

He Came to Them Walking on the Sea, Part 1; Mark 6:45-52 0413-046

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Immediately he made his disciples to get into the boat and go before him, to the other side, to Bethsaida while he dismissed the crowd. And after he had taken leave of them, he went up on the mountain to pray. And when evening came, the boat was out on the sea and he was alone on the land. And he saw that they were making headway, painfully for the wind was against them.

And about the fourth watch of the night, he came to them walking on the sea. He meant to pass by them, but when he, when they saw him walking on the sea, they thought it was a ghost and cried out for, they all saw him and were terrified. But immediately he spoke to them and said, take heart. It is, I do not be afraid.

And he got into the boat with them and the wind ceased and they were utterly astounded for, they did not understand about the loaves, but their hearts were hardened. I wonder if you might listen to the following phrases, and if someone here might tell me what the common denominator is. For all of these well-known common phrases that we hear and use every day, such as they made a scapegoat out of him, he, she is the apple of my eye.

You took the words right out of my mouth. I made it just by the skin of my teeth. Another one bites the dust. A leopard cannot change its spots. You have to read the writing on the wall and go the extra mile, but it's like the blind leading the blind, and we made it just in the 11th hour. Anybody recognize the commonality between all those phrases?

Biblical version, they're all biblical. They, the origin of all those phrases is a biblical origin, and that's just a small sampling of the literally hundreds of phrases that we use in our English language. Almost never recognizing the source of those, at least not while we're using them. We use phrases all the time.

They find their origin in the scriptures without hardly giving a thought to what the , origin of this, of this phrase is. And oftentimes using the phrase in ways that are completely different from how the Bible used the phrase, but as we think about these phrases that have made their way into our English language, there is one of which I'm thinking that you're probably ahead of me.

And you're also thinking of this phrase too, is the phrase. Walk on water. Don't we use that phrase a lot? We use it sometimes to mean that we think very highly of someone that, , we think that they just walk on water. Or sometimes it might be a very negative thing when somebody uses it about themselves.

You know, they, well, they just think that they walk on water, and so it can, it can really mean that, that someone has a very high opinion of themselves or that you have a very high opinion of someone else. Now, neither of those are anything remotely close to how the Bible uses the phrase. We wouldn't find it in the passage before us of Jesus walking on the water.

This is, as we said earlier, one of the most profound instances in Mark's Gospel, and we'll take a couple Sundays to walk through it because the meaning is. Not shallow. It is very profound, and it'll

take us a while to dig through it. So let's get started from verse 45. From verse 45, we, , begin reading this immediately.

He made his disciples get into the boat and go before him to the other side, to Beth Saida, while he dismissed the crowd. So we begin here with Mark's favorite word. His favorite word is immediately, he writes immediately, he made his disciples get into the boat. Now, the, the word that's translated, he made is a word that's very forceful.

It's very strong in the original. It means something close to compelled or constrained. It has the meaning of Jesus imposing his will onto the disciples as though the disciples did not themselves wish to get into the boat. They didn't want to get into the boat, but Jesus. Imposed his will upon the disciples, and he compelled them, or he made them to get into the boat.

So it carries it with this, this idea that the disciple's desire was different from Jesus' desire, and Jesus' desire being the master. His desire overtook theirs. It overruled theirs, and he made them get into the boat. So we immediately have a, an issue to deal with that we must think through. And it's the oddness of what Mark just said, the strangeness of what Jesus said, that Jesus made the disciples get into the boat.

And the strong implication is that they very strongly did not want to get into the boat. So why the oddness, why the making them get into the, , the boat? Furthermore, we read that Jesus then dismissed the crowd. So Jesus, in essence here, he's dismissing the, the people. And he is dismissing the disciples, by the way.

He's going to go on to dismiss the storms. There's a lot of dismissing going on, so he dismisses the people. Now, we know that there's two ways to dismiss someone, and this works the same way in our language as it does in the original Greek. But you can dismiss someone by a, giving them permission that they no longer are required to be in your presence by you.

You give them permission. You don't, you can, you can go, you can be dismissed. But another way that you can use the word dismissed is to not give permission for them to leave, but in order. But it give them an order no longer to give them permission to stay. It. And so dismissing someone can mean both. It can mean giving them permission to leave or not giving them permission to stay.

You must go. Okay. So we use it the both ways in our English, same way in the Greek. So Jesus dismisses the crowd, and when he dismisses the crowd, we should think of him not giving them permission to go, but Jesus making them to go. So this crowd, thousands and thousands of people, they've been with Jesus all day.

Jesus has fed them. And now Jesus makes them to leave. He makes them to go. He dismisses the crowd in this way also, he dismisses or he makes the disciples to get into the boat. So the, one of the, one of the aspects of the oddness here is that first of all, Jesus, just one day before he invited the disciples with them, it was his idea.

He said to them, You are tired, you're exhausted. You haven't even had time to eat. Come away with me. So invite invites them with himself. Come away with me. Let's go find this place that's desolate, that's separate, and let's rest and be together. Now, just less than a day later, Jesus makes the disciples to leave.

In addition to that, he makes the people to leave. So Jesus as we know. It. Jesus is never controlled by the crowds. It may appear this way at so times, but Jesus is never controlled by the crowds. Jesus is always in control of the crowds, although many times it appears as though the crowds are so large and so overwhelming.

Nevertheless, Jesus shows his authority here by dismissing the crowds. So we ask ourself the question, why the why this change in mood? Why the change in Jesus dismissing the crowd and making the disciples leap? So it is here that we have the advantage of having four gospels that we can sometimes cross-reference with one another and put some of the pieces together to get a more complete picture.

John affords for us one piece of information that's very helpful. If we were to look in John chapter six, verses 14 and 15. Or just look down at your lap because somebody so conveniently put this together for you. Just look at John 14, I'm sorry, John six, verse 14 through 15, when the people saw the sign that he had done, meaning the multiplication of the food, when the people saw the sign, they said, this is indeed the prophet who is to come into the world.

So they are quite excited about what's happened. This is the prophet notice. It's properly capitalized there. Speaking of the prophet that was to come, this is the prophet who is to come into the world. Verse 15. Perceiving then that they were about to come and take him by force to make him king. Jesus again, withdrew to the mountain by himself.

So John narrates the same instance by giving us this other piece of information, saying that Jesus perceived that the crowd is now reaching this fever pitch of excitement. They are getting all starry-eyed about who Jesus is, and they're beginning to see visions. Visions of Jesus displacing the Roman rule, displacing the Herod rule, shaking off from Israel, this Roman oppression, as well as the Herod oppression, shaking all that off of Israel once again, establishing Israel as a sovereign nation.

And Jesus is on the throne and the crowd is getting all glassy-eyed and excited about that. And they are in Jesus's perception about to take him by force and to make him king. That's the context into which we must now read. Jesus's demi dismissal of the crowd and the dismissal of the of the disciples.

But before we go any further, let's just pause right there and let's just make a brief observation about the ridiculous irony of what we just read, that they are about to take him by force and make him king. Does that strike anybody as well? I don't know. Foolish to by force make someone your king. Isn't that just an, an oxymoron?

Isn't that a self-contradiction to make, to impose your will on someone in order to put them in a position of rulership over you? That's utterly ridiculous to make someone against their wishes to be your ruler or your authority or your king over you. So it's quite ridiculous. We often though, if you think about it, we often do the same sorts of thing, or at least try to do the same sorts of things today.

Those that we appoint leaders over us, we have. This impression here in the Western world and our democracy here in the West, we have this impression that our leaders work for us. And we like to think that whether or not that's really true or not, I'll just leave that up to you. But we have that

impression that we are the ones who are in charge, and we're the ones who put the rulers and the people there, and it's us imposing our will onto them.

But that's a completely foreign idea to this idea of a king. That's why we don't have a king. That's why we have elected rulers, because the king is not one who rules by the permission of those he rule or he rules over, he exerts his will over them instead of the other way around. And so the very idea of making someone king against their will, is a completely nonsensical idea because if you imposed your will upon them to rule over you, it's really you ruling them instead of the other way around.

So we see the foolishness of that. But the reason I draw attention to all of this, we'll see in just a moment how that plays into the story. But the reason I draw attention to this is to, this is a wonderful insight into the human heart. The scriptures always provide for us a wonderful insight into our own heart, if we will just often take the time to look and to think of what the scriptures are showing to us.

Hebrew chapter four and verse 12 tells us that the word of God is living and active and sharper than a two-edged sword piercing to the division of soul and spirit. It pierces into our heart and it knows us, and it shows ourselves to us. And here it's showing us something about the fallen human heart.

The fallen human heart has a desire, a propensity. To fool itself into thinking that it rules over those who rule it or it's gods. So we see this all the way from the garden, don't we? We see this throughout the history of Israel as they would create these idols. You remember Isaiah 44, remember that passage in Isaiah 40 for rather humor, humorous passage where Isaiah is talking about the foolishness of idolatry?

And he says that this person will, will, this man will take a log, and from half of the log, he will cut it into firewood by which he warms himself and cooks his food. And the other half of the log, he fashions an idol and then bows down to it. And Isaiah's point is, do you see the foolishness of such a thing as that?

But really that's the same consistent picture that we see throughout the Old Testament. Remember as they fashioned the golden calf. And then Aaron says, behold your gods who brought you out of Egypt? It. That's not your gods that brought you out of it. You just made it. How foolish to convince yourself or try to convince yourself that you just created the God who rules over you.

It's the same thing that's happening with here with Jesus. They want to take him by force and make him king. Now, this is pointing into something that's very important for us to see in our own hearts, and it's the propensity, it's the tendency for fallen human beings to try to make God into our own image.

Now, if you could just bridge the gap between these two instances, between this and what I'm saying now, if you can just make this connection, you'll see the valid connection here that human mankind fallen, mankind has within itself this desire to make a God for itself, that it really is in charge of, or in other words, it made out, we made it in our own image.

Okay, so the way that that often looks in the modern world is this. Anytime you hear the sentence that begins this way, I like to think of Jesus as. And fill in the blank. And it doesn't matter what you

fill in the blank with. I like to think of God as whatever comes after that is blasphemy. Whatever comes after that is idolatry.

It doesn't matter what you like to think of God as, because if he is God, then it doesn't matter what you think of him. What matters is how he has revealed himself to you. And what matters is the truth and the reality of who he is. That's what matters, not what we like to think of him as. And so do you see the connection between wanting to make Jesus a king by force and modern man saying, well, I like to have this picture in my mind of Jesus as this type of a savior or God, as this type of a God.

It's the same thing as mankind reaching up and taking hold of God and saying, I'm going to make you God over me, when in reality you are the one who thinks that you have authority over them. Okay? You see the connection. So they tried to take him by force and make him king foolishness, though, as as it is.

This is what is the context or the occasion for what we read of in verse 45. Jesus made his disciples get into the boat. And he dismissed the crowd, so he's going to dismiss the crowd and he's going to, he's going to make his disciples leave. All of that is on the heels of Jesus's perception that things are getting out of control.

This attitude within the crowd, this, this feeling, this growing excitement, that Jesus is the one who is going to be the political ruler. We're going to make him king. If he's not willing to be king, we'll make him king because he's got what it takes. He's got the charisma. He just fed all this crowd. He teaches like nobody else ever teaches.

There's all the miracle stories and everything. He's got what it takes for us to make him king and lead us out of this slavery to Rome and the Herodians and all the abuse and all that sort of thing. Okay. That is what is the, is the. Oh, is, is the occasion, so to speak, for Jesus', , making them all to dismiss.

So he makes them go to, he tells them to go to the other side. He makes them get in the boat, and he tells them to go to Bethsaida. Now as they leave for Bethsaida, we remember this that last week, we mentioned that as they go for the, the, the location there, where they're going to do the feeding, we mentioned that in Luke chapter nine.

Luke tells us that they were in the region of Bethsaida, so they're in the region of Beth Eda, yet Jesus told them to get in the boat and go to Bethsaida. So that gets a little bit confusing for us until we realized this, that there were actually two, Bethsaida. There was a Bethsaida on the west side of the Sea of Galilee and another Bethsaida on the east side.

The Beth Seder that was on the east side was known as Bethsaida. Julius the other Bethsaida on the east, on the western side, was on the side of Israel. That was known as Bethsaida of Galilee. So two Bethsaidas, two cities, two villages that went by the same name, which really wasn't all that unusual because the word Bethsaida literally means house (Beth: house) of the fishermen.

So it's not hard to imagine the two villages on the Sea of Galilee both went by the name House of Fishermen. So they leave Bethsaida Julius, which is on the east side or the eastern shore of the Sea of Galilee, the northeastern shore, and they're going to cross over to Bethsaida of Galilee. That's where Peter and Andrew are from.

They're going to cross over to there. But just by, , a note here, just let your eyes drop down to, , well look down to the end of the passage first. If you look down to the end of the passage, the beginning of the next passage, verse 53, when they had crossed over, they came to land at where? Gennesaret. So they didn't make it to Bethsaida.

So Jesus sent them to Bethsaida. The storm is going to blow them so far off course that they're not going to make it to their destination. And then if you flip over and just let your eyes float down to chapter eight, all the way down to chapter eight and verse 22, we read and they came to Bethsaida. So it takes two more chapters for them to actually get to Bethsaida.

So all of what happens in the remainder of chapter six, which isn't much, and then chapter seven and most of chapter eight, all of that happens as they're trying to get to Bethsaida that they originally set out to go for. So just the point to observe there is all of this that happens, happens because they were blown off course.

So there's nothing there. There's no coincidences, there's no happenstances. All of these things occurred. Jesus healing the blind man, Jesus, , encountering the Syrophenician woman, Jesus, healing the deaf man. The second feeding, the feeding of the 4,000. All of those things take place supposedly because the disciples had been blown off course.

But of course we know there's no coincidences. They weren't blown off course. They were actually on course. But all those things happened because the disciples didn't make it to actually work to where they were headed to. So he makes the disciples to get into the boat and go to the other side while he dismisses the crowd.

So this fever pitch excitement over this man Jesus, and what he's now doing in the, in the in Israel, and the excitement over him being a political leader, this is what is now going to drive the story. This is what's going to drive the story along. Jesus is going to need to, to rescue the disciples. But now if we think back to last week's passage, remember last week.

One of the things that we observed was that Jesus will meet the needs of the people, but he will meet their greatest need. First, you remember that their greatest need was to hear the preaching and the teaching of the word of God, but they also needed to be fed. And so Jesus will meet their needs, but he'll meet the greatest need first, which is their need to hear the preaching and the teaching of the word.

Afterwards, he will meet the lesser need, which is to feed them. Jesus is going to do the same thing in this passage. He's going to meet the needs of the disciples. They will need to be rescued, but they have a far greater need, and Jesus will meet that need first. And the meeting of that need is the basis for the whole story.

So now let's begin looking at how Jesus is going to meet their greatest needs. So verse 46, after he had taken leave of them, He went up on the mountain to pray. So Jesus now has this second period of prayer that we read about. There's three times of prayer in Mark's gospel, three instances in which Jesus is said to be praying and we're told something about his prayer.

All three of those instances, well we, we saw the first one in chapter one, as Jesus leaves before the sun comes up and he goes to the desolate place to pray. The second one is here, and then the

third one will take place in chapter 14 in a place that we all are familiar with a place called the Garden of Gethsemane.

Those are the three instances of prayer in Mark's gospel. Now, what's interesting is the commonalities that all three of those instances of prayer have. They all take place at night. They all take place. When Jesus is alone. They all take place. When Jesus is in a desolate place, they all take place within the context of, of Jesus either being interrupted by his disciples or inhibited by his disciples.

In some way. The first time Jesus was praying, the disciples come and interrupt him. Where have you been? Jesus? This time when Jesus is praying, he'll again be interrupted by his disciples because he'll be called to their rescue. The third time he'll be inhibited by his disciples because his disciples can't stay awake to pray.

So all three instances are at night. All three instances, Jesus is alone in a desolate place. All three instances, Jesus is either interrupted or inhibited by his disciples. And lastly, all three instances take place within the context of a crisis. A crisis of temptation, so to speak. Jesus is being tempted and the temptation is always the same.

The temptation is to bypass the cross and take glory without the cross. The temptation is always for Jesus to abandon or forsake his mission in exchange for the easy way or the popular way. Alright, so just as a reminder, chapter one took place at the end of that night of healing and the disciples come to say, Jesus, what are you doing by yourself?

The crowds are all excited. They're all behind you. And Jesus responds by saying, let's go to another place. Now we see this instance takes place. In the same context. The crowd has reached this fever pitch. They're about to take Jesus by force and make him king. And once again, we find Jesus at night alone praying.

The third instance is the same. In which the temptation, once again is to Jesus, to not take this cross the next day, to not drink the cup of the cross the next day, all three instances at night alone, deserted, interrupted by disciples and praying over the temptation to fail or to abandon his mission. Now, you can believe that's coincidence, if you like, but I think that it's clear that Mark has a, a, an agenda, a prerogative to teach us something about Jesus's prayer, something about the temptation that he is undergoing and something about the reason why it is he sent the disciples away because the plan totally changed, didn't it?

The plan was to go away with Jesus and receive some much-needed rest. Now, instead of not only not getting the day of rest in place of a day of rest, they got another day of long strenuous work. So we might say, well, certainly now's time for a day of rest. But then instead Jesus sends them away. And we all know to understand that in Jesus, as Jesus sends them away, he's sending them knowingly into a storm.

Okay? So that's the context for all this. Now, verse 47, and when evening came, the boat was out on the sea and he was alone on the land. So the crowd has left him. He's all alone on a mountain, we're told, and the boat is out on the sea. Verse 48. And he saw that they were making headway, painfully for the wind was against them.

And about the fourth watch of the night, we'll stop there. So Jesus, during his prayer, he is said to see them and to see something about their situation, which is to say they're making headway painfully. So much has been said about, well, how did Jesus see them? And much explanation has been offered that, perhaps this was near the time of the Passover and we all know that the Passover takes place at Full Moon.

So it was probably a full moon and Jesus was up high on a mountain and he looks out and he can see the disciples there out on the Sea of Galilee, and he can see that they're not doing very well or other explanations, maybe Jesus came down from the mountain and he is now on, he's on the shore and he is looking out and he's seeing them and seeing that they're not doing too well.

Which both of those explanations are just absolutely ludicrous, aren't they? It's at night, it's a storm. Storms normally have rain and mist and fog, plus they are miles apart. Plainly, clearly, Jesus's seeing of them is a supernatural, seeing very plainly the spirit that indwells him. As Jesus's communing in prayer, the spirit that indwells him opens his mind, shows him this picture of the disciples on the water as we're as described, making headway painfully.

So that's actually, that's actually the first miracle of the story. Interestingly enough, the story has not one miracle, but five. There's five miracles in the story before us. And the first is we just saw the supernatural seeing of the disciples. The second miracle, we all know that one is the actual walking on the water.

The third miracle is the supernatural calming of the storm. because we're going to be told that as Jesus gets in the boat, it's immediately calm. The fourth miracle. Actually took place, right, just before that one. But the fourth miracle, not narrated by Mark, was when Jesus tells Peter to himself, get out of the boat, and he gets out of the boat and he takes some steps on the water.

The but being in supernaturally empowered by Jesus to do what he could never do. So that's the fourth miracle, the third miracle. Then the fourth is the calming of the storm, and then the fifth miracle is only narrated by John because John tells us as soon as Jesus got in the boat, they were immediately at the shore.

So somehow Jesus, then once he gets in the boat, they were at that point, at least a mile from shore, but they're immediately at the shore. So five miracles in the story. The first is Jesus's supernatural seeing. We'll come back to that next week. We'll come back to a lot of this next week. But Jesus's supernatural seeing of his called-out people in the middle of danger.

So he saw that they were making headway painfully. Now those that, that phrase making headway, painfully, that's translating a word that most often is translated torment or tortured. It's the same word that mark narrates from the mouth of the demons. When the demons say to Jesus, what are, have you come to torment us before the day, before the hour?

It's a word that shows up a lot in the revelation to speak of the torment or the torture that awaits the evil one and his demons. So the same description. They're being tortured. They're being tormented by the waves. Matthew uses the same word to describe what the waves are doing to the boat. Mark uses the same word to describe the experience of the disciples.

They're tortured, they are being tormented, making headway painfully so we can imagine. What it would be like to be rowing against the wind. Now, for a number of hours, mark tells us it's the

fourth hour or the fourth watch of the night. So, mark, as we know, is writing to a Roman audience and writing to a Roman audience.

He's going to use the Roman method of dividing the night into four periods. The Hebrews would divide the night into three periods. The Romans divided it into four. He'll do it again in chapter 13. But he divides the he, he's using the Roman method of thinking of the night as in four segments. And the fourth watch of the night would correspond to our 3:00 AM to 6:00 AM.

So we read earlier that when evening came, the crowd was dismissed. The D, the disciples got onto the water. So we would imagine that they got onto the water, maybe just at dusk, right at the end of the day. So that would put that maybe we'll think conservatively here, maybe 8:00 PM. And if this is the very beginning, mark says it's about the fourth watch.

So if, if it's the very beginning of the fourth watch, that's seven hours, seven hours of Jesus being in prayer, and seven hours of the disciples facing this wind. Now we know what happens in a storm and you're on a boat. Even if you're not a sailor, you, you know how it works when you're in a boat, especially a smaller boat, in a storm, what do you have to do?

You have to keep the boat heading into the waves because if a boat is not heading directly into the, if the waves come at the boat from the side, then the boat's going to capsize to survive the storm, the boat has to go straight into the waves, and that's how you fight a storm in a boat is you basically just keep the boat going into the waves.

You are not worried about progress. You're not worried about how far you're getting, you have to keep the boat heading into the waves. And to do that, the boat has to be moving in relation to the water. And you're probably not as, as the case is here, you're not moving very much in relation to the land, but the boat has to be moving in relation to the water in order to be steerable and in order to, to keep the, the, the bow of the boat heading into the waves the whole time.

So that's what the disciples have been doing. They've been rowing against the waves to keep the boat going into the waves throughout the storm. So imagine rowing again, let's just be real conservative. Let's just say that, that the storm has been bad now for four or five hours. Imagine rowing hour after hour, after hour and pulling on those oars.

Now they, they were semen. But still, this is a multiple hour storm. And just imagine what their arms feel like and imagine what their back feels like and what their legs feel like. Rowing into the storm, into the waves hour after hour after hour, mark uses the appropriate word to say they are tormented.

They feel like their, their arms are spaghetti. They feel like that they're just not going to make it anymore because they just, but they can't stop because there's no such thing as life vests. And if that boat gets turned against the waves and it capsizes the boat, they're, they're dead. So they've got to keep the boat moving and they've got to keep it moving into the wind.

The wind here would've been most likely what, what's known of even today as a predominantly eastward blowing wind. Even to this day, the Sea of Galilee experiences strong storms that are almost always west to east. And so this easterly wind is combating the disciples. They are travel, they are trying to travel westward.

So, Matthew says that the wind was opposite them. Mark here says that the wind was against them. They're trying to make it westward, and the wind is blowing eastward. And the waves, of course, are going the same direction as the wind, and they're trying to get the boat heading into the waves all night long.

And they've done this until the fourth watch of the night. Now John tells us that they had made it about 25 to 30 stadia, and we all know what that means, right? because we. Use Stadia all the time. A stadia is an eighth of a mile. Just so for your information, you always learn something in church, right? A stadia is an eighth of a mile.

And so they've made it about 25 to 30 stadia, which puts it about three to four miles. Now, the journey from Bethsaida Julius to Bethsaida of Galilee, which is not where they're going to make it, by the way, but that journey is a journey of about six miles over water. So they are about maybe two thirds of the way to where they're trying to get to, at least from a distance standpoint.

And they've made that two thirds of a way against the wind in the storm at night. So they were making this headway, painfully the wind was against them. And about the fourth watch of the night, he came to them walking on the sea. Now, last week we talked about the absurd attempts to explain away the miraculous feeding.

Through these crazy things, such as Jesus hid all these baskets of food, enough food to feed eight to 15,000 people and nobody saw him sneak it out of the cave. And these just crazy, ridiculous explanations trying to explain away the plain truth of the scriptures, meaning what they say, which was that Jesus miraculously fed the, the, the crowds.

We talked about that last week. This week, when we come to this miracle, we come against the same thing. Ridiculous explanations that I know that you have encountered these somewhere along the line, some sort of explanation as to how it was that Jesus appeared to walk on the water but didn't really walk on the water.

The most common one is that it was a stormy night fog. The disciples were disoriented. They'd gotten lost on the water, and Jesus wasn't actually on the water. He was on the shore. And because it was foggy and misty and they couldn't see really well, it was like this optical illusion. They were really a lot closer to the shore than they thought.

And there was Jesus on the shore, and they thought he was on the water. That's probably the most common one. Pretty crazy, h? The, , a little bit less common of a, of an explanation is that Jesus knew about a sandbar. There was a sandbar that somehow Jesus was able to walk on this sandbar and get in the boat.

Yet the boat didn't get stuck on the sandbar. I'm not sure how that worked out, but Jesus somehow knew about this sandbar, knew it was there, knew it went out to the boat, and walked on the sandbar and got into the boat. Which quite frankly, is far more of a fantastical explanation than the fact that he walked on the water.

This guy, Jesus, earlier in the day, he managed to feed eight to 15,000 people with nobody seeing where he got the food. Now, tonight, he just happens to know where a sandbar is and the boat just happens to not get stuck on the sandbar, and he walks on the sandbar to get into the boat. Isn't that, I mean, the explanations require more faith than the actual miracle itself.

So just to be clear, just to be very plain with us, the phrase that Mark uses twice, he came to them on the sea. Sometimes we, we talk about how words can mean different things and, and particularly Greek prepositions. Greek prepositions can be notorious to mean different things and, and so could this mean he walked by the sea?

To be very clear and to be very plain. There is no way of interpreting those words other than the way that they're interpreted. You would have to violate the rules of the language and make words mean what they don't mean. In order to say Jesus walked by the sea. It's not possible. The language, the Greek language does not allow for that interpretation or, or that translation is simply not possible.

It's the same identical grammatical phrase that that mark just used in verse 47 to say, to say that Jesus was on the land. So in the same way he's on the land is where he's is, in the same way he's now on the sea. So it is not possible for Mark's words to mean anything other than he was treading on water.

So he comes to them walking on the sea, the second miracle of the story. Now, the, the, this miracle, the nature of this miracle is, is plain and obvious to all of us, which is to say water doesn't support human beings. You might can float in water and you might can keep your head above water when you float, but your entire body is not going to tread on the water.

That's just not how water works. And so plainly, the creator of the water is in perfect control of what he has created. He created water in such a way as to be displaced by a human body except for this, for this instance, he created water such as to allow a human body to go down in the water, except for this time.

Because in this instance, Jesus wants to walk on top of the water. He wants to tread on top of the water. And so miraculously he changes the nature, the very makeup of the water's molecules to support his weight and to do it easily while he walks on the water. He came to them walking on the sea. He meant to pass them by.

So we stop right there because that's a very unusual phrase. We talked earlier about the unusualness, the oddness of Jesus, making the disciples leave. Now we come to something that's even odder. He meant to pass them by. What in the world does that mean? Does Jesus see his disciples struggling out on the water and think, oh, I need to go to them?

And so he walks on the water and his intention was to sort of, sort of, I don't know, sneak by them, maybe shout out some encouragement as he goes by. Hey guys, keep on rowing. You can make it. You can do it. Keep, keep rushing. You are almost there. One commentator actually says that Jesus didn't intend for the disciples to see him.

He wanted to surprise them when they got to the other side of the sea, but the disciples accidentally saw him, so he was able to walk on water, but he wasn't able to conceal himself from the disciples somehow. But what is this? What's going on here? Why did, why are we told Jesus meant to pass them by, and it's translated?

Well, Jesus purposed or he willed, he meant to pass them by or to pass by them. The most common explanation that's given is this, that Jesus wanted to evoke from the disciples a response of faith.

Jesus wanted the disciples to see him recognize him and ask him to come into the boat with them. And so Jesus is trying to draw out of them.

This request of faith, this request of trust. You may have heard that because that's the most, I think that's the most common way to understand that passage, but it's also the most nonsensical way to understand the passage because it makes no sense whatsoever. First of all, is Jesus meant to pass them by if it was his intention to pass them by and the disciples somehow overrode Jesus's intentions.

That's problematic in and of itself. But think about it just from a basic standpoint. Imagine that you are in that boat and imagine you've been rolling against the sea, the waves now for hour upon hour, upon hour, and then you see this person coming to you on the water, and then you get past the whole point that you are frightened and you don't know what this is or who this is.

You now recognize it's Jesus. What do you think happened? Then the disciples look at one another and say, Hey. I got an idea. Let's ask Jesus to come on the boat. You want to? Why don't we just ask him now? Yeah, let, yeah, let's, let's invite him onto the boat. Ludicrous. Once they recognize it's Jesus, who in their right mind will not welcome him into the boat.

So for me, that offers no explanation whatsoever. I'm stunned. I'm stunned at how many handlers of this passage miss it altogether because once I show it to you, it'll be very plain. What we are faced with here is something called a theophany. Now, theophany is a fancy word that you, again, one of those words, you don't need to remember the word, but it's one of those words that though it's not found in the Bible, it's a word that helps us understand what the Bible says to us because that's how we like to think.

Remember that whole discussion when we talked about the parables as, as Jesus teaches with parables, how the western mind from the Greek tradition, the western mind, what we like to do is we like to take concepts and we like to take the, the idea of the concept and break it down, give it a word. That way we can handle it and toss it around in our mind and think about it and talk about it.

And so these biblical words are the same thing. They, they give us a word to help us think about something that we're presented with in scripture. So the scripture presents us with these things called Theos. The theophany is just a, like the Greeks often do. They'll take two words and put them together.

They just took the word theos, which is God, and phrenos, which just means to reveal or to manifest or to display or to show. And so it's a God showing or a God revealing is all it is. It's a revealing of God. Now, in a real way, all of scripture is a theophany because all of scripture is revealing God to us.

But that's not what the word theophany is referencing. What the word theophany is talking about are instances in which God in particular reveals himself in a particular way, in a particular moment to particular people for a particular reason. So that's what theophany are. So let's think about some of the Theos that we can think of from the Old Testament.

The Old Testament has a number of theophany. Remember for example, when Abraham sat down and ate a meal with God and two angels, God was revealing or showing himself to Abraham in a certain way. Or maybe the best known one is Moses in the bush. The bush that burns, but it's not

consumed. That is a revealing, it's a God revealing, God is revealing himself to Moses in that instance, in a, in a certain way, in a certain manner or some other theophany is the cloud that the nation followed or the, , the angel of the Lord or the second person of the Trinity showing himself to the parents of, , Samson or to Gideon or many other instances there.

There's many of these instances in the Old Testament, these theophanies. Now, when we come to the New Testament, there's also Theophany as well, but the New Testament is a little bit different because Jesus is here. Jesus, as we know, he's the revealing of the Father. So the theophany sort of take on a different aspect, but in John's gospel there are three Theos, and this is the first.

The next two will be, the second one will be the Mount of Transfiguration in chapter nine on the Mount of Transfiguration. That's clearly a revealing of God because the disciples for a few moments, see, they behold Jesus in his glory. And then the final theophany takes place in chapter 15 at the moment of Jesus' death, earthquake, darkness, and the centurion then declares, surely this man was the son of God.

So those are the second and the third theophany. This is the first. So a theophany is God revealing himself in a special way, in a special manner for a particular reason in a particular time. How is Jesus showing himself to be God here? Well, first of all, he showed himself. He revealed himself as God when he saw the disciples on the water.

Then Jesus is revealing himself as God, as he walks on the water. Now, if we all were sharp students of the Old Testament, we would recognize right away that that is a theme that the Old Testament carries throughout the Old Testament is the theme of God putting water under his feet, treading on water, trampling on water, trotting on water.

A few instances in your notes go like this, Habakkuk, chapter three, verse 15, you trampled the sea with your horses. Psalm 77, your way was through the sea, your path through the great waters. Isaiah 43, you are the one who makes a way in the sea, a path by the mighty waters. Job nine verse eight, and others.

Okay, that's a, that's a prominent theme in the Old Testament. It's God's. Putting somehow in one way or another, water under his feet, trampling on it, trotting on it, and then you could even expand it further to talk about God's control of the water, God's manipulation of the water. The parting of the Red Sea, for example.

So a prominent Old Testament theme is God putting the water under his feet. Walking on the water. Here comes Jesus walking on the water. Have you ever thought that if Jesus' mission was to rescue his disciples, he could have gotten there a whole lot better than that? I mean, what the whole walking on water thing did he have to climb up the waves and go down the other side?

And I mean, surely it was tedious because they're three or four miles out. If Jesus just wanted to get to them to rescue them, there was a whole lot of better ways to do that. Jesus is intentionally walking on the water. I. Because the 12 Jewish people in the boat, the 12 Jewish men in the boat are going to immediately recognize, wait a minute, our scriptures talked over and over about God treading on water.

But then this enigmatic phrase, he meant to pass them by. So when we think about these theophany, these revelations, these appearances of God in the Old Testament, one of the phrases

that seems to be a common phrase that is off repeated is this phrase, God passed them by. And when God uses that phrase, he's not saying that he was on his way and he saw them over there, Hey, and he kept on going.

It's speaking of God revealing himself. And God is pleased to use the words or to use the phrase past them by, take a look with me at one of the most well-known of these Theophany, this is Revel, I'm sorry, Exodus chapter 33. In the context of Exodus chapter 33, Moses has headed up to here with the belligerent, disobedient, non-believing people.

And he has just headed, and they won't believe. They won't trust. But then there's this whole going into the promised land to fight for the land. They don't want to do that. And God's saying, well, since they're just so unbelieving, I'm not going to go with them. And they sort of go back and forth and back and forth and all it all ends up with Moses pleading with God.

God, just show me your glory. I just want to see your glory. I just want to see you. And then God indulges Moses this way. Verse 18. Moses says, please show me your glory. Verse 19. He said, this is God speaking. I will make all my goodness pass before you and I'll proclaim before you my name, the Lord, and I'll be gracious to whom I'll be gracious and will show mercy on whom I will show mercy.

But he said, you cannot see my face for man shall not see me and live. And the Lord said, behold, there is a place by me where you shall stand on the rock. And while my glory passes by, I will put you in the cleft of a rock and I'll cover you with my hand until the third time I have passed by. Then I'll take away my hand and you shall see my back, but my face shall not be seen three times.

God says, I will show you my glory. I will pass by. Another instance in which we see the same sort of thing. This is also a well-known instance. This takes place in one Kings 19. We are familiar with the story when Elijah has been run out of town or he's fearfully, fled from Jezebel, who now says she's going to kill em, and he winds up in the desolate place in the desert.

And then there's this, that whole time there where Elijah is really just at the end of his rope, but then God comes to him. So look, we'll pick up the story from verse from one Kings chapter 19, and he said, speaking, um, , God speaking here. Go out and stand on the Mount before the Lord. And behold, the Lord passed by.

And a great and strong wind tore the mountains and broken pieces, the rocks before the Lord. And the Lord was not in the wind. And after the wind and earthquake. And we know how the story goes as the earthquake. There's, then there's, it all ends with the, with the small voice. But you see how all of that takes place in the context of God saying, The Lord passed by and Elijah saw.

Let's look at one more job. Chapter nine. What's happening in Job chapter nine is that there's this big contention thing, this this contentiousness between job and the Lord, because Job has just had his whole life jerked out from under him, and he is asking the question, why? What did I do? I have not sinned.

And throughout all of that job is, is going back and forth and, and there's, there's certainly, if Job is anything, the Book of Job is anything. It's a volume of words. There's a lot of words, there's a lot of dialogue, and Job is just going on and on about how I can't seem to just. Present my case before the Lord.

I can't come face to face with him. If I could just come face to face with him, I would present my case before him. And it goes on about how nobody can see him. He is wise and hard, mighty in strength, who's hardened himself against him and who has succeeded. He removes mountains, et cetera, et cetera. But his whole point is, I can't seem to see him.

But then verse 10, he does great things beyond searching out and marvelous things beyond. Number behold, he passes by me and I see him not, but I do not perceive him. He moves on, but I do not perceive him. You see there. So we see this pattern in which God just seems to prefer this phrase to describe the revealing of his glory he passed by Why?

What does that mean? That he passed by? I don't know. We're never told. We just know that's a phrase that God prefers when in the context of listen closely, one of his people needing to see him and God desiring to show himself and he will oftentimes use this phrase pass By

now, Jesus who supernaturally saw them from miles away and has tread the water underfoot. We are told that his purpose was to pass them by. It has nothing to do with Jesus walking past the boat and beating them to the other side. Has nothing to do with Jesus trying to evoke some sort of response from the disciples.

It has everything to do with the first theophany in Mark's gospel. The first instance of Jesus saying, I will reveal to you my glory. I will reveal to you who I am. I will show you in a special way for a special occasion, for a special purpose. I will show you my glory. I will pass by you.

He meant to pass by them, but when they saw him walking on the sea, they thought it was a ghost. You know, there is a lot of superstition in the New Testament. You ever noticed how much superstition is in the, in the New Testament? We just experienced some superstition, didn't we? With Herod thinking that Jesus was John the Baptizer, come back from the dead.

We're going to experience more If you read through the book of Acts, the Book of Acts is full of people's superstitious beliefs. So they have this super we'll return here next week, by the way. But they have this superstitious belief that Jesus is a ghost. Some sort of apparition, the word there is phantasma, and you can hear that's where we get our word phantom from.

So they, they fear that he is some sort of phantom, some sort of ghost, some sort of living, but not living thing. Some sort of thing that was living and come back. Or sometimes phantasma can mean demon. There was a strong superstition in Jesus' Day that the demons were the source of storms on the sea. And so when there was a storm on the sea, people believed that it was a demon stirring up the sea.

And so perhaps that is, has a connection here. Perhaps they're, they're fearful that it was a, it was some sort of a demonic thing and they thought it was a ghost, and they cried out the same word there, literally screamed. It's the same word that's used to describe what the demons do when they come into the presence of Jesus.

They scream out. But here the, the apostles scream out, they cry out for, they all saw him. What does that mean? They all saw him. So they are keeping the boat in the wind, keeping the boat heading into the waves heading westward. Jesus is coming to them from eastward. So how do you row in a boat? You row facing.

Backwards. The stern it's called, right? So your row facing backwards, and they're rowing here and Jesus is walking from that direction. So imagine what this would've been like, dark, misty, rainy, plus all the waves up and down, up the swells, down the swells. It's not like they had a good sight of vision, but as they maybe go up one swell and come down another, suddenly they start getting a glimpse of something.

Something's on the water out there, and they go up another wave and down another wave and up another wave, and then the something's bigger and they all see it because they're all facing the same direction and they start talking to one. Did you see that there's something out there? It's the middle of the night, there's something out there, and it's getting closer.

Up another wave down, another wave up, another wave down, another wave. And this thing is getting closer and we can't quite see where it is. Rainy sea spray everywhere

and they're terrified. Does this call to mind another instance in which it's nighttime? The same disciples are on the same boat, on the same sea, and there's another storm, and then there's the same messiah and the same reaction. They're more afraid of him than they were of drowning. Once again, they're more afraid of him than they are the storm.

Do you notice how consistently the disciples radically underestimate Jesus's power, compassion, and care? They're always underestimating, they're terrified. He's coming to them in what is up to this point, the greatest demonstration of his deity, and he's coming to them and they're terrified. But immediately he spoke to them and said, take heart.

It is, I do not be afraid or literally stop being afraid. What wonderful words those are to hear. Take courage, take heart. Don't be afraid. Stop being afraid. Stop fearing. Those words are spoken about 12 times in the New Testament. All but once they come from Jesus' mouth, fear not, don't be afraid. It is I, but he says, take heart.

It is I. None of our translations get that right. From King James onward because all of our translations say something to the effect. It is I, but that's not exactly what Jesus said. We are, I think, all familiar with the I Am statements in John's Gospel. Everybody familiar with the I Am statements, these seven statements in John's Gospel in which Jesus makes these profound declarations of himself.

I am the way, the truth and the life. I am the resurrection and the life. I am the good shepherd. I am the door. I am the true vine. These seven glorious statements that Jesus makes. I am the bread. Now, as Jesus makes those statements, John has him making those statements in a particular grammatical fashion.

In the Greek language, there's two ways to say 'I am.' Yes. First of all, you could say 'ego.' Now when I hear ego, you probably think the same thing I'm thinking of. That's when I was a kid. Saturday morning cartoons. It was drilled into me. What? Leggo my eggo. Alright, so you could say 'ego,' like "leggo, my eggo," those two things have absolutely nothing to do with each other, but the word 'ego' means 'I am.'

That's actually where we get our word 'ego.' And what ego means is self-perception. How you perceive yourself to be. So in the Greek you could say ego, and that means I am. You could also say 'eimi.' That also means I am.

All seven times. John has Jesus saying both ago and eimi. Literally like he just repeated himself.

To translate those I am statements in John's gospel, to translate those, literally we would say, "I am. I am the resurrection and the life." "I am. I am the bread." "I am, I am the true vine." You get it? It is a radical extreme emphasis. A forceful emphasis. "I am, I am."

Now, this of course calls to mind. Exodus chapter three. Remember Exodus chapter three, once again, the Bush episode and what's your name? Who shall I say, sent me? And we all are familiar with that. Where we read the words I am that I am. And have you ever thought about that phrase? I am. That I am. That is a notoriously difficult phrase to interpret or to translate.

It's notoriously difficult to translate because it follows the same type of pattern. It's almost like literally saying, "I am, I am." And so translators will say, "I am that I am." That's really as close as we can get. In fact, if you were to read the Greek translation of the Old Testament, the Septuagint, and you came to Exodus chapter three where God says, I am, that I am, guess what you'll find?

Ego eimi. And here comes Jesus. I am that I am the bread. I am that I am the true vine. Guess what Jesus says to the, to the apostles? Fear not. Take courage. I am. I am.

Literally, Jesus says to the disciples, take courage. Yahweh is here.

Our New Testaments are full of instances in which Jesus unequivocally declares himself to be the Lord of all creation. I am that I am is here. The great I am is here. And so this is the greatest, the, the, the final, should we say manifestation revelation. This, this great revealing of himself. He walks on the water, he says to the disciples, I am that I am is here. The great I am is here.

And he got into the boat with them and the wind ceased. Mark, of course, skips over Peter's walking on the water because this is Peter's telling the story, and God has done such a work of humility in Peter that Peter says, no, that's too good of a reflection on me.

We're leaving that part out. Instead, we come now to the next miracle, which is the wind ceasing as Jesus gets into the boat. So before Jesus calmed the wind and calmed the waves by speaking to them, peace be still here. He calms the wind and the waves simply with a desire. It's a miracle of his will. He just wills the sea to be calm.

And it is. He just wishes it to be calm and it is. The wind ceased and they were utterly astounded for. They did not understand about the loaves, but their hearts were hardened. Where in the world did that come from? because I thought that we had left that episode behind. I thought. Now we're talking about walking on water and wind and waves.

I thought the loaves were last week's message. How did loaves make their way back into this? Instead, we are told they were utterly astounded. They were terrified. They were fearful, they were frightened, they were astounded. And Mark says the reason for their astonishment was they didn't understand the loaves.

So somehow their misperception of the loaves event was the basis for their fear in this event. And furthermore, Mark says, but their hearts were hardened. Now Jesus is going to go on to conduct another feeding, the feeding of the 4,000 in chapter eight. Interestingly enough, that account will also end with yet another statement of the disciples non-understanding.

And it's, this is almost verbatim. Look in your notes. We read this Mark chapter eight, verse 17, after the feeding of the 4,000, Jesus aware of this, said to them, why are you discussing the fact that you have no bread? Do you not yet perceive or understand? Are your hearts hardened twice? Jesus speaks of hard hearts that the disciples have both times in connection to the loaves event and their non-perception of the, of the feeding event.

And both times Jesus says, this is the cause. This is the instance, and this is because your hearts are hard. So now we see a couple things. First of all, we see the connection because the loaves, they didn't understand the loaves. They were perplexed. They were fearful. They were astounded to see Jesus on the water.

So the connection here is what? This is why John was helpful because John showed us the connection. John showed us that this fever of excitement, this feverish excitement over this man Jesus, and what he was doing, got the crowds all glassy-eyed about a new political leader who was going to change everything.

And these disciples got caught up in it too. They got caught up in this whole Jesus as king thing. And we know that they had a tendency to that because remember when James and John's, , mother comes to Jesus and says, Hey, when you come into your kingdom and you're sitting on your, on your throne, could, could my son sit on one side and one on the other?

Which shows us that there was a continuing problem that Jesus faced, and that was the problem that people were constantly wanting to make him into a political redeemer. Instead of a spiritual redeemer, they were constantly trying to make him into a physical deliverer instead of what he came to, to be, to be.

And he was, he was always facing this same problem. That's why he would say to Pilate, my kingdom is not of this world. If it were, then we would be conducting ourselves very differently. But their misunderstanding, their, the fact that they got caught up in that excitement and they too began to lose sight of who they were beginning to see Jesus to be.

And instead, they were beginning to see him, like the crowd was so excited and they were probably even picturing themselves in long robes, having positions of importance now that Jesus has ascended to the throne and they got caught up in this as well. And the fact that they got caught up into it. Was the basis for why when Jesus comes to them in the greatest revelation, yet in the gospel of Mark, when he comes to them revealing himself as the creator of all things, as the one who treads on the water, they weren't expecting that they were completely taken by surprise.

They didn't recognize him, thought he was a ghost. They were afraid. Why? Because we're told their hearts were hard. So we read that phrase hard hearts quite a lot in scripture, right? And it's a difficult phrase to wrestle with because it's a phrase that's used about some of the worst characters in scripture earlier, Mark used it to describe the Pharisees who want to kill Jesus.

But the most famous, hard-hearted person was Pharaoh, right? He's the most well-known, hard-hearted person because we're told over and over how he hardened his heart. So let's take the Pharaoh and let's use him to help us understand what the scriptures mean when they say someone is hard hearted. So Moses comes to Pharaoh.

God says, let my people go. Pharaoh says, no way. Moses says, all right, you asked for this. And then all these bad things start happening. The Nile turns to blood. All the water in the land turns to blood. There's frogs everywhere. There's gnats everywhere. There are sores all over. Everybody's body, darkness all over the land.

Crops die, hail, brimstone out. All kinds of bad things are happening to which Pharaoh responds. Seeing, hearing the command, God says, let my people go. Now, here's what you're going to get because you don't. All these things happen. Pharaoh responds to all that by Oh, sure. I should have. I should have done that before the first plague.

Not at all. In fact, his response to the plagues just to call it for face value for what it is, his response to the plagues is perplexing because you would think anybody in their right mind after about plague number three would've been glad to see those people go. His response is perplexing. That is the essence of what scripture means when it says the heart is hard. In scripture, hardheartedness means fallen man's tendency to not perceive God rightly and not perceiving him rightly, to then not react to him rightly perceiving God wrongly.

You react to him wrongly. And that's precisely what Pharaoh did, wasn't it? When he should have said, oh, absolutely. Nile turned to blood. All the water in our wells turned to blood. Please go. Instead. It's this puzzling reaction and what you say, why are people res? Why is he responding that way? Now, think back through Mark's gospel at all the examples we've been shown of hardheartedness in which Jesus heals the man with the withered hand and they look at Jesus and hate him and start conspiring to kill him.

Or Jesus heals and cleanses lepers, and the more he does this, the more people hate him. That is what Mark is showing us. The hardheartedness of people that not perceiving God rightly, they therefore don't react to him rightly. Now, let's put ourselves back in the boat. What's happening in the boat? In the boat, the disciples have fallen prey to earthly ambitions, and that has caused their perception of Jesus to become perverted.

They were beginning to understand him as who he was. Remember back in the, remember back in the boat, and the first time when he calms the sea and they're saying, who is this man? Who is this man? And this is why Jesus comes to them. This is why Jesus makes them leave, makes them get in the boat, makes them go out into the storm because as we said at the beginning, Jesus is going to meet their greatest need first.

And their greatest need is to have their hard hearts softened. How is Jesus going to soften their hard hearts? He's going to soften their hard hearts by answering the question they asked on the first storm. Remember, same sea also at night. Same boat, same disciples. Jesus calms a storm. They ask, who is this man?

Who is this man? Now, another storm, another night. Same sea, same Jesus, same boat. And Jesus is I am that I am.

I am the great I am.

You need to quash your thoughts of earthly kingdoms. You need to stamp out your ambitions for earthly advance. You need to stop seeing me and even the slightest way as your ticket to glory. because that's not who I am. I am that I am.

So we'll leave ourself with this. When the scriptures call the disciples, when Jesus calls them hardhearted, the thing to understand about hardheartedness is hardheartedness is not black and white, night and day. It's not. Either you are hardhearted or you're not at all. There's degrees of hardheartedness, there's phases.

There's levels of hardheartedness. The disciples certainly are not hardhearted in the same way the Pharisees are. But the disciples have started to fall into this misperception of Jesus and the correction for that. Look to Jesus. Here I am. I am that I am. Look upon me.

All of us face the exact same temptation, all of us. The temptation to hardheartedness, the temptation to start seeing Jesus, to start seeing God a little differently in ways that fit our paradigms just a little better, that fit into what we would like just a little better. All of us have that tendency.

The tendency to slide into hardheartedness. God does not soften the heart of man one time, and it's done. But we live a life in which we are constantly tempted to slide into hard heartedness, meaning we don't stop believing, but we start perceiving God just a little bit more in our image, just a little bit more like we like to think of him, which is why he was so fitting to start the whole story by drawing attention to the fact that they wanted to make Jesus king by force.

So the solution, the biblical solution to sliding into heartedness is the word. The word became flesh and dwelt among us. The word became flesh and came to the apostles on the sea. The word became flesh, and we have it here. This is the necessary remedy. For all of our tendency to slide into Hardheartedness, return to the word, return to the word, return to the word, it is simply not valid for the Christian to say, you know, I've read the Bible.

I know God, I know what he's like. I know what he is not like. because I read the Bible more than once. In fact, I got it. We live in a fallen world with fallen hearts that until we are with Jesus in glory, we will always face this tendency to slide into redefining God in some small way like we'd like him to be.

And the moment we do that, we're blaspheming him. You know, the people that were being fed and celebrating Jesus. They weren't demeaning Jesus, were they? By calling him the prophet and thinking of him as their great earthly deliverer. They weren't demeaning him, they were glorifying him, but they were glorifying him in ways that were not consistent with who he has shown himself to be.

And it matters not how much glory you give to God. If it is not in agreement with what he has shown us, then you are demeaning him. You can define God in any glorious way that you want, and if it's not how he has revealed the great I am, you're blaspheming him. You're making him in your own image, and that may be the highest image that you can imagine.

But unless it's what he showed himself to us to be, we are blaspheming his name. So we must return to the word, return to the word. The word is the only course correction for our tendencies into hardheartedness.