**Do Not Be Afraid**

 ***16****When evening came, his disciples went down to the sea,****17****got into a boat, and started across the sea to Capernaum. It was now dark, and Jesus had not yet come to them.****18****The sea became rough because a strong wind was blowing.****19****When they had rowed about three or four miles, they saw Jesus walking on the sea and coming near the boat, and they were frightened.****20****But he said to them, “It is I; do not be afraid.”****21****Then they were glad to take him into the boat, and immediately the boat was at the land to which they were going. (John 6:16-21, ESV)*

 The Lord Jesus is saying to us, “Do not be afraid, it’s me,” in the middle of our storms.

 Greetings dear brothers and sisters as we talk today about not being afraid. The word “fear” can also mean to shudder, or to be in terror – it can also mean fear from someone or a task. Here, in this passage, we can feel the terror of the disciples directly. However, we’re going to talk about why this fear was unnecessary. Aside from the fear of God, no other fear has a right time to be expressed or even allowed into our lives. We’re talking about not-fearing – and the Lord is saying to us, “Do not fear – it is I.” Let’s go a little deeper into this…

 Fear is conquered by being in God’s Presence and hearing His Word. The disciples entered the boat with a clear objective. They had just witnessed the miracle of the feeding of the 5000 men (which of course meant their families too). It was that same night that they were returning to their home region. They got going even though Jesus was not coming along with them. It was dark and windy. Within that darkness, they saw something supernatural. Someone was walking *on* the water without sinking. They were terrified. Their understanding of how the world worked and what the laws of nature were, was suspended for a moment. They saw something which they could not explain, and even more than that, that unknown figure was approaching them. In other words, something outside of their “life-box” had happened, and they could not lean on their faith at that moment. It was Jesus, however, and He said, “It is I”, which was God’s name in the Old Testament that He had given Moses. Jesus also said, “Do not be afraid!” In other words, have the opposite of fear within you all – have belief within you, rather than magnifying the possibility of evil (one definition of fear) in your minds. That kind of fear comes from both a weakness of faith and spiritual inexperience.

 When you catch a wild bird, its heart beats rapidly in your hands, because it is afraid of the new experience. It is not used to being caught, and it doesn’t know that it is not in danger. At the same time, the animal does not trust you since it doesn’t know you nor do you two speak each other’s languages.

 Today we desperately need to hear Jesus’ voice saying to us, “Do not be afraid.” It could be that you are going through storms right now – or you are suffering from some issues. It may be that you are standing in front of a proverbial Red Sea, meaning you are in an impossible situation. The Lord comes to us with this word – “Do not fear.” He says, “Do not forget that I AM”.

 The disciples did not recognize the Lord’s supernatural mode of arrival into their predicament. But today, the Lord continues to knock on our door in extraordinary and supernatural ways, calming us and rescuing us from the storms of life. Our solutions do not look like His. The disciples thought that Jesus needed to enter their boat, but the Lord had brought them to their destination already.

 The Lord needs us to trust in Him, dearly beloved. Fear is a faith in a wrong object. If you are afraid, it means you have expectations for evil things to happen. If, on the other hand, you trusted your life to Jesus, then I invite you to always have an expectation of salvation and Eternal Life before you.

 Come and let us recognize the Lord’s Presence, and instead of being afraid of our Heavenly Father, let us run toward Him, cling to Him, and serve Him.

 The Lord comes to you in your every situation and says, “It is I, do not fear.” May we recognize Him, and may we accept His Presence and actions with faith among us. The Lord Bless You, Amen.