

Jesus Has Power Over Nature

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Date: 11 April 2021

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[0 : 00] After spending several weeks studying Jesus's parables, at least as the way that Mark presents them to us in chapter 4, we start a new section of Mark's gospel.

So remember, as we think through what Mark is doing and why he is writing in the way that he is, he is taking more of a mosaic approach to the life of Christ, and he's given us these snapshots. He's moving quickly. Most of what he records is brief, it's concise, and it's important. In most of chapter 4, Mark is dealing specifically with Jesus's parabolic teaching, his teaching specifically as it relates to the kingdom of God, and he makes these illustrations, and they are important.

But beginning at what we just read in chapter 4, verse 35, continuing through the end of chapter 5, these verses contain four of the most well-known and most beloved accounts of Jesus's miraculous power.

We just read one that probably all of us have heard a hundred times before. In fact, sitting in here this morning, Ashlyn came early with me, and I sat here and I said, have you ever heard the story of Jesus calming the storm?

[1 : 14] And she said, yeah, about a million times, Dad. About a million times. And so hopefully she doesn't get too bored this morning. But we know the story, right? We love this story. We love it.

But it's not just this story. As soon as we finish this one, it leads directly to another one that we love so much as well. So the whole reason Jesus is going across the lake is so he can get to the garrisons, garrisons, and there's a couple of men who are possessed by a legion of demons. Jesus delivers them and casts them into the swine. We love that story. And then if this doesn't end there, it just builds upon it. You get to the next one, and there's this man named Jairus, a ruler of the synagogue, who comes to Jesus because his daughter is dying.

And he says, please, heal my daughter. And then his daughter dies. And Jesus raises her from the dead. And then on his way to go and raise her from the dead, this lady, there's the press of the crowd.

Lots of people are on top of Jesus as he's just trying to get through the town. And all of a sudden he stops and he says, who touched me? Remember, Peter says, what do you mean who touched you? Everybody has touched you.

[2 : 18] But there was a woman with an issue of blood. She touched the hem of his garment, and she was made whole. We know these stories. We love these stories.

They're beloved, and they're important. Well, this is the section that Mark is now covering. And as he goes through here, he's already introduced to us the fact of Jesus's authority and power. He did that in the first couple of chapters. And then he kind of works his way into this selection of the 12 apostles and then the parables. And now he's going to expound further on Jesus's power. And we see in these four stories great power. Jesus has power over nature, as we just read. He has power over demons, over the spirit world.

He has power over disease, as we see him heal the lady. And then he also has power over death, as we covered so thoroughly last weekend in our celebration of the resurrection.

[3 : 18] And once again, these are not randomly chosen events in the life of Christ. Mark didn't sit down with Peter and say, hey, just tell me all the stuff, and I'm going to pick my favorites and write them down.

That's not what is happening here. No. Every detail in the gospel of Mark, indeed, every detail in the scriptures was specifically written to proclaim the identity and purpose of Jesus.

And not only to proclaim that identity and purpose, but that he might persuade us to believe Christ and to follow Christ. That's why those stories are there.

They're not there to provide some type of moral lesson. They're not there to provide or sustain some type of excitement in our lives. It does those things, but that's not really why Mark included them.

Mark included them in order that we might see that Jesus is indeed the Messiah and the Son of God. Therefore, repent and believe the gospel.

[4 : 23] And so as you read through these four accounts, you'll notice that Mark continually pulls our focus back to the person of Christ. No matter how distracted we may get by the peripheral matters in these stories, well, what really was the issue of blood that the lady had?

Well, it doesn't really matter. That's not the point of the story. Well, what really kind of storm was this that came on the Sea of Galilee? It doesn't really matter. That's not the point of the story.

Well, who exactly were these people that were mourning over Jairus' daughter? It doesn't matter. It doesn't matter. We can't get distracted by those things.

It's not the point. Mark is continually in these stories pulling our focus back to the person of Jesus. Jesus is a helpful reminder to us because we tend to come to the scriptures with a very man-centered approach to our study.

And oftentimes, it prevents our ability to understand exactly what God intends to communicate through these passages. For example, how many times have we come to this specific story that we all know so well?

[5 : 34] Jesus calming the storm, and what we walk away with is the fact that since Jesus calmed this storm, he will calm the storm in my life as well.

Well, that's not irrelevant, and it certainly is true that he has that power and that he may indeed calm the storm in your life. But it's not the central truth of this text. That's not the point.

We know that in part because of the way the disciples reacted. If this was all about just delivering them from a storm, then the reaction, at least, and it's not that they didn't do this.

It's just what Mark records for us. You would think that they would have said, yeah, they were excited, and they were all hugging each other, and we can't believe we survived. Thank you so much. But none of that happens in the reaction of the disciples in the Gospels.

This wasn't about just being delivered from a storm. What was their reaction? They actually feared more. They were scared of the storm.

[6 : 36] They were even more scared after the storm. Why? Because the point of the passage is not about being delivered from a storm. It's about seeing the true reality of who Jesus really is.

And in those moments, they began to see, and they trembled. So we always come to the Scripture first looking for the Lord, first looking for God, seeing who He is, seeing what He's like.

And only then can we begin to understand the implications and applications that it has practically to our lives. So that being said, there are actually some wonderful practical implications and applications in these stories to our lives.

Things that are helpful. Once we begin to see and know God through the Bible, we can truly begin to understand ourselves. Understand our own sin.

Understand our need for grace. Understand how Jesus can indeed help us. Listen, of these four stories, there's three particular implications or applications that continually emerge.

[7 : 44] There's a lot more than just three, but these three continue to emerge. The first one is this. We are absolutely hopeless without God. We are hopeless without Him.

Think about it. Without Jesus, the disciples drowned. They're in a hopeless situation. Without Jesus, the maniac in the garrisons remains possessed by a legion of demons, cutting himself, scaring everybody in the town, breaking the chains, whatever.

He just stays that way. He's hopeless. Unless Jesus does something, he's hopeless. Then we get to Jairus' daughter. Without Jesus, she remains dead as a 12-year-old.

Without Jesus, the woman who had spent all of her money on all the doctors, on all the things, remains unhealthy and dying in her disease.

Without God and His work, we are absolutely hopeless. We continue to see that in these stories. Secondly, we see that personal faith in Jesus is necessary for everyone.

[8 : 57] It's absolutely necessary. What is it that Jesus says to the disciples after He calms the storm? How is it that you have no faith? In other words, faith is important to Jesus in that story.

What is it that He says to Jairus when Jairus is on his way to his house with Jesus? He just thinks that his daughter is sick at this point, but somebody meets them in the way and says, your daughter

is dead. Don't bother the teacher anymore.

And what does Jesus do? He looks at Jairus and He says, Jairus, just believe. Have faith. What is it that He says to the woman with the issue of blood? She touches the hem of his garment.

He turns around and says, who touched me? The way kind of clears and here's this woman. And He says, your faith has made you whole. Faith is absolutely necessary. Not only are we hopeless, but our faith, our personal faith in Christ is absolutely necessary.

And then the third thing that just continues to emerge is that a true understanding of Jesus produces fear. In every one of these situations, the disciples, after He calms the storm, they feared exceedingly.

[10:01] The woman with the issue of blood, after she was healed, when she realized what happened, it says that she trembled. She didn't rejoice. She trembled. We really see who God is.

What does that do? Well, we tremble. Because He's not like us. Not only does it produce fear, it produces worship.

It produces evangelism. Remember the maniac? After he's in his right mind, he begs Jesus, let me go with you. And Jesus says, no, stay here. Go tell everybody. Just go tell everybody.

And he couldn't stop spreading the news. Seeing Jesus, seeing this gospel, it leads to evangelism. Gives us a greater desire for Him.

There's a lot of other applications we could pull from these, but those three continue to emerge. So with that, let's jump into this particular story. This one of Jesus calming the storm. I'm going to break it down into three sections for us.

[11:03] We'll see the storm. We'll see the test. And then we'll see the lesson. So let's first look at the storm. Verse 35. On that day, when evening had come, He said to them, Let us go across to the other side.

So the unforgettable events that happened on this particular evening come at the end of a very, very busy day in the ministry and life of Jesus and His disciples.

On that day, there is a reference to the day that Jesus was in the boat, pushed out from the shore in the Sea of Galilee just a little bit. You can read this in verse 1 of chapter 4. They pushed out into the Sea of Galilee a little bit.

There's a multitude of people on the seashore. And He begins to teach the people. So that's the day that Mark is referencing here. It's on this day that Jesus dismissed the crowd and encourages His disciples to take Him to the other side.

Now, it's possible even that the events recorded at the end of chapter 3 were a part of this day as well. If that's true, consider the day that Jesus had.

[12:14] It began with people crowding the house in which He was staying, probably Peter's house in Capernaum. And on that particular day, a group of delegates of the Pharisees from Jerusalem showed up.

And they accused Him and confronted Him and told, began to spread to all the people standing there, that Jesus was actually possessed by Satan. So He's dealing with that to start His day. That's a great way to start your day.

And then from there, He moves on. And who shows up? Well, His mom and His brothers show up. But they weren't there to encourage Him. They're there to stop Him.

They thought He'd lost His mind. So the very beginning of His day is He's confused. Or He's not confused, but He's confronted by two different groups. And so then the crowd grows so large, He can't stay in the house.

And so He moves on away from the house. And these crowds are clamoring around Him. There's people everywhere. So He goes out to the sea and He pushes out. And He teaches all afternoon in the hot sun in Galilee to all of these people.

[13:11] This is a long day. Now we can understand just a little bit better why He was asleep in the boat. This is just a long day. He's exhausted. It's a busy day. And He dismisses the people.

And He says, let's go to the other side. Now, Jesus never does anything without purpose.

Everything that He does has a specific purpose.

And if you read ahead, you'll see that He had a divine appointment scheduled on the other side of the lake. Two men possessed by demons. And He's going to go over and He's going to deal with that.

But the storm that these men encountered on their way to the Gerasenes was not by chance. It's not that Jesus knew that the maniacs were there and He needed to do something about it. And they just headed that way. And then all of a sudden, this storm just comes up. No, that's not exactly what's happening here. He wasn't oblivious to the coming storm. He was intentionally leading His disciples into the storm.

[14:10] Did you see that? He told them, let's go to the other side. Knowing fully what was going to take place on the way.

So it is many times with the storms that we face. There is no aspect of your life in which Jesus is not in sovereign control. And while it is true that some of the difficulties we face and the hardships that we come up against are a result of our sin and our foolishness, the terrifying storm that these men faced was a result of their obedience.

Did you notice that? They're just doing what Jesus said to do. They didn't do anything wrong. Jesus said, let's go to the other side. And in the midst of going to the other side, the greatest storm they've ever faced probably hits them.

They think they're going to die. Not because they did something wrong. They weren't being punished. But because they were just being obedient. Jesus was leading them into a great, great, terrifying, deadly storm.

Says Sinclair Ferguson, There are times when the Lord himself will lead us into difficulties. Contrary to the picture sometimes painted of the Christian life, Jesus did not solve all the disciples' problems and protect them from their trials and perplexities.

[15:40] In actual fact, sometimes he led them quite deliberately into them. And this was such an occasion. The storm was sovereignly controlled.

Look at verse 36. And leaving the crowd, they took him with them in the boat, just as he was. Remember, he was teaching in the boat. And so they just set out from where he was in the boat. And other boats were with him. Now, the boat that Jesus is in is probably a small fishing vessel belonging to one of his disciples. Maybe Peter, Andrew, James, or John had a couple of their boats near Capernaum.

That's where he was. And they bring their own boats over. However, this was probably a small fishing boat. In 1986, a group of archaeologists, there was a drought in the Galilean area.

And the waters in the Sea of Galilee had receded. The Lake of Galilee, it's not called that now. But it had receded enough that these archaeologists found a boat, a fishing boat.

[16:40] They call it the Jesus boat now. And it was dated back to the first century, to the time of Jesus. It's about 27 feet long, seven and a half feet wide, and probably four to five feet tall.

It had a flat bottom. And so they believed this was used for fishing because they would have stayed in the shallow waters to do most of their fishing. It fit maybe 12 to 15 people at most, which tells us why Jesus had other boats with him.

He probably didn't have all the disciples in this boat. There's probably just a handful of them. And then there was a handful in some of the other boats. And there were more than just the 12 apostles as well that followed Jesus.

There's more people. There's a little bit of a flotilla taking place going across the Lake of Galilee here. These small fishing boats. Now, Luke tells us that there was no rowing necessary.

The conditions were favorable. They had set out from Capernaum on a beautiful sunset cruise across the lake. No one had to work for it.

[17:45] They set their sail, Luke says, and they began to head across the way, not expecting anything to go wrong. And that's the point. That the storm that they faced here was completely unexpected.

It was sudden. And I'll leave it to you to research how these storms suddenly come up in the Galilean area. There's a lot of information out there about that. That's not really the point. The point is, this was a sudden storm.

They didn't anticipate this. They weren't expecting it at all. No one but Jesus had any clue of what was actually going to happen. And isn't that often how it goes for us?

There are times in our lives where we can make a decision knowing that there are risks involved. And if I go this way, I do think this is the best way, but there is probably going to be some consequences that I deal with that aren't going to be quite so pleasant.

And we prepare ourselves for those things, and we anticipate those things the best that we can. But the worst of the storms in our lives typically are sudden and completely unexpected.

[18:47] We're cruising across our sunset cell in life. Things are good. We're relaxed. And then all of a sudden, unexpected, suddenly out of nowhere comes a storm.

You're caught in it wondering, can I actually survive this? But it wasn't just the disciples in the boat. And that's significant.

Look at verse 37. And a great windstorm arose, and the waves were breaking into the boat so that the boat was already filling up. So not only was this storm sovereignly controlled, not only was it unexpectedly sudden, but it was unforgettably severe.

In fact, the combination of Greek words that Mark uses here is the same that we would get gale force winds, or we would refer to as hurricane-like weather.

This storm was severe. It was hard. Mark is writing from Peter's eyewitness account. He said that the waves are breaking into the boat now.

[19:58] The wind is swirling. Perhaps pieces of the boat are beginning to fall apart. The storm was so severe that no matter how fast they bailed the water, the water still continued to fill up the boat.

And then these men, some of them, who have spent their entire lives on this lake, now think that they're going to die. That tells us a lot about this storm.

These men grew up on this lake. They knew the tendencies. They grew up on a boat. They knew how to weather storms. But this one, it didn't matter. It didn't matter how many storms they had weathered in the past.

This was the one that they didn't think that they would escape. And Jesus led them into it. They didn't expect it. And they thought, surely, we're going to die.

So we see the storm. Next, we see the test. Look at verse 38. Now, we've established that Jesus led these men into the storm.

[21:13] But here we begin to see why. Why he led them into the storm. He was about to demonstrate his power on a scale that they probably never imagined.

But he was also testing their faith in a way that God often does in the scripture. He wasn't trapping them. That sounds bad, doesn't it?

Sometimes we think about God testing our faith. And we think, oh, he's trying to trap us so that he can give us a hard time and expose all of our flaws. That's not what Jesus is doing. He wasn't testing them in order to rebuke them.

He was testing them in order to build them, in order to increase their faith. Jesus doesn't lead you into a storm to crush you. He leads you into a storm to sanctify you.

To make you more like him. And God does this all through the scriptures. Just think about this.

James chapter 1. James says, And then in 1 Peter.

[22:28] We read it a few weeks ago. In this you rejoice, though now for a little while, if necessary, you have been grieved by various trials, so that the tested genuineness of your faith, which is more precious than gold that perishes, though it be tested by fire, that it may be found to result in praise, glory, and honor at the revelation of Jesus Christ.

This is just a part of the Christian life. God tests our faith. God leads us into storms. You can't blame Satan for all your troubles.

And it's not meant to crush you. It's actually meant to sanctify you. Now, lest we begin to think that Jesus was less than human, Mark points out for us here, verse 38, that Jesus was actually asleep.

And he wasn't pretending to be asleep. And this wasn't some type of divine sleep over which no one had power to wake him up. That's not what's happening here. He's just exhausted.

He's exhausted from a long day. You've been that way, right? You just had such a long day. Or maybe it's just a combination of long days in a particular week. And you get home and you wake up the next morning after sleeping for about 10 hours and your shoes are still on.

[23:45] You ever been in one of those places? You're just tired. Jesus, he's tired. He's exhausted. And perhaps there's no greater juxtaposition in the Bible of Jesus's humanity and his deity all at once coming together here.

How is it that he could sleep? Because he was man. Prone to the same weaknesses that you and I are prone to. The same exhaustion that you and I are prone to.

I like how Kent Hughes wrote about this. It's just a great sentence. In this grand display, the opposites of weakness and omnipotence do not clash, but they coalesce in a beautiful harmony that's too magnificent for human imagination.

How is it that Jesus could sleep? Well, he's just a man and he's exhausted. And then the disciples pick up on the fact that he's asleep. And it doesn't make them feel better.

In fact, they're fearing for their lives and they begin to panic. Now, this is important. All three of the synoptic gospels say that they said something different. Luke says this.

[25 : 00] Luke says that they tried to wake Jesus up and they said, Master, Master, we're perishing. We're dying. You just leave it at that. Matthew says that they try to wake Jesus up and they say, Lord, save us.

We're dying. We're perishing. But only Mark records this part. Where they say, Master, do you not care that we're dying?

Now, that's not a contradiction. In fact, those three accounts are perfectly complementary in this case. Amazingly complementary. Now, imagine you're on a boat with about 12 other guys and you're packed into this little tiny fishing vessel that's only about 7 feet wide and 27 feet long.

This is a little boat. And you're out in the middle of a lake. You're nowhere near land. And all of a sudden, a massive storm comes up and you think you're going to die.

The boat's about to sink. You don't know what to do. The only person that can even help you is asleep and he won't wake up. And you can sense the intensity building in these men.

[26 : 10] There's no spokesperson for the disciples at this point. They're probably all trying to wake Jesus up. They're all trying to get him to do something. And it starts kind of small and it starts just, Master, we're dying. We're dying.

And then he doesn't wake up and the storm doesn't get any better. And so they run back and it's, Lord, save us. Save us. Do something. And he still doesn't wake up.

And the storm still rages. And maybe it even gets stronger. And the boat's still filling. And life is about to come to an end for these men. And what is it that they run back to Jesus and say, do you not even care?

Don't you care about what we're going through right now? It's exactly how we respond to difficulties. These issues come into our lives unexpectedly. That makes it worse because we think everything's going to be good.

[27 : 06] We think everything's going to be the way that it's supposed to be. And then just all of a sudden we're hit with a storm. And maybe at first we've got enough gospel understanding.

We've got enough Christianity. And we know that we're supposed to be okay with it. We're supposed to just pray about it. And so we go to the Lord and say, Lord, I'm just really struggling right now. I just want you to know. And then he doesn't do anything.

It doesn't seem like it at least. He doesn't do anything. And maybe your situation gets worse. And you go back to the Lord in prayer again. Except this time you're just begging him to do something. Lord, please, will you please do this? Will you please help me? Will you please deliver me?

And then it seems like he's not doing anything. And it's just getting worse. And it's getting worse.

And then maybe you're tempted as I've been. To go to prayer, you go to the right person.

But this time your spirit's different. And this time it's, do you not care about me? Are you not there? Am I wasting my time?

[28 : 08] Sinclair Ferguson said it was the cruelest question that they could have asked. The cruelest question. Why? Because the very reason he was in the boat.

Indeed, the very reason he was in the world. And the reason he was going to die on the cross. Was for them. Precisely. Because he cared. For them.

And that's one thing we can never doubt. Can never doubt his love. Can never doubt his care.

Sometimes amidst the storm. What's necessary for us to do.

Is just preach the gospel to ourselves anew. Again. And again. And again. Because even if everything else in your life falls apart. The gospel remains.

And he's good. And he cares. I don't know what kind of storm you may be facing. Maybe you're not facing any storms right now. Maybe it's just. Maybe we're about to go through one.

[29 : 09] I don't know. I get nervous reading through 1 Peter. And then also through these stories here. But maybe you're facing something right now. One thing I do know. Is that he hasn't lost control of your life.

And he won't. In fact. He's probably leading you into this storm. He cares. And he's working out his good and sovereign purpose in your life.

And we think back to Romans 8. And I know people quote this wrongly many times. But what is it that Paul said? All things work together for the good of them who love Christ.

Who are called according to his purpose. He didn't say that everything is good for those who love Christ. It just says that everything works out for good. The good.

The sanctification. The righteousness. The maturity. Of those who know Christ. And love him. Look at verse 39. Jesus awoke and rebuked the wind.

[30 : 12] And said to the sea. Peace be still. And the wind ceased. And there was a great calm. It's amazing.

It's a fantastic display of power. Jesus harnesses a storm. With his words. With his words.

As far as we know. He doesn't say anything to the disciples at this point. Because he knew what was going on. He knew it all the time. And he gets up and he just says three things. Peace be still.

And then all of a sudden. The wind completely stops. The waves become like glass on the surface of the lake. This wasn't the gradual progressive dying down of a storm.

It's not like they had hit the peak of the storm. And now the storm was passing. And they could try to settle down. No. This was immediate. If it wasn't immediate. There'd be reason for us to doubt it.

[31 : 10] But that's how Jesus works. In fact. Every miracle you read of in the New Testament. In the gospels. They're immediate. Jesus says peace be still. And suddenly. As sudden as the storm came up.

It was completely done. The wind had stopped. The sea became as glass. And this is where I read all of those passages at the beginning.

This was the forces of nature. Bowing immediately to. And submitting to. Their God. Their creator. The fullness of Jesus' humanity. Is seen as he exhaustedly slept in the boat. But the fullness of his deity is seen. And that he controlled the wind and the waves.

With the power of his word. There's only one being that could do that. And that's God. So why is this so important?

[32 : 08] Why do we care about this? Because only a man could die for our sins. Only a man could die. Why do we care that Jesus was asleep? It seems almost irrelevant to the story.

But it's not. It shows us humanity. And it had to take a man to die for our sins. But only God could provide a perfectly sinless sacrifice.

That could truly atone and satisfy his own wrath on our behalf. But you see. This story isn't about God calming your storm.

Though he may do that. The story is about proclaiming. That Jesus of Nazareth. Is the Messiah and the Son of God. Therefore repent and believe the gospel.

Let's look at the lesson and we'll be done. Verse 40. He said to them. Why are you so afraid? Have you still no faith?

[33 : 12] And this is a really unfair question it seems like, isn't it? What do you mean why are you so afraid? We're just caught in the worst storm of our lives.

We didn't think we were going to survive. What do you mean how do we have no faith? Jesus didn't mean that they had zero faith at all. Think about what these men had done.

They left their jobs. They left their families. They left everything behind to follow Jesus. There was a measure of faith in their life. That's not what Jesus is saying. He's not saying that they had zero faith.

He's not even condemning them necessarily for feeling fear in the storm or being afraid of the storm. He's rebuking them for not trusting him through the storm.

It's not just a matter of being nervous. The Bible never condemns fear in and of the experience of fear. What it condemns is elevating our fear above our faith that Christ is God and that he will care for us no matter what.

[34 : 13] In addition to showing his divine power, he was teaching his disciples that they could trust him in the most treacherous and helpless situations.

But this faith was to be founded on who he was. Not merely on what he could do, but on who he was. Because it is who Jesus is that makes all the other stuff important.

It was necessary to you. Each of these men would eventually face enemies that would take their lives for the sake of the gospel. If they didn't trust Jesus when he was in the boat, how were they

going to trust him when he wasn't in the boat?

They didn't trust him to care for them in this life. How could they trust him to care for them with eternal life? Look at verse 41.

They were afraid during the storm.

[35 : 33] But they were really afraid after the storm. This wasn't a magic show. This wasn't a time when an audience applauds a magician's success at an elaborate illusion.

That's not what this is. This was very real. This wasn't one of those situations where you get to the end of it and you just, wow, you're really awesome.

That's not what they did. Can you imagine this? I don't think I can. I've tried all week to try to comprehend what would it be like to actually be in a place where you come to the realization that right in front of you is the incarnate God.

I don't know that I can understand what that would feel like. But when we see it in the scripture, it's always fear. They trembled. They witnessed Jesus do something that only God can do.

And his presence then made them fear. And this is really what a genuine confrontation with God does, I believe. It produces awe and worship.

[36 : 44] But they still didn't quite get it. They were asking the same question everyone else in Mark's gospel was asking at this point. Who is Jesus? There's a significance to what they ask here.

They weren't grasping his deity quite yet. They're getting closer because it can't be denied. But up to this point, I really think that the disciples were convinced that Jesus was the Messiah, but they didn't see him as anything more than a man.

In fact, that's their question. What kind of man is this? That's what the crowds in chapter 1 asked. When they heard Jesus preach with power, when they saw him perform these miracles, they said they rejoiced that God had given such power to man.

The fault in their faith at this point was that they were ignorant of the fact that Jesus was more than man. He was a man. But he was also God. He was the incarnate God. The disciples are getting closer, but they're still not grasping that, and they wouldn't grasp it, not until after the resurrection. And we have the benefit of looking back after that, so we can't be too hard on them. But they're asking what everybody else is asking. Who is Jesus? And Mark spends this entire gospel answering that question. Who is Jesus?

[38 : 03] He's the Messiah and the Son of God. Repent and believe the gospel. Let me end this way. Early Christians viewed this particular event in the ministry of Jesus as symbolic of the church.

In fact, early Christian art often displays in symbolic form the church as a boat that is caught in the midst of a storm. It is weathering the storm.

Jesus is in control, and Jesus will help it to survive. Can you imagine the encouragement that this would have brought to Mark's early Roman readers, which, like Peter's audience, are facing a severe persecution under the Emperor Nero.

People are being killed. Peter has been martyred now for preaching the gospel, and other people are following suit with that. And they got to be wondering at some point, is this going to last?

Everybody we know that's Christians, their lives are being threatened. Can the church survive? Can the gospel survive? And it's not very different for us today.

[39 : 23] There are times where we ask ourselves, can the church actually survive? Which is a weak question in our context. There are much more severe contexts around the world to ask that question.

But the answer is yes. How do you know? Because Jesus said it would. Not even the gates of hell will prevail against it, Jesus said.

And when the early church understood this story, they viewed it symbolically as the church going through the storm of this world. Will it survive? Yes, it will.

Will at times the storm be severe? Of course. But how could the ship go down when the master's on board? He can.

At the end of the day, this story is about proclaiming who Jesus is. And for some of us, that should lead to repentance and faith. For believers, it should remind us that we can trust him.

[40 : 29] He's in control. And we can pursue him. Knowing that he cares. And knowing that the church will indeed survive.