

Ark of the Covenant - Part 5

by Major Ian Thomas

Major Ian Thomas emphasizes the necessity of Christ and the miraculous nature of the Christian life through the indwelling of the Holy Spirit.

Duration: 1:06:32

Scripture: Mark 6:34, John 6:6, Romans 8:37

Topics: "Ark Of The Covenant"

Description

In this sermon, the preacher discusses the story of a small boy who had faith in God's power. The boy had five loaves of bread and two fish, and despite the crowd's doubt, he offered it to Jesus. Jesus took the small offering and miraculously multiplied it to feed thousands of people. The preacher emphasizes the compassion and patience of Jesus, who continued to teach and guide his disciples even when they didn't fully understand. The sermon also mentions another story where Jesus walks on water during a storm to comfort his disciples. The preacher highlights the power of God to do the impossible and encourages listeners to trust in God's provision and guidance.

Transcript

...concerned to me, and the hospitality that it's been my joy to share in the homes of many parents. I'm thankful to the past, and his wife too, and his associates, and those who are behind the scenes, which is so much of the chonky work that makes a series of meetings like this possible. I appreciate those who have come so regularly, each morning and each night.

A number of you have been at all the services, and we've covered a considerable amount of terrace. I've enjoyed being with you and sharing with you the things of the Lord Jesus. I have a feeling that probably in the evenings I've taxed you too severely, and it may well be that some of you have found it quite a heavy load.

We have been doing some exploration in the Old Testament, but I trust that the Holy Spirit may continue to re-speak his word, and that in days to come, as you turn over these pages of God's revelation, much will be recalled to you by the Holy Spirit, and become of increasing worth as, perhaps, in the light of the things that we have been studying together, other parts of God's word come alive in the context of God's revelation. Bearing in mind that everything you have to say to us, from Genesis to the Revelation, finally focuses upon the person of his Son. As we have studied the content of the Ark and its true content, we found David making the great discovery that no man, nor method, nor means can ever at any time be a

substitute for God's Son.

But if he was to get the Ark back where it belongs, it could only be upon the shoulders of a man, not less than 30, but not yet 50, who bore two pieces of wood on his shoulders. Our Lord Jesus, who bearing those two pieces of wood, went to that cross where his blood was shed, with which the mercy seat was to be sprinkled, that on the grounds of that regentive transaction to which he alone was qualified, as the only man ever born since Adam fell, who is both physically and spiritually alive, that he might lay down that life a ransom for me. And that on the grounds of that transaction to which he alone was qualified, we might become the recipient of the gift of God's Holy Spirit through whom he, Christ, now risen from the dead, comes to take up residence within our humanity, that the Holy Spirit might re-establish his sovereign within every area of our being, divinely sealed, divinely sent, and divinely sanctified, set apart once more for that intelligent purpose for which an intelligent God intelligently creates, all in Christ.

In other words, David discovered that no matter how enthusiastic he might be, and no matter how noble his motivation, and no matter how dedicated he and his people may have been to the task, God can only answer with death if it's less than his son. But, to detach your Christianity from Christ is to kill it. That Godliness without God is death, and that spirituality, apart from the Holy Spirit, is to you and to me a spiritual and a moral impossibility.

That Christianity is Christ. As the one who gave himself for us, that in the power of his resurrection, through the presence of his Holy Spirit, he might give himself to us. And we submit ourselves gladly to him in his rightful sovereignty as fellow members, in particular, of that body corporate to which belong every boy, girl, man, or woman out of every nation, kindred, tribe, or tongue, class, creed, or color, who, cleansed in the blood of God's dear Son, have their names recorded in the Lamb's book of life, and are sealed on earth by the presence of his Holy Spirit, here, in time, and on into eternity.

That's why, of course, the Christian life is essentially miraculous, because it derives from the person of our risen Lord, resident within our redeemed humanity. That's why I thought tonight, after the strenuous labors of the past evening, we would turn to the New Testament, just to give you a little bit of relief, and allow the Lord Jesus to emphasize afresh to us, in one of the most familiar stories of the New Testament, and one of my papers, the fact that Christianity, if it is to be valid, must always be miraculous. It doesn't have to be sensational, it doesn't have to be spectacular, but it always has to be miraculous in the sense that there is no possible explanation for it but God himself.

And there's no boy, no girl, no man, no woman, however humble, however undifted or untalented, how ever little that individual may have been bestowed with gifts or inherent ability who cannot daily live in that miraculous power of his resurrection which is imparted through his Holy Spirit to every forgiven sinner. Nobody need consider themselves disqualified for this quality of life which the Lord Jesus describes as more abundant. The lovely thing is that he has not chosen the mighty and the noble and the great.

The qualifications for those whom God seals, sends, and sanctifies are clearly enunciated for us in the first chapter of his epistles of the Corinthians. Don't bother to turn to it, I'm only passing to it in reference. You see your calling brethren, how that not many wise men after the flesh, not many mighty, not many noble are called.

But God hath chosen the foolish things of the world to confound the wise. God hath chosen the weak things of the world to confound the things which are mighty. God hath chosen the base things of the world and things which are despised hath God chosen.

Yea, and things which are not to bring to nought the things that are. That there may be no possible human explanation for what God in his infinite power and wisdom and by virtue of his own omnipotence has purposed to do. That no flesh should glory in his presence.

Nobody will be due for congratulations in that last day when the dust has settled. But Jesus Christ himself, of whom, through whom, through whom, are all things, and to whom alone be glory, and to whom it is our reasonable service to yield our bodies a living sacrifice. There'll be no great names in heaven, there'll be no distinguished preachers, just forgiven sinners, all worshiping the Lamb, all recognizing that only that is valid and will stand the test of time and eternity that ultimately had its origin in him.

For of him are you in Christ Jesus. For God is made unto us wisdom and righteousness and sanctification and redemption. That according as it is written, he that glories, let him glory in the Lord.

And to you and to me has been given the amazing, fantastic privilege of that humanity with which he may clothe on earth, in time, on the way to heaven, his glory. And it's our supreme privilege to yield our bodies that in them he may be magnified, reflecting only as in a nurse the glory of the Lord. And as I have reminded you already in the past, a person looking into a mirror to see the reflection is only conscious of the mirror in the measure in which the mirror exists.

So that in our testimony for Christ, as we draw attention to ourselves as apart from drawing attention to him, it's only because in some area the mirror has been sullied and is not giving a perfect image of the one who is himself. The origin of that image which he alone must be the opposite. The weak, the base, and the nothing.

There are none of us here tonight who don't qualify for sharing that quality of life that God so lavishly bestows upon those who, recognizing their bankrupt with the empty hand of faith, will take what he loves and longs to do. The Christian life is miraculous. Why settle for anything less? The story that I want to refer you to tonight is found in the sixth chapter of Mark.

We shall begin with the story there, we shall proceed with the story in the sixth of John, and it's just possible, it depends how much time we have, that we may glance at it again in the fourteenth of Matthew. It's all the same record, but as we're introduced to the story in the sixth of Mark, so it's magnified, as it were, by John in the sixth of his gospel. In the thirty-fourth verse of the sixth chapter of Mark, Jesus, when he came out, saw much people and was moved with compassion toward them because they were a sheep not having a shepherd, and he began to teach them many things.

And when the day was now far spent, his disciples came unto him. I may have mentioned to some of you before that that sentence that is found at the end of the thirty-fourth verse is one that brings a considerable amount of encouragement to me. It says that the Lord Jesus began to teach them many things.

I have to use the German Bible to a very considerable extent when I'm on the continent of Europe, and Luther, in his translation, puts it this way. It says, Er hielt eine lange Prede, which means he preached a long sermon. Now, isn't that a source of tremendous encouragement? And if there's one thing of which I'm not guilty, that's preaching short sermons, and some of you have discovered that for your cost.

The Lord Jesus preached a long sermon. He taught them many things, and there came a time when the disciples really got quite anxious about the situation. It was getting night, darkness was falling, the people were tired and hungry and thirsty.

So, finally, they plucked up enough courage to interrupt him, and they said, this is a desert place, and the time is far past. Send them away that they may go into the country, round about and into the villages, and buy themselves bread, for they have nothing to eat. The essence of what they said was this, this is a desert place, send them away, they have nothing to eat.

And that, to them, seemed to be the most reasonable suggestion to make under the circumstance. And, I suppose, we might well have done the same. Send them away, this is a desert place, they have nothing to eat.

Let's, in other words, said they, let us get them off our hands. Master, the situation is going to be extremely embarrassing, for there were 5,000 men, and Matthew, in his record, reminds us that in addition to the 5,000 men, there were also the women in the building. It was a vast company of people, and the disciples could see themselves well into the evening with a large crowd of people, without a chance in eternity of satisfying their most modest needs.

Tired, hungry, and cold. And so, it seemed reasonable to get them off their hands, and to avoid the embarrassment that the Lord Jesus answered them and said, give you them to eat. You don't send hungry people away, you feed them.

And immediately, without a moment's hesitation, they dismissed the idea. They said, shall we go and buy 200 penny worth of bread and give them to eat? And what they said was tinged slightly with sarcasm. They said, 200 penny worth of bread to feed this mob? They said, impossible.

A sheer, utter impossibility. And, of course, they were right. Absolutely right.

So long as they were not prepared to reckon with the Lord Jesus. And the Lord Jesus agreed with them entirely. He said, you're right, absolutely right, it is impossible.

And that's exactly why we're going to do it. And I'm going to show you how to do the impossible. Because I want to introduce you to a principle of life.

And, of course, in this miraculous event where the Lord Jesus met the need of this vast company of people, it wasn't just an isolated lecture. It was a principle that the Lord Jesus had been seeking to enunciate to them all through his earthly ministry. Again and again and again, the Lord Jesus, in everything he did and said and was, was trying to introduce them to that relationship that releases the life of God in a man's humanity, that lets God be God in act, in the flesh and blood of any boy, girl, man or woman who is prepared to make themselves available to their Creator God.

But it's a lesson that the disciples relentlessly failed to learn. He said, we're going to do the impossible. And now we need to turn to John's gospel and examine the story a little bit more closely and magnified through the eyes of John, who gives us greater detail as to how it actually happened.

In John's gospel in chapter six, when Jesus then lifted up his eyes and saw a great company come under him, he said to Philip, Friends, shall we buy bread that these may eat? And this he said to prove him, for he himself knew what he would do. In other words, when the Lord Jesus posed this question to Philip, it wasn't that he was in need of counsel. The Lord Jesus didn't find himself in a position of difficulty and was sort of groping in the dark, trying to find a way out, and wondered what Philip might suggest.

He knew what he was going to do. And the marvelous thing that you and I need first to grasp is this, that nothing ever takes the Lord Jesus Christ by surprise. That when he shares us to, when he invites us to share his life on earth, it's to share a life that is never less than completely, overwhelmingly adequate at any time, to any situation that can ever arise in any circumstance.

Nothing ever panics him. The Lord Jesus, with all the inimitable resources of deity, vested in his person, for the Father had given all things into his hands. By the presence of the indwelling Holy Spirit, yielding himself in the protection of his humanity to his Father as God, he knew that all the inimitable supplies of deity were his, on call, at any time, to any situation.

Nothing frightens him. And, of course, it is to this quality of life that the Lord Jesus invites us, when he says, come unto me and I will give you rest. The invitation of the Lord Jesus to come to him is not simply to receive from his piercing hands the gift of forgiveness.

It's a marvelous thing that you and I, in spite of our sin, can know that that sin has been blotted out, and that God, for his dear sake who died first, will remember our sins no more. We may be grateful for that, and we should never cease to be grateful, and there should never be a day that dawns when, upon our knees, we don't thank him for the blood he shed upon the cross, and the price he paid for our peace with God our maker. But remember this, that when he came to offer you that, and with his piercing hands he gave you the gift of a free and timeless, eternal pardon, it wasn't simply that you might know that your sins were forgiven, but that as a sinner reconciled to God, you might become literally, factually, experientially, and moment by moment the recipient of his indwelling Holy Spirit, that he, the same Lord Jesus that walked this earth nearly 2,000 years ago, might actually share his life with you.

Not a name, not a doctrine, not a theological concept, not just a little piece of evangelical jargon. However sentimentally it meant, and however meaningful it may be, Jesus Christ is a person. He's somebody who longs to fellowship with you moment by moment, and take every step with you, and face every situation with you, so that no matter where you may find yourself, it may always be in the consciousness that I am living together with him.

That's why you and I don't have to be frightened. He knew what he was going to do. Is there something that frightens you tonight? Is there something that worries you? Is there a load upon your heart? Is there a burden on your shoulders? Is it the family situation? Is it the financial situation? Some younger boy or girl, is it the future that worries you? The choice of vocation, where you ought to study, or if you ought to study? Is it a question of the boy or girl you ought to marry? These things can be very frightening to a youngster.

I can remember moments when I was a boy when I was frightened of the Jesus. You become accustomed to being sheltered and carried by a family context, and suddenly you suddenly you realize there's going to be a moment when you're going to step out of that protection and go on your own in a cold, hard, cruel, unrelenting world. Are you frightened? Well, the good news of the gospel is this, that there is somebody who wants to share life with you who nothing can frighten, who's nevertheless radical, who's always vigorous, and who knows the future.

And no matter what it is that looms upon the horizon, that appears to you, so frightening to you now, he knows exactly, exactly what is going to do. He's just waiting for you to let him do it. He's just waiting for you to let him get into action.

He's just waiting for you to recognize the fact that the content of that salvation that was placed in the ark beneath the mercy sheet sprinkled with blood was that for every moment of every day you would be divinely sealed, sent and sacrificed by his holy spirit who will never leave you, nor forsake you. He knew what he was going to do. So why did he ask Philip? Did he want to know, did he want to know something about Philip? No, for a very good reason.

He knew already everything there was to know about Philip, as at this very moment he knows everything there is to know about you. Nothing about you he doesn't know. There are lots of things about us that nobody other than the Lord Jesus knows.

Our God creator and savior. Because God in his compassion has allowed us to retain within our own hearts many things that he would not dare to share with us. And nobody has the right to impute upon the sanctity of these inner counsels of the soul that he knows.

Because he is the one with whom we have to do who knows the thoughts and the intent of the heart. And before him, with whom we have to do, we are open and naked. And he reads us like a book.

He didn't need to know anything about Philip. He knew all he needed to know. So he didn't ask this question because he didn't know what he was going to do, and he didn't ask this question because he wanted to know something about Philip.

He asked this question so that Philip might discover something about himself. He wanted Philip to discover his own bankruptcy. He wanted Philip to discover how far short he fell of that quality of life for which Christ had called him into discipleship.

Philip answered, 200 penny worth of bread is not sufficient for them, but every one of them may take a listen. He answered, it's impossible in the light of the resources that we have at our disposal. It's a sheer impossibility.

We can't do it. With whom was Philip reckoned? With Christ? No, he was doing a very reasonable thing. He was reckoning only with the material resources that they had at their disposal.

But, as I have already reminded you, every demand that God may make upon us, no matter how seemingly impossible it may be, is entirely logical. Though with man it may appear totally unreasonable, because in the divine logic there is a hidden factor that is missing in human reason. God himself.

And you see, Philip, in this particular situation, was not reckoning with the hidden fact. So, the conclusion that he drew was completely reasonable from a human standpoint, but utterly illogical from God's standpoint. He said, Master, we have 200 penny worth of bread.

That's the best that we could buy, even if we had somewhere to buy it. And you see, so far as Philip is concerned, in this particular situation, for all the role that Christ was to play, he might just as well have been dead. He wasn't reckoning with Christ.

All he was looking at was the money bag. And there's nothing very miraculous about that. It might well have been that the Lord Jesus would turn to somebody in the crowd and say, excuse me, sir, do you believe in God? No, I don't.

You mean you're an atheist? Yes, I am. And the Lord Jesus might well have said to him, well, that's fine. I was just looking for an atheist.

You're just the man I want. You know, we're in a bit of trouble. We've got about 5,000 men here, and we've got a whole lot of women and children beside.

And they're hungry, and they're tired, and it's getting chilly. It's evening fall. And we want to, we want to help them.

We want to feed them. What would you suggest? Well, what do you think would be his first question? He'd say, how much money have you got? Well, what was the first question that a member of your board put last time you made any suggestions? What was the first question they put? How much money have we got? So, what was the difference? What was the difference between the atheist in the crowd and Philip as a professing disciple? No difference at all. Well, there was a difference.

The man in the crowd was a professing atheist, but Philip was a professing Christian behaving like an atheist. That was the only difference. You see, and the tragedy is that, by and large, we've learned to be professing Christians behaving like atheists.

We'll sing our songs, we'll recite our creeds, and we'll profess our faith. But actually, at the point of stress, somehow we pay the record that the only person who's adequate. Are you a professing Christian? Are you behaving like an atheist? In the various situations that have arisen in your life over the last 24 hours, the past week, with the problems with which you have had to grapple, have you honestly reckoned with the fact that the Lord Jesus, the creator God who's through the universe and the space, is alive and alive in you? Quite frankly, in the problems that you have been nursing, have you really reckoned with the fact that the Lord Jesus is alive, and that as a forgiven sinner he's come by his holy spirit to share all that he is with you, in whom are hidden all the treasures of wisdom and of knowledge? In whom you have been blessed with every spiritual blessing and heavenly thing, and in whom dwells all the fullness of the godhead body? Have you reckoned with him? Well, while this little discussion was going on, quite an interesting situation was arising in a corner of the crowd.

It was a little incident that took place between a small boy and a man called Andrew. Andrew, who was one of the most lovable of the apostles because he had a friendly smile and an approachable, very approachable, temperament. He was a very friendly type.

That's why I think this boy went to him. It was so much easier for him to talk to Andrew than to some of the others. At this stage he probably wouldn't have gone to John, because John was in the habit of calling fire down from heaven.

He changed a whole lot, of course, when the Lord Jesus came to take up residence and share his life with him on the day of Pentecost. But Andrew, by nature, was a friendly type. He had a kindly smile.

He didn't rebut you, he didn't snap your nose off. I've described him, as some of you know, as a man who had a face like a doorman, that said, welcome on it. And some people have a face like a notice on the door, beware of the dog, and they wonder why nobody ever calls.

I think you'd have liked Andrew, yes. And I think if I wanted to be like anybody, I'd like to be like Andrew. I'd like to feel that folks would come and talk to me without being frightened.

And you see this small boy tugged on his shirt. They had rather long shirts in those days, and still do in the Middle East, if you've been there. And so Andrew turned around and said, son, what do you want? He said, take me to the master.

What do you want me to take you to the master? He's busy, he's preaching. He's been preaching a rather long time, as a matter of fact. And he's still preaching.

What do you want? And the small boy said, well, you see, I want him to feed this crowd. Well, said Philip, as a matter of fact, that's what he wants, and that's what I want, but we don't have anything to do with it. So the small boy said, well, I've got something.

He said, would you take me to him, because I've got five loaves and two fishes. Well, I'm perfectly certain that Andrew was very kind. And he said, son, I'll tell the master, and I'm sure he'll appreciate it.

But you know, quite frankly, I don't think it's quite enough. Not quite. I think probably when your mum wrapped that up, she had you in mind.

And it's just about your size. And I suggest that the most sensible thing to do would be for you to wrap yourself around it, you see. But I'll tell you something, I'll tell the master, and I'm sure he'll appreciate your very, very generous and kind offer.

But quite frankly, I don't think we should disturb him, see. And you can imagine just how disappointed that boy was. Because he turned on one side, and perhaps warmed it around for a bit.

But before too long, there was another tug on Andrew's shirt. What, you again? Yes. Well, what do you want this time? Did you wrap yourself around it? No, he says, still got it.

Well, what do you want? He said, take me to the master. Ever argue with a small boy? I gave that long since. I've got four of my own.

And I could rather imagine, you see, that the conversation would go something like this, because just as Phillip reckoned only with the money bag, Andrew was only reckoning with a small boy, five loaves and two sissies. Jesus Christ might just as well have been sick. Because their enthusiasm, their dedication, their attachment, their Christianity was detached, as the art was out of context.

And there was nothing miraculous about it. And when the art is out of context, and the pillars stand hard against God's people, their taste defeated from the field of battle. Said the small boy to Andrew, I don't care whether I've only got five loaves, fifty loaves, five hundred loaves, five thousand loaves, or five million loaves.

That's not the point. Take me to that man. That's all that matters.

That's it. And that small boy had discovered the principle that lets God loose, that makes life miraculous. He was unsung and unnamed.

We don't know to this day what they called him. But I'm absolutely certain that that small boy has a warm place in the heart of God. And finally, somewhat reluctantly, Andrew brings the small boy to the Lord Jesus and said, Master, there's a kid here keeps pulling my shirt.

Please pack him on the head and say thank you. You've got five loaves and two sissies. I want you to feed the crowd.

I've told him it isn't enough, but if he pulls on my shirt any longer, he'll split it. Please thank him and send him away. And the Lord Jesus said, tell the folks to sit down.

I've been waiting for that small boy. Sadie's been waiting for you. It always fascinates me to know that in any given company of people, there's a small boy, a girl, a man, or a woman, unnamed, unsung, but for whom there's a warm spot in the heart of God.

Because although in them others might have little expectation, they've begun to grasp the principle, let God do as good as God is in a man. And that's all that really matters. You see, we're always told to be man-sized for God, and God's just waiting for the opportunity to be God-sized in a man.

And any small boy will do, any small girl will do, any man will do, any woman will do, the face, the lips, the mouth, and the fingers of their mouth. Any old bush will do, so long as God's in it. And the substance of the bush doesn't have to sustain the flame.

Otherwise it would soon be a heap of ashes. Moses found that out. You see, Philip reckoned with the money, so Jesus Christ didn't count.

Andrew reckoned with a small boy, five loaves and two fishes, so Jesus Christ didn't count. This small boy reckoned with Jesus Christ, so the loaves and the fishes didn't count. All that mattered was that God was God, always living.

And see, wouldn't that simplify life for you? If you could practice the principle moment by moment, and step by step, and day by day, and situation by situation, just to let God be living. Jesus took the loaves and the fishes, and gave thanks. And he distributed to the disciples, and the disciples to them that were set down.

And likewise of the fishes, as much as they would. And when they were filled, he said to the disciples, gather up the fragments that remain, that nothing be lost. Therefore they gathered them together, and they filled the twelve baskets with the fragments of the five barley loaves, which remained over and above, unto them that had eaten.

Then those men, when they had seen the miracle that Jesus did, said, this is of the truth. That's what that's coming to the world. They said, there is no possible explanation for what has happened but God himself.

Now, how did the Lord Jesus feed the five thousands? The natural answer would say, well, he was God. But as I trust most of you will have come to recognize, if never before as probably you have, the answer to that question is not he was God. The answer to that question was this, he was man.

But he was the kind of man that he of God created man to be. A man who would let God be God. That's why you see Peter so excitedly, on the day of Pentecost, when for the first time he entered into the good of this principle, and receiving the Holy Spirit, recognized that it was now to be his fantastic privilege to allow Jesus Christ as God, to be God in action in his humanity, as once the Lord Jesus Christ had allowed the Father as God, to be God in action in his humanity.

On the day of Pentecost, it all fell into place. You men of Israel, hear these words, Jesus of Nazareth, a man approved of God among you by miracles and wonders and signs which God did by him. That was the great discovery that Peter made on the day of Pentecost, that the Lord Jesus in the 33 years of his incarnation, flesh and blood, in our humanity, walking the streets of the city and winding his way through the village pathway, riding his donkey, or preaching on the mountain, or watching his disciples preach.

He was a man approved of God by those miracles and signs and wonders which God did by him. And on the day of Pentecost, Peter said, now as God by him, shall he now as God by me. I see it now.

He was divinely sealed, he was divinely sent, he was divinely sanctified. He sanctified himself for our sake. He set himself apart as man in exclusive availability to his Father, so that the power of God through the Holy Spirit every moment of every day might give expression in terms of his flesh and blood to his own timeless ends, until at last upon the cross he could cry and know that it was true.

It's finished! I've let my father tell the story. It was written in the eternal ages of the past, and agreed between his Father, Son, and Holy Spirit, that I should be born a man to become the Lamb of God that taketh away the sin of the world. God by him.

God's approved man. And as the Father sent me, said the Lord Jesus, so I'm going to send you sealed, sent, and sanctified. By my indwelling Holy Spirit, through whom you'll share my deity, as I as man, through the same Holy Spirit, shared my Father's deity.

Jesus gave thanks, and broke the loaf. So did he thank his Father, that God by him might feed the five times. You see, the Lord Jesus as a man always reckoned with the Father.

As this small boy learned to reckon with Christ. Believest thou not that I am in the Father, and the Father in me? The words that I speak unto I speak not of myself. The Father dwells in me, he does here.

It's my Father as God by me. But remember this, he that eateth my flesh, and drinketh my blood, dwelleth in me, and I in him. So that as my Father is in me, I might be in him.

And as I am in my Father, so he might be in me. I came in the perfection of my humanity, humanity, to demonstrate this principle that vicariously bearing the price of your redemption, you might be restored to that relationship that will allow me to be as big as the God I am in you, as I for 33 years have allowed my Father to be as big as the God he is in you. And you see, so long as you're prepared to be to me as man what I have been prepared to be to my Father as man, I will be then prepared to be to you as God what my Father has been prepared to be to me as God.

Anything complicated about that? He gave thanks, broke the loaf, and in so many words said, Father, five thousand men touched the women and the children, all we've got is this marvelous little kid. He was five loaves and two fifties. Thanks so much.

Who was in business? His father. How do you raise Lazarus from the dead? Let me remind you. He said, roll away the stone.

And of course Martha at first didn't want to do so. She said, he stinks. And he did.

Changing situations. And there are many such that arise constantly. All we need to have, of course, is the courage to roll away the stone.

And then it says the Lord Jesus, John 11, lifted up his eyes to heaven and said, Father, I thank you that you've heard me. I thank you that you've heard me. And you may seem a little surprised, Father, that I should say this aloud because you know I always trust you and I know that you always hear me.

Because you know that the relationship that I adopt toward you is one of total and unquestioning dependence and obedience. I never reckon with anything less than you, Father, but I'm saying it aloud so that those who stand around may know that you sent me. I don't want them to get into their heads the idea that I'm doing anything for you.

I want them to understand clearly, Father, that I'm available for you to do it through me so that one day they will not think they've got to do for me, but realize that I only have to do through them. Thank you, Father. And when he said thank you, he said, Lazarus, come forth from he that was dead.

Came forth. Who raised Lazarus from the dead? God, by him. So what was miraculous about the life of Jesus Christ? The Father.

By him. What's to be miraculous about your life and mine? The Lord Jesus. By us.

That's all. The hidden factor. Of course, he was born with a hidden factor.

Because he wasn't born as you and I were born as we've discovered in our morning sessions. He was born miraculously conceived of the Holy Spirit, the only man who walked this earth, who was alive spiritually and physically since Adam fell into sin. The hidden factor was there.

And by his total obedience and availability to the Father, he allowed God as the hidden factor to demonstrate the power of deity by everything he did and said he was. But you see, when you claim redemption through the blood of Jesus Christ and the mercies he has sprinkled with blood, the Holy Spirit comes to fill you, send you, sanctify you, that the hidden factor, the indwelling life of our now triumphant risen and glorified Lord might be manifest in terms of your humanity by what you do and say and are. So that the word may once more be made flesh and be it among us.

And others in our presence recognize that Jesus Christ has been reincarnated in terms of our humanity. For every time a boy, girl, man, a woman is genuinely born of the Holy Spirit, it's Christmas all over again. And Christ is formed in you.

Well, how much did they learn? How much did they learn? Those of you who are preachers and pastors and Sunday school teachers and Bible class leaders will be greatly encouraged. Nothing. Absolutely nothing.

Isn't that amazing? Nothing. Is that tough on the disciples? Now just glance quickly back to Mark chapter 6. Mark and chapter 6, verse 44. They that did eat of the loaves were about five thousand men, and straightway the Lord Jesus constrained his disciples to get into the ship and to go to the other side before unto Bethsaida, while he sent away the people.

Why did he send his disciples away? Verse 52. For they considered not the miracle of the loaves, for their heart was hardened. They considered not the miracle of the loaves.

They learned nothing. Why not? Hearts were hardened. Apostles with hard hearts.

Disciples with hard hearts. How compassionate, how patient, how kind the Lord Jesus. He didn't wash his hands in it.

He just started all over again. As he has to do for you and for me, until that moment of truth, when suddenly the light floods our souls and we kick ourselves for being that stupid. Ever kicked yourself yet? You see, they had come and he said, get them off our hands.

He can't keep it. And so the Lord Jesus fed them and got his disciples off his hands, because their hearts were hardened. They considered not the miracle of the loaves.

Where did he send them? Well, he sent them out in the boat into a storm, tailor-made for his disciples. He knew perfectly well they were going to land in that storm. He fought it out.

And we can be profoundly thankful for those storms that the Lord Jesus thinks up, if we're not prepared to learn the easy way, what we have to learn the hard way. Matthew 14, 14th of Matthew, same story. Verse 21 of the 14th of Matthew, they that it were about 5,000 men beside the women and the children.

And straightway the Lord Jesus constrained his disciples to get into a ship and to go before him unto the other side while he sent the multitudes away. And of course, on the surface they could have congratulated themselves that they were doing exactly what they were told. He told them to get into a boat.

He told them to go to the other side. They were in the will of God, they could have said. They were in his permissive will.

That's absolutely true. But they had little to congratulate themselves about. When he had sent the multitudes away, he went up into a mountain apart to pray.

And when the evening was come, he was there, alone, all too often is the Lord Jesus lonely. But the ship was in the midst of the sea, topped with waves, for the wind was coming. A mighty storm with mountainous waves that beat into that little boat, threatening to sink it, threatening to be over their heads, threatening to send them to the bottom.

Darkness had fallen. They'd lost all sight of their destination, nothing but the dull leaden waters around them, and the howl of the wind in their ears, until almost all hope was lost. And in the fourth watch of the night, Jesus went unto them.

What do you think he was doing? The impossible. He was walking on the sea. The impossible.

Demonstrating to them, for every step he took, that everything that threatened to be over their heads was already under his feet. The impossible. How did he do it? God by him.

He could have done it as God. One word of God, he could have spilled the water. But though never less than God, he insists on behaving as never more than man, and for every step he took he said, thank you father, thank you father, thank you father, thank you father.

For he, as God, created man, you see, to exercise authority over all the works of God, and so that man, as God intended man to be, could walk on water. We throw it all back into God's feet from the day of Aaron's tale. Now we have to go water-stealing.

God created us to be without stealing. To have demean over all the works of his hand. The easiest thing in the world for Jesus Christ, as a man, to let the father, as God, by him, do the impossible.

He could have done it as God, of course. The only thing he could have done as God, nobody has seen him, because nobody has seen that being God behaving as God at any time. To be seen he had to behave as a man.

Because God created man to make an invisible God visible. So for every step he took, ruling his humanity to the invisible father, he said, thank you father, thank you father, thank you father. From one step at a time the father put under his feet what threatened to be over their heads.

And when they saw him they thought he was a ghost, and they shrieked out in terror. They said it's a spirit, it's a ghost. They cried out, shrieked literally, for fear.

But straightway the Lord Jesus, verse 27, spake unto them and said, give good cheer. Literally, I am. It is I. I am.

Stop being frightened. You see, where he is, you can't be frightened. And he says, where I am, there shall be my servant also.

So when you're fully fulfilling your role as servant, you'll always be where he is. And where he is, you can't be frightened. He said, give good cheer.

I am. Stop being frightened. What a marvelous thing it is when the Lord Jesus steps into the midst of the storm and whispers in your ear, I, not I was.

You haven't got to clutch like a drowning man in the sport of some memory of the past. I am. He doesn't say, I will be, if you hang on long enough, if you stick it out, if you occupy till I come, I'm on the way.

No, no, no. He doesn't say I was, he doesn't say I will be, he says I am. At this very moment, precisely at this time, in this situation, no matter how threatening that situation may be, I am.

In the timelessness of the present tense of an eternal God. And Peter answered him and said, Lord, if it be thou, if you are, didn't come unto thee on the water, if you are put on the man's feet, what's under your feet? Because if you don't, chances are it's soon going to be over my head. And I think for the first time there was a smile on the face of the Lord Jesus.

He said come. And when Peter was come down out of the ship, what do you think he did? The impossible. He walked on the water to go to Jesus.

Must have been an exciting moment. But he began to walk on the water, thoroughly preoccupied with the person who had told him. Reckoning with Christ as the Lord Jesus reckoned with the Father.

For the first time beginning to practice the principle, that as the Father by Christ, so now Christ by him. That everything the Father put under Christ's feet, Christ was prepared to put under Peter's feet. He walked on the water.

He must have been quite excited. He might have said, hi, this is terrific, I've never done this before, fancy walking on water. How did he do it? Well, simply reckoning with the Lord Jesus at every step he took.

Thank you Lord, thank you Lord, this is exciting, I've never done this before. Bang, bang, bang. Everything was tremendous until an unkind wave slapped him on the side of the face.

And another one hit him on the other side. Distracted his attention from Christ, and once more caused him to be preoccupied with himself. He saw the wind voice, and immediately was afraid.

The moment his attention was distracted from the person of the Lord Jesus, and instead of being preoccupied with him, became preoccupied with himself, he began to argue. He said, you can't do this, this is stupid, you're a man, you can't walk on water. And he was right.

He went down for a duck and, beginning to sink, he cried, Lord save me. And immediately the Lord Jesus stretched forth his hand, recaptured his attention, and said, O thou of little faith, wherefore didst thou doubt? You'd have thought that if a man stepped out at the command of Jesus Christ and walked on water, he would have congratulated him on his faith. My, some of our Christian magazines could get the story.

They'd have it highlighted. In the very next publication they'd publish a special edition. Man walks on water! Did Christ congratulate him? No.

Because, you see, nothing is impossible to the man who believes that God is God, and is prepared to let God be God, as big as God is. He said, O thou of little faith. Jesus, as if it's difficult to walk on water when you're reckoning with me, and I've told you to.

It's no more difficult, Peter, for you to walk on water when you reckon with me because I've told you to, than it's difficult for me to walk on water because my father told me, and I'm reckoning with him. Of course, you and I don't have the right to point a gun at God and tell him exactly what we intend to do because he's God and we're at his disposal. That isn't faith.

Faith is dependent on obedience, too. Faith is your act in obedience to his command out of your dependence on him. Then everything is possible that he tells you to do.

That's what makes life miraculous. But you don't call the shots. You don't decide the performance.

You don't plan the program. It is a choice. You're sent, and if you want to live miraculously, you're numbered amongst those who went to be sent and went.

That's the secret of living miraculously. Immediately the Lord Jesus stretched forth his hand, called him, and said to him, O thou of little faith, wherefore didst thou doubt? And when they were come into the ship, the storm was over, the wind ceased. They that were in the ship came and they worshipped him, saying, Are thou true? Thou art the Son of God.

It's so thrillingly simple. In the midst of the storm, he said, I am. That's really all you need to know.

If you'll reckon with the fact, I am. What more can you have than that? And it's a wonderful moment when you can look into his face and say, you are. Thou art.

Storm's over then, and you know the peace of God that passes all understanding. Come unto me, said the Lord Jesus, I give you rest. Because all that I am, you've got.

You can't have more. You need never have less. And it's never other than adequate.

And the Christian life, the moment we've learned to live miraculously, reduced to its prime simplicity, is to recognize that there is never a moment at any time in which the Lord Jesus, no matter how threatening the circumstance, no matter how heavy the responsibility, no matter how promising the opportunity, there is never a moment at any time in which the Lord Jesus is not. Act to save your heart. Stop being frightened.

I've got good news for you. See a good cheer. I am.

And you say, thou art. That's all I need to know. Apart from what you are, I am nothing, have nothing, can do nothing, but all that you are, I've got.

That's all I need to know. Let's go. Thank you.

And so you walk through time. This is what the Bible calls walking in the spirit, walking through faith. Taking every step into new situations, hearing Christ say, I am, and you say, thou art, thank me.

I am, thou art, thank me. I am, thou art, thank me. And everything that once threatened to be over your head, he puts beneath your feet.

And you reign in life by one Christ Jesus, more than promised to him that loves you. And the ark is that where it belongs, for in it the mercy seat is sprinkled with blood. And you've entered into the good of its content, sealed, sent, and sanctified, energized by the indwelling presence of a risen Christ who shares his life with you every moment of every day.

Through the presence of his holy indwelling spirit, you've come alive. Well, that's it. And the week is over.

Audio: <https://sermonindex1.b-cdn.net/21/SID21886.mp3>

Source: <https://sermonindex.net/speakers/major-ian-thomas/ark-of-the-covenant-part-5/>

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