

## Go Listen on the Mountain (Temptations of Superman's Girlfriend II)

Matthew 17: 1-13

#23 in Jesus Stories series

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### Prayer

Lord, you're beautiful. And we pray that this morning we would see you. That you would help us to preach. That we would see you and hear you, Lord Jesus. In your name we pray, Amen.

### Message

#### Clip from Superman

[The scene begins on the terrace of Lois Lane's house. It's a beautiful night. The lights of the city are visible in the distance. Lois sips her wine and looks at her reporter's pad, unaware of Superman landing on the terrace ledge overlooking the city.]

Superman: *Good evening. Miss Lane. . . (Superman notices her gown)*

[Lois sets her glass on the table, jumping and turning around.]

Lois: *Uh . . . hi!*

Superman: *Oh, I'm sorry. Did you have plans this evening?*

Lois: *Ah . . . no! (Lois looks at gown) Oh. This old thing . . .*

Superman: *Well, listen, it's no trouble at all for me to come back later. I mean...I don't have to park or anything.*

Lois: *No! Don't move! Um, . . . er . . . (coughs) (laughs a little) Sure you can move, just don't fly away alright?*

[Superman smiles down at her. Superman hops down off the ledge onto the terrace.]

Superman: *Sorry to just . . . drop in on you like this, Miss Lane, but I've been thinking, you know there must be a lot of questions about me that people in the world would like to know the answers to. . .*

Lois: *Of course. Yes, uh . . .*

[Lois walks to table and picks up her reporter's pad and pencil, takes a seat at the terrace table. Superman follows a few steps behind her. Lois smiles, hiding her nervousness, tries to light a cigarette from a box on the table.]

Superman: *You really shouldn't smoke, you know, Miss Lane.*

Lois: *Don't tell me. Lung cancer, right?*

[Lois turns back to lighting her cigarette. As she begins smoking, Superman, through his x-ray vision takes a flashing medical x-ray type shot of Lois's lungs.]

Superman: *Well, not yet, thank goodness.*

[Lois blinks, puts out her cigarette, picks up her pad. Superman comes back out onto the terrace leading Lois. He stops, draws her close to his side and looks deeply into her eyes as she looks uncertainly back.]

Superman: *Ready?*

[Superman flies through the night sky holding Lois, looking at her smiling as they fly. Lois's thoughts are heard.]

Lois: *Here I am, like a kid out of school . . .*

[Superman takes her hand stretching her arm out to fly arms out.]

Lois: *Holding the hand of a god. . . I'm a fool.*

[Superman circles in above the city, holding Lois in his arms. He lands and deposits Lois gently on the terrace once again. She is absolutely struck dumb with wonder, stares at him, her arms still wrapped around his shoulders.]

Superman: *Ah, we forgot to time ourselves*

Lois: *Ah, huh.*

Superman: *Oh well, maybe next time.*

Lois: *Mmm.*

[Superman starts to turn and back away, smiling down at Lois's hands. Lois notices her hands are still on his shoulders.]

Lois: *Oh! . . . Oh! . . .*

[She drops her hands slowly from his shoulders and they smile at each other. Superman walks to the terrace ledge as she watches in wonder. He turns.]

Superman: *You okay?*

Lois: *(brightly) Uh huh.*

Superman: *Well, good night! . . .*

[Superman waves and turns to the ledge.]

Lois: *Oh! Good night! (waving)*

[Superman steps up on the terrace ledge, shoots off into the night sky. Camera pushes in on Lois's face, almost drugged with contentment.]

Lois: *(speaking quietly to herself) What a super man!*

[Lois takes a few steps to go inside her apartment.]

Lois: *Superman!*

[Suddenly – loud knocks on the apartment door.]

Clark: *Uh, Lois! Lois?*

[Traffic is heard outside as the knocking continues.]

Clark: *Anybody home? Hello? Lois?*

[More knocks, more insistent.]

Clark: *Lois? Uh, Oh. . .*

[Lois unlocks all the locks on her door and opens.]

Clark: *(peering in around the door) Oh, uh, hi! Hi. Can I come in?*

Lois: *Oh yeah! Oh yeah!*

[Lois turns distractedly away from the door. Clark pushes his way in.]

Clark: *Lois, for goodness sake. Didn't you hear me knocking?*

Lois: *Ah, huh! (vapidly)*

## Revelation 3:20

*Behold I stand at the door and knock. If anyone hears my voice and opens the door I will come in to him and sup with him . . .*

I'm just pointing out that it might be rather stressful to be Superman's girlfriend. He'd be so awesome, but you couldn't control him, comprehend him, or contain him. And he could look right through you. And it would be a challenge for Superman. How would you get your girlfriend to see you (the real you and not just your awesome power)? How would you get her to listen to you and your word?

Well, if she ever did, and if she ever fell in love with you, she might be tempted to – well she would, she'd be tempted to control you. I mean Lois Lane would be tempted to contain the super man, even save the super man, keep him safe, and for herself, in a box made of stone. I imagine Lois might be tempted to domesticate the super man.

[The scene opens in a Newspaper office]

Lois: *I guess it's uh, sort of like . . . being married to a doctor, you know? The doctor gets wakened in the middle of the night and then the wife has to cope with the fact that he's gone. I guess I'm just too selfish.*

Clark: *No. No, you're not selfish at all.*

Lois: *Yes, I am selfish when it comes to you. I am selfish . . . and I'm jealous of the whole world.*

So, imagine what it would be like to be Superman's girlfriend, because you are Superman's girlfriend. You are the bride of Christ.

Matthew 17:1 *“Now after six days.”* It had been six days since Peter said, *“You’re the Christ.”* And Jesus said, *“You’re Rocky and on this Rock I’ll build my church and the gates of hell will not prevail against it.”* And then said that he must, *“suffer many things.”* And Peter said, *“This shall never be.”* And Jesus said, *“Get behind me, Satan.”* After six days, from the time Jesus told the disciples not to tell that he was the Christ, for they didn’t know what Christ meant, six days after he said, *“Don’t go tell it on the mountain.”* *“After six days,”* on the seventh day,

Matthew 17: 1-4

*Jesus took with him Peter and James, and John his brother, and led them up a high mountain by themselves. And he was transfigured before them*

(the verb “transfigured” is *metamorphao*. It means metamorphosis, like a caterpillar turns into a butterfly. It means transform like “transformers, more than meets the eye!” [Peter sings] Awesome.

*And he was transfigured before them, and his face shone like the sun, and his clothes became white as light. And behold, there appeared to them Moses and Elijah, talking with him. And Peter said to Jesus, “Lord, it is good that we are here. If you wish, I will make three tents here, one for you and one for Moses and one for Elijah.”*

What a stupid thing to say! Mark, who seems to have been very close to Peter, in his gospel records that Peter said this because he was terrified. And of course he was: He just saw Jesus, meek and mild, transformed into Super-man! And not just a low grade Hollywood sort of Superman, but the Biblical *eschatos* man, what Paul called, *“the Eschatos Adam,”* the “ultimate Adam,” “ultimate man.”

**What Peter Saw:**

So what does Peter see on top of that mountain?

**What Peter Saw:**

- The Superman

He sees the Superman.

**What Peter Saw:**

- The Superman
- The Son of Man

He sees the Son of Man coming in his kingdom.

You'll remember, last week, that Jesus had just said, "*some standing here will not taste death until they see the son of man coming in his kingdom.*" It turns out that he was there with them all along. He just looked like Clark Kent. Peter sees "*The Christ, the Son of God,*" the God-man.

**What Peter Saw:**

- The Superman
- The Son of Man
- God

He sees God.

Jesus said, "If you've seen me, you've seen the Father." God is light and now Jesus is radiating unspeakable light, like the light of the world, or something. You may remember that during the Exodus, Moses climbs the mountain, and a cloud of glory or light covers the mountain. From below, the people saw consuming fire. Then on the mountain, on the seventh day, God spoke his Word, which was written in stone as law. And when Moses descends, his face shines with light. Now Peter sees Moses on this mountain with the light up Jesus.

You may also remember, that years later, Elijah climbed the same mountain. And the Lord came to him in a still small voice, a thin silence, or a whisper. Then he heard the Word of God and was told to go prophesy.

So, on the mountain, Peter sees God, somehow. And Peter sees Man.

**What Peter Saw:**

- The Superman
- The Son of Man
- God
- Man

Peter sees what Man is supposed to be and destined to be,

- a vessel filled with fire and light, filled with God.

On the mountain Peter sees the Judgment.

**What Peter Saw:**

- The Superman
- The Son of Man
- God
- Man
- The Judgment

Jesus is the judgment on the false man because he is the revelation of the true man.

Matthew's description of these events is clearly a reference to the great prophesy of Malachi at the end of the Old Testament.

Malachi 3:1-5 (ESV)

*And the Lord whom you seek will suddenly come to his temple;*

Remember that in the Old Testament, the Glory cloud came down and filled the temple in Jerusalem and, before that, it filled the tabernacle in the wilderness. The Glory cloud filled the Sanctuary and both times the priests, the Levites, could not stand.

*And the Lord whom you seek will suddenly come to his temple; and the messenger of the covenant in whom you delight, behold, he is coming says the Lord of hosts. But who can endure the day of his coming, and who can stand when he appears? For he is like a refiner's fire and like fullers' soap.(This blew me away, but Fullers' soap, it turns out, was made with brimstone.) Then I will draw near to you for judgment.*

Remember that Jesus appeared like this on the road to Damascus. It killed the old Rabbi, Saul, and gave birth to the Apostle, Paul. And Jesus appeared like this to John at the start of the Revelation. Like Paul, John couldn't stand. He fell as dead until Jesus came and touched him and said, "Fear not."

2 Thessalonians 1: 9 tells us that this is how Jesus destroys evil. 2 Thessalonians 2:8 says this is how Jesus destroys the "lawless one." (the anti-christ) with just the "manifestation of his presence." The antichrist is the false Christ. If you think you are your own creator and savior, you create an anti-christ, (an imitation Christ) which is destroyed by the revelation of the true Christ. Jesus Christ is the judgment.

Malachi 6:4-6 continues

*For behold, the day is coming, burning like an oven, when all the arrogant and all evildoers will be stubble. The day that is coming shall set them ablaze . . . But for you who fear my name, the sun of righteousness shall rise with healing in its wings. Remember the law of my servant Moses, the statutes and rules that I commanded him at Horeb (that's Sinai) for all Israel. "Behold, I will send you Elijah the prophet before the great and awesome day of the Lord comes. And he will turn the hearts (in Greek, apokatastasei, restore the hearts) of fathers to their children and the hearts of children to their fathers, lest I come and strike the land with a decree of (haram or) utter destruction."*

Well, that's the end of the Old Testament and now Peter sees Jesus, glowing with light standing on the mountain with Moses and Elijah. Jesus is the fulfillment of the law and the prophets. Jesus is the meaning of Scripture. Whenever you're reading Scripture and you wonder what it means, it means Jesus. And whenever you wonder what anything means it means Jesus. Jesus is the Word of God, the Logos.

**What Peter Saw:**

- The Superman
- The Son of Man
- God
- Man
- The Judgment
- The Word that creates all things

Logos means meaning. The word of God, through whom all things are created and sustained. He is God's judgment as to what is, and is not. He is the Word of God that spoke to Moses from the fire. And He is the Word of God that came to Elijah. He is the Word that God speaks when he says, "*Let us make man in our image and likeness.*"

Peter sees Superman on the seventh day.

**What Peter Saw:**

- The Superman
- The Son of Man
- God
- Man
- The Judgment
- The Word that creates all things
- The seventh day where everything is very good.

Peter sees the seventh day. On the seventh day of creation, "*It is finished.*" Man is finished in the image of God and everything is very good.

In Revelation 21: 5 a voice comes from the throne of God where a lamb stands as if it had been slain, the word of God is this: "*Behold I make all things new*" - all things . . like Moses. Scripture makes it very clear that Moses died in the wilderness because he was disobedient when he was told to speak to the rock and instead, he struck the rock three times at *Maribah*. Scripture claims that the rock was Christ. Because of that God told Moses he couldn't enter the Promised Land, but would be "*gathered to his people.*" And where were his people? They were in *sheol*, often translated hell.

So, Moses, who was in hell – having been forbidden from entering the Promised Land because he took living water from Christ the Rock, like Eve took knowledge of God from the tree. Moses now stands on the Mountain of God, in the Promised Land talking to Jesus – his friend. He's been made new. Peter sees the seventh day and that the "*word of God will not return void, but accomplish that for which he was sent.*" Peter sees the Super-man and he's so discombobulated that he says, "It's good that we're here." "Good idea, Oh, Lord." "Why don't I make some tents?" What on earth is Peter doing? Well, you know exactly what he's doing; he's getting religious.

Matthew 17: 4 (ESV)

*And Peter said to Jesus, "Lord, it is good that we are here. If you wish, I will make three tents here, one for you and one for Moses and one for Elijah."*

The Greek word translated "tents" is also translated, "tabernacle." It's an obvious reference to the tabernacle in the wilderness. When Moses went up on the mountain, the consuming fire and glory of God were so terrifying to the Israelites, that they begged God not to speak his word directly to them, but to Moses. And God had Moses build a tabernacle so that he could dwell with his people and move with his people, without killing his people.

Five hundred years later, after a painful experience, in which Uzzah was killed by the glory of God that would reside on the Ark of the Covenant of the tabernacle. King David decides to build God a stone tabernacle – a temple. In 2 Samuel 7, God gets mad and says that he doesn't want to be kept in a stone temple. He wants to "tabernacle" among his people and so move with his people. And then God says, *"One day a son of David will build me a temple."*

Well, it's easy to see why David wanted to build a stone temple. It's just unsafe to store a hydrogen bomb in a tent! It's kind of unsafe to store a hydrogen bomb in a stone temple. And now it's obvious something like that was going on in Jesus. Instinctively, Peter must've thought, "If the veil rips and this glory gets out, there's no telling where it might go and what it might do." Instinctively he tried to contain the glory and comprehend the glory.

Comprehension is building mental containers. So, Peter judges the Judgment saying, "good job God," and then he tries to build three containers, one for the law, one for the prophets, and one for Jesus. If there are any tents, there shouldn't be three tents, but only one tent. But that's exactly what religion does. It takes the Life and divides it, trying to conquer it, and comprehend it. Isn't that exactly what the priests and Pharisees did when they nailed Jesus to the tree? They divided him, trying to conquer and comprehend him. They took the Life and killed the Life.

And isn't that exactly what Eve did when she took the fruit of the tree of the knowledge of good and evil? Trying to comprehend the good, she killed the good and lost the Life. Maybe we try to comprehend God because we're terrified of being comprehended *by* God. Maybe we try to know, because we're terrified of *being* known. You know, in the Bible there are two ways of knowing, one results in death and the other on results in – babies.

Gregory of Nyssa wrote, "Concepts create idols. Only wonder understands." In other words, only worshippers know God because they've been known by God. Worship is surrender – to the Author of life, and it bears the fruit of life.

Well, utterly terrified, trying to save his life, instinctively Peter tried to contain comprehend, and control Jesus – the Life. And isn't that what most religion is? Isn't that usually what a denomination is? Some folks have an experience of the truth, the light and the life and then they make walls and try to put the life in a box so they can market it, use it, and judge people with it. They kill it trying to control it, that is kill him, trying to control him.

Well anyway, Peter stands on the holy mountain and Jesus radiates the Light of eternal fire, more brilliant than the sun, like Malachi prophesied, *“the sun (s-u-n) of righteousness will rise.”* *“The Lord whom you seek had suddenly come to his temple.”* But where was his temple? *“The glory cloud was coming, the glory that filled the temple.”* But where was the temple? Peter saw no temple and Jesus had just told him: *“You’re Peter and on this rock, I’ll build my church.”* I think Peter heard: “You’re Peter, and I’m telling you to build my church.”

So, Clark Kent transforms into Super man right there in front of Peter, James, and John and Peter wants to build a temple – a house – a home. You see? Peter is tempted to domesticate the Super man. I think that’s the temptation of Superman’s girlfriend. And we, the church, are Super man’s girlfriend.

Speaking of the church in Great Britain and North America, Dorothy Sayers wrote: “We have efficiently trimmed the claws of the Lion of Judah, certified him ‘meek and mild’ and recommended him as a fitting household pet for pale curates and pious old ladies. “

We try to domesticate him, but he won’t be tamed. It’s like what Mr. Beaver says to Lucy in the Chronicles of Narnia when she asks if Aslan, the lion, is safe, “Safe?” says Mr. Beaver, “Who said anything about safe?” “Of course he isn’t safe. But he is good.” He is uncontrollable, incomprehensible, uncontrollable, untamable Good.

Alison Schofield, from our missions committee, who often works on the Dead Sea scrolls in the Middle East, shared with me a quote she heard from a Christian Bishop in Iraq when someone expressed surprise that there were, or had been so many Christians in places like Syria and Iraq, he responded, “You didn’t invent Christianity in North America. You just domesticated it. Let the American Christian church know that we are praying for them to remember who they really are.”

We’re Superman’s girlfriend . . . and if you were Superman’s girlfriend, wouldn’t you be a bit concerned that he might still be interested in conquering the world by hanging on crosses outside of cities like Jerusalem, Rome, Damascus, and Fallujah? Hanging on crosses at the gates of hell? Surely Peter is thinking about what Jesus had said about crosses and suffering just six days earlier. Maybe he’s thinking, “Can’t we just capture this moment and not climb any more mountains? Because no one would dare crucify you . . . looking like this.” “Jesus, I’m supposed to build the church. How do I build it with a dead Messiah?” “Let’s hang on to this and forget the sins of the world.” “Jesus let me save you. I’ll build a tent. I’ll build your church. I’ll get religious.” And now the story gets rather hilarious.

Matthew 17: 4-5

*And Peter said to Jesus, “Lord, it is good that we are here. If you wish, I will make three tents here, one for you and one for Moses and one for Elijah.” He was still speaking when, behold, a bright cloud overshadowed them.*

The bright cloud that overshadowed Mt. Sinai and filled the tabernacle in the wilderness and filled the temple in Jerusalem, that same bright cloud overshadows Jesus, Moses, Elijah, James, John, and Peter who won’t stop talking. A voice comes from the cloud and basically says, “Stop it! *Shabat*, Sabbath. Shut up and listen, Peter!”

Matthew 17: 5

*He was still speaking when, behold, a bright cloud overshadowed them, and a voice from the cloud said, “This is my beloved Son, with whom I am well pleased; listen to him.”*

Listen to him. Listen to him. Listen to Him!



Matthew 17: 6

*When the disciples heard this, they fell on their faces and were terrified. "The Lord, whom you seek will suddenly come to His temple . . . but who can stand when he appears?"*

God speaks and blows up Peter's container, or, at least Peter's plan to build a container, Peter's plan to build the tabernacle – the Sanctuary. You know, it was seven years ago this week that my old tabernacle blew up, and seven years ago in a few weeks that we formed the Sanctuary. When that happened, people had all sorts of plans and I had all sorts of plans. But on several occasions, my wife came to me and she said, "Peter, I was praying, and I heard the Lord say, "Tell Peter, he can't build the Sanctuary."

Now, that's pretty frustrating when you're also called to be the *leader* of the Sanctuary. For seven years we've tried all sorts of things to build the Sanctuary (some we may have done well, some not well). But, for seven years, we've stayed about the same size. Seven years ago, some people also started having visions of a boat, not a big boat, but like a Viking war boat – already built. Seven years ago, some told me: "Peter, the Lord has big plans, but for now, the Sanctuary is to be about worship and nothing more, worship and nothing more." At the time, I thought maybe we're supposed to sing a bunch of songs, but that's not worship (it can be part of worship) but worship is admiring Jesus, looking at Jesus, listening to Jesus.

Well, Jesus is revealed on the seventh day, and Peter wants to build the tabernacle, and God says, "Behold, this is my beloved son. Listen to him." For seven years, I've waited for the Sanctuary to get really big or fall apart. And for seven years God always seems to provide just enough that we can show up, behold Jesus, and listen to Jesus.

Matthew 17: 5 God the Father says,

*"Listen to him." When the disciples heard this, they fell on their faces and were terrified. But Jesus came and touched them, saying, "Rise and have no fear." And when they lifted up their eyes, they saw no one but Jesus only.*

"Rise and have no fear." It's like they die and rise with Jesus. God says, "Listen to Jesus," and what does Jesus say? "Rise and have no fear." "Have no fear." – fear is the beginning of wisdom, but love is the end. Jesus is wisdom, love, beginning and end. "Have no fear." How can they have no fear?

Well, they just saw Super man on the seventh day and on the seventh day, "everything is very good." Jesus is the word of God, and God's word will "accomplish that for which he was sent." God's word is the way God creates all things – including you. That we could ever reject God's word is perhaps the deepest mystery in Scripture . . . Or perhaps the deepest mystery is that having rejected it we could accept it and then love God in freedom, and love all creation in freedom, with absolutely no fear. No fear, because Superman is the Savior of all and freedom because salvation is wanting to be saved. He gives us hearts that want to be saved, restores the hearts of children to the Father. God's word is eternal seed and when we listen we are impregnated with eternal life. Jesus touched them and said, "Rise and have no fear," and they lifted up their eyes and saw no one but Jesus only.

You know there are two ways a church can get big, and there are two ways superman's girlfriend can get big. Lois can see herself and make herself big. She can look in a mirror and focus on herself. She can consume more and make more Lois. She can beef up and try to help Superman, save Superman. And the church can look in a mirror and work on her self. She can consume more and make more church. She can beef up and try to help Jesus. She can talk about herself, work on herself, and build more of herself. Lois can get fat, or Lois can get pregnant. If the church focuses on herself, she may get big, but

not with the life of Christ. But if the church sees only Jesus, and doesn't worry about getting pregnant, well, she might get pregnant.

Peter, James, and John can't build the tabernacle because they *are* the tabernacle. They will be filled with holy fire, and they will be impregnated with glory. Peter wanted to build a container for the glory rather than worship the glorious one and become the container. What I'm trying to say is that God doesn't want us to get religious. He wants us to get pregnant. And if you don't know how that happens, that's okay. Just show up every seventh day (the Sabbath day) look at Jesus and listen to Jesus. See only Jesus, and you'll find yourself bearing eternal fruit.

Matthew 17:9

*And as they were coming down the mountain, Jesus commanded them, "Tell no one the vision, until the Son of Man is raised from the dead." And the disciples asked him, "Then why do the scribes say that first Elijah must come?" He answered, "Elijah does come, and he will restore all things."*

*"restore (apohatestasei) all things"* It's another reference to Malachi, and the word that will restore hearts. I think it means Christ, the Word, in the mouth of the prophet restores all things.

Matthew 17:12

*"But I tell you that Elijah has already come, and they did not recognize him, but did to him whatever they pleased. So also the Son of Man will certainly suffer at their hands."*

Jesus says, *"Don't tell until you see the Son of Man risen from the dead."* *"Don't tell until you see the Son of Man suffer."* *"Don't tell until you know that the substance of God's glory and the power that makes all things new is sacrificial love."* Don't tell until you've gone up one more mountain – Mount Calvary.

On that mountain they would watch the Son of Man bear the sins of the whole world. When he died, his flesh was torn and the veil in the temple was torn and the glory of God got out. He said, *"destroy this temple and I'll rebuild it in three days."* On the third day, his body rose and on the fiftieth day, Pentecost, it kept rising. The glory of God fell on the disciples in the upper room. They were impregnated with Life and Peter began to preach. At the end of Matthew, Jesus meets the disciples on a mountain and says: *"All authority in heaven and on earth has been given to me. Going therefore disciple all nations."* Tell everybody. And Lo-is (Lois) *"I am with you always."* In forty years, the stone temple would be utterly destroyed and the living temple, the church that Jesus built on Peter, would be sailing to the ends of the earth.

This sermon has really stressed me out because a little over ten years ago I preached on this passage and the temptation of Superman's Girlfriend. We had just gotten real big – from about seventy to a couple thousand. We had just built a multimillion-dollar Sanctuary, and I'd become concerned that we had started focusing on the container and begun to forget what it contained. People began to say, "Peter, you can't preach that because we just built this." "That" was Jesus on the seventh day.

I was beginning to see that through his death and resurrection, we were to storm the gates of hell and God would reconcile all things to himself making peace by the blood of his Christ. So, I stood up on July 11, 2004 and said, "You know we built a pretty great boat." "During the week I asked 'Lord, what am I to say?'" This week, a phrase kept running through my mind: "Sink the boat, sink the boat, sink the boat. Lose the container blow up the tabernacle." Then I said, "If we sink the boat, maybe we'll walk on

water with Jesus. We can't really sink God's boat." I explained what I meant, "Let's sink the boat we built – sink it in our hearts and become the boat God builds."

Now I'll quote, "I do believe the commander in chief told us to build this boat. While we built it, he was building us, the navy. Well, the boat we built is a great battleship. It's an instrument of fire and the firepower is Christ in you. We just finished, but maybe we're still in port or just taking some pleasure cruises when it's safe. But what if the commander in chief is calling: 'Time to go to war.' Might we be tempted not to hear? Thinking to ourselves, 'That's unsafe. War can sink a boat and this is a great boat and we don't even have it paid for . . .' Well, don't we see: a battleship sitting in port during time of war is an abomination." I said "in our hearts." "So, let's sink the boat in our hearts – right now! And so, be willing to sail into the gates of hell if so commanded. Let's don't be safe."

Well, do you see why I've been stressed this week? I think God listens to sermons. I'm not sure I meant what I preached, but I think God meant what I preached. In three years, that boat sank and the Sanctuary was born because we preached the ultimate victory of Jesus standing in the glory of the seventh day. And, like I said, people had visions. It's super important that you don't believe everyone that says they have a vision. God commands you to test every word. But several people had visions of this boat, not a big boat, but an old boat, like a Viking boat, built for war. One friend had a vision of me on a cruise ship and she said, "Peter you were miserable." Then she saw me on this other boat and she said, "That's what you were made for." "This boat can go where other ships can't go."

Lately, it's dawned on me that we can't build this boat because it's already built. But maybe we can equip this boat with the right crew and right provisions. For seven years, according to one of my friends, the boat's been moving through the harbor or held in place by the hand of God. And that's not bad. For seven years we've been looking at Jesus and acquiring provisions every seventh day. Well, I'm not sure we can build this boat, but I think we can sail this boat out to sea and into battle. Already the word from this little boat of ours is going to distant places and bearing fruit beyond these walls.

So this week, the Board met and took tangible steps to embrace this vision. It has two parts, each dependent on the other.

1. Taking care of the boat – equipping the boat. And, you see, the boat is you. Since Andrew Tibert resigned, we've had to scramble but God has provided some wonderful people you'll hear about in the next few weeks. Their job and my job is to help us worship Jesus together – together on the seventh day and throughout the week, and listen to Jesus. That includes groups, committees, classes, programs, administration and structure but our communion in Jesus is the boat.

We must care for this boat, this tabernacle.

2. We think we're supposed to sail it out to sea, which means setting the sails and waiting for the wind, preparing for the wind.

I don't know that we'll ever get big, but I think we're supposed to travel far. Fairly often people will write and ask, "Where is there a church like the Sanctuary in my city?" And I say, "Well, you can barely find it in this city, but we'd like to help you do church in your city. We'd like to help you worship Jesus standing on the seventh day." So we'd like to export our worship and hopefully export our conversations. We're already exporting our Downside-up films, but we'd like to support them with better material and a community of believers, which is us.

Like we preached last week, we've seen that Jesus suffered and died for all, and like we preached this week, we've seen that Jesus conquers all things. If we've listened on the mountain, let's go tell it on the mountain –over the hills and everywhere.

So, I know we're supposed to gather and worship every seventh day. And I think we're supposed to sail that worship around the world. I suppose I could be wrong about that, and I suppose our little boat could sink. And I suppose that if we stopped looking at Jesus, we could sink like Peter sank- we could even die . . . But let's don't play it safe due to fear, for even if we sink into the depths of the earth, we mustn't forget just who our boyfriend is:

Clip from *Superman*

[Superman is flying and he spots Lois Lane in her car buried in a fault of the earth. He flies down, picks up the car, and sees Lois covered in dirt inside. He immediately goes around the car, tears the door off, and moans as he tenderly touches Lois' face, takes her out, and gives her a kiss.

Superman: (shaking his head side to side and whispering) No, no, no. (screaming) Ah, Ahhhhhhhhh!

[Superman turns and flies around the earth causing it to spin backwards in time. Rocks that have fallen go back into place, waters flow and recede back into a dam, holes in the dam are restored, the car is lifted from the fault in the earth. Superman grieves as he flies. He then reverses the course, moving the earth back into its normal rotation again.

A new scene begins with a blinking red light on the dashboard of Lois's red car. She is repeatedly trying to start the car, when Superman flies up and lands on the side of the car. She notices something and turns as she rolls down the window lifting her eyes to his.

Superman: Hi. (smiling at her)

Easter morning, Matthew 28:9, this is an accurate translation, Jesus appeared to the women running from the tomb and said unto them "Hi."

The temptation of Superman's girlfriend is to play it safe and to domesticate the man of steel. But let's watch him, and listen to him, and let's follow him wherever he goes.

### **Communion**

He took bread and he broke it saying, *"This is my body given to you. Take and eat. Do this in remembrance of me."* And in the same way, after supper and having given thanks, he took the cup, and he said, *"This is the covenant in my blood poured out for the forgiveness of sins; drink of it all of you. And do it in remembrance of me."* The light cup is juice, the dark cup is wine. They're both the light, and life, and glory of God.

And now may The Sanctuary be filled with his glory and bear the fruit that is life.

In Jesus' name, let's worship.

[Several worship songs are sung]

## **Benediction**

So, what are you thinking about? Are you thinking about your marriage? The parts that aren't working? Are you thinking about your business and how it may fail? Are you thinking about your children, thinking about the fact that you feel lonely? Thinking about yourself? Are you thinking about the wind and the waves, maybe even thinking about the boat? Well, lift your eyes, and look at Jesus.

You know, he gives absolutely everything for you? And he's the Super Man. So, rise and have no fear. He's more real than the wind. He's more real than the waves. He's more real than the boat. He's more real than the problems that you're facing. He's more real than the emptiness that surrounds you. Because he is the light, and the life, and the foundation of all being. And he belongs to you, for he's given himself to you. And you belong to him. Keep looking at Jesus. And Father, we pray this in his name. Amen.

And so, would you, I mean I mentioned a few things this morning about the church and all, would you just be praying for the Board? We have an incredible Board. We're kind of reconfiguring things that you'll hear more about in a little bit. And just pray, that in all this, we keep our eyes on Jesus. Okay? Pray that we keep our eyes on Jesus and go where he leads us. And now, you are The Sanctuary. And so *"may you be filled with all the fullness of God."* That's what the Apostle Paul says, in Ephesians. Remember? That's pretty cool. Amen.