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Who Jesus Is and Why He Matters *Great Question! What's the Answer?*

Mark 4:35-41

INTRODUCTION

There's power in the sea, and even more power in Jesus Christ who loves you.

I spent a lot of time in the ocean growing up. There is significant power in the waves of the ocean. The sea does not look that powerful – until you are out in it yourself. Then, it can humble you quickly. Just yesterday at Carmel we weren't even on the water, we were just next to it not even in it and a wave came in that quickly rose up around us and almost knocked us over.

Tip for the day: Carmel Beach – just watch the water.

Surfing story – being held under at the 14th hole Kahuku Golf Course... surprising power.

Today we are going to get to know Jesus just a little bit better. I bet everybody here knows Him. For some you may know Him as a casual acquaintance, for others know Him as your truest friend, Savior and Lord. None of us know Him to the extent He would like us to know Him. So, this passage is for all of us.

The setting is the Sea of Galilee. Jesus has been teaching the multitudes in parables helping them understand the Kingdom of God, explaining things even more completely to His disciples who asked for clarification.

Let's pick up the story in Mark 4: 35 and read through verse 41.

Who then is this Jesus?

Jesus is the Still of the Sea

It is easy to read this story and miss God's clear and very important revelation of who Jesus is in relation to the natural world. As I have read this passage before I have been so taken back by the presenting unreasonableness of Jesus' question about their fear and faith that I have not given proper note to the obvious direct disclosure of Jesus in relation to the natural world.

Your outline point # 1 should read: **Jesus is the Stiller of the Sea**. He is someone who has authority over the natural world – the sea, wind, sun, rain... There is literally nothing under the sun that Jesus does not have ultimate control of.

This should not surprise us. He has already shown Himself to have authority over sickness and demons and the authority to forgive sins. Here we add to that list His demonstrated **authority over nature**.

Of course we will see that sickness, demons, sins, and nature are only a part of the universe of things He is Lord over. God will go on to reveal in the Gospel of Mark that Jesus has power and authority over **all** things, including even death.

But patience will serve us well, let's not get too far ahead of ourselves, rather let's enjoy the unfolding of the story of who Jesus is as the Gospel of Mark tells it. For today, add to your understanding of Jesus that He has authority over the natural world, the created order.

And of course we know this to be true because Jesus Himself is the creator of all things. Genesis 1:1 teaches, "In the beginning God created the heavens and the earth." Genesis 1:26 records God's thoughts, "Let Us make man in Our image..." Who was the "us?" John 1 makes it clear that Jesus was with God in the beginning creating all things. In fact John 1:3 says, "All things came into being through Him, and apart from Him nothing came into being that has come into being." And John 1:14 makes it clear that Jesus is the creator of the entire natural world. He was The Word who spoke it into existence. It reasonably follows that if He can speak it into existence out of nothing, He certainly can get it to calm down when He wants.

If He chooses to, He can control the natural elements. So I guess farmers **should** pray for rain and athletes **should** pray for sun, we'll let God sort it out as to who gets their wish.

So what implications does Jesus as stiller of the sea have in our lives?

1. Know that Jesus Is One Powerful Person

You try that whole "Hush, be still" routine and see what you can accomplish. We don't stand a chance. As a surfer I have prayed, no Lord, take that wave away. He chose only to give me the ability to hold my breath until I could get to the surface.

Jesus is not just a man, He is not even just a prophet of God, He is the eternally existing God the Son, Creator of the Universe, Redeemer, Savior, Sovereign Lord of all people and all creation -- Able to heal you in body and spirit. He is able to create out of nothing. And here we see that He is able to still the powerful sea. **Our Lord Jesus is powerful!**

2. Reconnect With The Bigger Story of God's Dealings With Mankind.

God created man to rule nature. [read Gen 1:28] Yet, man decided he didn't need the follow God's order. Satan's logic seemed much more reasonable. "Surely you will not die..., eat, eat..." God's intention for intimate relationship with man ruling (Gen 1:28) over His creation was spoiled by man's rebellion, and the world, including us, fell under His curse: God said, "I will greatly multiply your pain in child birth..." (Gen 3:16); "Cursed is the ground because of you, in toil you shall eat of it all the days of our life..." (Gen 3:17-19). Man exerted his free will to listen to Satan rather than God. Like a teen exerting his independence from his parents. Kit Culver says, "Human independence meant the forfeiture of intimacy with God, and with the passing of generations, people's knowledge of Him became increasingly distant and darkened."¹

Sad! But true to the reality we live in. We don't have the power to make the natural world submit to us do we? We try, but the tides always rise. The hurricanes destroy. The seismic waves generate tsunamis and they still wreck havoc. Cold still freezes. Sun still burns. Crops still require sweat to harvest. Childbirth is still painful. We live in a fallen world.

This is the down side of the bigger picture. But here is the good news -- God in Jesus is breaking into this world (fallen under the temporary dominion of Satan (Jn 12:31; [John 14:30](#); [16:11](#); [2 Cor 4:4](#); [Eph 2:2](#); [6:12](#); [1 John 4:4](#); [5:19](#))) and is exerting His power and authority, setting things right. He began the restoration and redemption of all things with the 1st advent of Jesus, and He will finish the work when Jesus comes again.

"Who then is this...?"

He is Jesus and He has power and authority over the forces of nature. Remember those commercials: Don't mess with mother nature...? Well, God's Son has more power than Mother Nature.

Who then is this...? That question lingers in the minds of disciples and I hope it lingers in yours. It appears at the end of the story as Mark presents it, but the disciples had a question for Him in the midst of the storm. You may have had the same question. I have. With waves crashing and all indication that they were going down, they asked, and we ask, "Jesus, don't you care...?" Things were going so bad for them that they figured He must not care. But, if we look carefully at this story, we see just the opposite. And this is our second point that Jesus is...

Jesus is the One Who Cares Most

But it didn't seem like that to the disciples at this time. In fact, I find myself very sympathetic to them. It was His idea that they cross (v.35) the sea, they were following His lead, they had done all the work of sailing the boat, and they were trying desperately to keep the thing afloat while the waves kept pushing it under. All the while Mr. Good Idea was asleep on the cushion! Oh I'm so glad I followed His lead!

As I studied this passage, it dawned on me that we have in Jesus a Savior who leads us into dangerous places, situations where we will be at risk of losing our lives – places where our faith will drain out and fear will come rushing in. We will think we have made a foolish choice to follow

¹ Speak, Lord – Learning to Listen to the Bible, Christopher Culver, Hightower Press, Littleton Colorado, 2006 p.24

Him – what does He know about sailing anyway, He is a carpenter? If I hadn't followed Him I would have been safe and sound on the dry land...

Ever been there? I have. "Don't You care...?" seems like a very natural question – a question appropriate for a natural assessment of their situation. But a **natural** assessment is not what the disciples needed. They needed to look at the situation through the eyes of faith and recognize Jesus for who He was. I'm convinced that if they knew with clarity and confidence that Jesus was the Son of God sent to save them from their sin and lead them as their Lord, as the King of the Kingdom of God... they would probably have dropped the "Don't you care..." and replaced it with more of a, "If you please Lord, would you still the sea that we might live."

But they didn't know the rest of the story yet. They had inklings of the prophetic voice in their ears of Jesus as God's Messiah, they knew Him as an healer, an exorcist, a forgiver, a teacher... but it wasn't all adding up, it hadn't gelled yet that He was God the Son, Sovereign over all creation and the very incarnation of God's perfect love come for their benefit.

They hadn't seen John 3:16 at football games and they had not been convinced of it's truth – For God so loved the world that He sent His Son...

This event on the sea was part of Jesus filling in their understanding of who He was and what His intentions were with them. They did not know it before, but they knew it after their lesson on the lake: **Jesus has both the power and the willingness to save us!**

Take note that Jesus' stern words to them had nothing to do with His annoyance that they had awakened Him. "Don't you ever wake me up again!" No, at their calling out to Him He did wake up and He did act in their best interest. Even here we see a man who cares. And we see with 20-20 hindsight that He is not just a man who cares but He is a God who cares – a God who travels in the same boat with us and who cares so much that He listens, and saves us from death, employing powers we do not have ourselves.

I have a hunch this Jesus does not only use the method of direct teaching to teach us the important lessons of our lives. There are some lessons these disciples picked up along the way of actively following His lead. Not only did they learn that Jesus had power over nature, but it is very possible that given the time to reflect, they would have later recalled that the Scriptures speak of God delivering people through the stormy seas (Ps 89:8-9; Ps 46:1-3; Ps 107:23-30) and this would have added to their understanding that Jesus who demonstrated this same divine ability was in fact the Son of God. We stand at a distance and should appreciate this too.

Not how about us? I believe it is fair to say that we are "in the boat with Jesus" if we are following His lead and going where He has asked us to go and doing what He has asked us to do. If you can't remember a time when you have been in the boat with Jesus and things have gotten pretty hairy and Jesus appears to be sleeping on the job... just keep following His lead and that time will come. When it does, this text would argue strongly that it would be a good idea to ask Jesus to deliver you! Because He can deliver us from any storm, He has in the past, and we can be 100% confident that He will in the future.

Here it is very important that we neither presume on God to save us and deliver us nor think that He can't or won't. Beth Moore says: "God will always deliver you..." – He will either deliver you **from** your troubles, **through** them or **by** them. We know that the sea takes some believers. Chuck has spoken of the song, *It is Well with My Soul*. Why was it well with the soul of someone who lost his loved ones at sea? Because Jesus delivers some **by** the storms of life. His death on the cross and resurrection from the dead secures our ultimate deliverance. And He will deliver every believer in Him.

When He has revealed enough of Himself to you to enable you to believe in Him as Savior and Lord you are "...sealed in Him with the Holy Spirit of promise..." (Eph 1:13) Listen to Eph 2:4-6 "But God, being rich in mercy, because of His great love with which He loved us, even when we were dead in our transgressions, made us alive together with Christ (by grace you have been saved), and raised us up with Him, and seated us with Him in the heavenly places, in Christ Jesus,..." Paul's confidence in Jesus ultimate deliverance of us into an eternally right relationship with God is so great that he sees us as already raised up as already made alive with Christ, and as already seated with Him in heaven. Your deliverance as a believer is a done deal.

Jesus led His followers out onto a sea that became a life threatening environment; then He delivered them through it. He **still** leads His followers out onto stormy seas where we will think we are goners. And He still stills the seas. From this side of the cross, we are able to see and we are reminded this morning that far from Jesus not caring for us, He is actually the one who cares the most! He cares enough to save.

Don't you care...? It is one of those questions that I bet the disciples later regretted ever asking. Jesus demonstrated His care, here on the sea; and later even more perfectly, on the cross. "I can't believe I asked Jesus if He cared."

There is one more part of this passage that has bothered me. I think because I can relate to the disciples fear and lack of faith when faced with a real life threatening situation I can't help but feel Jesus' rebuke was a bit harsh. Verse 40 says, "And He said to them, "Why are you afraid? Do you still have no faith?"

These questions seem sort of like a medical doctor with bad bedside manners. Lori and I have gotten sucked into the TV show *House*. He is a very rough talking doctor who seems not to care about anything but getting the right diagnosis. But it instead of some non caring doctor, upon more careful examination, we see here, and this is our final point, Jesus is...

Jesus is the Great Physician of Our Souls

Let's stay with the analogy of Jesus being like a medical doctor. He puts the stethoscope on our chest and listens and hears what is underneath our breath. It is a "gurgley" wheeze indicative of an illness that will be terminal, unless it is treated. Those lungs are not clear. With His hand on us He asks us to take a deep breath. Does it hurt here, how long has it hurt?

Just like that Jesus listens to our breathing and hears, "don't you care we are perishing?" That concerns Him and He asks another diagnostic question? Why are you afraid? And then, moving in on the diagnosis, He asks, "Do you still have no faith?"

Diagnostic Question 1 – Why are you afraid?

This week I had to ask, Johnny why are you afraid? I have fears: I have feared that my own sin would disqualify me from heaven. I fear my children will not call Jesus their Lord and will miss what is most important in life. I have experienced life threatening situations where I have faced and feared death. And I know that you have fears too, some of those you could probably accurately label just concerns; others are real fear invoked by darn right life changing potentialities; and still others of you face actual death – an illness, a wartime deployment. If this is not your situation now it will be some day.

So why do we fear? Because we have very real hopes and dreams for our lives and we face very real threats that may rob us of what we want, like life itself. We know God has the power to deliver, but we also know that in this fallen world, bad stuff happens to even the best of people. So, bottom line, we don't trust God to take care of us the way we want to be taken care of. Hence Dr. Jesus' second question,

Diagnostic Question 2 – Do you still have no faith?

He is using extreme language to drive home an important point: Beneath our fear is our lack of faith.

“Their earnest entreaty showed that they had a “little faith”; but as their terror arose from want of confidence in the power of Jesus, and so completely unmanned them, it could be said comparatively that they had no faith.”²

Jesus heard in their “Don't you care we are perishing?” the sickness of fear caused by the condition He labels as “no faith.”

How about us? What do you think? If we were in the boat with Jesus and the waves were sinking the boat would we have been the ones waking Him with our complaint, “Don't you care...?” Would we be fearful of death and without the faith that He would deliver us?

My hunch is that most 20th and 21st century Christians would be right there with the same attitude as the 1st century disciples? Why? Because most of us have not fully come to a point of surrendering our life to Jesus to the point we are no longer afraid of the death that may come as a result of following Him.

The only way we (as Jesus' disciples today) can be as relaxed as Jesus was then in this storm, is if we are in the boat with Jesus, if we know who He is, and finally if we are ready to die.

I have already said that we are in the boat with Jesus when we are going where He has sent us and doing what He has called us to do. You would be wise to make sure that is the case. You don't want to live in the storms of this fallen world and not be in the boat with Jesus.

² Clark's Peoples Commentary: The Gospel of Mark, 1896, 1902 p. 90

We know who He is if we know Him to be who He has revealed Himself to be in the pages of Scripture. So far in our study of the Gospel of Mark we know Him to be the Son of God, King of the Kingdom of God, the promised Savior and Lord, the one with the power and authority over sickness, demons, sin, even the forces of nature. Do you know Him? Let's all get to know Him better, one surrendered attentive time of seeking Him in the pages of Scripture after another, today, tomorrow, the next day...

We are ready to die only if we have given ourselves totally into the care of Jesus and trust Him with our very lives. Paul seemed to have done this: "to live is Christ, to die is gain..."(Ph 1:21); "to be home in the body is to be absent from the Lord..." (2 Cor 5:6) and we can imply the opposite to be true as well.

Let's talk about being ready to die.

All who are truly followers of Jesus have been bought with a price (Acts 20:28; 1 Cor 6:20; 7:23), we are no longer our own (1 Cor 6:19) but rather we belong to our Master, the Lord Jesus. He will protect us from harm when He wants to. He will allow us to suffer even death when He wants to. We can take great hope that He has demonstrated His ability and willingness to supernaturally preserve the life of His loved one, yet we've got to come to grips with the fact that we are His to protect from death or to call home by death.

When we can place ourselves in the hands of Jesus as not only our savior from sin but our Lord Protector, then we are ready for some exciting living. Until we see ourselves as His we won't be free of fear, and we won't have healthy vibrant faith that allows us to be on the wild sea on mission with Jesus and not preoccupied with our own wants and needs.

The Great Physician diagnosed His first disciples as fearful people of "no faith". What is the remedy? Jesus just lets His diagnosis sink in with out offering the remedy.

But I'm inclined to give you the primary remedy I know of. Like many medicines that can save your life this can be a bitter pill. It is the pill of **declaring Jesus as your Lord and Master**.

- If Jesus is your Lord and Master, He can and will supernaturally heal you; but should He not choose to heal and instead choose to deliver you by that illness, He will bring ultimate healing in the form of eternal life with Him in heaven. He has demonstrated His power and His love. You need not fear, only believe in Him both as Savior and as Lord who has bought you.
- If Jesus is your Lord and Master, He can and will protect you from the forces of nature; but should He deliver you by that force, you will still be delivered into His eternal presence. He has demonstrated His power and His love. You need not fear, only believe in Him both as Savior and as Lord who has bought you.
- That means that if Jesus is your Lord and Master, He can and will redeem your strained marriages; but should your earthly marriage dissolve, your marriage to Christ will never

end. He has demonstrated His power and His love. You need not fear, only believe in Him both as Savior and as Lord who has bought you.

The remedy to the human condition of “no faith” is knowledge of who Jesus is, it is prayer for greater faith (Luke 17:5; Mark 9:24) Lord I believe help my unbelief...; and most challengingly it is submission of your life to the Jesus as your master who can and will deliver you from every storm.

Conclusion

Who then is this Jesus...? He is the Stiller of the Sea; He is the one who cares the most and He is the great physician of our souls who diagnosis our most underlying malady – our lack of faith.

It is kind of funny, these poor disciples of Jesus were afraid of the wind and the waves that threatened their lives; but after Jesus dealt with those threats by the power of God, verse 41 says, “They became **very much** afraid...” It is natural wisdom to fear the natural elements that could kill you. It is Godly wisdom to fear Him who controls the forces of nature and holds the eternal life in His hand.

Jesus, with all that power, can and will direct it to your benefit, delivering you from many threats, and through others; then one day He will deliver you by a threat and bring you home to Himself. It will not be a bad day, but a glorious one when you will see Him face to face and all your sorrows and concerns will be washed away and replaced by things the way God intended them to be.

John MacArthur has said, “The believer who is aware of God’s power and love has no reason to be afraid of anything.”³

Look at your Transformation Cards and the memory verse. Memorize this question that the disciples of Jesus asked. “Who then is this that even the wind and the sea obey Him?” Meditate on the answer all week long.

Let’s pray!

³ The MacArthur New Testament Commentary, John MacArthur: Matthew 8-15, p.35