

Storm Tossed Christians

by Jacob Prasch

Jacob Prasch explores the trials faced by Christians, emphasizing the importance of faith in Jesus during stormy times of life.

Duration: 1:14:10

Scripture: Matthew 14:33, Mark 4:35

Topics: "Trials"

Description

In this sermon, the speaker encourages the audience to judge for themselves the scriptural validity of the events happening in Toronto. He begins by reading from Mark 4:35, where Jesus feeds a multitude with just a few loaves and fish. The speaker relates this story to his own life, imagining his wife packing a picnic basket for their son. He emphasizes the importance of having childlike faith and being willing to give whatever little we have to Jesus, trusting that He will multiply it to meet the needs. The speaker concludes by inviting the audience to a meeting where videos of the events in Toronto will be shown, encouraging them to come with an open mind and make their own judgments.

Transcript

I'm a minister and I lecture in Hebrew, Old Testament literary criticism, and Judaism in the Full Gospel Bible College in England, where we train our missionaries and full gospel pastors in Britain. I lecture there and I'm a member of the executive sort of executive committee we have in England, the Full Gospel Church, and it's always good to be in another full gospel church, but if you're a Baptist or if you're Reformed or if you're Assemblies of God or if you're whatever, I don't love you any less. There's no such thing as denominations in heaven.

Praise the Lord, wish we didn't have any now. As it was announced, I have a newsletter if you like it, it's a free subscription, and also if you'd like to come on a study tour to the Holy Land, Israel, led by a Hebrew speaker. It's different when you come with somebody who speaks Hebrew than when you go with someone who doesn't.

All the tour guides are Israeli believers in Jesus, and I speak Hebrew and I lead the tour, and it's two weeks intensive Bible studies on site. We study the scriptures in their original Jewish context on site where the events happened, and there's also the option of an additional week in Egypt and Jordan if you'd like that as well. It'll be in October of 1996, Lord willing, if you'd like to come, you can put your name on the list.

It's different than other tours, it's not a holiday or a vacation, it's not a pilgrimage, it's a study tour, and we do things other tours don't do. We have joint meetings together with Israeli Hebrew speaking congregations, you get to meet Jewish believers, you get to meet Arab believers. Too much of what you hear about Israel is some other foreign or expatriate telling you We want our people to see the real body of Christ, the indigenous Hebrew speaking and Arabic speaking body of Christ, that's who we have with us if you'd like to join us in October.

In any event, we have a meeting tomorrow night at Bryn Eden School, we'll be studying the Golden Calf, we'll be showing videos of Toronto, what it is, you can see the videos for yourself of what happens in Toronto, and make up your own mind, you hear so much about it, the best thing is to come and see for yourself, come with an open mind, make up your own mind. Now my position concerning Toronto is neither here nor there, what's important is to go to the Word of God, and you judge for yourself if the things in these videos are scriptural or not. That's tomorrow at the Bryn Eden School.

Tonight please open with me to the Gospel according to Saint Mark chapter 4, Mark chapter 4 commencing in verse 35. Heavenly Father, we just ask you to be with us now, opening our eyes, our minds, and our hearts to the glory and meaning of your word. As always, Father, we ask that we be not simply hearers of your word, but in your grace and in your strength do us also, in Jesus' name, for Jesus' sake, amen.

The Gospel of Saint Mark chapter 4, verse 35, and on that day, when evening had come, he said to them, let's go to the other side, and leaving the multitude, they took him along with them, just as he was in the boat, and other boats were with him. And there arose a fierce gale of wind, and the waves were breaking over the boat so much that the boat was already filling up. He himself was in the stern, asleep on the cushion, and they awoke him and said, Teacher, do you not care that we are perishing? And being aroused, he rebuked the wind, and he said to the sea, Hush, be still! And the wind died down and became perfectly calm.

And he said to them, Why are you so timid? How is it that you have no faith? And they became very much afraid, and said to one another, Whose end is this, that even the wind and sea obey him? Now, turning the page to Mark chapter 6, we read another story of Jesus taking dominion over the sea. Mark chapter 6, commencing in verse 47. Once again it's evening, but in verse 46 it says, After bidding them farewell, he departed to the mountains to pray, and when it was evening, the boat was in the midst of the sea, and he was alone on the land.

And seeing them straining at the oars, for the wind was against them, at about the fourth watch of the night, he came to them walking on the sea, and he intended to pass them by. But when they saw him walking on the sea, they supposed it was a ghost and cried out, for they all saw him and were frightened. But immediately he spoke with them, and he said, Take care which it is I do not be afraid.

He got into the boat with them, and the wind stopped, and they were greatly astonished, for they had not gained any insight from the incident of the lobe, but their heart was hardened. And when they crossed over, they came to the land of Geneseth, and moored at the shore. When they had come out of the boat, immediately the people recognized him, etc.

We have two stories of Jesus calming a raging sea, but the second account of him calming a storm on the Sea of Galilee is sandwiched in between two stories of him feeding thousands of people supernaturally. You go from a storm to a famine, from a storm to a famine. Now when I went to theological cemetery, I

mean seminary, we had to study both liberal higher critical theology and conservative evangelical theology.

In other words, we would study what the liberal theologians, unbelievers, nominal Christians said, and then we would read Christian theologians like F. F. Bruce and learn how to refute them. I was taught, this is what the liberals say, this is how you refute it. What the liberals say is, the reason we have two accounts is because these things are stories invented by the church, and you have two different sources.

You either have two different versions of the same story of him feeding thousands of people, or two different stories of him calming a storm on sea. That's absolute rubbish. He fed the people twice, and he calmed the storm twice, and the Holy Spirit put it in the Bible for a reason, in fact, for more than one reason.

The first reason has to do with messianic typology and messianic prophecy. Open with me, please, to Psalm 65, verse 7, King David writes, centuries before Jesus was born, who does still the roaring of the seas, the roaring of the waves, and the tumult of the people? It is a messianic prophecy about Jesus. It's a prediction the Messiah would take dominion over a storm.

We see this further in the typology or the symbolism of Jonah. All of the Old Testament prophets are symbols or types of Jesus in some way. They all give us a picture or a foreshadow of him, what he would be and what he would do.

We think of Jonah also asleep in a boat, don't we, during a storm. And Jesus himself in Luke's Gospel identifies himself as the anti-type or the fulfillment of what Jonah represented, as Jonah was three days in the stomach of the whale, or the great fish, rather, so would Jesus be three days in the grave. So the first meaning of this story is messianic typology.

The Jews were to recognize the Messiah because he would fulfill these kinds of prophecies, both direct prophecies like Psalm 65, but also the ones concealed in type or figure as with Jonah. That's the first reason. But the second reason is different.

It's eschatological, something about the last days. In both accounts of Jesus coming a storm, the storm takes place at night. As I mentioned this morning in Johannesburg, the night is the most common figure in the Bible of the great tribulation.

He's coming like a thief in the night. Watchman, watchman, how far is the night? Is he coming in the second watch of the night or the third? The wise virgins needed oil in their lamps to see in the night. Work while you have the light, but night will come when no man can work.

It happens at night. Now we have to go further with this mythologically, understanding the Midrash is the way the Jewish people interpreted the Bible in the days of Jesus. Jesus was a rabbi.

His real name was Rabbi Yeshua Bar Yosef. Nina said it. That was his real name.

He was a rabbi, and he fought the way other rabbis did, and using the Jewish way of understanding the Scriptures. Let's understand what's really happening here. Psalm 65, seven.

Once again, look at it. You don't have a Bible. Share the Bible with the person next to you, please.

Who does still the rolling of the seas, the rolling of the waves, the tumult of the people? In other words, the raging sea, the wild waves are a picture of the tumult of the people. The Hebrew word for people or nations is the same word, glory, glory, the Greek word, ethnon. And the last days, the Bible says the nations will be in an uproar.

The people will be in the uproar. There'll be political, social and economic chaos in the world, fear and anxiety among the nations, none of them knowing the way out. So a raging sea, mythologically, it's a picture of the tumult of the people.

When the Lord Jesus takes the minion over the storm, it is a picture of what he's doing spiritually. You understand? Every miracle Jesus does when understood from the Jewish perspective reflects something spiritual. Take his healing, for instance, he healed the paralytic, a man who's on a pallet.

He tells this man when he healed him, pick up your pallet and go your way, sin no more. Why, when this man has been healed, does he still need the pallet, this piece of wood to which his flesh was confined? Why? It's sort of like someone being healed from polio and still keeping their wheelchair. Why? Because the pallet was a piece of wood to which his flesh was confined.

When Jesus heals the man, he heals him spiritually. When he says, pick up that piece of wood, mythologically, in Jewish metaphor, he's telling him, pick up your cross and follow me, live a crucified life, you understand? His physical miracles always reflect something spiritual, most frequently salvation when he's talking about healing. We're all blind until he opens our eyes, we're all lame until he empowers us to walk in the spirit.

But here it's no different. When he takes the minion over the element, it's a picture of something spiritual. And on last days, this increases anxiety among the nation.

In Hebrew poetry, the book of Psalms continually refers to the anarchy and chaos on the last days as a storm at sea. Why are the nations in an uproar, this kind of thing? One of the pictures of the church in tribulation is Acts 27. Remember when Paul was on the boat and the sun and moon don't give their life? We're told in Matthew 24 and Luke 21 and this kind of stuff in the last days, the sun and moon won't give their life.

Acts 27, when they begin to throw the grain overboard, remember when the boats being stormed forth, they had to throw the grain overboard. What does it say in Ecclesiastes? Cast much bread upon the water, we will reap when it's due season. The gospel being preached in the last days of tribulation increases.

It's a metaphor. So we have the first meaning is Messianic typology, Messianic prophecy. That's the first meaning of Mark 4 and Mark 6. The second meaning has to do with eschatology, something specific of the last days.

We have to understand the nature of a boat. Boats are always figures of churches in the Bible that begins with Noah's Ark, the first boat. Even its dimensions, 300 cubits, 30 cubits, 50 cubits, 30 is the number of spiritual maturity in the Bible.

Jesus begins in public ministry at the age of 30, thereabout. King David begins to reign as king when he's 30. Now, spiritual maturity is different than the world's maturity.

The world's definition of maturity is conformity to the world. When they say, why don't you grow up, it means, why don't you become like me? God's definition of maturity is why don't you become like Jesus, totally different than the world. The world's definition of maturity is a phony word.

That's the 30, 50 is the number of the Holy Spirit, isn't it? The day of Pentecost, Hamashim in Hebrew, 300 is the number of the electives of Gideon's army, isn't it? So it's a picture of the church. Those who have the maturity of Christ, an elite company who are filled with the spirit. It begins with Noah's Ark, pitched within and without, we can't go into all of it.

That's the first. Those who are on the Ark were saved. Jesus tells the apostles, I'll make you fishes of men again in Midrash.

Whenever you see fishing, it teaches something about evangelism. Now, witnessing should be a normal part of our Christian life. The same as praying and reading the Bible.

But when you're talking about campaigns and outreaches, it's different. Those things must be directed by the Holy Spirit. The apostles fished and fished and fished all night, but caught nothing until they got Jesus in their boat.

When they got Jesus in their boat and he told them where to cast their nets, they caught so many fish, one boat couldn't contain it. In other words, hey, Baptists, come and help us. Hey, Pentecostals, come and help us.

You can have one evangelistic program after another, but until it's directed by the Lord and he tells us where to cast our nets, we're not going to get many fish. Now, that's not to be confused with personal evangelism and then witnessing day to day. I'm talking about programs and projects.

He must tell us where to cast our nets. So you have a boat. Boats are always types of churches.

And here, when a boat gets storm tossed, it's a church in tribulation, you understand. And in the last days, it becomes more specific. Psalm 65, the tomb of the people, the boat gets storm tossed, the church will be storm tossed in tribulation before Jesus comes.

Again, the main type of it is Acts 27, separate subject. Now, let's look further. There is yet a third meaning, not just Messianic prophecy and typology, not just eschatology of the last days, but something more.

What does it mean for you and for me in our lives as sisters? What does it mean for your church and my church? What does it mean for our families, day to day, week to week? Why are there two famines? Why are there two storms? That's the way life's troubles come. It's never one thing than another. It's one thing after another, isn't it? You're almost afraid to answer the telephone.

What's the next bit of bad news going to be? That's the way life's tribulations are. It's all at once, wham! We live in a fallen world. Let's focus on this third meaning, being storm tossed, our boats in tribulation.

What happens to us? Look carefully once again at Mark 4. It was evening. It begins to get dark. Now ultimately that hints at or alludes to the great tribulation at the end.

That's true. But there are intermittent periods of darkness in all of our lives. And there always will be until Jesus comes.

Look what happens here. In verse 35, He said to them, let's go to the other side. Jesus takes the initiative to bring them into a situation where they will experience tribulation.

In your life and in my life as Christians, the Lord Himself will bring us into situations where we will experience tribulation. Forget about these lies of Copeland and Hagin and all this rein of garbage. It's a lot of rubbish.

That's not the Christian life. This is the Christian life. There will be tribulation in the world.

It's a guarantee. But we have three kinds of problems that are okay and one kind that's wrong. The first kind of problem Christians are going to have, as I always point out, is those that are common to man.

We live in a fallen world and we're members of a fallen race. Everybody, saved and unsaved, is going to have a certain amount of trouble in the world. Just because we're human.

But secondly, there's the kind of trouble that we will have because of Satan. We are God's children, we are His servants, His messengers, and Satan will specifically attack Christians. But then there's the third kind of trouble at this time.

The kind that the Lord Himself will lead us into for our molding and breaking to make us more like Jesus. He who began a good work in you in Philippians 1.6 will bring it to completion in the days of Christ Jesus. One of the ways God deals with our old nature to bring forth a new creation is through tribulation.

The Lord Himself brings them into times of difficulty. Those three you can't do anything about. But then there's the fourth kind of trouble.

The kind of trouble that the Lord would otherwise spare us from, but we get ourselves into anyway. Now praise God He can even deliver us from those things, and He does. But from being human and having an enemy, the devil, plus the things God is going to do in our lives, that's more than enough trouble.

We don't need any more trouble. I don't know about you, but sometimes I can be quite clever at bringing the fourth kind of trouble on myself. The kind of things that the Lord would otherwise choose to spare me from, but I'm rather sick.

Nonetheless, let's look. He says, let's go to the other side. Once again, there will be times in your life as a Christian, in your family, in your marriage, in your church, when Jesus Himself will lead you into situations where you will experience trouble.

Don't let anybody tell you different. And a fierce gale of winds. The Hebrew word for wind is ruach.

It's the same word for spirit, the Greek word, pneuma. These windstorms represent spiritual opposition. You have favorable and unfavorable winds in biblical typology.

The worst is the rauchio, the east wind that almost destroyed the boat in Acts 27. I lived in Israel for years. My family are Israeli.

My children are born in Galilee. At certain times of the year, you have this northeast wind that blows in off the Mediterranean into Galilee. And it goes through the Mount Carmel mountain shades, the ravines and valleys of Mount Carmel.

If you come to Israel with me, I'll show you and explain it to you. And it focuses the velocity of the wind and concentrates it like a piston effect, causing a rather medium-sized lake, the Sea of Galilee, which we call Hakanereth in Hebrew, to look like the South Atlantic in wintertime. Tumultuous waves and all this.

But it's a picture of spiritual opposition. It's the same word in Hebrew, same word in Greek. Let's look.

The boat was filling up. He himself was in the stern, asleep on the cushion. And they awoke him and said, Teacher, do you not care that we are perishing? There will be times in your life as a Christian, where not only will the Lord bring you into tribulation, there will be times in your life as a Christian, where you will think he doesn't care about it.

Jesus, Jesus, we're being stormed to us. Please help us. Jesus, the boat's filling with water.

Jesus, the boat's going to sink. Can't you help us? He doesn't seem to care. You pray and plead, and you're in a time of crisis, and it seems like the Lord doesn't care.

He's led you into the situation, and once he gets you into it, he doesn't seem like he's going to help you. That's going to happen. If this has never happened to you as a Christian, you haven't been one very long.

But let's look further. Again, he's typified here by Jonah, isn't he? Sleeping in the boat. And being aroused, he rebuked the wind, and he said, Hush, be still.

And he tells them, Why are you so timid? How is it that you have no faith? The main problem you have with the rain of garbage you have pumped in this country, is that they're not teaching people faith in Jesus, they're teaching people faith in faith. You hear what I said? They're not teaching faith in Jesus, they're teaching faith in faith. If you want to know about real faith, read Hebrews 11, not Kenneth Hagin's books that only fit for firewood.

That's my faith. To this he expects them to do something. They fail the test.

But then we turn the page to Mark 6. Once again it's night. Once again they're in a boat in the storm at sea. Why? Because they failed the test the first time.

I guarantee, if you fail a test, or I fail a test, in our lives as Christians, we will go through the same test again, and again, and again, until God uses it to get us right. Not until we learn the things that He has for us to learn will we stop going through it. If you fail the test the first time, I guarantee you will go through it again.

Let's look. There's a difference, however. The second time, Jesus is not in the boat.

The first time, He was in the boat. The second time, He wasn't. The second time you go through the test, you fail.

It's always more difficult than the first time. Much of the detail will be the same, but there'll be some crucial differences. He's not in the boat.

You think that the Lord has abandoned you. The first time it happened, He was in the boat. Lord, you brought me into this mess.

He didn't seem to care what was happening to me, or to any of us when it was happening, but at least you were in the boat. Now where are you? Now you get me into the mess and you take off. It appears to us that the Lord has abandoned us.

He withdraws the sense of His presence. You hear what I said? He withdraws the sense of His presence. So He didn't abandon them.

On the northwest coast of the Sea of Galilee, we can pinpoint from where the warm springs are, where the apostles would have been fishing. You can see these boats, these hills. On one of these hills, Jesus would have had a perfect view of the Sea of Galilee in a clear night.

You can easily see a fishing boat. Would have been called a doogie. About as long as this road fused from here to here, from there to there, being storm-crossed.

It says He was on a mountain. And from that mountain, He could easily see the doogie being storm-crossed. They thought He abandoned them.

But in fact, He was on the mountain. And He wasn't missing a move. He saw them straining at the oars.

He saw them being storm-crossed. He saw their fear. He saw their sense of abandonment.

He wasn't missing anything. But the sense of His presence was something they didn't know about. He didn't abandon them.

Where was He? Look at verse 46. He was on the mountain. What was He doing on the mountain when the apostles were being storm-crossed and felt abandoned? He was praying.

Who do you think He was praying for? He was praying for them. He was praying for Peter and John and you and me. That's who He's praying for.

It's the sense of His presence that's withdrawn. But He's not missing a move. He sees it all.

But they don't get it right this time. It follows a famine. Look what it says in verse 52.

They've not gained any insight from the miracle of the loaves. We'll come back to that one in a minute. You have the loaves in Mark 6 and then in Mark 8 another one.

But before that, let's look at the synoptic account. We always have to read the gospel account synoptically. Let's look at Matthew's version of this.

In Matthew 14. Turn with me, please, to Matthew 14. He went up to the mountain himself to pray.

And it was evening and he was there alone. But the boat was many stadia from the land battered by the waves, for the wind, the spirit, was contrary. And in the fourth watch of the night he came to them, walking on the sea.

The Jews had three watches, the Romans had four. This was anywhere, somewhere between three in the morning and six in the morning. And when the disciples saw him walking on the sea, they were frightened, saying, it is a ghost, and they cried out for fear.

But immediately Jesus spoke to them, saying, take courage in his eyes, do not be afraid. And Peter answered him and said, Lord, if it is you, command me to come to you on the water. And he said, come.

Peter got out of the boat and walked on the water and came towards Jesus. But seeing the wind, he became afraid. And beginning to sink, he cried out, saying, Lord, save me.

And immediately Jesus stretched out his hand, took hold of him and said, once again, all you of little faith, why did you doubt? And when they got into the boat, the wind stopped. And those who were in the boat worshipped him, saying, you are certainly God's son. They worshipped him and he received worship.

Matthew 14, verse 33, is a very important verse to mark in your Bible for witnessing to Jehovah's Witnesses who say he was not God. If he was not God, why did he receive worship in Matthew 14, 33. When they knock on your door, that's one verse you'd want to have handy.

Now, let's look. We read something curious when we compare Mark's version in Mark 6 with Matthew's version in Matthew 14. In Mark 6, it says he intended to pass them by.

Doesn't it? They're begging God to save them. They're in trouble. Finally, Jesus shows up and he intends to pass them by.

He's going to walk past them. You're in a time of crisis in your church, in your family, in your marriage, your business is going to the wall, your health, your finances, your academic studies, whatever it is, some combination of things, you're in trouble. Everything seems lost and it seems like the Lord himself has abandoned you.

Oh Jesus, where are you? Finally, he shows up and he does nothing. You're desperate. You come to a prayer meeting.

You come to a meeting at the church and you think there's going to be a breakthrough. The spirit is really moving. And you know the pastor is going to have a message just for you.

And he has a message. And it seems to speak to everybody else except you. And you really believe that because God is so obviously in this meeting that somebody is going to come up to you and give you a prophecy or a word of knowledge or a word of wisdom and that's going to be it.

But instead you walk out of the meeting with nothing. It says the Lord intended to pass them by. Finally, he shows up.

Finally, Jesus shows up in your crisis. After you think he's abandoned you, after bringing you into a crisis that he brought you into, that you're in by his will, not because you're out of his will you're in the crisis. You're in the crisis because you're in his will.

Again, forget this Hagen-Kolkin stuff. It's a pack of lies. It's not reality.

This is reality. The people taught that false kind of faith are the first ones who are going to lose their faith when a crisis comes. It's the people who believe this that won't lose their faith.

Do you know where the Bible says many will fall away and betray one another? Well, the ones who are going to fall away and betray you are the people who believe Rema doctrine. It's the ones who believe this that are going to stand firm. Why does he intend to pass them by? Because they were straining at the

oars.

The natural propensity of human nature of the old man and the old woman is that when we think the Lord has abandoned us to try to cope with the crisis in our own strength. Give me those oars. I don't care if you're Samson.

I don't care if you're Hercules. If you've seen these kinds of waves from the Northeastern on the Sea of Galilee, you're not going to row against it. You see, I knew some Christian coastguards in America and they were taught all kinds of things about rescuing people.

And apparently one of the most important things about rescuing people that lifeguards and coastguards are taught is that you can't save somebody who's trying to save themselves. When somebody's caught in a rip current and they're panicking, they're given five seconds to calm the person down by speaking to them. Otherwise, they're taught how to apply blows to the carotid, carotid.

They're taught to have these tranquilizer injections and so on because you can't save somebody who's trying to save themselves. When we feel the Lord has abandoned us, as long as we strain at the oars, we try to cope with the crisis and our own human strength, the natural man or the natural woman will try to take over because they think God doesn't care. As long as we're straining at the oars, He'll intend to pass us by.

But then in Matthew's version, it's different. What happens in Matthew's version? Peter is told to get out of the boat. Now you have to understand something.

What the text of Matthew is doing is trying to paint Jesus in light of the prophecy about Him in Deuteronomy 18.18 that the Messiah would be a prophet like Moses. The way that Moses, but the children of Israel, are out of a crisis through the water by faith, supernaturally, it's trying to show that Jesus is what Deuteronomy 18.18 said. The theological term is corporate solidarity.

Peter represents the Jewish people and is Moses whether or not of tribulation through the water, walking by faith. So Jesus is trying to paint Jesus as a Moses figure, a Mosaic figure. You understand? It has that dimension to it.

But he tells Peter, get out of the boat and come walk. In the last days, tribulation will increase. And the Lord is preparing people now in the storms we go through to walk by faith in the storms so others will see it and believe.

He wants to make you and me people who can walk by faith in a storm. But look what happens to Peter in Matthew 14. Verse 30, but seeing the wind, seeing the spirits, he became afraid and beginning to sink, he cried out, Lord, save me.

When he takes his eyes off Jesus and puts it on the storm, he becomes intimidated. When we take our eyes off of Jesus and put it on the storm, we will become spiritually intimidated. Do you understand? When we keep our eyes on Jesus, we walk.

When we take our eyes off Jesus, we sink. That's what happened to Peter. That's what happens with us.

This story is situated between two narratives of Jesus feeding thousands of people, isn't it? Let's look at one of them. Let's look at the first one. Turn with me again, please, back to Mark 6, beginning in verse 34.

Mark 6, 34. He felt compassion for them because they were like sheep without a shepherd and began to teach them many things. Whenever people, through no fault or choice of their own, have no shepherd, Jesus himself will shepherd them and he'll teach them many things.

One of the great privileges I've had as a Christian working among the Jews is to know so many Russian Jewish believers who were saved in underground Pentecostal and Baptist churches under the Communists before the Iron Curtain came down in the old Soviet Empire. And many of these people were, of course, persecuted terribly and imprisoned for their faith. And they never had any Bible so they came to Israel.

And I just love going there and I speak Hebrew and I'm translated from Hebrew into Russian. And they love the Bible studies. And you begin to teach them the Word of God and they say, Oh, I knew that, I knew that, look at this, the Lord showed that to me when I was in prison.

Oh, look at that, that's right, I knew that. When I was in prison in the gulag, when they were torturing me, the Lord showed me that very thing. Now when they see it in the Word of God in print and it comes alive to them, they marvel.

You see, those people through no fault or choice of their own they didn't have the Book of the Lord. But they sure did have the Lord of the Book. He Himself will intervene where there's no shepherd and teach them many things.

And today in this country and in many other countries because of the backsliding of the church, make no mistake about it, all this deception with ecumenism is a prelude to the road to Babylon and Revelation. Make no mistake about it, the false peace you see in the Middle East is a prelude to the false peace predicted in the Word of God before Jesus comes. And make no mistake about it, Toronto and all this garbage is a prelude to the apostasia and great falling away And a lot of people are having to come out of churches.

Through no fault of their own they have no shepherd and they're meeting in small groups in homes. But the Lord Himself will be their shepherd and teach them many things. Now again, as I always point out, the solution to bad church is not no church, but good church.

And the solution to false doctrine is not no doctrine, but true doctrine. And the solution to a bad shepherd is not no shepherd, but a good shepherd. What these people need to do is speak the Lord about forming new congregations and asking God to give them shepherds who will be true shepherds after His own heart.

But when people through no fault of choice of their own have no shepherd, the Lord Himself will shepherd them. Every time. Now be careful.

There's no such thing as a perfect church. You'll find people who go from one church to another always finding fault. You're never going to find a perfect church.

I'm talking about leaving a church because of major heresy and false doctrine. I'm not talking about this leaving church because you don't like to worship or you don't like this or you don't like that or you don't like the other thing or you feel this or that. I'm talking about where people have a solid, clear, definite, biblical basis because the church has departed from the Word of God.

I'm talking about that kind of situation. People who go around will always find fault with their pastors or their elders or their church. I'm not talking about that.

Those people have another problem. I'm talking about people who leave because they're standing on the Word of God. Now let's look.

And when it was already quite late his disciples came up to him and began saying the place is desolate. It's already quite late. Send them away so they may go into the surrounding countryside and villages and buy themselves something to eat.

But Jesus answered and said to them, You give them something to eat. And they said to him, Shall we go and spend two hundreds in our eye on bread and give them something to eat? And he said to them, How many loaves do you have? And when they found out they said five and two fish. The five loaves here probably typify or certainly typify the five books of the Torah, the Pentateuch.

The fish, Jew and Gentile more than likely. And he commanded them all to decline by groups on the green grass. And they declined in companies of hundreds and fifties.

And he took the five loaves and two fish and looked up towards heaven. He blessed the food and broke the loaves and kept giving them to the disciples that sat before them. And he divided up the two fish among them all.

And they all ate and were filled. And they picked up the twelve baskets of the broken pieces and also of the fish. Now the twelve here is like the twelve apostles, the twelve sons of Jacob, the patriarchs, the twelve tribes of Israel, etc.

God's number of organization of peoples. And there were five thousand men who ate the loaves. Now again, we have to understand the typology.

Remember, the Jews coming out of Egypt were in a desolate place in Sinai and there was no food. And Moses fed the people supernaturally, right? The Messiah will be a prophet like Moses is trying to show Jesus in the character of Moses who feed God's people like Moses did in the wilderness supernaturally. It's showing him as the second Moses.

Moses gives the covenant and so does Yeshua, Jesus. But it's also trying to show him as an Elijah figure. Remember, with Elijah and Elisha, the sons of the prophets and the famine, they fed the people and the sons of the prophets in groups of fifty.

All of these Old Testament prophets are symbols of types of Jesus. And that's what Matthew's trying to show here under the influence of the Spirit as he writes. There's that aspect and that's the separate aspect.

I just mentioned it in passing because it's in the text. But let's look at what it means for us more practically today. People have been there three days.

Lord, send them away. They're hungry. They're hungry.

There's nowhere to get any food. But Jesus says, you give them something to eat. But Jesus, we're not in the middle of nowhere.

There's five thousand men alone. There's no McDonald's. Thank God.

No Pizza Hut. No supermarket. There's nowhere to buy any food.

And even if we did, where are we going to get two hundred thousand rands to feed this many people? Give them something to eat. Jesus, I know you're God in everything. I know you're the Messiah.

But we're out in the middle of nowhere. Where are we going to get the food? There's nowhere to get it. And even if there was, we don't have the resources.

It would cost too much. Once again, all Jesus says is, you give them something to eat. But Jesus, we can't meet this need.

Be realistic. What does Jesus say? What do you have? Now we can all personalize the scriptures in different ways, and I'm no different. When we read this stuff synoptically, we read what happens is, a little Jewish boy has this picnic basket that his mother makes for him with a few loaves called shipunim and some fish called dagim.

It so happens my son Eliemi is a little Jewish boy from Galilee. And I can almost picture my wife picking, packing up a picnic basket for my son Eliemi and my daughter Batmiel to go hear Rabbi Yeshua Bar Yosef preach the good news. My kid is a little Jewish boy from Galilee.

Born in Galilee. And this little boy has practically nothing. A couple of fish and a few loaves.

But what he had he gave to Jesus. And what does it say the Lord does? He blesses it, He breaks it, and He uses it to meet the need of others. The Lord does not use what He doesn't bless.

But He does not bless what He does not break. Lord, bless me. You want me to bless you? Yes, Lord, bless me.

Alright, I'll bless you. Lord, use me. You want me to use you? Yes, Lord, use me.

Alright, I'll use you. Come here. One thing to be a talented musician you give it to Jesus.

I can play piano but I'm not very talented. It's one thing to be able to play a musical instrument. Even to play it well.

But it's another thing to be able to lead worship under the anointing of the Holy Spirit. Because your natural talent is natural ground for pride and self-sufficiency. Until the Lord breaks it He really can't use it to the degree He wants to.

When I was a kid in university I studied medicine. Nothing wrong with medicine. There are countries that will allow when doctors and nurses and paramedics who will never allow an evangelist to a missionary.

Nothing wrong with it. But it's one thing to be a doctor or a nurse. It's another thing to be a medical missionary.

Self-sufficiency. The Lord does not use what He doesn't bless. But what He blesses He has to break.

Praise God for new motives. Praise God we want to give Him our natural talents to use for His glory and kings and servants. But everything has to go to the cross and be resurrected.

It all has to be broken before He can really use it. You see this kid had practically nothing. Compared to the magnitude of the need it was laughable.

But what he had he gave to Jesus. What is the barometer if something was really given to Jesus? What's the acid test? Are we willing to have it broken? No matter how big the need is and no matter how scant the resource in God's economy that's not the issue. Oh we have to take the practicalities into consideration.

Of course we do. That's common sense. The Bible does.

But ultimately in God's economy the magnitude of the need or the scantness the inadequacy of the resource is never the issue. The real issue is this. Are you and I willing to be broken? You hear what I said? I don't care how big the need is or how little you have.

The real question is are you and I willing to be broken? From a famine to a storm from a famine to a storm. But the apostles did not gain any insight from the miracles of the loaves. Oh they have little faith? Yeah, oh we have little faith.

Let me tell you something about faith. The Greek word for faith is chison the Hebrew word is emunah. The Hebrew word and the Greek word for faith is the same as the Greek and Hebrew words for faithfulness.

Oh you have little faith? Oh you have little faithfulness. The righteous is saved by faith he's saved by faithfulness. Neither the word of God the Greek language the Hebrew language no place is the word of God draw a distinction between faith and faithfulness.

Only Kenneth Hagin does. But the word of God does not. The fact that these are uneducated men doesn't bother me.

The fact that they don't know the word of God and people are looking for people who don't know anything bothers me tremendously. The blind meeting the blind and both fall in the pit together believing a lot of hype and rubbish instead of believing what's true. We react in a storm.

We can't take it anymore. But what happens when we remain faithful? When we follow God's principles? Emphasize principles. People today are trying to give you programs.

Three steps to success. Seven steps to victory. Five steps to blessing.

Inevitably one of them is right near check for nine thousand. The word of God is a program. It doesn't give us a formula.

It gives us principles. But what happens when we follow the principles? In a crisis in a famine in a storm and the Lord still does not meet the need. Can that ever happen to Christians? Yes it can and sometimes it does.

Turn with me please to John chapter 11. But if it doesn't it'll happen to somebody you know. Thick Lazarus of Bethany the village of Mary and her sister Martha.

And it was the Mary who anointed the Lord with ointment and wiped his feet with her hair whose brother Lazarus was sick. The sisters therefore sent to him saying Lord behold he whom you love is sick. But when Yeshua heard it he said to them the sickness is not unto death but for the glory of God that the Son of God may be glorified.

Now Jesus loved Mary and her sister and Lazarus. When he therefore heard that he was sick he stayed then two days longer in the place where he was. Then after this he said to his disciples let's go to Judea again.

And the disciples said Rabbi the Jews who are there now are seeking to stone you etc. But then we get to this verse 11. Our friend Lazarus has fallen asleep but I go that I may awaken him out of his sleep.

The disciples therefore said to him Lord if he's fallen asleep he will recover. Now Jesus had spoken of his death but they thought that he was speaking of literal sleep. Then he said to them plainly Lazarus is dead and I'm glad for your sake that I was not there so that you may believe but let's go to him.

Repeatedly particularly and most conspicuously in John's Gospel you have this phenomena. Jesus is speaking midrashically. He's speaking on a spiritual platitude but the people are thinking on a physical one.

The woman at the well I'll give you living water she's thinking of literal water my name Jesus is speaking of the spirit. You must be born again Nicodemus. The Jews had different concepts of new birth.

Your bar mitzvah your marriage becoming a rabbi etc. Nicodemus was past the age of all of that. So he says to Jesus can I go back to my mother's womb.

He's thinking on a physical level Jesus is speaking on a spiritual level. But as a rabbi Nicodemus should have known the midrash or you were ruler of the Jews and you don't know what I'm talking about. So it is with death.

The little girl is asleep not dead talita takumi Paul says do not be overly grieved for the brethren who have fallen asleep. Unsaved people die God's people go to sleep. When you go to sleep you wake up again.

Death is never used for the biological cessation of a believer. Death is for the unsaved. Christians don't die they go to sleep.

It goes back to the typology of Adam. Jesus is the second Adam. God causes the sleep to go on Adam and takes the woman out of him.

Then Adam wakes up. Jesus dies. The church is taken out of him and his bride then he wakes up in the resurrection.

God even knew what was going to happen before we fell. Sleep. But then the story continues.

Let's pick it up in verse 17. So when Yeshua came he found that he had already been in the tomb for four days. And you have to understand this.

The rabbis had a tradition that the Shekinah the Holy Spirit the Lachah Kodesh hovered over a corpse for three days after death. When somebody was dead for four days they were in Trinito to put absolutely God. Now Bethany was near Jerusalem about two miles off and many of the Jews had come to Martha and Mary to console them concerning their brother.

Martha therefore when she heard that Jesus was coming went to meet him but Mary still stayed in the house. Martha therefore said to Yeshua Lord if you'd been here my brother would not have died. Even now I know that whatever you ask of God God will give you.

Jesus begins talking about the resurrection. Few things will reveal someone's true spiritual caliber more than the unexpected death of a loved one. Normally it is Mary who's the most spiritual.

Martha who's the most temporal, practical. Here we see Martha showing more strength and you'll very often find that ask experienced pastors. When a tragedy like this hits a family sometimes it's the people who you think are going to go to pieces the most that show the most resilience and emotional stability and fortitude and spirituality and trust in God and it's the ones who you think are the most spiritual who tend to lose it.

That can happen. And there's a hint of that here it appears. Martha's hope is in the resurrection and Jesus says that's right but then it says this verse 28 when she had said this she went away and called Mary her sister saying secretly the teacher is here and is calling for you and when she heard it she arose quickly and was coming to him.

Now Jesus had not yet come into the village but was still in the place where Martha met him. The Jews then who were with her in the house and consoling her when they saw that Mary rose up quickly and went out followed her supposing she was going to the tomb to weep there. Jewish people do not have a wake or anything like this.

They bury a corpse before the next sundown and then they mourn it's called sitting shiver mourning for seven days. In the Middle East morbidity sets in very quickly and a corpse would begin to decay almost instantly particularly at certain times of the year. Disease and all this other stuff you bury the corpse at once.

So their mourning the sitting shiver the mourning takes place after the burial in Jewish culture. Now let's look. Therefore when Mary came where Yeshua was she saw him and fell at his feet saying to him Lord if you had been here my brother would not have died.

When Jesus therefore saw her weeping and the Jews came with her also weeping he was deeply moved in spirit and was troubled. Now it says that it reiterates how Jesus loved Lazarus and his family. He stayed with them during the Pilgrim Feast Passover the Feast of Weeks the Feast of Booths and probably Hanukkah four times a year at least he would stay with his family.

When the Jews had to come to Jerusalem to worship for the high holidays and Jesus said where have you laid him and they said Lord come and see and Yeshua wept. So the Jews were saying behold how we loved him but some of them said could not this man who opened the eyes of the blind of him who was blind have kept this man also from dying and Jesus therefore again being deeply moved within came to the tomb. Now it was a cave and a stone was lying against it and Jesus said remove the stone Martha the sister of the deceased said to him Lord by this time there will be a sense we have been dead four days and Jesus said to her that I not say to you if you believe you will see the glory of God.

So they removed the stone and Jesus raised his eyes and said father I thank you that thou dearest me and I knew that thou dearest me always but because of the people standing around I said it that they might believe that thou didst send me and when he said these things he cried out with a loud voice Lazarus come forth and he who had died came forth found hand and foot with wrappings and his face was wrapped around with a cloth and Jesus said unbind him and let him go many times in my life the Lord has reminded me I'm not very bright or very spiritual I recall going with my wife at that time my girlfriend to Bethany and I read this passage and the Lord showed me something about the story of Lazarus that I

knew was from the Holy Spirit and I thought this was some kind of a great

breakthrough the problem was a number of years ago I read that the English evangelist George Whitfield said the same thing two hundred years earlier I wasn't so great after all it's this the resurrection of Lazarus is a picture of evangelism three stages roll away the stone when you witness to an unfaithful person when you share your testimony when you preach the gospel whenever we evangelize the only thing we are doing is rolling away the stone we are making it possible for them to hear the voice of Jesus that's all we can witness and witness and witness but until they hear his voice and not ours they're not going to come out of the tomb this world is this stinking tomb this swollen world is but then Jesus says Lazarus come forth I've heard certain people say if he didn't specify Lazarus

everyone would have gotten up and maybe they're right I don't know but you see there's no chapter divisions of the original Greek text it follows through from what Jesus said in John 10 my sheep will hear my voice he says Lazarus come forth we can witness we can roll away the stone but only the son of man can call that which is dead unto life Jesus says come forth but then when he comes forth he's bound and he says you unbind him that's counseling that's discipleship people come out of the tomb this world is bound and he says to us you unbind him roll away the stone preach the gospel witness testify he calls them by name from death to life but then when they come forth he tells us now you unbind them discipleship counseling pastoral care but then what happens many of the Jews who'd come

and beheld what he'd done believed in him and then he eats with Lazarus doesn't he you see one of the things that you see in the Bible when Jesus raises somebody from the dead notice they're always eating the little girl give her something to eat after Jesus resurrects from the dead he eats the fish with the disciples doesn't he and here he's eating with Lazarus you've got these courts like the JW's and the Moonies who say he didn't literally raise from the dead well ghosts and spiritual bodies don't need to eat you always see when somebody's been resurrected they're eating food literal resurrection how? it begins by somebody Jesus loves is sick and in danger of death somebody he really loves and really cares about when this kind of thing happens it doesn't happen to weak Christians it

happens to strong ones weak Christians couldn't handle it these are people who really know the Lord and love him he whom you love is sick come quickly Mary and Martha have sent for you Lazarus has been diagnosed as pre-terminal he's going to die any minute you've got to get there what does it say? verse 3 the sisters therefore sent to him Lord he whom you love is sick he's dying get here quick but in verse 6 when therefore he heard that Lazarus was sick and dying he stayed two days where he was Jesus come quickly it's Lazarus you know Lazarus the brother of Mary and Martha the one you always stay with at the high holidays he's sick he's dying the family's desperate please get here they never needed you like they need you now he's pre-terminal he's going to die any minute please get here

and Jesus says Lazarus is terminally ill he's dying and Mary and Martha are begging you to come they said they've never needed me so much as they need me now yes Lord quick he's dying you've got to get here right away and Jesus says alright, alright book me a room in the holiday inn for a couple of days and order a pizza he intentionally doesn't come he lets the worst worst case scenario transpire sometimes that can happen to faithful Christians we trust him we believe him we don't lose faith we don't lose heart but sometimes he doesn't meet the need however when he comes he resurrects Lazarus and when he resurrects Lazarus God is glorified his people are blessed and many believe whenever Jesus fails to meet a need when he lets the worst case scenario transpire when he lets it all go to

the wall when he lets something die it's always because he wants to bring resurrection power into that situation in such a way as God will be glorified his people will be blessed and many will believe now Jesus hated ostentatious prayer to draw attention to yourself but here he prayed instructively, didn't he? that's a very Jewish thing when the Jews would practice the Passover and go through the Passover their children were meant to hear it it's not wrong to pray instructively to pray audibly in the presence of other people instructively it's not wrong it's only wrong to do it to draw attention to yourself but there is a biblical place for praying instructively and he does it here think of the martyrdom of Stephen when Peter was in prison an angel comes and gets him out of prison when

Paul was in trouble in Damascus he gets out the window in a basket when Jonah gets swallowed by the whale the whale vomits him out but here Stephen doesn't get rescued the worst case scenario transpires he trusted the Lord but the Lord let him die but look what happened when he died he beheld Jesus coming at the right hand of the Father you want to laugh at some of the wondrous people you know the civilians Jesus only they say that Jesus is Jesus the Holy Spirit is Jesus and the Father is Jesus they say to them what about when Stephen saw Jesus at the right hand of the Father okay if you got hit in the head with enough rocks you'd be seeing double the total lunacy that was the answer he sees Jesus coming for him not only that but the apostles find themselves in a situation where the

church that they planted gets scattered and what happens when the church gets scattered the gospel gets scattered with them and many believe what happens with Lazarus when he dies many believe when the Lord lets something die it's always to bring resurrection power into that situation in such a matter if God will be glorified his people will be blessed and many will believe sometimes the church has to die for a new one to be born sometimes the Lord needs to let somebody's business go to the wall to get them in the situation where he wants them instead to do the things he has for them to do and to bless them with the blessings he wants to bless them with if the Lord fails to meet their needs it's always because he wants to bring resurrection power into that situation now it takes special

Christians of a certain caliber to go through that kind of trial not everyone can go through that kind of trial it may never happen to you and I hope it doesn't I certainly hope it doesn't happen to me and my family but it does happen to Christians sometimes I've had things like that happen to me when they were to the same degree as Lazarus a crisis a famine to a storm a famine to a storm oh Lord the boat is being thawn tossed I can't stand it anymore my back foot and husband is drunk my unsaved son is using drugs my pastor went to Toronto and he's come back now he thinks he's a baboon the church is going to split I can't handle it anymore peace brings happiness are we going to strain at the oars or are we going to have faith real faith Hebrews 11 faith not rhema faith Hebrews 11 faith

faithfulness faith not faith in faith faith in Jesus are we going to strain at the oars or are we going to trust him are we going to walk on the water and keep our eyes on Jesus or are we going to take our eyes off Jesus and put it on the storm shaman the need is big the resources are scant you may have very little you may be very little that little boy was nothing but a kid he had nothing and he was nobody compared to the magnitude of the need what he had and what he was was laughable but what he had he gave to Jesus with child life faith I don't care how big the need is I don't care how little you have if you have that kind of faith that that kid had and whatever you have no matter how small if you give it to Jesus and you're willing to have it broken you watch God multiply it and meet

the need that's reality that's the Christian life that's real victory that's real power that's the way it was in the gospel of Mark that's the way it was in the gospel of Matthew that's the way it was in the gospel of John

and that's the way it is now this is reality God bless you and thank you for inviting me to your fellowship

Audio: <https://sermonindex1.b-cdn.net/12/SID12046.mp3>

Source: <https://sermonindex.net/speakers/jacob-prasch/storm-tossed-christians/>

Grow in Your Walk with Christ

Listen and read messages that will stir your heart for Christ and point you to deeper repentance and devotion.

- 50,000+ Sermons from speakers past and present
- 3,900+ Classic Christian Books freely readable online
- 1,200+ Bible Translations and Commentaries
- Over 450k forum posts — Join our vibrant online Christian forum

www.sermonindex.net