

# Expository Thoughts On Mark - Mark 6:47-56

by J.C. Ryle

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## Transcript

The event first recorded in these verses, is a beautiful emblem of the position of all believers, between the first and second advents of Jesus Christ. Like the disciples, we are now tossed to and fro by storms, and do not enjoy the visible presence of our Lord. Like the disciples, we shall see our Lord face to face again, though it may be a time of great extremity, when He returns. Like the disciples, we shall see all things changed for the better, when our Master comes to us. We shall no longer be buffeted by storms. There will be a great calm.

There is nothing fanciful in such an application of the passage. We need not doubt that there is a deep meaning in every step of His life, who was "God manifest in the flesh." For the present, however, let us confine ourselves to the plain, practical lessons which these verses contain.

Let us notice, in the first place, how our Lord sees the troubles of His believing people, and in due time will help them. We read that when "the ship was in the midst of the sea, and He alone on the land," He "saw His disciples toiling in rowing" came to them walking on the sea--cheered them with the gracious words, "It is I, be not afraid" and changed the storm into a calm.

There are thoughts of comfort here for all true believers. Wherever they may be, or whatever their circumstances, the Lord Jesus sees them. Alone, or in company--in sickness or in health--by sea or by land--in perils in the city--in perils in the wilderness--the same eye which saw the disciples tossed on the lake, is ever looking at us. We are never beyond the reach of His care. Our way is never hidden from Him. He knows the path that we take, and is still able to help. He may not come to our aid at the time we like best, but He will never allow us utterly to fail. He who walked upon the water never changes. He will always come at the right time to uphold His people. Though He tarry, let us wait patiently. Jesus sees us, and will not forsake us.

Let us notice, in the second place, the fears of the disciples, when they first saw our Lord walking upon the sea. We are told that "they supposed it had been a ghost, and cried out. For they all saw Him, and were afraid."

What a faithful picture of human nature we have in these words! How many thousands in the present day, if they had seen what the disciples saw, would have behaved in the same manner! How few, if they were on board a ship, in a storm at midnight, and suddenly saw one walking on the water, and drawing near to the ship--how few would preserve their composure, and be altogether free from fears! Let men laugh, if they please, at the superstitious fears of these unlearned disciples. Let them boast, if they like, of the

march of intellect, and the spread of knowledge, in these latter times. There are few, we may confidently assert, who, placed in the same position as the apostles, would have shown more courage than they. The boldest skeptics have sometimes proved the greatest cowards, when appearances have been seen at night, which they could not explain.

The truth is, there is an instinctive feeling in all men, which makes them shrink from anything which seems to belong to another world. There is a consciousness which many try in vain to conceal by affected composure, that there are beings unseen, as well as seen, and that the life which we now live in the flesh, is not the only life in which man has a portion. The common stories about ghosts and apparitions, are undoubtedly foolish and superstitious. They are almost always traceable to the fears and imaginations of weak-minded people. Yet the universal attention which such stories obtain, all over the world, is a fact that deserves notice. It is an indirect evidence of \

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