

Alton Baptist Church e-Service 17th May 2020

Take courage! It is I. Don't be afraid.

Opening Prayer

Heavenly Father, we thank You that whether we are in the church building together or thinking about You alone, You are with us and hear our prayers. Help us to spend time each day singing your praises, reading and contemplating Your Word, praying for one another and those issues You bring to our attention.

Song O let the Son of God enfold you -

https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=kjVLUY_dNLk

Some words about the Good Shepherd and His Sheep from John 10:3-4,14
3 ... and the sheep listen to his voice. He calls his own sheep by name and leads them out. **4** When he has brought out all his own, he goes on ahead of them, and his sheep follow him **because they know his voice**. **14**“I am the good shepherd; I know my sheep and my sheep know me...

Song I heard the voice of Jesus say -

<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=XUVCpF8-VuE>

Prayers of Praise, Thanks and Intercession

Pray as you feel led.

Reading: Matt 14:22-32 *Topic: Take courage! It is I. Don't be afraid.*

22 Immediately Jesus made the disciples get into the boat and go on ahead of him to the other side, while he dismissed the crowd. **23** After he had dismissed them, he went up on a mountainside by himself to pray. Later that night, he was there alone, **24** and the boat was already a considerable distance from land, buffeted by the waves because the wind was against it.

25 Shortly before dawn Jesus went out to them, walking on the lake. **26** When the disciples saw him walking on the lake, they were terrified. “It’s a ghost,” they said, and cried out in fear.

27 But Jesus immediately said to them: “Take courage! It is I. Don’t be afraid.”

28 “Lord, if it’s you,” Peter replied, “tell me to come to you on the water.”

29 “Come,” he said.

Then Peter got down out of the boat, walked on the water and came toward Jesus. **30** But when he saw the wind, he was afraid and, beginning to sink, cried out, "Lord, save me!"

31 Immediately Jesus reached out his hand and caught him. "You of little faith," he said, "why did you doubt?"

32 And when they climbed into the boat, the wind died down. **33** Then those who were in the boat worshiped him, saying, "Truly you are the Son of God."

Song I believe in Jesus <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=d5HbddjrTU>

Some Thoughts

The disciples were not afraid of the wind or the waves as they crossed the sea of Galilee in the dark. Several of them were fishermen and used to this. No, it was seeing what they took to be a ghost that terrified them. This was outside of their experience, well out of their comfort zone. Something supernatural.

Jesus said to them "Take courage! It is I. Don't be afraid." The key words here are "It is I."

If a ghost had said "take courage, don't be afraid." They would still have been afraid. But they recognized the voice of Jesus. Him saying "don't be afraid" made all the difference.

Have you ever phoned someone and when they answered said "It's me." Normally you would only say that to someone you expected to recognise you. And amazingly when someone calls us and says "It's me" we do recognise them - if we know them. Even if we haven't heard from them for a long time.

It is critical for us, as Christians, that we recognise the voice of Jesus when He speaks to us. He may not say a lot. Sometimes "It's me" is enough.

Peter recognised the voice and mad fool that he was, asked Jesus to tell him to get out of the boat and come to him on the water. Jesus with his usual economy of words said "Come".

The amazing thing is that Peter did the impossible - he walked on the water.

This is the lesson we can learn today from this passage. If Jesus asks you to do the impossible, it is possible, with His help.

In fact this should encourage us to expect to do the impossible with Jesus. Or put it another way, to expect Jesus or the Holy Spirit to work supernaturally in our lives.

Yes, Peter's human senses took over, he realised he was doing the impossible, began to doubt and started to sink. We all have this problem.

Jesus could have continued teaching Peter how to trust Him enough to walk on water, but Jesus had more important plans for Peter.

At Pentecost, Jesus wanted Peter to do the impossible. To use his words as a humble fisherman to cause three thousand people to fall to their knees and ask to be baptised.

Of course Peter couldn't do this on his own, anymore than he could walk on water. But with the presence of the Holy Spirit, the impossible is possible.

We should not give up expecting the impossible from God. We should have the courage to pray for the impossible and expect it to happen.

After all, our God is the creator of the heavens and the earth, the sustainer of all things by His powerful word.

So courage! Jesus is with us! Do not be afraid!

Song Do not be afraid - <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=EAdRk9c1R1o>

Grace

The Grace of our Lord Jesus Christ,
the Love of God,
and the Fellowship of the Holy Spirit
be with us now and always.

AMEN