

Greetings to you! Our theme for this morning is, 'In the Storms of Life the Lord is near at hand to save.' The miracle of Jesus walking on the water takes place immediately after the feeding of the five thousand. Jesus makes his disciples to get into the boat and go ahead of him to the other side, while he dismissed the crowd. The disciples were probably heading toward Capernaum – Hebrew it is kepher Nahum – village of Nahum. After dismissing the crowd he went on a mountainside by himself to pray. We know from Matthew 14:13 that he wanted to go to a solitary place after the death of John the Baptist and now he goes up on the mountainside to pray. He was praying there through the night and he was alone since he had already sent away the crowd. The boat was already a considerable distance away. The disciples are rowing somewhere in the region of Bethsaida (14:13-21) to Genasseret. The boat however was not making progress because it was buffeted by the waves because the wind was against it. The Greek word translated as 'buffeted' can be understood as 'subject to severe distress, torment or harass'. The disciples tried their best to reach the other shore but they were unable to.

Matthew records for us that Jesus went out in the fourth watch, which is between 3:00 am and 6:00 am walking on the lake. When the disciples saw him walking on the lake they were terrified and they cried out in fear thinking it was a ghost. Jesus reassured them saying, 'Take courage! It is I. Don't be afraid.' Peter wants to confirm this and says that if it is indeed Jesus then he should make Peter walk on the water to him. Jesus invites him to do so. But as Peter stepped out into the water he saw the wind and he was afraid and began to sink and he cried out, 'Lord, save me! Immediately Jesus reached out his hand and caught him and said, 'You of little faith, why did you doubt?' And when Jesus climbed into the boat the wind died down and those in the boat worshipped him saying, 'truly you are the Son of God.'

In this miraculous event that takes place in the Sea of Galilee we see that Jesus is indeed God and all the forces of nature are subject to him. The storm subsided at the very presence of Jesus. In our own lives we may be facing many storms. They may be financial storms where we are striving with great difficulty to make both ends meet; there may be emotional storms where relationships have broken down between husband and wife and between brother and sister, children and parents; there may be storms of uncertainty – about what will I do? Which job should I take? What should I study? Or losing a job; there may be storms of sickness where there has been prolonged sickness in the family; or there may be storms of enmity where people are trying to victimise you. We all face these storms in one way or the other. We may be like Peter as the winds and the waves threaten us and we feel that we are about to sink. We may be crying out like Peter, 'Lord save me!' The Lord's word for each one of us today is: 'Take courage! Don't be afraid for I am with you.' In the storms of life it is the Lord's presence which gives us the grace to overcome it. The Lord is near at hand to save us and he will do it because he is a faithful God. Meanwhile let us be faithful to him and persevere in prayer.