

Mark 4v35-41
Teacher, do you care?
 28th July 2019 am Hill and Arcadia

I'll never forget the **pain and anguish** of a mother standing next to the bed where her nine year old son had just died. Her little boy had suffered for years and now he was dead.

I don't think there is **a single person here** today who has not felt life to be unbearable. Each one of us here for one reason or another has experienced life as a huge crushing wave.

Like the disciples we are often faced with **unwanted and unexpected** difficulties.

1 Life can be so hard

In this section of Mark's gospel the Holy Spirit gathers together a number of **life threatening crises** that various people faced.

Jesus does not still an average storm but a "**great windstorm**" that threatens to flood the boat with all the passengers drowning.

Mark 4:37 and a great windstorm arose, and the waves were breaking into the boat, so that the boat was already filling.

In the **Gerasene territory** across the lake, Jesus does not exorcise one who is marginally or mildly possessed but one who is victimized by *a legion of demons* (5v1-20).

No one had been able **to subdue** this ugly character. Instead they had him removed from society and forced to live in the tombs (graveyard) – the realm of the dead away from the life of the community.

Back home in friendlier territory the same pattern for potential death continues. There is **Jairus' daughter**...

Mark 5:23 and implored him earnestly, saying, "My little daughter is at the point of death. Come and lay your hands on her, so that she may be made well and live."

Later news arrives *Mark 5:35 While he was still speaking, there came from the ruler's house some who said, "Your daughter is dead. Why trouble the Teacher any further?"*

And then there is the woman **subject to bleeding**

Mark 5:26 and who had suffered much under many physicians, and had spent all that she had, and was no better but rather grew worse.

Isn't that a picture of life and death around us?

Among us here at Central we have a steady and growing stream **of grieving** members.

There are also a number of us who have to deal with unwelcome debilitating **physical illness**.

Some previously active members **have grown old** with their bodies failing them and in some instances their minds are not what it used to be.

Hardship abounds; from being unemployed to road accidents, from injustice to dysfunctional relationships; also economic and political instability and uncertainty...

So many of us are facing hardship and pain; you may be one of those who feel driven by a deep **sense of desperation**.

Like the disciples who find themselves in deep trouble thrown about by this terrible storm.

Like the **demon possessed** man has been beaten and chained by others; cutting himself with stones in an attempt to get rid of the inner turmoil in his own soul.

Like Jairus desperate as a father to turn his daughter away from death's door.

Mark 5:23 and implored him earnestly, saying, "My little daughter is at the point of death. Come and lay your hands on her, so that she may be made well and live."

And can you imagine as a sick person **wasting all your resources** on every conceivable remedy in the hope of being healed?

Mark 5:26 and who had suffered much under many physicians, and had spent all that she had, and was no better but rather grew worse.

These people **like all others** who suffer any kind of affliction were desperate.

Each one knowing, for **different reasons**, that they did not have the capacity, nor the ability or the resources to escape from their predicament.

The storms of life are **a common experience** among all men and women in this dark and broken world. Life can be so hard.

The disciples **ask the question** we often think and even say...

2 Lord, do you care?

Mark tells us that “*v37 the waves were breaking into the boat, so that the boat was already filling.*” It wouldn’t be long before the boat **would sink**.

It is in this **terrifying situation** we read that Jesus was in the back of the boat sleeping. *Mark 4:38 But he was in the stern, asleep on the cushion.*

In the Bible, sleeping in the midst of adversity **is a symbol** for complete trust in God. For example, God tells the Israelites that when they get to the Promised Land,

Leviticus 26:6 I will give peace in the land, and you shall lie down, and none shall make you afraid.

Psalms 4:8 In peace I will both lie down and sleep; for you alone, O LORD, make me dwell in safety.

Jesus could sleep through the storm because **he knew** this would not be the way he would die. He demonstrated total trust in His Father’s plan for his life.

But the disciples **don’t know that!** All they know is that the only hope they have of surviving this storm is for everyone to help bail water – to do the best they can!

While Jesus being asleep through the storm signifies his total trust is in God and what He is doing; that **is not true** of the frightened sailors.

To them it indicated that Jesus did not care about their crisis. They rebuked him by saying, “*Teacher, do you not care that we are perishing?*”

This of course **is the language** of desperate, frustrated people. This questioning response from suffering people is expressed elsewhere in the Bible.

Psalms 10:1 Why, O LORD, do you stand far away? Why do you hide yourself in times of trouble?

Psalms 44:23 Awake! Why are you sleeping, O Lord? Rouse yourself! Do not reject us forever! 24 Why do you hide your face? Why do you forget our affliction and oppression?

You and I are not alone in those moments and seasons when we wonder about being abandoned by God or when we doubt His presence.

But what is it that **the Holy Spirit** is showing us through Mark about Jesus to comfort us when life stinks.

3 Learn more about who Jesus really is

Jesus shows himself as **possessing the power and authority** to intervene with help in each of these difficult situations.

We learn from this that Jesus is not only sovereign over the demonic forces and debilitating illness, but he is also sovereign over the powerful forces of nature and also of death.

Mark 4:39 and he awoke and rebuked the wind and said to the sea, "Peace! Be still!" And the wind ceased, and there was a great calm.

Mark 5:8 For he was saying to him, "Come out of the man, you unclean spirit!"

Mark 5:34 And he said to her, "Daughter, your faith has made you well; go in peace, and be healed of your disease."

Mark 5:41 Taking her by the hand he said to her, "Talitha cumi," which means, "Little girl, I say to you, arise."

He has authority over **the elements**, over **multiple evil forces**, over **disease** and over the final enemy **death!**

But now **what does this mean** for you and me in our situations of crisis? We need to ask and answer the question the disciples asked on the boat *Mark 4:38b* "Teacher, do you not care that we are perishing?"

The message conveyed to us from these life threatening and fearful situations is very clear – **Jesus is equal to and in fact above any threat** that may shatter human life.

Jesus does care that you have... Jesus does care that you are...

Peter therefore urges the scattered church in *1 Peter 5:6* *Humble yourselves, therefore, under the mighty hand of God so that at the proper time he may exalt you, 7 casting all your anxieties on him, because he cares for you.*

But we cannot leave it there lest I mislead you and take you down a road of **disillusionment**.

Jesus being equal to and above any threat **does not imply** that the Lord will / must muzzle every storm, cast out every demon, heal every disease and raise every person from the dead – **YET!**

The immediate response of Jesus to the needs of these particular people (and any others as He sees fit) is **an aspect** of His sovereign power, within the framework of a much bigger picture – all of which serves the kingdom purposes of God.

To see the sovereign power and control of Jesus as **merely responsive**; a kind of knee jerking frantic crisis management (putting out of fires) is a mistake.

God's sovereign power is **supremely proactive**. God is intentionally unfolding His kingdom purposes in all that happens.

The nature of **who Jesus is** as the second person of the Trinity (having sovereign power and purpose) gives us confidence in all circumstances...

Romans 8:28 And we know that for those who love God all things work together for good, for those who are called according to his purpose.

It is comforting to know that Jesus cares; that He is not asleep; that He is present, that He is at work at all times in all things exposing his true identity.

When you and I see who Jesus really is then our **faith will grow** and our fears will diminish.

We see here that Jesus is concerned about the faith of the disciples. They haven't really got who Jesus really is.

After calming the storm he turns to his disciples and **questions their faith**. He says to them, "*Why are you so afraid? Have you still no faith?*"

He does this because he has seen that the disciples feared the power of the storm more than they trusted the power of Jesus.

And why not? The storm is threatening to take their life while Jesus is asleep on a pillow.

What the disciples needed to see was that it was **God with them** in the boat. And that Jesus is not some kind of helpless victim but that He is in total control over all things even when He was sleeping.

The **purpose** of these miracles is to lift your eyes from the surging chaos that seems so devastating.

And to fix them instead on the vision of **the One enthroned** in heaven, the king omnipotent over everything including the storm that day on the Sea of Galilee – Jesus.

The believer always in every circumstance hearing and believing...

Isaiah 43:1 But now thus says the LORD, he who created you, O Jacob, he who formed you, O Israel: "Fear not, for I have redeemed you; I have called you by name, you are mine. 2 When you pass through the waters, I will be with you; and through the rivers, they shall not overwhelm you; when you walk through fire you shall not be burned, and the flame shall not consume you.

It is true that you and I will be **consumed with fear** if our hope is pegged on circumstances or chance or on people. Do you believe that Jesus is stronger than the power of the storm

Where there is faith – that is when your trust and confidence is in Christ – who is all powerful, actively orchestrating His redemption purposes related to each and every disciple – fear in the same proportion is gone.

Conclusion

It was a **great testimony to God's faithfulness** when I bumped into the woman who lost her nine year old son some years later. She was obviously overflowing with the joy of Lord; asking, "Do you remember me?"

I did – **Her testimony** – God has been her portion and strength. She has continued to grow in her love for God and in the experience of his grace.

- Does God **really care**? Yes he does.
- Will God **eliminate every storm** you are going through now? No.
- Will God **abandon you** in the midst of these storms? Never!
- How should you and I **respond in times of crisis**? Like the Psalmist respond in faith and not fear...

Psalms 121:1 I lift up my eyes to the hills. From where does my help come? 2 My help comes from the LORD, who made heaven and earth. 3 He will not let your foot be moved; he who keeps you will not slumber. 4 Behold, he who keeps Israel will neither slumber nor sleep. 5 The LORD is your keeper; the LORD is your shade on your right hand. 6 The sun shall not strike you by day, nor the moon by night. 7 The LORD will keep you from all evil; he will keep your life. 8 The LORD will keep your going out and your coming in from this time forth and forevermore