

Longing to Mimic The Rabbi Pt4!

Overview

Discipleship and the Rabbi.

I want to read for you today out of one of my favorite little books. I hesitate to call it Scripture. I've been chastised for referring to this as Scripture. I'll just say it's a wonderful little book. It's not accurately put together according to strict translation. It's kind of like a sermon based on the Word. It's a story. So I'm reading out of what's called the message. Thought I had my glasses with me. That's not good. It's not the way. When Jesus got the news, He slipped away by boat to an out-of-the-way place by Himself. But unsuccessfully, someone saw Him and the Word got around. Soon a lot of people from the nearby villages walked around the lake to where He was. Where He saw them coming, He was overcome with pity and He began to heal the sick.

Toward the evening, the disciples asked Him, we're out in the country and it's getting late. Dismiss the people so they can go to the villages and get some supper. What Jesus said, there's no need to dismiss them. You give them supper. All we have is five loaves of bread and two fish. Jesus said, bring them here. Then He had the people sit on the grass. He took the five loaves and the two fish, lifted His face to heaven in prayer, blessed, broke, and gave the bread to the disciples. The disciples then gave the food to the congregation. They ate and they were full. They gathered twelve baskets of leftovers and about 5,000 had attended His wonderful dinner.

I want to read on now immediately on the hinge of what we just read. As soon as the meal was finished, He insisted that the disciples get in the boat and go on ahead to the other side while He dismissed the people. When the crowd had dispersed, He climbed the mountain so He could be by Himself and pray. He stayed there alone, late into the night. Meanwhile, the boat was far out to sea when the wind came up against them and they were battered by the waves. At about four in the morning, Jesus came toward them walking on the water. They were scared out of their wits. A ghost, they were heard crying in terror, but Jesus was quick to comfort them. Courage, it's me, don't be afraid. Peter suddenly called, master, if it's really you, call me to come to you on the water. Jesus said, come ahead. Jumping out of the boat, Peter walked on the water to Jesus, but when he looked down at the waves, turning beneath his feet, he lost his nerve and started to sink.

Master, save me. Jesus didn't hesitate. He reached down, grabbed his hand. And then he said, faint heart, what got into you? The two of them climbed into the boat and the wind died down. This is so interesting that I had chosen to read this passage. And then just before the service began, I was introduced to a lady that I did not at first recognize, and her daddy was my hero. He

was the district superintendent of this district. That man, Don Emmons, came to my church in Espanola in 1970, and he preached from the passage that I just read. And his focus in that message was, if I was an artist, I would paint a picture of Jesus and Peter walking back to the boat together. I remember it like it was yesterday. What I'm about to share with you this morning actually began in Jordan at the baptism of the Lord Jesus. Jesus shows up at the Jordan. He insists that John baptize him. John gets all excited and says, no, no, no, no, you baptize me. I want to give you a little, this is just a personal observation. You don't have to take this home. But I think that there was a clear understanding between the two of them.

Jesus' baptism was one of water, his message was, he's coming and he has another baptism. Jesus says, you baptize me in water. I hear John saying, water, no, you baptize me with the Holy Ghost and fire. That's what I think was going on. Jesus said to Peter, he said to John the Baptist, this is necessary. It's the most interesting and I've related this to you in times gone by because it's one of my favorite little pictorial stories in the Gospels that when Jesus was going down in the water being held by the hands of a human being, Jesus is the God man and the man dares to touch him. I was warned some years ago that when I was about to meet the president of Kenya, don't touch him. Somebody will kill you. ³ Here was John the Baptist who took a hole of the torso of Jesus and lowered him out of the, into the water. What was this symbolic of?

It was Jesus in a prophetic manner saying to the father and whoever was watching with any attention, I'm going to die as he went down in the water, but I'm going to come back to life as he rose up out of the water. And what I see and perceive at that moment is the father in heaven is so enthralled with the moment that he could not hold his peace and the father says to his son, how I love you and I'm so proud of you today. You are my beloved son with you. I'm well pleased. Please allow me to add my own little interpretation as it might be. You are my beloved son with whom I'm well pleased. I added this little phrase that doesn't take the place up, but to me, well, it helps me in the delivery of what I feel here this morning.

The father was saying as Jesus was promising in a dramatic fashion father, I won't back away from the cross. I'm going down. And the father speaks and says, son, I believe in you. I'm going to ask you to do this a few times this morning. I want you to repeat those words with me. I believe in you. I believe one more time. I believe in you. Those are powerful words. I believe in you. I remember, by way of remembrance, you know your scriptures ever so well, that Jesus took this beautiful picture of blessing, of encouragement, of lifting up people everywhere he went. I believe in you. Although he never used those words, those words aren't necessarily recorded for us in those clear pieces. It's so abundantly obvious.

A fellow is introduced to Jesus and Jesus looks at that man. He's about to call into his realm of discipleship and he said, ah, now there is a pure Israel light. There's no deceitfulness in his heart. What a proclamation. He was saying to Nathaniel, I believe in you. Andrew gets all excited because it appears that he was very present. In fact, the scripture says he was there and it's most likely he was present when Jesus was baptized in Jordan. He was there when John the Baptist said, behold the Lamb of God who takes away the sins of the world. ⁴ There were some people in the midst of them caught on immediately and this fellow goes to his brother Peter and says, you've got to come. I think the Messiah has arrived.

When Jesus meets Simon, he says these words to him. I know your name is Simon, but from now on, I want to call you Rocky. The name Simon in its original Greek or Hebrew root means breakable like a reed that can be broken in the wind, just not reliable. You can't use those reeds to build a house. You could fetch a roof with it. Simon means breakable, not dependable. And it's not a nice thing to be going around with a name that means we'll never be able to depend upon you. Jesus says to this man, I'm not going to refer to you as Simon. I like your other name, Peter, which means rock. And from that day on, I believe that Peter would have said to his buddy disciples, he calls me rock. He calls me Peter, I'll thank you to call me Peter also, because this gave him such a sense of ambition. Jesus believes in me. I want you guys to believe in me.

I know that I also told you this story. I'm not as forgetful as some might think. I know I've told you this story. And I love to tell it, it's very telling of me. It happened when we were passing a church in Hamilton. Our kids were small. And our son David was very, very much like his dad, a non-academic. Now he surpassed me, well past me at this moment, because that guy is down in Kentucky somewhere studying Greek and Hebrew. The only Greek I know is a little Greek restaurant over in St. Catharines. And the only Hebrew I know is Yikes.

So I'm sitting, trying to read something, my favorite articles. It was probably a Time magazine. And there was a disturbance going on in the kitchen dining area. I'm sitting in our living room. And my wife came to me and said, you better go and help out your son. He's struggling with his homework. And he's totally distraught. And he doesn't believe he's capable. Well I had to put down my magazine and I had to go and see the kid. So I sat down with him at the table and he had his chin propped on his arms as Elbow. I said, what's your problem, guy? He said, well I'm stupid. I said, well make sure you think you're stupid. I can't do this. I said, well pass it over here. Let me have a lookie. I looked at it and thought, I feel kind of stupid myself a little. Because what they were trying to teach these kids just was beyond me. $X + Y = ABC$. And you better get that right on the exam.

Like, no, this doesn't make sense. I'm looking at it. I'm not going to be able to help him. April has said, you go and help him. I'm looking at him. I'm looking, so I had a parachute. I said, now wait a minute. You claim that you're stupid. Yes. I said, who's your mama? You know who she is. Who's your daddy? I know who you are, dad. I said, am I stupid? No, no dad. Is your mama stupid? No dad. I said, well you're our son. If I'm not stupid, mama's not stupid. How can you be stupid? Oh. I said, okay. Okay. I said, good. Now your mother's going to come and help you with your studies. I did. I did. I'm not making that up. I did.

I believe that the moment I told that kid, you're not stupid. I was telling him, I believe in you. I believe in you. I had hit on the occasion of his wedding, the groom's father was allowed to make a speech. I stood to my feet and I started this way. David Jr. You are my beloved son. And with you I'm so well pleased. You are tall in my eyes. I'm thrilled with you and I know you're going to be a wonderful husband to Anna. And that has turned out well. If you're not sure about that, Anna's in charge and she'll tell you exactly what's going on. They have a wonderful relationship. Yes, dear. Okay, dear. It's wonderful. He's walking tall. He's done ever so well. And I believe that when we tell people, I believe in you, it actually makes a huge difference. It makes a huge difference.

So I'm going to call you Peter from now on because I believe in you. On another occasion, he said, Simon Simon. A little reminder. Simon Simon, Satan desires to mess with you. But guess who's praying for you? I'm praying for you. And because I'm praying for you, you are going to be the rock and I'm going to use you abundantly. Every time Jesus injected positive wording into people's lives, I believe that their life was changed. I believe in you. The next question that should follow is this, but do you believe in yourself? I believe in you. Do you believe in yourself? The occasion came when a woman was dragged by the self-righteous ones, dragged into his presence. They knew the law. If guilty, she should be stoned to death, according to the old Mosaic law.

They dragged her into his presence, I believe they threw her on the ground before him, and they said, we caught her in the very act. I have a question that I've heard other preachers utter and I care to use their question. Where was the man? Where was he? and has been suggested by different biblical scholars or wannabe scholars. They probably had set the whole thing up and said to a fellow, you cooperate and there's a few pesos for you. We know that that woman has very low esteem for herself and you can have your way with her. The moment we walk through the door, you get lost. We want her. If that was the plan, it was working well to this moment as they threw her down in front of Jesus. Humiliated, I'm sure, beyond measure, Jesus stooped down and began to write something on the ground.

There's been lots of suggestions as to what he might have written. It doesn't really matter. Even with his finger, he wrote in the sand. It dispersed her enemies. They ran for cover. You could figure out what he wrote in the sand for yourself. Maybe he was looking at George over here and he wrote down the name of George's girlfriend. What do we know? And he looked at them and said, whichever one of you, maybe he was pointing up what he wrote in the sand, whichever one of you is not guilty, you cast the first stone and they were gone. And indeed Jesus looks at her and I believe with an outstretched hand lifting her to her feet to help restore her to her dignity, whatever there was in remnant in her soul. And he said to her, woman, where are your accusers?

I believe her response was ever so gentle, almost silent. I believe she mumbled something and he said, where are they? They're gone. And then Jesus, and you know what he said to her, but I just want to put a little color into it. Neither do I condemn you. Now you just pull yourself together and you go your way. Don't sin anymore. And remember this, David adds, I believe in you. What's the chance that that lady went back to her harlotry ways? I'd say nil to 30 degrees below zero. When the master of creation and the judge of all mankind, the one who could raise the dead, heal the sick and speak of the wonders of God's plans for your heart and for your life, when he says, I don't condemn you, you just grew by three feet. He restored her dignity to her. She was a changed woman once you walked away because he said, I believe in you, but the challenge would have been in her heart and spirit.

But do you, darling, do you believe in yourself? It's not enough that he says, I believe in you, but you've got to believe in you. It's a package. It's a cooperation. Do you, do you really believe in you? John 3 and 16, I learned it at my grandmother's knees. For God so loved the world that he gave his only begotten son that whosoever believes in him shall not perish but have for the son came not into the world to condemn the world. But that the world through him might be

saved. There's enough condemnation going around in society today. It really is a moment of condemnation. The mayor of New York City who has a track record, you probably don't follow American politics. I'm Maureen Emmerd with Fairs and I am with ours. Forgive me for that. It's got something to do with an animal called a fox. Whatever we might think about this mayor in times past, he made a declaration in the last few hours. Have you heard about this? He stood in front of a whole lot of press people and he made a statement and I'll try and speak it as best as I can. His words I might not have perfectly. But the essence of what he said was this.

We did a great disservice to our children and to our country when we took prayer out of the schools. And anyone on to say he was bold as a lion. Lions are hard to find in North America these days. He spoke further and he said, and don't give me your drivel about separation of God and state. I printed or jumped off of my chair. I thought, finally there's a man in the house. He said, the state is the body of this country and godliness and prayer is the heart of our country. When you took out the heart from our country, you killed our country. And what is the response of the media? Boo, boo, boo, boo.

He's now being criticized by the ACLU and the people who don't want God. It goes on and on. I mean, the number of people that are rising up against him. Who do you think you are? We don't want God in this place. Kelsey Grammer is a well respected, highly regarded actor. I don't think I had the first time I remember him on a weekly thing called Cheers. And I scarcely missed a piece of it because I really enjoyed it. It was quite humorous. All the characters in it were humorous, but he was especially intriguing to me. And then his, you know, his start and went on from there. I never would have guessed what's coming out of his mouth these days. He is the star of an ongoing theater thing right now that's been produced by Christians and their income from that theater presentation last weekend, but it exceeded \$15 million. And it's all about Chuck Smith, who was very responsible for a revival that we got to know as the Jesus people back in the 70s.

I remember it well. I visited that church because I was so excited that God was doing something among these poorly clad, poorly groomed, but beautiful young people who walked into the church barefoot. My home church chased those people out and said, you come back when you're dressed properly. But Chuck Smith said, welcome singers and wine bibbers, count this church to be your home. And it was the beginning of a revival that became the front page of Life magazine. Kelsey Grammer plays the part of Chuck Smith and he's telling us that it was a life changing experience for him and his piece was celebrated so widely and so beautifully. But what do people really think about this? They're putting him down.

We had such high regard for this man when we thought he was a filthy Hollywood actor, but now he's showing up as a saint. We can't stand the smell of him. Those are my words. That's what I hear them saying about him. Put him down, put him down, put him down. You are my beloved friend. I'm well pleased. I'm proud of you. I stand with you. When people are told, I believe in you, they walk tall. When the Marines of the United States of America head to the other side of the world to fight for justice and truth and freedom, they're told by their commanding officer. You better believe in yourself. We're going over there to win and not lose and not one of you will be left behind. The American soldiers are some of the most renowned and celebrated soldiers in world history. It has lots to do with how they're prepared before they go on the battlefield.

You're going to be a winner. Putin should learn something from that when he's sending 15-year-old children into the fray and they're not properly armed, not properly trained, and they're dying like flies. That's communism. Socialism at its supreme best. Ouch. Pastor, you're meddling now. I believe in you. Go and sin no more. The calling, the opportunity of a disciple in those days was the highest calling, the highest regarded privilege of all. And everybody in the country would be clamoring to sit under your tutelage. A full-time rabbi would not necessarily have a home synagogue where he would minister. He would travel from synagogue to synagogue. And the local rabbi would say, we have a guest speaker today.

You've all heard of Rabbi Floristberg, and he's here to teach and share with you today from the Word. And that rabbi would stand in the place of the rabbinical teacher. He would read from the Word of God, and he would not make any personal reference to what he just read, because reading the sacred Word was a sacred moment, and you don't mess with it. He now wants to interpret for you what was just said. And at that moment, he would step aside, and now he's not speaking as the Lord. He's speaking of Moses, and it was Moses' responsibility back at the time to interpret for the people what do the Ten Commandments mean tomorrow being Monday.

Do you recall, surely you do, that the disciples came to Jesus and referenced a man who was quite ill? And they asked Jesus, Rabbi, who sinned? He's obviously not well. Who sinned? His parents? Or is he responsible for his own sin? Where do they get such an idea? Isaiah Psalm 51. In sin and iniquity, I was conceived in my mother's womb. So the concept, of course, was we were sinners before we were even born. So Master, we know he's a sinner, but on what account? Because he was conceived by his parents and his parents are sinners, or is he ill and sick, which is punishment for his sinfulness? Do you think he did something? Who is guilty? That was a question that the rabbis were trying to answer on a consistent basis in the local synagogue.

So the rabbi would be teaching or reading out of the word, and then he'd sit down and he'd say, now there's a question among you, if there's illness, is it the result of your own sin or of your parents sin? It was an age-long debate. And rabbis would have public debates and argue such elements. To be a rabbi, when you spoke, it meant you knew your stuff. And nobody's going to take you on. So if you're at this synagogue, this is what you believe. If you're in that synagogue, this is what you believed. So a young fellow, not the girls, weren't allowed at the age of 12.

He could determine he's going to go on and study some more. So he would study from the age of 12 to the age of 18, all the rest of what we know as of the Old Testament. He needed to know it backwards, forwards, and upside down, because you see, it probably was in his heart, I want to be a rabbi. He'd been taught that the Word of God was so precious, so precious, that a scripture was read to them. Your Word is like honey on my tongue. Every child in the classroom was given a piece of slate. The teacher would come along with a honey pot and put a little bit of honey on every child's slate, the slate where they were always encouraged. Now write this, what the Lord says about thus and so.

So the slate represented in a very humble fashion, the Word. The honey on the slate and the children were invited, now go ahead and lick it up. And then they were being very reminded, your Word is like honey to my tongue. So this 18 year old loves the Word of God. He can't get enough

of it. Morning and noon and night, his parents are so proud of him. And now he seeks for a rabbi to accept him as a disciple. He would do whatever it took to try and get the attention of the rabbi. But you see, he'd have many competitors. For this rabbi, who's one of the top rabbis, this guy's got a silver tongue. So many young men would want to be his student. So they would be vying for his attention. The rabbi got to choose whichever one he wanted to. Now we need to remember what the rabbi's focus was, 110%. He was with all the other rabbis very cognizant of this fact. The Lord's presence has departed the temple. And why? Because we've neglected the Word. We've broken every law. God's upset with us. So the rabbi's responsibility was not just to read the Word, but to move into the seat of Moses and come down on you and say, if you want God to bless our nation, this is what you've got to do. The Lord says thus and so. And he would interpret according to his understanding.

What he wanted to do was multiply himself and other young men who therefore would also become rabbis who would then have their disciples and let's get an army of rabbis, let's get an army of young men and young men who were following hard after the Lord. And maybe we can get the nation to humble themselves for the Lord promised if my people which are called by my name will humble themselves, seek my face and turn from their wicked ways. Then I will hear from heaven and I will. If you wait upon the Lord, the Lord will believe in you. If you humble yourself and repent of your sin, the Lord will believe in you and you'll visit you with an outpouring of his spirit.

So now we have this incredible tension. We have a young man who wants to serve the rabbi. He looks over all of these young men who are saying, me, me and whoever he chose, that young man was going to walk so close that a famous saying that lasts until this day. Your disciple of the rabbi, may you walk so close to that rabbi thinking like he thinks, praying like he prays, interpreting in the seat of Moses as your rabbi, may you walk so close to him that the dust of his sandals now clings to your garments. Walk close. If you walk to the left, you will walk to the left. If you walk to the right, you will walk to the right. You will have the same opinion about who sinned as your rabbi because that's what is so important. So now the rabbi looks over at this group of competitors, me, me, me, and he's got to choose one that he believes will, will, will, might model after him, will walk like him, will look for the dust of his sandals, will pray like him, believe like him, preach like him, eat like him, be a clone.

Who will he choose? Before he chooses, one could rightfully say, the rabbi chose my son. And why? Because that rabbi believes in my son. I believe in you. Jesus is walking along a seashore and he sees some humble fishermen. He's not a guy who lives in the synagogue. They don't carry big Bible dictionaries in the strongest concordance. They can't quote like some could. They probably gave it up at the age of 10, 11, 12, went to work with Daddy to become fishermen. They did not qualify. It was farthest from their possible dreams and aspirations that they should ever be chosen via disciple. They quit trying, not interested. I can't learn all that stuff. Why? Because I'm stupid. Jesus comes along the shore and he sees this fisherman. And this Jesus is a celebrated fellow. We have every reason to believe he'd already healed many. He'd already, we don't know all the miracles that he has performed, but he's done much.

It says something to this effect. His fame was throughout the entire region. When they saw

Jesus coming, one of them must have said, it's him, it's him, it's the rabbi. 14 It's the rabbi. It's him, it's him. This is the guy that raises the dead. This Jesus, the ultimate rabbi, turns and says, in effect, Peter, I believe in you. And I believe in you and I believe in you. So come on with me. He believes in me. Humble little me. I'm writing my life story. My son has really prompted me to do so. He just said, Dad, you never, you never journal. He said, we really don't know you. We didn't go to 37 countries with you. We never went with you to China. We never went to any of these. Dad, we just heard little bits and pieces when we listened to a sermon, which we seldom got to hear because you're always in some other body else's church, preaching, Dad, we don't even know you. So this week, at some ridiculous hour, I was writing this morning at 3 o'clock.

I couldn't sleep. I'm at page 27, or 28 now, I forget, 8.5" by 11" single spaced. And I wrote my memory of the call. I intend to print this, and as many of you want to copy, I'm going to give it to you. I hope many would like to hear the story about how I almost got eaten by five lions. It'll be there. Would you like to hear the story of how I met the president, Daniel Arapmoy? Would you like to hear how I defied a truckload, a big dump truckload of Muslim-wielding pangas who were going to chop my head off and kill me? I defied them in the name of Jesus. I'm going to write about all of this stuff. I never walked on the water, and I'm not crazy about wine. I'll just stick with the water.

When I recounted this week and not without tears, I typed away. I was sitting in a service, and I was quite bored with the preacher. Like some of you this morning, I feel so sorry for you. I'm doing the best I can. It was a dry, dry, dry sermon. Oh, my Lord, it was dry. But God was stirring something in my heart, and I said to my little girlfriend, who's still my girlfriend, you go home with your parents. I'm not coming with you today. I have something I want to do. I recorded in these little writings this week of how I stayed in the old church called Central Tabernacle in Hamilton. I hid in the men's washroom and listened for old Mr. Edwards turn the big lock on the front door. That would tell me I'm alone.

I came out of my hiding place, and I made my way into what was known affectionately as the prayer room. It was the most important room in the house. The prayer room was more important than the pulpit. It was more important than anything. The prayer room is where we met with God every Sunday night for two and three and four hours. But here I was alone in the prayer room and was crying out to God, and I wrote this down because I remember, what do you want from me? I'm confused. I have nothing to offer you. I was not an academic. I hated school. Everything was boring to me. I wanted to go and live on the farm. That's where I felt I belonged. That wasn't a low calling. It just intrigued me to know my daddy was a farmer. My grandpa was a farmer. I wanted to be a farmer.

But little did I know that my daddy had prayed at the altar when I was dedicated in prayer that no one heard him pray, oh dear God, what do you plan my son to do and take the place of my dead brother Milton? You'll have to read the story of Milton the evangelist and his sudden death. You'll have to read another chapter of what a man came from. Every field in Missouri came to the college, I sat at the back of the college, service, chapel service. Somebody tapped me on the shoulder and said, there's a man who wants to see you. At the end of the service, I went to find this man. He looked at me and said, yes, you're a forest. I know you anywhere. Your uncle Milton

died in that horrible crash. Are you David? I said, yes. He buried me in his chest. I felt suffocated. He wept over me. And then he prophesied and said, David, for us the mantle of Milton will rest upon you and God is going to use you as an evangelist. That was a prophecy over my head. But alone in a prayer room, I knew none of this stuff and I cried to God. And I said, what do you want? I'm a zero. I have nothing alone in a prayer room. And what God communicated to me, I'll just sum up in these words. The Lord never changed my statement. I was not unlike my future little son. I'm stupid. The Lord didn't argue with my stupidity. He's still feeling sorry for me.

But God spoke to me in that hour in that prayer room and said, in essence, David, I believe in you and that's enough. I've taken far too long, so I'll hastily close now because your chicken's in the oven and it's done clucking. Do what the master says. Talk so close that the dust of his sandals will get on your garment. They were so excited to be his disciples. It was a high calling. They would have said to people in the crowds, somebody say, how come, how come he chose you? Because he believes in me. That was the password. That was the calling card. He believes in me. So tell me this. He believes in you. Do you believe in you?

Master, these people are hungry. There's thousands. Send them home. Send them into a village. Tell them to go get some day to eat. Jesus says, no. Are you near my sandals now? Think about this. Jesus said, it's okay. You fellas, feed them. Master, there's only fragments of fish and bread. Jesus said, that'll do. He challenged them. He gave them an opportunity to feed the 5,000, but they opted. No, you do it. Brother, will you pray for the sick with us on a Sunday morning? Oh, no. Praying over the sick is, that's the role for the pastor. Will you teach this Sunday school class? Well, no, I'm not equal to that. I don't qualify. Look, let somebody else do it. Hey, Moses, I can sure use you in that dry stick. No, I have a nice brother Aaron. Have you met him? Passing the buck.

Go ahead and feed them, guys. So Jesus took the bread, blessed, broke it and said, now feed them. And what was left? Each one of them. I suppose we could preach a sermon on this. Pastor Peter, this would be the point where you could pick this up and do it justice. Every one of the disciples who did not at that point believe in themselves, every one of those disciples ended up with a big basket of food remnants. Twelve baskets. Twelve would be miracle workers. The very next verses I read, Jesus says, no, you guys get into the book. They just, the boys were just cleaning up the crumbs on the ground helping this lady change the diaper on this little kid over here. I don't know. And Jesus said, look, look, I'll take care of the people. You guys get in that boat. Head to the other side. I'll catch up to you later.

Obediently, they got in the boat and away they went. You know the story already. All of a sudden Jesus appears walking on the water. They're scared out of their wits. I think that's what it said. They were scared to death. It's a ghost and Jesus. No, it's me. Peter, the great disciple, master, if it's really you, ask me to walk on the water. And Jesus said, hi. Again. As he's jumping over the side of the boat, what are the rest of the disciples thinking? Are you nuts? It's hard to get this guy to take a bath. He believes in me. And yes, when he got out of the boat and started to walk, yes, he faltered. Let's leave that alone. Let's not be hard on this guy. Not until you walk on the water and tell me that you knew where the rocks were. You were saved. Let's not be hard on him for

faltering. Let's rejoice in this for a moment. There's gravity in what I'm about to say. For a moment, Peter believed what Jesus believed. I believe in you, Peter. And for a moment, he believed the same.

Let's bow your heads, I'm going to close. I really felt in my heart reminiscing, of course, as I already indicated, as I'm writing my little story. And it's a humble little story. And somebody's going to accuse me of bragging. There's not a moment of bragging there. I'm including my failures when I'm writing it. I'm including how I went to a church that I'll not name right now. And I was miserable the whole time I was there. I felt like I was out of the will of God. I've dropped it. Lord, I messed up. Lord forgive me. God certainly had more faith in me than I had in me. And I messed up royally. But God redeemed me and picked me up and dusted me off and said, am I stupid, David? No. Then you can't be stupid.

God doesn't make junk. So what I felt impressed to say to you this morning, at this moment in this service, do you believe and don't you finish it? I know you want to say, do I believe in him? Of course I do. I'll call off. Yeah, yeah, yeah. I say, no, no, that's not the question, dearie. Do you believe in you? That's not new age, darling. That is not new age. Do you believe in you? Because that was Jesus' password to Peter Simon, to Nathaniel, a man in whom there's no guile, to a woman caught in the act of adultery. I believe in you, doll. Now you go. Make me proud.

He tells us I'm giving you an opportunity to watch a miracle, take those fragments of fish, and believe that you can do this. No, Lord, no, we're not ready for that. So whatever God might be calling you to do, Pastor, I'm over 70. So am I and look at the spot you voted me into. Thank you very much. You're not too old. God still has something for you to do. And I haven't got the foggiest idea what that might be. That's between you and God. I'm just a zero, God says. I use zeros, you know. You put a 1 in front of 40 zeros. You got a lot going for you. God uses zeros. God uses empty vessels. In fact, I submit to you the only kind of vessel that God is requiring of you is an empty vessel. And broken, I'm poured out. Can you still use me, Lord? Shall God use us as a body, as a congregation to do something over the top? Dear God, I hope so, because I'm not content to go fishing.

I want to stay the course and do as

His bidding. Heavenly Father, I pray for all of these people that I love more than I know how to say. And I'm so humbled to be respected in some regard as a teacher. I'm so humbled that they would come today and dare to listen to David, spit, and carry on. I'm actually humbled by that, Lord, I do not feel worthy. But Lord, I know that as unworthy as some of us might feel in this house, what God calls clean, Peter, let no man call unclean. What God, what Moses thought was a dry stick God sought as the rod of God. My Father, may I be willing, may I be ready, may I put on my running shoes and be ready to run for you, not taking into account my age, my inadequacy, and at times my self-proclaimed stupidity. Help me to be faithful. I pray.

Help me to listen to your Word when you say, David, feed them. Help me not to draw back and say, I'm not ready, Lord. Help me to follow through. Help all of us to follow through. 20 If you accept that prayer, say, hey man. Now before you leave, I want you to go to at least one person in

this room. Now it's going to be fun because you're pursuing George and George is trying to go over to Jim. You get my drift. I want you to go to somebody and say to them, and it's from your heart. You're going to say, you need to know something. I believe in you. You don't have to tell them why. Think it over. Of all the people in this room, is there somebody? And don't you dare come to me.

You go to somebody who's really in your estimation quite deserving. And yes, you can tell your husband or your wife, I believe in you, but I hope you told them out already this week. So that's old news. Pick another client. Will you do this today before you leave? I want to say to my Ukrainian brother right here and now, publicly and with my own mouth in front of everybody, my brother, I believe in you and I have good reason to say that. God bless you. This house is yours. This is your opportunity. Bless somebody with I believe in you. We believe in You!