

Family Reflections

21-day fast, Unstoppable 2021

Pray for everyone's family time, health, and joy this Christmas

Mark 4:35-41 (Read text)

Big Picture Context: Rest of Mark 4 through the climax at the end of chapter 8.

- **We begin an important section** in Mark that leads to a climax in understanding who Jesus is.
 - **We have three set of three miracles that demonstrate who Jesus is** in order to call people to faith and following Him, rather than hardness of heart and rejection.
 - **Each set is followed by an interlude that focuses on the reaction of people to what they see in Jesus.** The question: Do they understand and believe, or do they not understand and in fear reject Jesus?
1. **Miracles Set #1 (Inside and Outside Israel) (4:35-5 all)**
 - a. **Jesus Calms a Demonic Storm** – At issue, disciple's faith
 - b. **Jesus Heals a Demonic** – Issue, the fear of those who saw the miracle.
 - c. **Jesus Heals a Dead Girl and Sick Woman** – Issue, having faith, not fear
 2. **Interlude #1: Confusion re. who Jesus is and rejection of Him/Kingdom (6 all)**

Its about His Kingdom and the Identity of Jesus (Walk through Gospel outlines)

The Kingdom of God is advancing through Jesus' preaching and ministry.

- **Jesus introduced** as Messiah, Lord, Son of God, Servant of God in **Mark 1:1-14**.
- **This introduction culminated with an explanation of why Jesus came, namely to inaugurate, preach and demonstrate the Kingdom of God.**

A. The Kingdom of God

Defined in simple terms:

- The Kingdom the third heaven rulership of God come to earth through Jesus Christ.
- Throughout the New Testament, the word kingdom consistently refers to the rule of Christ in the **hearts of believers**, since, for the time being, Christ's kingdom is not of this world (John 18:36).
- Jesus explained it this way: "The kingdom of God is not coming in ways that can be observed but the kingdom of God is in the midst of you or within you" (Lk 17:20-21).
- Romans 14:17 says that the kingdom of God is a matter "of internal and external righteousness and peace and joy in the Holy Spirit."

The gospel of the kingdom is the good-news message of repentance, redemption, and restoration of all things offered by God to all who will receive Christ.

- Those who accept this offer become part of His eternal kingdom (John 1:12).
- Those who choose to remain in their sin cannot be a part of this kingdom.
- Although grace makes this offer available to anyone who will receive it, Jesus warned that it would be difficult to enter His kingdom and few would do so (Mt 7:14).

- Unfortunately, many of humanity does not want to repent and change. We tend to love the darkness more than the Light (John 3:19). Many would rather cling to their old sinful identities than die to themselves to let Christ create them anew.

Three phases of the Kingdom

1. When Jesus walked the earth. (Mark 1-8)
2. Through the church, the people who have surrendered to the Lordship of the King and He dwells in their hearts and by the Holy Spirit he lives through them and extends His rule. It is a spiritual reality in hearts. (Mark 9-16)
3. Final consummation of the Kingdom will be both spiritual and natural. (Revelation)
 - The Jews, well-versed on OT prophecies, had been expecting the Messiah to immediately initiate the third phase of the Kingdom of God. However, the kingdom of God that Jesus described was not the kingdom that the Jews were expecting. Instead of the powerful, militaristic kingdom that the Jews thought their God would give them, the gospel of Jesus Christ described a kingdom of love, meekness, and peace received through laying down our soul life to receive spiritual life.

B. How people are to receive the Kingdom?

1. **Reception begins with repentance and a heart hungry to be right with God.**
 - In Mark 1 John the Baptist came preaching repentance.
 - In Mark 2, Jesus announced He came to call sinners to repentance (2:16)
 - The kind of repentance called for was Repentance from a hard heart, spiritual blindness, unbelief, willful sin, and blockages in the heart.
 - It was also from a lukewarm heart mixed with cares of the world, from weeds that choke out the fruit of the Kingdom in our lives.
 - This is so we can have good soil in our heart where we can see and understand the truth, hear its implications spiritually, receive it and act on it.
2. **Jesus taught we need to lay aside the old wineskins**
 - Wineskins of expectations, of programs and practices, wineskins of conclusions about who Jesus is and what He came to do, and religious performance.
3. **The Kingdom requires a complete death of self and enthronement of Christ in every matter with no hesitation of following.**
 - We need to move from the consumer mindset of the crowd that gathers to see the miracles and get their needs met to becoming avid disciples in community (followers) to making ourselves prepared to be sent ones into the harvest field.
 - **Images of Christ-centered life.**

C. Satan Himself always opposes the advance of the Kingdom of God:

- Why? He becomes dethroned of his temporary enthronement over the earth.
- So, He sends skeptics and accusers to discredit
- He manifests demonic lies to confuse, dissuade, and deceive our mindsets
- He feeds the religious and political and divisive spirits to take us away from Christ.

- He sends cares of this world and plants hard things in our heart through trauma, access points of sin, generational iniquity and so on.
- He sends crowds in need and busyness, and good ministry projects and programs that consume us to get us disconnected from the head, tired, and burned out.
- And he sends storms of adversity and opposition, and trials, and pain and loss to keep us from arriving at the assignments Jesus has for us.

Let's Come Back to the Story - Re-Read the Text

Background: The story of Jesus calming the storm is told in the three Synoptic Gospels, Matthew 8, Mark 4, and Luke 8 followed by the story of the demonically possessed man or men in the gentile region of the Gadara (the Decapolis capital) near the ranching territory of Gergesa.

Why did Jesus cross the lake? (Not a joke like; why did the chicken cross the road?)

- Jesus wanted a respite from the crowds so decided to take a boat with the apostles to the opposite shore outside Israel where there were no large towns (Matt. 8:18).
- Possibly knew he was on a mercy mission to this demoniac on the other side. He likely knew whom he was to minister to in crossing.

He commands and declares: "Let us go to the other side." This is the word of God.

- His word always comes to pass and never fails.

The severity of the storm itself: It says it was a **great (mega) storm** and the word *lalaipse* describing the wind is used for **hurricane force winds**. A huge tempest. We assume perhaps at least the four fisherman were with Jesus sailing the boat that Jesus was Himself in and other disciples followed Him in other boats. **The four apostles who were seasoned fishermen** were quite familiar with the ways of the sea; certainly, this was not their first squall on the Sea of Galilee, which was known for its sudden raging storms. **Even these professional fishermen were frightened by this storm, to the point of fearing they were in great jeopardy** of losing their lives.

The rest of Jesus: "But Jesus was in the stern, asleep on the cushion" (Mark 4:37–38). Jesus was in the boat in the position in which any distinguished guest would be shuttled on the little seat placed at the stern, where a carpet and cushion are arranged. The helmsman stands a little farther forward on the deck, though near the stern, in order to have a better look-out ahead." It says in one of the gospel account shortly after they set sail, Jesus fell asleep.

It is significant that Jesus' sleep was deep and sound, even though the storm, which was "already filling" the boat. There are several implications:

- **Jesus could rest in a storm because** in His Spirit-man **He was seated with the Father in another realm**, a realm when there are no storms.
- **Because He was at rest**, fully trusting not concerned at all in His own faith, **He could have authority over the storm that presented itself.**
- **How about us?** Do we know our identity seated with Christ in Heavenly places?

- Further, the Bible says **the sleep of a believer** will be sweet and peaceful because he knows the Lord is with him and will protect him. (Proverbs 3:24; Psalm 4:8).
- **It reveals the humanity of Christ:** It appears He needed rest and time away from crowds (Matt. 8:18). Christ's humanity meant He had the same basic human needs of rest and rejuvenation as we do, and this means he understands our needs and can serve as our intercessor before the Father (Heb. 2:17)

Let's note the disciple's attitude in waking Jesus.

- **They seemed to be annoyed he was not helping them bail the boat.** They may not have been afraid for their lives (although possibly) but that Jesus was not helping. Ouch. This could be part of their lack of faith.
- **Apply:** Are you ever annoyed when it looks like God is sleeping and ignoring the situation that has "swamped" you and threatens to drown you?

Let's note Jesus' response.

- **With one quick word from Christ, the storm abated, and the sea became calm** (Mark 4:39). The apostles marveled at this powerful display of Jesus' supernatural ability over the elements. This can be immensely comforting to the Christian in a storm. Faith in Christ is never misplaced. If He can calm the storms of the sea with one word, He can calm the storms of life as well.
- **It is interesting to note that the word "rebuke"** Jesus addressed to the wind and the waves are exactly the same as he addressed to the demon-possessed man in Mark 1:25 and a boy controlled by a deaf and mute spirit in Mark 9:25.
- Just as an evil demon possessed that man, so the destructive power of the storm was the evil power of the demons at work in the realm of nature. This is confirmed by the subsequent story. This was without question a demonic storm.

Application: The demonic storm of Covid-19 and election fraud, and financial hardship, and hurricanes, and social unrest, and the masking of the church.

There is a demonic agenda opposing revival and the church. Election fraud, from within and from without, is meant to undo the constitutional republic of America. **Economic and social shutdowns** caused by the demonically empower Covid-19, whether made in a lab in China or created by the devil himself, are meant to create a one world order that the current president elect is calling a necessary "reset." Be assured this reset is not like that of what God is doing in the church. It is a demonic agenda!

I believe the reset for the church is entirely different than that of the reset the enemy intends in world. The church reset is calling us back to the basics of repentance, wholly sold out to Jesus, laying aside the wineskin of programs, business, old methodology and ministry agendas, unto following the voice of the Holy Spirit, the Kingdom gospel, the priority of His presence, a relational discipleship net, and preparation for further adversity and a great outpouring of His Spirit, miracles, power, signa and wonder sin a new worldwide revival.

I believe this story and the one that follows about setting a region of the world free from demonic influence is applicable today. God is about to expose the demonic agendas, and facades and will punish the evil systems.

Lana Vawser - God is calling the church back to intimacy, to faith, to fire and He will vindicate His prophets who have seemed to miss it in the eyes of much of the church. He is breaking the spirit of Jezebel and intimidation and opposition that is opposing the church right now. The church is going to be unstoppable in 2021 and it is time for the power and presence and glory of God to come in a new way and for believers to rise in faith and boldness. There has been a sobriety in the words from the Lord in the last year. God has wanted to purge our old methodologies in the church to reintroduce new ones. It is time for the church to repent of false motive, old ways, and intentional sin. He is healing marriages, restoring family, restoring relationship, restoring first love in the church so that she can rise in power in this new era.

Dutch Sheets, Chuck Pierce, Johnny Enlow, Kent Christmas – I have been silent to give evil men time to repent but now is the time for God to judge and bring down evil. I will do this not by politics or natural means, but by my power. I will bring a fresh power of God and of the Holy Spirit. I will vindicate my prophets who have spoken in my name. The church will come out of caves and hiding and take her place in the season ahead. She will be judged and her unrighteousness and old ways healed. Just like God waited for Israel to be hemmed in by the Egyptian army at the red sea of the Jordan river at the flood stage or Haman to issue a decree and build a gallows so the enemy has put His foot forward in 2020, I have let the enemy appear strong in opposition so that I can show now my glory apart from the work of man.

Jesus said: Why are you so fearful? How is it that you have no faith? Jesus didn't say, "Wow, what a storm!" Instead, He asked, "Why is it that you have no faith?" The storm could not disturb Jesus, but the unbelief of His disciples disturbed Him.

1. **It was not their fear of the storm that made Jesus say they had no faith.** A small boat in a big storm is a scary place, and the initial fear itself isn't wrong. **What was faithless was they were not putting their trust in God at that moment.**
2. **Jesus could say they had no faith because they did not believe His word.** They each heard Jesus say, "Let us go over to the other side of the lake" (Mark 4:22). His spoken word is always reliable and comes to pass. In this sense they had no faith.
3. **Jesus could say they had no faith because they accused Jesus of a lack of care towards them.** When they woke Him, they said, "Do you not care that we are perishing?" (Mark 4:38) When we think Jesus doesn't care about us, it shows we have no faith, because we don't believe the truth about Jesus. It takes great faith to trust the sleeping Jesus, to know that He cares and works for us even when it does not seem like it. But this is the kind of trust God wants to build in us.
4. **Jesus could say they had no faith because they forgot the big picture.** The disciples should have known that God would not allow the Messiah to perish in a boat crossing the Sea of Galilee. Could the story of Jesus possibly end with Him drowning in a boat accident on the Sea of Galilee?
5. **Jesus could say they had no faith because they did not see the authority they already had in Him as His disciples to rebuke the storm.**

Finally, this passage also reveals the deity of Jesus because only God has **authority over the forces of nature and can make the "winds and water obey."**

- **Psalm 65:7**, "O God of our salvation who stills the roaring of the seas, the roaring of their waves." **Psalm 89:9**, speaking of the Lord, "You rule the raging of the sea;

when its waves rise, you still them.” **Psalm 107:29-30**, “He made the storm be still and the waves of the sea were hushed”

- God brought wind and parted the seas for Moses and Israel
- **God sent a storm and quieted it to get Jonah back on mission. Likely an obvious parallel here.** In Jonah a great life-threatening storm comes and the sailors are afraid. They wake Jonah with a rhetorical question. How can you sleep help us. God, YWYH calms the wind and waves when Jonah is thrown over and the sailors are in awe and great fear of God.
- Here Jesus calms the storm equating Him with YHWH and he is awoken by a rhetorical question and the response is the same awe and fear and who is this God?

Applicative Principles

1. When we follow Jesus, we will likely get demonic opposition.

- The Lord never promised we will never see a storm in life (as a matter of fact, He has told us to expect trouble, John 16:33). Rather, He has promised that He will be with us in the storm. He will never leave His children alone in the midst of trouble; with perseverance they will overcome (Deuteronomy 31:8; James 1:12).
- Storms prove our faith. Pain, suffering and adversity draw you apart from worldly cares and brings you closer to the Lord.
- Jesus overcame the world, death and the devil. The gates of hell shall not prevail against the advance of the Kingdom.

2. It may not look like He is watching, but when we are in the storms of life and we call out to Jesus, He will respond to our request.

- If Jesus was able to rescue the apostles from the storm, He is also able to rescue us from the storms of everyday life: sickness, job loss, marriage problems, and even the sting of death (1 Corinthians 15:55).

3. There is a call to strengthen our faith.

- **The apostles’ lack of faith reminds us** that even those who lived and walked with Jesus, saw His miracles, and heard His message still found it difficult to be 100 percent faith-filled all the time. In that way, the disciples were a lot like us. However, their lack of faith was rebuked—and, by extension, so is ours.
- **Apply:** Is it possible God is calling your to speak to the storms in our life and in our nation? Financial storms, relational storms, health storms, opposition storms?

Gospel Zoom Call on Tuesday (Slide)

Ministry