because I must close on time this morning or I shan't be invited back. Now, the next passage that we read in John 18 is another example of our Lord speaking these words without any modification whatsoever.

And you know the story. And you know what preceded it. How many times they had tried to arrest Him.

They had tried to take Him. They had tried to provoke Him to say many things to accuse Him. And they had brought all kinds of machinations against Him.

The Pharisees had planned it into the night hours on one particular occasion how they were going to trap Him the next morning when they go to the temple. And all this had been frustration. They couldn't lay

hands on Him until finally the Lord who in His great omniscience knew exactly how it would be in John 13.

I was going to read that with you. He told the disciples what was going to happen. And He that has eaten bread with me has lifted up His heel against me.

Am I in overdrive now? Just watching the clock. And remember, our Lord said something about that. He said, when this happens, you will know that the one who has eaten bread with me has lifted up His heel against me.

And He's going to betray me and put me into the hands of my enemies. Then you will know what? That I am. There it is again.

Foretelling His own death. The manner of it. The instruments of it.

How it's going to happen. And now it's coming upon Him. He's in the Garden of Gethsemane.

And He's coming to the edge of the garden. We'll be talking about this a little later in our studies this week. And as He comes to the edge of the garden, Judas meets Him with the band, the perfidious man, the man of treachery and defeat, the man of money in his bloodstream.

He's coming to meet Him with the band of the robbers with swords and staves. And they're an angry band. There's a lot of frustration behind them.

There's a lot of attempts behind them to arrest Him. And they weren't able to do it because His hour was not yet come. It says three times.

But now here's the chance. Here's the opportunity. And for 30 pieces of silver, they have the opportunity to arrest Him and to carry Him away.

And so they meet Him at the edge of the garden. The Lord says to the three, remember, rise, let us be going. He that betrays Me is at hand.

And as they meet, if I were artistic, if I were an artist, I would like to paint some of these biblical pictures. The mob on one hand. You've seen some of the paintings of this.

The mob on one hand with the lanterns in the nighttime and the swords and the staves and the brigands in their brutality displayed upon their countenance and the ferocity of the manner in which they're approaching Him. They're just anxious to get their hands upon Him. And behind them are some of the elders of Israel.

And they meet Him there. And He steps out in front of His little band and He says, Whom seek ye? Then comes the deep-throated roar, Jesus of Nazareth. And He says, I am.

And that's all He had to say. As blown by the wind, they fall back in dismay, routed, fall backwards away from Him who can stand in the presence of the I Am, who can hold up his head and keep his feet when the I Am is there and says He is the I Am. None of them.

They're completely thrown into turmoil. And as they begin to gather themselves up again and to stand again before Him, He asks them again. He gives them opportunity again to say for what they had come.

And He said, Whom seek ye? And I think now they'd be almost afraid to say it. But they said it. Jesus of Nazareth.

And He says, I've told you that I am. Now, watch how He modifies this. It isn't that singular, dramatic, lonely statement, I am.

No, it's dynamic deity. Now, He enlarges it. He adds to it.

He seems to break, if you will, that sovereign power that's involved in that name. And He says, well, I've told you that I am. If therefore ye seek Me, let these others go their way.

And in the compassion of His lonely heart, He's moving on to the cross as we know. And He submits Himself. He is still the I am.

In Him is inherent, limitless power and majesty and splendor and deity. But He submits Himself into the hands of these who are thirsting for His blood and will not be satisfied until it's poured out at the cross. And He says, if you're seeking Me, then let these go their way.

He said to His Father in the previous chapter, of those whom thou hast given Me, I've lost none, except the Son of Perdition. And I've lost Him because the Scripture must be fulfilled regarding who He is. Remember, He said before, He said, haven't I chosen you twelve? And I know that one of you is a devil.

I chose you, and one of you is a devil. Let these go in peace, He said. And He delivered Himself into their hands.

And watch, my friends, watch with a moving heart and a softened spirit the I am's bound and led away. Shall we pray? Our Father, we ask Thy blessing upon our brief meditation this morning of Thy Word. And the mystery and the glory and the radiance of Him who is our Savior, who is the ultimate, absolute, the sovereign over all that is and all that can happen, and yet who He delivered Himself into their hands.

He gave Himself up for us all. May Thy blessing attend our activities the remainder of this day, we pray, as we commit ourselves into Thy good hands in the name of the Lord Jesus. Amen.

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