

Title: **A PARABLE OF**
EVERY BELIEVER'S LIFE

Text: Mark 4:35-41

Readings: *Psalm 77:1-20 or Psalm 86:1-17*

PSALMS 77:1-20 — To the chief Musician, to Jeduthun (Praising), — A Psalm of Asaph

1 I cried unto God with my voice, [even] unto God with my voice; and he gave ear unto me.

2 In the day of my trouble I sought the Lord: my sore ran in the night, and ceased not: my soul refused to be comforted.

3 I remembered God, and was troubled: I complained, and my spirit was overwhelmed. **Selah**.

4 Thou holdest mine eyes waking: I am so troubled that I cannot speak.

5 I have considered the days of old, the years of ancient times.

6 I call to remembrance my song in the night: I commune with mine own heart: and my spirit made diligent search.

7 Will the Lord cast off for ever? and will he be favourable no more?

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8 Is his mercy clean gone for ever? doth [his] promise fail for evermore?

9 Hath God forgotten to be gracious? hath he in anger shut up his tender mercies? **Selah.**

10 And I said, This [is] my infirmity: [but I will remember] the years of the right hand of the most High.”

11 ¶**I will remember the works of the LORD: surely I will remember thy wonders of old.**

12 I will meditate also of all thy work, and talk of thy doings.

13 Thy way, O God, [is] in the sanctuary: who [is so] great a God as [our] God?

14 **Thou [art] the God that doest wonders:** thou hast declared thy strength among the people.

15 Thou hast with [thine] arm redeemed thy people, the sons of Jacob and Joseph. **Selah.**

16 The waters saw thee, O God, the waters saw thee; they were afraid: the depths also were troubled.

17 The clouds poured out water: the skies sent out a sound: thine arrows also went abroad.

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18 The voice of thy thunder [was] in the heaven: the lightnings lightened the world: the earth trembled and shook.

19 Thy way [is] in the sea, and thy path in the great waters, and **thy footsteps are not known.**

20 Thou leddest thy people like a flock by the hand of Moses and Aaron.”

PSALMS 86:1-17 — A Prayer of David.

1 Bow down thine ear, O LORD, hear me: for I [am] poor and needy.

2 Preserve my soul; for I [am] holy: O thou my God, save thy servant that trusteth in thee.

3 Be merciful unto me, O Lord: for I cry unto thee daily.

4 Rejoice the soul of thy servant: for unto thee, O Lord, do I lift up my soul.

5 **For thou, Lord, [art] good, and ready to forgive; and plenteous in mercy unto all them that call upon thee.**

6 Give ear, O LORD, unto my prayer; and attend to the voice of my supplications.

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7 In the day of my trouble I will call upon thee: for thou wilt answer me.

8 ¶Among the gods [there is] none like unto thee, O Lord; neither [are there any works] like unto thy works.

9 All nations whom thou hast made shall come and worship before thee, O Lord; and shall glorify thy name.

10 For thou [art] great, and doest wondrous things: thou [art] God alone.

11 Teach me thy way, O LORD; — I will walk in thy truth: — unite my heart to fear thy name.

12 I will praise thee, O Lord my God, with all my heart: and I will glorify thy name for evermore.

13 For great [is] thy mercy toward me: and thou hast delivered my soul from the lowest hell.

14 O God, the proud are risen against me, and the assemblies of violent [men] have sought after my soul; and have not set thee before them.

15 But thou, O Lord, [art] a God full of compassion, and gracious, longsuffering, and plenteous in mercy and truth.

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16 O turn unto me, and have mercy upon me; give thy strength unto thy servant, and save the son of thine handmaid.

17 Shew me a token for good; that they which hate me may see [it], and be ashamed: because thou, LORD, hast holpen me, and comforted me.

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INTRODUCTION

(Mark 4:35-41) “And the same day, when the even was come, he saith unto them, **Let us pass over unto the other side.** (36) And when they had sent away the multitude, they took him even as he was in the ship. And there were also with him other little ships. (37) And there arose a great storm of wind, and the waves beat into the ship, so that it was now full. (38) **And he was in the hinder part of the ship, asleep on a pillow:** and they awake him, and say unto him, Master, carest thou not that we perish? (39) And he arose, and rebuked the wind, and said unto the sea, Peace, be still. And the wind ceased, and **there was a great calm.** (40) And he said unto them, Why are ye so fearful? how is it that ye have no faith? (41) And they feared exceedingly, and said one to another, **What manner of man is this, that even the wind and the sea obey him?**”

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At the end of a long and busy day our Lord and his disciples boarded a small ship to cross over the Galilean Sea. The Lord Jesus had preached all day in the open air to great multitudes. And when they were alone, he privately taught his disciples the meaning of his words. But there was **one more work to be done** before his day's work could be complete. On the other side of the sea there was a maniac who had lived in the clutches of Satan for many years. And that poor maniac was one of those sinners whom the Son of God had come to save.

- The Lord Jesus agreed to save him before the world began.
- For more than thirty years, Christ had lived for that poor Gadarene, as his Representative, to establish righteousness for him by his life of obedience to God.
- Soon the Son of God would die this poor sinner's place as his Substitute, to satisfy the justice of God for him, to redeem him with his own precious blood.
- And now the time of love had come, when this wretched man must obtain mercy and grace.

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As “**he must needs go through Samaria**” to save the Samaritan woman at the time of mercy, so now he must needs go over the sea to save the maniac of Gadara. So our Savior said to his disciples, “**Let us pass over unto the other side.**” His labor for the day could not end until he had spoken peace, pardon and eternal life to this chosen object of his grace.

Oh, may this be the day of grace for some of you!

As I preach the gospel, may the Son of God call some of you to life and faith in him by the power of his Spirit. **Perhaps you have come here today possessed by the devil himself, as this Gadarene was.** If God is pleased to do so, he can bind the fiend of hell by the word of his power and take possession of your heart by his almighty grace. **If he does, before you leave this building, you will find yourself “sitting” at the Master’s feet, “clothed” with the garments of salvation, and in your “right mind,” trusting Christ alone as your Lord and Savior.** Savior, do for some sinner here what you did for that Gadarene two thousand years ago. Be gracious. Save some. Do it for the honor of your own great name.

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But before our Lord and his disciples reached this wild Gadarene, they had to cross the Sea of Galilee. As they were crossing the sea, **“There arose a great storm of wind, and the waves beat into the ship, so that it was now full.”** The disciples were full of fear. Death seemed certain and imminent. But the Lord Jesus was asleep in the back of the ship. These frightened disciples woke him up and cried in despair, **“Master, carest thou not that we perish? And he arose, and rebuked the wind, and said unto the sea, Peace, be still. And the wind ceased, and there was a great calm.”** Then he gently reproved his fearful, unbelieving disciples. And the story ends.

This brief event in the earthly life of our Savior is **recorded by the Holy Spirit three times.** He intends for us to remember it and learn by it. The story is written for our learning and admonition, that we might be prepared for the storms of life.

Few, if any, of our Lord's miracles were so likely to leave his disciples with such an unforgettable,

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convincing demonstration of his divine omnipotence. At least four of these men were professional fishermen and skilled seamen. In all likelihood, Peter, Andrew, James, and John were very familiar with the Sea of Galilee. They had probably been exposed to its devastating and often fatal storms from their youth. Never, not even in the greatest of our Lord's other miracles, had they seen such power as he demonstrated here. By the mere word of his mouth, our Savior stopped the storm!

LESSONS

There are many important lessons taught in these verses. We would be wise to ask the Spirit of God to frequently remind us of them.

1. **Faith in and obedience to Christ** do not exempt God's saints from the storms that other people face. — These disciples were in this storm because they did what the Lord told them to do.
2. The fact that our Lord was weary and required sleep demonstrates clearly that **he was a real man**.
3. The fact that the wind and sea obeyed his word demonstrated **our Redeemer's complete deity**.

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This Man is the omnipotent God! The wind and the sea knew the voice of their Creator! — Only One who is both God and man could redeem us and save from our sins.

4. The greatest saints in this world are **still sinners**; and the strongest believers are sometimes filled with unbelief.
5. Our Lord Jesus Christ is **a tender, compassionate, forgiving Savior**. — “*Why are ye so fearful? How is it that ye have no faith?*”
6. **Our Savior's reason for everything he does is the salvation of his elect**. He went to the other side of the sea because there was a wild, lost Gadarene on the other side for whom the fulness of time had come.
7. **All who are in the good ship Grace with Christ are perfectly safe**, as they pass through the stormy seas of this world. — As Hawker put it, “If Christ is in the boat, we can smile at the storm.”

Those seven lessons are a sermon in themselves, a sermon that I frequently preach, in one way or another. They bear frequent repetition. However, in this message, I want to use our text in another way.

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I want to use this event on the Sea of Galilee as **A PARABLE OF EVERY BELIEVER'S LIFE**. When the Son of God enters the hearts of chosen sinners in his sovereign saving power and grace, he brings us with himself into the church and kingdom of God, he brings us with himself into the ship of grace and salvation. As he does, he casts his eyes and ours across the waters of time to the other side of the sea of life, and says, as, he did to his disciples in our text, **“Let us pass over unto the other side.”**

If you will look with me at **Psalm 107:23-31**, you will see that I have a good, biblical basis for using our text as a parable of our lives in this world.

(Psalms 107:23-31) “They that go down to the sea in ships, that do business in great waters; (24) These see the works of the LORD, and his wonders in the deep. (25) For **he commandeth, and raiseth the stormy wind**, which lifteth up the waves thereof. (26) They mount up to the heaven, they go down again to the depths: their soul is melted because of trouble. (27) They reel

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to and fro, and stagger like a drunken man, and are at their wit's end. (28) Then they cry unto the LORD in their trouble, and he bringeth them out of their distresses. (29) **He maketh the storm a calm**, so that the waves thereof are still. (30) Then are they glad because they be quiet; **so he bringeth them unto their desired haven**. (31) Oh that *men* would praise the LORD *for* his goodness, and *for* his wonderful works to the children of men!”

Proposition: The believer's life is a voyage across a troubled sea to our “**desired haven**” on the other side.

Divisions: In this message, I want to describe the believer's life as it is portrayed parabolically in our text as...

1. A Voyage.
2. A Voyage Across A Stormy Sea.
3. A Voyage With Christ.
4. A Voyage Marked By Miracles.
5. A Voyage That Should Be Without Fear.

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A VOYAGE

First, I want you to see that every believer's life is a voyage. — As we embark on this voyage, the Son of God takes us into the good ship Grace and says, "**Let us pass over unto the other side.**" Death is often spoken of poetically as a passing over, the crossing of a sea or a river. We sing,

He will keep me `til the river
Rolls its waters t my feet,
Then He'll bear me safely over,
Where my loved ones I shall meet."

However, this passing over the sea is not something we shall do some day. It is something we do every day. We are, right now, passing over the sea of time unto the other side. **We are, right now, walking through the valley of the shadow of death.**

The sea is a fit emblem for our lives and all the varied circumstances of our lives in this world. How quickly we pass across the sea!

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(James 4:14) “What *is* your life? It is even a vapour, that appeareth for a little time, and then vanisheth away.”

(Job 7:6) “My days are swifter than a weaver’s shuttle, and are spent without hope.”

(Job 9:25-26) “Now my days are swifter than a post: they flee away, they see no good. (26) They are passed away as the swift ships: as the eagle *that* hasteth to the prey.”

I’ve watched a lot of people die! As I look into your faces, I think to myself, “**There go the ships, not painted ships upon a painted sea, but immortal souls, rising and falling upon the billows of time, disappearing one by one over the horizon of time into eternity.**” Soon, we must all pass over that horizon.

Perhaps, the horizon seems very far away to some of you. Do not be so foolish. **Soon, you will pass from**

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this changing world of time into the unchanging world of eternity.

- Here all things are temporal and changing.
- There all things are eternal and unchanging.

How will it be for you in that day? How will it be for you in the swelling of the Jordan?

A VOYAGE ACROSS A STORMY SEA

Second, Let me show you that this life is not only comparable to a voyage, but it is a voyage across a stormy sea.

(Mark 4:37) “And there arose a great storm of wind, and the waves beat into the ship, so that it was now full.”

We must often sail into the tempests of sorrow, affliction, adversity, and grief; but Christ's presence assures us of safety no matter what the storm may be.

I remind you, these disciples were not acting in disobedience. **They followed the Master into the**

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ship at his command. Loyalty and obedience to Christ is often the surest path to trouble. **The path of faithfulness is always right through the eye of the storm.**

Though our storms are many and varied, basically, all our trials and troubles in this world arise from two sources:

- **The contrary winds of our circumstances without.**
- **The waves of sin and unbelief within.**

(Romans 7:14-24) “For we know that the law is spiritual: but **I am carnal, sold under sin.** (15) For **that which I do I allow not:** for **what I would, that do I not;** but **what I hate, that do I.** (16) If then I do that which I would not, I consent unto the law that *it is* good. (17) Now then **it is no more I that do it, but sin that dwelleth in me.** (18) For I know that in me (that is, in my flesh,) dwelleth no good thing: for to will is present with me; but *how* to perform that which is good I find not. (19) For the good that I would I do not: but the evil which I would not,

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that I do. (20) Now if I do that I would not, it is no more I that do it, but sin that dwelleth in me. (21) I find then a law, that, when I would do good, evil is present with me. (22) For **I delight in the law of God after the inward man:** (23) **But I see another law in my members, warring against the law of my mind, and bringing me into captivity to the law of sin which is in my members.** (24) **O wretched man that I am! who shall deliver me from the body of this death?"**

(Psalms 73:1-3) “Truly God *is* good to Israel, *even* to such as are of a clean heart. (2) But as for me, my feet were almost gone; my steps had well nigh slipped. (3) For I was envious at the foolish, *when* I saw the prosperity of the wicked.”

(Psalms 73:21-28) “Thus my heart was grieved, and I was pricked in my reins. (22) So foolish *was* I, and ignorant: I was *as* a beast before thee. (23) **Nevertheless I am continually with thee:** thou hast holden *me* by my right hand. (24) Thou shalt guide me with thy counsel, and afterward

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receive me *to* glory. (25) Whom have I in heaven but thee? and there is none upon earth that I desire beside thee. (26) My flesh and my heart faileth: *but* God *is* the strength of my heart, and my portion for ever. (27) For, lo, they that are far from thee shall perish: thou hast destroyed all them that go a whoring from thee. (28) But *it is* good for me to draw near to God: I have put my trust in the Lord GOD, that I may declare all thy works.”

A VOYAGE WITH CHRIST

Third, Let me hasten to tell you that our life in this world is a voyage with Christ. — A voyage, yes. A voyage through stormy seas, yes. But, blessed be God, it is a voyage in the company and constant presence, protection, and care of the Son of God, our Savior.

The Lord Jesus does not say, “Go over to the other side and I will meet you there.” He said, “Let us pass over unto the other side.” And, though “*there arose a great storm, and the waves beat into the ship, so*

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that it was full,” we read that the Lord Jesus “*was in the hinder part of the ship.*” **He was silent; but he was there.** So it is with us. Our Lord may appear to be asleep. He may be silent. It may even appear at times, to our feeble, sinful hearts, that he does not care if we perish! But he is always with us!

How I pray that God will teach me and teach you to believe him. Did not our Savior say, “*Lo, I am with you alway*”? Did he not promise, “*I will never leave thee*” (Hebrews 13:5)?

(Isaiah 41:10) “Fear thou not; for I *am* with thee: be not dismayed; for I *am* thy God: I will strengthen thee; yea, I will help thee; yea, I will uphold thee with the right hand of my righteousness.”

(Isaiah 43:2) “When thou passest through the waters, I *will be* with thee; and through the rivers, they shall not overflow thee: when thou walkest through the fire, thou shalt not be burned; neither shall the flame kindle upon thee.”

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(Philippians 4:4-7) “Rejoice in the Lord always: *and* again I say, Rejoice. (5) Let your moderation be known unto all men. The Lord *is* at hand. (6) Be careful for nothing; but in every thing by prayer and supplication with thanksgiving let your requests be made known unto God. (7) And the peace of God, which passeth all understanding, shall keep your hearts and minds through Christ Jesus.”

A VOYAGE MARKED BY MIRACLES

Fourth, ours is a voyage marked by miracles.

(Mark 4:39) “And he arose, and rebuked the wind, and said unto the sea, Peace, be still. And the wind ceased, and there was a great calm.”

The charismatics talk about miracles. We experience them. They put on a show of sham tomfoolery; but God's saints are men and women whose biographies are histories of God's miraculous works.

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- **The Miracle Of Redemption — Substitution!**
- **The Miracle Of Regeneration — “Christ in you!” — “Partakers of the Divine Nature!”**

“It took a miracle to put the world in place.
It took a miracle to hang the stars in space.
But when God saved my soul,
Cleansed and made me whole,
It took a miracle of love and grace!”

- **The Miracle Of The Resurrection — Conformed to Christ!**

Still, there is more, much more to consider. **It is upon the dark background of our great troubles that our Lord most clearly displays his wondrous power and grace.**

- It is in the fiery furnace of adversity that we know the preserving power of his presence.
- It is only in the lions' den that we see the Lord's dominion over the lions.
- The Lord God who is with us and for us is the God who is able to deliver us. He is God alone. He is God indeed!

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**A VOYAGE THAT OUGHT
TO BE FREE OF FEAR**

Now, in the last place, I want you to see that our voyage with Christ across the stormy sea of life is a voyage that ought to be free of fear. The voyage we are on is a perfectly safe voyage.

(Mark 4:40) “And he said unto them, Why are ye so fearful? how is it that ye have no faith?”

The disciples' fear arose from their unbelief. **Fear is the rank weed of nature that grows wild in the soil of unbelief.** These poor disciples were so much like us. **They should have been perfectly calm.** — They were on the Master's business. — They were in the Master's presence. — They had repeatedly seen and experienced the Master's power. They should have most reasonably looked to Christ; but they didn't. Instead of looking to the Lord God omnipotent, they looked at...

- The Terrible Storm.
- Their Own Weakness.

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- The Apparent Frailty of Their Ship.

Let us, each one, take the Lord's gentle rebuke personally. As I prepared this message, I tried to apply it to myself. I hope God will enable you to do the same. Our greatest difficulties, our greatest temptations, our greatest falls are always the result of unbelief. Yet, unbelief on the part of one who has experienced the saving power and grace of God in Christ is the most absurd and unreasonable thing in the world. "**Why are we so fearful? Why is it that we have no faith?**"

Our Savior is the sovereign God of providence, omnipotent, wise, and good. — And don't miss this: **He is in the boat with us!**

- **He is in the boat of your heart.**

(Colossians 1:27) "To whom God would make known what *is* the riches of the glory of this mystery among the Gentiles; which is Christ in you, the hope of glory:"

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(1 John 4:4) “Ye are of God, little children, and have overcome them: because greater is he that is in you, than he that is in the world.”

• **The Son of God is in the boat of his Church.**

(Deuteronomy 23:14) “For the LORD thy God walketh in the midst of thy camp, to deliver thee, and to give up thine enemies before thee.”

(Psalms 46:5) “God *is* in the midst of her; she shall not be moved: God shall help her, *and that* right early.”

(Revelation 2:1) “Unto the angel of the church of Ephesus write; These things saith he that holdeth the seven stars in his right hand, who walketh in the midst of the seven golden candlesticks.”

The Church of God, the true Church, is safe. She will pass over this sea. She will be brought to her desired haven. She will reach the other side. Not one

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passenger aboard the good ship Grace will be lost at sea.

• **Christ is in the boat of Holy Scripture.**

His Word is forever settled in heaven. It cannot be broken. All the shifting winds of pseudo-science and waves of unscholarly criticism will not sink this vessel. We have no reason to fear the carpings of reprobate men. The Word of God abides forever. When their laughter is turned to weeping and their criticisms burn as fire in their souls, the Word of God will still be forever settled in heaven!

• **Our Lord Jesus Christ is in the boat of Providence.**

Not only is he in the boat, he is at the helm. We do not trust providence, or worship providence (We are not Deists.); but the Lord God almighty whom we do trust and worship is the God of providence; and we rejoice to know it!

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The Lord Jesus Christ, who is with us, has the whole world in his hands. All power in heaven and earth is given unto him. He holds the reins of universal dominion. This omnipotent God bids us cast our care upon him with these assuring words, “For he careth for you!” He says to us, “Be not afraid, only believe.”

APPLICATION

Now, let me finish by applying this story to you who are yet without Christ. I trust that God has brought you into deep waters and begun to cause you to reel to and fro like a drunken man by reason of your souls' trouble.

1. The storm of God's wrath is beating your little boat.
2. Cry out from your soul to Christ, the Master. Appeal to his great compassion — “*Carest thou not that I perish?*”
3. May the Son of God now arise and speak peace to your troubled heart.

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4. If he will speak by his Spirit, his word of grace will bring great calm; and he will bring you to your desired haven!

(Psalms 107:23-31) “They that go down to the sea in ships, that do business in great waters; (24) These see the works of the LORD, and his wonders in the deep. (25) For he commandeth, and raiseth the stormy wind, which lifteth up the waves thereof. (26) They mount up to the heaven, they go down again to the depths: their soul is melted because of trouble. (27) They reel to and fro, and stagger like a drunken man, and are at their wit’s end. (28) Then they cry unto the LORD in their trouble, and he bringeth them out of their distresses. (29) He maketh the storm a calm, so that the waves thereof are still. (30) Then are they glad because they be quiet; so he bringeth them unto their desired haven. (31) Oh that *men* would praise the LORD *for* his goodness, and *for* his wonderful works to the children of men!”

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(Psalms 107:42-43) “The righteous shall see *it*, and rejoice: and all iniquity shall stop her mouth. (43) Whoso *is* wise, and will observe these *things*, even they shall understand the lovingkindness of the LORD.”

5. Believe him, only believe him, and you will see the glory of God.
- Believe him, poor sinner, and you will see the glory of God in the face of the crucified Christ.
 - Believe him troubled, downcast believer, and you will see the glory of God. — In your Trouble! — And in your Deliverance!

(John 11:40) “Jesus saith unto her, Said I not unto thee, that, if thou wouldest believe, thou shouldest see the glory of God?”

Amen.

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- ¹ Danville — (Tuesday - 09/21/99) — (Sunday PM – 06/27/04)
— Sunday AM – August 8, 2010)
Pikeville, KY - (9/23/99)
Madisonville, KY - (02/09/00)
New Castle, IN (04/30/00)
Ball, LA (03-04-00)
Spring Lake, NC (05-27-00)
Rescue Baptist Church, Rescue, CA KY — (Wednesday PM – 06/30/04)
Todds RD Grace Church, Lexington — (Wednesday 04/13/05)
Fairmont Grace Church — Sylacauga, AL — (04/24/05)
Grace Baptist Church, Taylor, AR — (Sunday AM — 06/12/05)
Wichita Falls, TX – (Mon. PM – 06/13/05)
Honiton, England (03/02/08)

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