



THE GOSPEL OF

MARK



Sermon Series Notes

“Where is your Faith? (Mark 4:35-41)

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We now move beyond the parables of Mark chapter four to a real life learning opportunity for Jesus’ disciples. Read Mark 4:35-41. Let me say again how much I love the Word of God, and how much I love this story from the Word of God.

Luke 8:23...and they were in great danger; This is not just an uncomfortable, undesirable situation, this is life-threatening.

My experiences on the Sea of Galilee/My experiences on the Gulf of Mexico, twice thinking I was going to die.

Three things to focus on from the text: One, “...don’t you care if we drown?” Two, “Why are you so afraid? Do you still have no faith?” And three, “They were terrified and asked each other, ‘Who is this? Even the winds and the waves obey him!’”

I’ll begin with the latter. And to consider the latter, we must divide it into two parts. The first is the all important question, “Who is this?” The answer to this question follows nicely after last week’s text on the parable of the mustard seed. As the kingdom has grown enigmatically (mysteriously) & exponentially (rapidly), the birds of the air have perched in branches of the kingdom. There are birds out on a limb, and birds on a branch near you. Both are shady characters. The birds on a limb I described primarily as cults, and I identified one main characteristic of a cult as what they believe about who Jesus is. They do not believe that Jesus is God very GOD.

Matt.24:24; Mark 13:22 For false Christs...will appear and perform great signs and miracles to deceive even the elect – if that were possible.

It was a gradual realization for the disciples in understanding just who Jesus really was, but once they got it, they never lost it. For us, we are way ahead of where they were, because we have the complete record to examine. If you are honestly still asking the question, “Who is this?” let me try my best to help you out.

Note booklet “Jesus is God.”

His claims: John 10:30-33; 8:56-59; His works: See John 10:37-38; Other supporting Scriptures: II Peter 1:16-18; John 1:1, 14; Isaiah 43:10b; 44:6b, 8b; 42:8; Ex.20:3; Rev.19:10 (booklet on this verse); 22:8-9;

Matthew 2:11; John 20:28; Heb.1:6; I Timothy 1:17; Romans 9:5; Melchizedek, Gen.14:18-20; Psalm 110:4; Heb.7:1-3.

I am baffled that anyone could honestly look at the evidence and come to any other conclusion than the obvious one as to who Jesus is. JESUS IS GOD.

Now, notice with me what the text tells us just before the disciples asked the question “Who is this?” It says, “They were terrified and asked each other, ‘Who is this?’” Isn’t it interesting that their fear was greater after Jesus calmed the storm? But that’s what needs to happen with us, our fear of Him must become greater than our fear of the storms of life.

Someone has said that the most important thing about a person is what comes to mind when they think about God.

“... the most portentous fact about any man is not what he at any given time may say or do, but what he in his deep heart conceives God to be like...were we able to extract from any man a complete answer to the question, ‘what comes to your mind when you think about God?’ we might predict with certainty the spiritual future of that man. (a.w. tozer, *the knowledge of the holy*).

How you think about God will determine who you become. You aren’t just a by-product of “nature” and “nurture,” you are a by-product of your God-picture, and that internal picture of God determines how you see everything else.

Most of our problems are not circumstantial. Most of our problems are perceptual. Our biggest problems can be traced back to an inadequate understanding of who God is. Our problems seem really big because our God seems really small. In fact, we reduce God to the size of our biggest problem.

A.W. Tozer says a “low view of God...is the cause of a hundred lesser evils.” but a person with a high view of God “is relieved of ten thousand temporal problems.”

Matt.10:28 Fear not those who can kill the body, but fear him who can cast both soul and body in hell.

Matthew Henry comments eloquently on Jesus calming the storm: “Winds and waves synchronize in the sublime symphony of a solemn silence.”

It was not a gradual calming of the storm. No, it went from furious squall to “completely calm.” (megas galene, gal-ay'-nay)

Who is this? This is God in human flesh. This is the Lord of all creation; Gen.1; John 1:2; Heb.1:10; Isa.44:24; Col.1:17.

He calmed the sea, and he stirred them up. One commentator says “sheer awe swept over them.”

Jesus is God, therefore, Jesus can calm any storm in my life.

But that brings us to our second point of focus in this story, “...don’t you care if we drown?” The truth is there are times in life when it appears God just doesn’t care, sometimes that He is not in tune with what is happening to us, that maybe He’s paying no attention at all. Anybody ever felt that way? Perhaps you’re feeling that way right now.

The storm is raging, and Jesus is sleeping.

Did you know that sometimes the storm comes after we've been obedient to Jesus' directive? It was obedience to Jesus' that led these disciples into this storm.

Jesus rebuking the wind and the waves makes me wonder if hell was not somehow involved in the origination of this storm. It is mysterious to me, but there are clear references in the Scriptures to Satan having power over the elements. For example, when God gave Satan permission to afflict Job, it was fire that fell from the sky and burned up Job's sheep and his servants (Job 1:16); See Rev.13:13; And it was a mighty wind that destroyed the house where Job's 10 children were having a meal together (Job 1:18-19).

Don't you think when disciples of Jesus are obedient, Satan will do all he can to stop them? I think so. So, this storm could have been the enemy's attempt to take out not only Jesus, but His disciples as well.

This is not the only time we find the disciples in a storm after following Jesus' instructions. See Mark 6:45-51 (note v.45). What is fascinating about this storm story is that Jesus would have walked right passed them as they battled the storm. Please note v.48a.

Matthew's record of what I believe is the same storm adds another element we need to consider. See Matthew 14:22-33.

In these stories there is a clear progression of faith required. The first is the faith to trust Jesus, even though he is asleep in the boat. The second is the faith to know that Jesus sees you in the storm even though you do not see Him (and He cares). And the third is the faith to step out of the boat and walk on water in the midst of the storm.

If we never experience storms in life, how will we grow in faith? See Deut. 8:2-5; James 1:2-4.

Jesus is able to calm the storm, but He wants me to learn to trust him despite the storm.

And now we come to the third and final focus from our text, "Why are you so afraid? Do you still have no faith?" See Matt.6:30; 16:8.

Some of us need faith to receive a miracle. Generally speaking, I believe we would see the Lord do more miraculous things if we had more faith.

Matt.9:29...According to your faith will it be done to you; Jesus in his hometown, see Mark 6:4-6.

The disciples asked Jesus to increase their faith. Anybody wanta ask that of the Lord today?

I have many times identified with the man in Mark 9:24.

With that said, we must not miss what I believe is clear from just the storm stories (& other Scriptures) we have looked at today, and that is that God's desire is not to save us from the storms of life, but that we might have faith in the storms of life.

John 16:33 I have told you these things, so that in me you may have peace. In this world you will have trouble. But take heart! I have overcome the world.

I John 5:4...everyone born of God overcomes the world. This is the victory that has overcome the world, even our faith.

What would have happened if the disciples had not woken Jesus?

What if, in any of the storm stories, Jesus had not calmed the storm?

I don't believe any of us doubt that God can calm any storm, anywhere, anytime. But our faith needs to grow so that, whether He calms the storm or not, we will make it to the other side. I don't think it is stretching the Scripture to allow "the other side" to represent heaven. Between here and heaven, there will be storms, they are inevitable. And what gets me safely through every storm to the other side is faith; See John 6:16-24; If we add this account to our storm stories, we know that, not only can Jesus calm the storm, but He can, if He chose to, take us immediately from the site of the storm to the other side. Wouldn't that be nice? But that is not the reality of life.

So here's what we're left with. We live in a world where storms are inevitable, especially if we are followers of Jesus. Some storms come as a direct result of our obedience to Him. For some, they will experience the miraculous in dealing with the storm. For others, they will need faith to endure the storm. But all will make it to the other side.

God delivered Daniel from the den of lions, and he delivered Shadrach, Meshech, & Abednego from the fiery furnace. But the prophet Zechariah was killed between the altar and the sanctuary (Luke 11:51); Elijah was taken up to heaven in a chariot of fire, and his successor, Elisha, would complete his ministry and die of an unknown illness (II Kings 13:14); Elisha had twice as many recorded miracles as his mentor, including raising a widow's son from the dead; I still do not completely comprehend the suffering God allowed Job to endure; King Herod had James the brother of John killed with the sword, then he arrested Peter also, but God delivered Peter from prison; Paul the apostle had a thorn in his flesh, and we are told it was to keep him from becoming conceited, and through his weakness God's power would remain on him; I understand that, but what about his number one servant, Timothy. Paul said he had no one like Timothy, that Timothy put the interests of Jesus Christ first. Yet Timothy had "oft illnesses" and terrible stomach problems. These are two men who saw extraordinary miracles performed through their ministries, yet they suffered without being healed. Another servant of Paul's, Epaphroditus, almost died.

Hebrews 11 is a record that includes saints in history who had faith that received miracles and those who had faith to endure storms See Heb.11:32-40.

Jesus allowed Lazarus to die, after telling the messenger that this sickness would not end in death (John 11). And Martha and Mary both say the same thing to Jesus when he finally shows up (after they had the funeral and buried Lazarus).

Mary & Martha to Jesus, "If you had been here my brother would not have died." Imagine what it must have been like for Mary & Martha as their brother's sickness got worse and worse. They no doubt clung to Jesus' words through the messenger that had been sent to let Jesus know Lazarus was sick. Jesus said, "This sickness will not end in death. No, it is for God's glory so that God's Son may be glorified through it" (John 11:4). Anybody know what the very line after this statement is? It is this: "Jesus loved Martha and her sister and Lazarus." He cared. It goes on to say, "Yet when he heard that Lazarus was sick, he stayed where he

was two more days.” He allowed them to go through the storm without him physically present, because he wanted them in days to come to look through renewed eyes of faith.

Could Jesus have healed Lazarus? Of course He could. So why He did allow him to die, then raise him from the dead? He did it for Martha’s and Mary’s sake, so that they would look beyond this present life, so that they would be able to weather the ultimate storm here and now - death. I Cor.15:26 the last enemy to be destroyed is death. And He did it for the other family and friends of Lazarus. Read John 11:41-42.

Just as Jesus calmed the storm to prove that he can calm storms, so he raised Lazarus from the dead to show that He can raise the dead. One day He will calm every storm. One day death will be no more. Keep your eyes on the other side – by faith!

Now let me add a little twist to this message. What is you’ve received a miracle in the past, but in your present storm, the Lord appears to be asleep, or not in tune with your situation? It is only natural to think, “Why doesn’t God do something this time like He did last time?” We must remember that every storm we face in this life is unique.

We need faith that enables God to do miracles, and faith that endures when the miracle doesn’t come.

See Daniel 3:16-18.

CONCLUSION

Psalm 23

You can trust him with your life; Don’t let the storms of life get in between you and the assurance of His love.

Job 13:15 Though he slay me, yet will I hope in him.

God cares, even when it is in His will to allow someone to face the ultimate storm – death.

Psalm 116:15 Precious in the sight of the Lord is the death of His saints.

I Cor.15:19 If only for this life we have hope in Christ, we are to be pitied more than all men.

Sometimes it is our obedience to Jesus that leads us straight into the storm. But it will be worth it all when we reach the other side!

Romans 8:18 I consider that our present sufferings are not worth comparing with the glory that will be revealed in us.