

Consider His Presence, pt 1

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[0:00] Mark chapter 4 is where we're going to be this morning. Mark chapter 4. As we continue looking here in lesson 2 of Consider Christ, Jesus was everything he did, the decisions he made, were in the context of fulfilling what God the Father had sent the Son to accomplish.

And when we understand that dynamic, and it was a timetable that he was put on, and every step was a step of purpose, and with every deed was a deed meant to glorify the Father.

And we're going to look here this morning at Jesus because the passage we're going to look at is part of his Galilean ministry period. It's full of miracles and preaching.

But after a busy day of ministry, the Lord tells his disciples, let's pass over to the other side. Let's go to the other side. And this would take him to the country of the guardians, where he would continue doing his Father's business.

So the disciples get on a ship to cross the Sea of Galilee, and they cross the sea. This is a sea they'd been across many times.

[1:42] You know, I want you to understand, when we look at this story, it wasn't a strange place to them, but it was a place that they were going to experience a storm that took them outside of their comfort zone, that took them to thinking about things differently than they normally would have.

And on that journey, the disciples learned a great lesson through the storm. And that was their need for the Lord to be with them.

And the Lord to be there, until the storm raged on that trip. The storm began to rage, and, you know, they left with confidence, but they soon were faced with fear.

And when we consider Christ's presence, because sometimes, have you ever noticed that we can probably relate a little differently, but oftentimes we start the day confidently, thinking we know how the day is going to go.

You know, we start the day saying, hey, I'm going to accomplish this and that, or we're going to navigate the waters of our life. You know, we've been down this road many times, and so we don't give it much thought.

[2:53] You know, I really think when the disciples left that day, they probably didn't give it much thought when they departed the shore. Why? Because it's a trip, and they'd been out and familiar with those waters their whole life.

They thought it was just going to be another normal day. Another day that was just like the rest, and when we understand that unplanned storm came, and then we realize that we couldn't.

When unplanned storms come, we soon realize that we can't on our own, that life can feel overwhelming, and we can even forget our need for the Lord, and even though He's always present, because, you know, life's filled with storms.

You know, this year, April and I's life went kittywampus, you might say. Upside down, storms come, they change things, but you know what?

It's no different than anybody else's life, because we all face storms. We all face things that happen in life, and because the disciples here, and their story that's recorded for us, we're going to learn some truths that are going to benefit us today, and the first thing we're going to look at is the reality of storms, the reality of storms.

[4:26] Let's look at our text here this morning as we begin here. Look down in Mark chapter 4. Look at verse 35, And it says this, And the same day when the even was come, He saith unto them, Let us pass over unto the other side.

And when they had sent away the multitude, they took Him even as He was in the ship, and they were also with Him other little ships. And there was also, get my right place here, And there arose a great storm of wind, and the waves beat into the ship, so that it was now full.

You know, the reality of storms. You know, the fact that Jesus was present on the ship didn't guarantee the journey was going to be smooth.

You know, have you ever noticed that sometimes our mindset, well, the Lord's with me means all the road's going to be smooth. You know, we can get that, sometimes grab a hold of that in our mind, but you know what?

It's really unbiblical thought. Because Jesus never said, If I'm with you, the road will be smooth. Matter of fact, He retells us and reminds us just the opposite.

[5 : 39] The Bible tells us that we're going to have storms, and we're going to have trials. There's going to be struggles in this life. You know what? The devil sometimes, when you think about it, that's a great lie of the devil.

You know, if you have Jesus, life should be smooth. You know what? That makes people disheartened with the truth of who God is. Because when they believe the lie that, Hey, life will be grand if I just have Jesus.

You have an eternity that's going to be grand. But in this life, you have a Savior that will walk with you in the storms and the trials that you face.

He said we're going to have some problems. You know, when we understand that when somebody teaches that when you do what Christ wants you to do, everything's going to go smooth.

You know, there's a lot of people who actually promote that. That's called a prosperity gospel. You'll have wealth and health, and life will be grand if you're just doing everything right with the Lord.

[6 : 38] You know, the first thing it tells me, they didn't read the book. Because you have faithful people who serve the Lord faithfully. Even to the point of giving their life as a martyr for the truth of the gospel.

Can you say that they didn't walk with the Lord? Look in the Old Testament. Wednesday night, the message was on Shadrach, Meshach, and Abednego.

You know, their faith in the Lord was a reality of what? Hey, you can throw us in the furnace and we have to serve a God who can save us, but if not, we're still going to serve Him.

You know, that's a reality that we need to understand because storms are going to come. And we sometimes say, well, why would God allow storms?

I want you to understand, storms are a tool that God allows because He uses them to chasten us or to draw us back closer to Him.

[7 : 41] Trials are what comes into our lives because He's using them to conform us to His image, to understand who we are and who He is.

You know, you think about for a moment, here's these disciples, they're getting in a ship to go to the other side. Were they in the Lord's will? I mean, I don't think you get much more when Jesus says, get in the ship, let's go to the other side.

But there was a storm that came up. The reality of storms, because secondly, the first thing here, they can be unpredictable. If you ever know storms, you never quite know what you're going to get. You know, I was thinking about that this week as we were watching the weather forecast. You know, I'm trying to figure out when's it going to rain, how much rain we're going to get. And I got the little forecast thing open.

And as I'm sitting there, it goes from, I open it up about at one point and it says, well, it's going to have an inch of rain in an hour.

[8 : 42] The next hour, you're going to have an inch of rain. While I'm looking at it, it drops to half an inch. And then drops down to a quarter inch. And then I open up about 30 minutes later and it's back up to three quarters of an inch.

You know, it's like, okay guys, let's make your mind up here. But you know what? That's really a good example of how storms come. They're very unpredictable. You know, the best technology we have, we still can't figure it out.

There's still so many variables. You know, the same is true of the storms of your life. There's going to be things that are different. They're going to be unpredictable. You know, the place that they're crossing here in the scriptures, the Sea of Galilee.

It's 732 feet below sea level and is a site of ferocious winds that come down and race into the valleys. Even though the disciples knew that and had weathered storms before, because when they'd been on this and they're fishermen, some of them are fishermen that had been out and across this, do you think this was the first storm they ever faced?

No, I don't think this was the first storm. They knew something about this storm was different though. Because that day, they faced a storm that caused them to fear for their lives.
[10:02] But why did they fear? They feared because they forgot who was with them. Jesus was there. Jesus promised they were going to pass to the other side and he was going to fulfill his promise because storms are unpredictable to us, but they are never a surprise to God.

God always knows what's going to happen. You know, it's like one of those intellectual thoughts. Have you ever considered nothing was a surprise to God? Nothing catches him off guard. He knows the end. from the beginning. He knows exactly what you're going to face. And we're going to go through storms and trials and God knows what he's doing because he's going to bring us through.

Because trials are used to make us conform to the image of Christ. You know, think about a great verse in Scripture to always remind ourselves.

Go to Romans chapter 8 for a moment. Romans chapter 8 and verse 28. You know, it's a familiar verse, but this is really the context that it applies in our life.

[11:21] Romans 8, 28 tells us this. It says, For we know that all things work together for good to them that love God, to them who are called according to his purpose.

You know, that's an often quoted verse, but you know, there's great comfort because that verse doesn't say life is going to go smoothly.

It doesn't say everything's going to go grand. It just tells us and reminds us that all things work together for good to them that love God.

You know what it tells us? That storm in your life has a purpose. There's a purpose behind it. We have to focus on who Jesus is. That he's with you in the midst of the storm. Because that passage in Romans goes on, it says, For whom he did foreknow, he also did predestinate to, can be conformed to the image of his Son, that he might be the firstborn among many brethren.

[12:32] He says, All things work together for good for what purpose? That we might be conformed to his image. That's sanctification being worked out in your life.

Because you know what? The reality is is when the times are tough is when you really figure out the what and the how and the need.

To understand that God is there. Because you know what? When everything is going smooth, you know what's easy to get? It's complacent. All of us do it.

You know, we're creatures of habit. We're creatures of habit who say we don't like habit. That we don't like things all the same but we get upset if it's not the same. But you know what happens when things are predictable and things are going the way we think?

We get very complacent. Complacency is an open door for sin. Now here a few weeks ago we talked about David. King David.

[13:37] What got David in trouble? Complacency because he was back home when he should have been out at the battle. Why did the king not go out to battle?

Because they were confident they were going to overcome. They were complacent. complacency gets us in trouble because when we understand and when we get complacent you know we start depending on ourselves.

I can do this. I can accomplish this. I can get through this. But when storms come it reminds us that we have a savior that promises to never leave us or forsake us.

not only can storms be unpredictable but they can also be unmerciful. You know in the midst of storms you know storms are not a respecter of persons.

You know in Nebraska we have tornadoes. Have you ever noticed that tornadoes are non-discriminatory? If you are in its path it doesn't matter how famous you are.

[14:46] It doesn't matter how much money you have. It doesn't matter how poor you are or how destitute you are. You know what? A tornado will destroy everything in its path.

It does not respect anybody in that time. They can become unmerciful at any times. And we find here that storms can sometimes fill you up and consume those things.

You know look back in our text here look in chapter 4 look at verse 37 it says and there arose a great storm of wind and the waves beat into the ship so that it was what now full.

Now full. You know what made them nervous about this storm? Experienced sailors who had crossed this sea of Galilee many times because they understood one reality if the water gets in the ship what happens?

If you can't bail faster than the water coming in what happens to the ship? It's going down. They understood the reality of what was going to happen.

[16:02] You know they understood what was going on around them. The storm was unmerciful and the water and the boat kept getting higher and they were overwhelmed. You know what? Often times the storms in our life aren't water filling the ship literally but often we find ourselves in situations through storms that feel overwhelming.

Life can overwhelm because you just don't know what to do or how to deal with it. You know but people respond to trials in life differently.

You know today we live in a society and throughout history you'll find this is still pretty consistent. A lot of things we face today we think are just modern problems.

You know what? The problem is when people get into situations in life when life seems overwhelming they turn to what I often refer to as self-medication. They turn to alcohol or drugs. I can suppress the problem. I don't want to deal with the problem so therefore I suppress my feeling about the problem. that's really what alcohol and drugs is about.

[17:15] It's not about solving the problem but it allows them to disconnect from the problem in their mind. They don't realize the destruction attached to it.

There's immorality. You know often times people find escape from it by immoral acts and immoral choices. Why?

Because it distracts the mind. You know what? I think there's a lot of people that are dealing with pain in life right here. Because I can doom scroll and my mind is consumed and distracted from the reality around me.

There's a lot of people who use a phone as medication. You can read some studies on it the dopamine that hits in the brain. No matter what you're doing on that, just the stimulation in your brain hits dopamine and gives you that same sensation of people on drugs and alcohol.

You might say, I never do drugs and alcohol, but you know what? Sometimes we can use other things to distract. Instead of looking for the solution and the one who has the solution, we look to self-medicate, self-distract.

[18:31] you know, sometimes in the midst of storms, believers will do strange things. You know, it's like, well, that church I'm not getting fed at.

They think switching churches is going to solve a problem or switch schools or move to a new neighborhood. And they do it in seeking peace, but you know what? None of those things are the source of peace.

They may be a source of distraction, but they're not a source of peace. When we understand that dynamic, that even though there's many ways to handle problems and storms, the only way that will bring comfort is trust in the Lord.

You know, consider the reality that as you go through trials, don't seek only to change your circumstances, instead allow the Lord to change your heart.

You know, a lot of people try to change the circumstances, not realizing that God is working in your heart to change something that needs to be changed in you, to walk through those things.

[19:37] Look over to James for a moment. James chapter 1. James chapter 1, look down at verse 2. Notice what James tells us. You know, I like James.

James is a practical guy. I like James. He doesn't do a lot of fluff. You know, sometimes all the extra details are good. He gets right to the point.

Notice this. He says, my brethren, count it all joy when you fall into diverse temptations. You know what he says? When storms happen in your life, when things unpredictable happen, when things that overwhelm you happen, he makes it very clear.

He says, when you fall into diverse temptations to do what? Knowing this. Think about the practical dynamic that James is just telling you there. knowing this.

You know what? We operate on what we think we know. If you know the right things, it impacts the decisions that you make. Notice what it says.

[20:41] He says, knowing this, that the trying of your faith worketh patience. But let patience have her perfect work. There's a key word right there that he uses knowing something.

He says, let. Have you ever just thought about for a moment what that entails? Let. Does that entail you doing everything to overcome it?

It means surrendering to the things of God and allow God to direct you through. Let patience have her perfect work.

You know, we're an impatient society. We want everything right now. You know, we have a generation coming up that they have things at their fingertips and ability to research and to do, and we have some wonderful.

Technology is a great tool. So I don't want you to take it wrong. You know, I like technology. There's some things made my life a lot simpler with technology. But you know, one thing it does, it makes us impatient.

[21 : 45] I want this now. I want it quick. I want to get it. It needs to be done instantaneously. You know, we live in a society, if somebody sends a message and they haven't responded in 30 seconds, your first thought is, why are they ignoring me?

You know, I'm old enough to remember when somebody had to call you on a funny little device. I still laugh because you still got people today that'll do this. Even though they've only ever used a cell phone.

They picked up a mannerism from their parents. You know, you know what, when you called somebody, if nobody was home, you know what happened? I remember before they had answering machines. If nobody was home, you got nobody.

You didn't even have a funny little machine to talk to that may or may not take your message depending on how full the tape was or cut you off mid-sentence or eat the tape.

You're saying answering machines with tape. Yeah, that's how old I am. But you think about, you go from a generation that has an expectation of, okay, certain things are going to take time. You call, you leave a message, you know what, you just expect, hey, they'll get back to me when they can.

[23 : 02] But we live in a generation that our expectation is instantaneous. not all bad, but the problem is we treat God the same way. We say, God, don't you know I'm in a storm?

You need to solve this right now. But you know what, we learn the most when we have to let go of ourselves and let patience have her perfect work.

You know what that's saying? I don't control the situation. it's really a control factor. Am I in control or am I going to allow the Lord to be in control?

To walk through those things because when trials come, allow God to work through you the way he intends to. You know, patience also means not quitting.

Today, we have a concept of if it gets, if it's not comfortable, move on to something else. Do we agree that's kind of a cultural dynamic today?

[24 : 11] If things get difficult or uncomfortable, I'm going to avoid it. Instead of understanding what God wants to do, we quit. We allow ourselves to go through the trial so that God can finish that work.

You need to allow God to work. no matter how much your trial fills you up, you need to keep trusting the Lord. You know, think about a verse that we often teach the kids downstairs that's just as important as adult.

Think about Proverbs 3, 5, and 6. Who can quote that off the top of your head this morning? Nancy? Amen?

That's a verse that's easy to say, but what's letting that happen? Let patience have her perfect work.

Don't quit. Don't give up just because things get difficult. God will never fail you.

[25 : 14] Even in the midst of storms we become so filled with fear that we lose our sense of the Lord's presence. That's exactly what the disciples did. They'd already seen, think about this for a moment, they'd seen Jesus cast out demons, perform miracles, yet the little ship with the storm raging they forgot who was on board with them.

When we worry about what's coming we forget who is on the journey with you. You know, this passage is our theme for VBS. I want you to understand that I think it's important we even cover it because as we try to teach the kids, as adults we need to make sure we understand what's being taught.

How does it apply to us? Because you know the one thing I've learned over the years if you don't know how it applies to you it's hard to tell somebody else how it applies to them. You know remember God cares about you because whenever storms happen you know what the devil's going to do?

he's going to try to distract your perspective. He's going to try to distort what's going on. He wants you to lose sight of the God that's with you.

He wants to distract from what God would have for you. He'll whisper things well a good God wouldn't allow this to happen to you. You know that's another side discussion that's happening a lot and says well how could a good God allow this to happen?

[26 : 46] You know what their assumption is? Life should have no problems so that I might consume everything to myself. It's a perspective problem.

The devil will tell you God isn't with you or God doesn't care or everyone's against you. But the first thing to remember the devil is a liar. He's the father of it.

You know some people are better liars than others. There isn't a personal lie the best liar and there's some good liars we have plenty of politicians they don't hold any measure against the master the devil.

If you think how deceitful a person can be imagine the one that's the author of it. The devil will tell you lies but God does care for you in the midst of storms.

Go to 1 Peter chapter 4 and we'll finish up here this morning. We'll have to do part two next week to finish up the lesson but look over here at 1 Peter chapter 4 look at verse 12 here's Peter think about Peter was one in the storm he says beloved think it not strange concerning the fiery trial which is to try you as though some strange thing happened unto you but rejoice in so much as you are partakers of Christ's suffering that when his glory shall be revealed you may be glad also with exceeding!

[28 : 18] Joy! Keep in mind that storms are going to come and when trials come God's grace is sufficient to carry you through if you'll let him so when storms come we'll cover a little bit more next week as we're going to look and see the disciples response finally in the midst of the storm let's pray