

Sermon

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Date: 31 December 2023

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[0:00] And we're not going to end there, but move into a message that I think is very appropriate for us today, called King of the Chaos.

I might begin it this way. I love this season of Christmas and New Year's. I hope you enjoy it as well. I love that there's new adventures, new gifts, new things.

As a matter of fact, I've got new shoes on. And I just love it because one of my sons said, Dad, we're going to bring you into the 21st century.

I said, Hallelujah. And he wanted to give me shoes. Now, Dad, with these shoes, we're going to make you cool. And I said, well, I have a spoiler alert.

It's going to take a lot more shoes to make me cool. But this is a sign of just something new and love shared during this time.

[1:10] And what I think about in the new year is that God has a lot of adventures for us. But we don't know if they're going to be good or bad. We don't know if they're going to climb up the mountain of ecstatic joy, if they're going to fall into the valley of dark trials.

We don't know. Nobody knows. That's why what we were singing today with the worship team. Lord, we don't know, but you're the king. And so today, we want to just look at Jesus being the king of the chaos.

And this is the story that Matt mentioned, and so did Rob, in Mark chapter 6. So let's read the Word of God, and then we'll look at it, hopefully briefly.

And if not, forgive me. All right? Mark 6, 45 to 48 is the beginning. And here it is. It says, That's going to be part one.

Part two. And he saw that they were making headway painfully, for the wind was against them, and about the fourth watch of the night, he came to them walking on the sea.

[2:58] He meant to pass them by. But when they saw him walking on the sea, they thought it was a ghost and cried out.

Scene two. Scene two. Scene three. For they all saw him and were terrified. But immediately he spoke to them and said, Take heart, it is I.

Do not be afraid. And he got into the boat with them, and the wind ceased. And they were utterly astounded, for they did not understand about the loaves, but their hearts were hardened.

Amen. Holy Spirit, Holy Spirit, Holy Spirit, Holy Spirit, Holy Spirit, thank you for having Mark write this down. And thank you that like the Acholi people, we have a Bible in our hand.

Help us that it might also be in our heart. In Jesus' name, amen. Mark is trying to get us to see one point.

[4:14] It all begins in Mark chapter 1. And here, I don't have it on the screen, but here it is. That Jesus is the Christ, the Son of God.

One thing that Mark wants us to see is who Jesus is. The Son of God, the one in control of all chaos, all problems, He is the Son of God.

At the very end of Mark, Jesus had just died on the cross. He breathed His last. And the centurion, who was at the foot of the cross, says, Truly, this was the Son of God.

What Mark set out to show us is exactly what he accomplishes. Jesus is the Son of God. But this Son of God is also the King.

Right after Jesus had died, Joseph of Arimathea comes and takes his body. And it says this, only Mark would share this, that Joseph of Arimathea was seeking the kingdom.

[5:24] And somehow he thought that kingdom was attached to Jesus. And that's the point at the end of Mark. Jesus is the Son of God and the King.

Even the King of the chaos. If we look at the story that we just read, we will highlight ten statements. I'm not going to explain all of them. But ten statements where Jesus is the subject and He is doing something.

Ten times in eight verses, He made His disciples. He dismissed the crowd. He had taken leave. He went up on the mountain.

He was alone. He saw they were struggling out at the sea. He came to them. He meant to pass by them. He spoke to them.

[6:22] He got into the boat. It is clear that the subject is not the disciples. It's Jesus. And the disciples are the beneficiary of the King.

You know, one thing that concerns me in our age is that when we mention the gospel or perhaps we talk about the Bible, we often begin with us.

What is our need? And how does Jesus meet that? The early church never did that. You see, that creates a consumer mentality.

What it creates is that I have a need and I am just thankful Jesus exists to meet that need. Now listen, that is a truth.

Please don't misunderstand me. But we don't begin with us. We begin with Him. And what the early church would do is they would lift up Jesus and say, this is who He is.

[7:25] See Him. Know Him. Repent. And come to Him. And so Mark, in the fashion of the early church, is saying, let me tell you about Jesus.

Let me tell you about the King. As I mentioned, we're heading into the new year.

And this passage, I believe, speaks to us. On two levels, I wanted to preach on this passage. My son-in-law, Mike, said, why did you choose this one?

For two reasons. Number one, it fits the missional need in me to talk about mission because the disciples are with Jesus on mission.

But the other thing that really hits home on this, the last day of 2023, is that they left one shore and they're heading to another.

[8:28] And that's exactly you and me. today we end 2022. And we're headed into a new year that we don't know what will happen.

But I guarantee that not everything that will happen will be easy. I can promise you that. That's just not the way life is.

Life has its ups and downs. And the issue we want to look at is what are we going to do when we're down? And this is where Jesus comes in as the king of the chaos.

Now, with that in mind, there are three types of chaos that Jesus deals with. Now, we all get the chaos of the storm.

That's the key point in the story. But it's not the only chaos that Jesus and his disciples are facing. There's first a chaos in the crowd.

[9:34] A chaos of the crowd. And how do we know that? Well, we have read in the story that Mark says, immediately and then he concludes in the first verse, Jesus had to dismiss the crowd.

You see, what had happened is they had fed the 5,000. And after they fed the 5,000, something began to shift.

But let me start this way. When Jesus came and saw the 5,000, he had said to his disciples, come and let's find a place of rest.

And yet, the great crowd came and Jesus looked at them and he said, we desperately need rest.

The disciples had been out by twos preaching and healing and casting out demons.

Jesus wanted to regroup. He wanted them to come back and find some rest. But instead, Jesus sees all these crowds and when they came, it says he had compassion on them because they were like sheep without a shepherd.

[10:45] And so what did Jesus do? Well, the first thing he did is found in Mark 6, 34, and here's what he did. It says, after he saw them as sheep without a shepherd, he began to teach them.

Hmm. He didn't start with a miracle. He didn't start with the feeding of the 5,000. He taught them.

And what Jesus was trying to get them to see is that there are some spiritual truths you must understand and if you don't get it, you will misinterpret life.

And so he taught them. There was something he wanted them to know. He was demonstrating his authority to not only do a miracle but to speak and change and transform life.

But here's where the shift came. Okay, Jesus, nice thoughts. We even agree with a lot of what you said. But what we really like is you provided us with lunch.

Actually, it was dinner. And so because of that demonstration of his authority to multiply loaves and fish, they wanted to take him by force and make him king.

[12:22] And here's the point. They had the wrong idea. you see, Jesus had known there will never be a crown without a cross.

But this crowd didn't know that, nor did they care. And so Jesus was trying to instruct their minds. He's trying to tell them about spiritual truth and not just give them a hot lunch program. God said, and as they shifted and wanted to make him king, Jesus had to get rid of his disciples because they too were thinking the same thing, most likely.

What we find is that Jesus is addressing the key issue in all of us, and that is he wants us to think properly.

And so chaos number one in this story is the chaos in the crowd or of the crowd, and here's what Jesus is doing.

[13:37] The king has authority over our minds. He has authority over our thinking, and he wants us to think well, think properly.

That's why Shoreline meets here. All of you come every Sunday. Why? Because somebody's going to open the word of God. Let me think God's thoughts after him. But we all know that we all have a tendency to stray.

Our minds can be haphazard. They can get in a dark place. My mind wanders, even at my most spiritual moments. And so Jesus is addressing their minds.

And that's what he's doing today as we enter the new year. What God wants us to do is to have his perspective, not the world's perspective, as we head into the new year.

It's important for mission. It's important if you're going to survive 2024. That's the first chaos.

[14:56] The second chaos, right before the disciples, we can call the chaos of the call. What do we mean by that? Jesus made his disciples get in the boat.

you're not staying here. Get in the boat. And Mark uses a very strong term that some have said even is used of divorce.

Get in the boat. I'm making you go this way and I'm heading that way. Jesus knew that his disciples would quickly adapt to the way of the world and the thinking of the crowd.

They would get caught up in the chaos and they too would want him to be king before the cross. We know that because Peter, when Jesus was telling him, I've got to go to the cross.

And what did Peter say? No, wait a minute. Not you. Not you. Not that. What did Jesus say? Get behind me, Satan, because you don't have in mind the things of God but the things of man.

[16:12] You see, so quickly they were able. And that's why there's a chaos going on. Jesus is calling and he's saying, here's where I want you to go. But we can have a chaos in our minds or a chaos of decision.

Oh, I think it even goes further than that. not only did they resist his desire but I'm wondering what they might think.

Hey, we fed the 5,000 Jesus and the crowd still here. Can't we finish what we began? I mean, you told us to give them bread and to give the fish.

Isn't there still something here? The meeting is not over. Oh, Jesus, can't we wait and go rest with you on the mountain?

Seems logical to me. Before they had encountered the crowd again, Jesus was saying, we all need rest.

[17:16] Well, Jesus, can't I do that better with you than somewhere else? And what about this one? These disciples knew the Sea of Galilee, but it was late.

It was already getting dark. I wonder if they were thinking, do we have to be in a rush? Why immediately? Why is this so urgent?

Won't it be easier to navigate the sea in daytime? I want to remind you that in Mark chapter 4, they'd already had this experience. They went out on a boat, same kind of storm, Jesus asleep, in

the boat.

Oh, we get boating at night. What we don't get is why you want us to go now. But here is the beautiful thing about the disciples in the way they responded to Jesus.

They simply said, okay. You see, whenever Jesus calls, people have asked me in Africa, how did you start doing this? How do you start traveling in the nations?

[18:28] And I just simply tell them, let me make it simple for you. When Jesus tells you to do something, there's only one answer, yes, sir. That's it.

And what we can see is that while the disciples were dealing with the chaos of the call, it doesn't make sense, the timing's not right, everything seems to be pointing against it, they still went on.

And it's one thing for you and me today, as we head into 2024, to accept the call of Christ as for you. But I want to tell you something, that's only the beginning.

When they accepted the call, they got out on the sea, and it began to storm. Have you ever faced that? Have you ever said to God, I know I've done this.

Lord, why am I facing all this? Why are all these trials coming? All I've wanted is to follow you. All I wanted was to do your will, and it seems like things are coming unglued.

[19:41] That's what happened to them. And Jesus wants us to see that too, because throughout the ages, people have worked through the chaos of accepting the call, and now they deal with the chaos of persevering in the call.

Let me tell you what I'm trying to say. In June 1849, a 17-year-old named Hudson Taylor was out walking, bent down, picked up a track, and put his faith in Jesus.

It was amazing that that day his mother, away from her home, secluded herself in a room, and prayed that he would come to know Christ.

And Hudson Taylor picks up this track and comes to faith in Christ, and almost immediately from that day of salvation, the call of God to go to China was in his mind.

Now, that had already been in his family, but he didn't know it. And he accepted the call to go to China. He immediately started preparing to be a medical doctor and doing other training.

[21:01] He was getting ready, and for about four years or so, he diligently worked on not only strengthening his faith, but being equipped so he could go to China.

And finally, it happened. All he wants to do is just follow God. I just want to follow your call.

September 19, 1853, he boarded a small three-masted little clipper ship to leave and head out to China from England.

And as he boarded that and said a tearful goodbye to his mother, a storm happened immediately. They were off the coast of Wales.

They hadn't sailed that far, and the ship ran into a severe storm that lasted for hours. Even the captain said, this was the wildest storm I've ever seen, and he was a seasoned sailor.

Taylor, aboard the ship, alternated between dread and trust in God's care. Do you understand? Don't we?

[22:17] And so he's bouncing from extremes. God will see me through. I think I'm about to die. And on board that ship, the captain even came to him and said, look, I don't think we're going to live another 30 minutes.

We're about to go under. And then he asked Hudson Taylor this, so what about your call to go to China? We're all about to die. And Hudson Taylor just simply said, I still believe I'm going to get to China, but if I don't, God will find me dying, trying to follow his call.

What I find in the story of Hudson Taylor is exactly the same story of the disciples. It's one thing to deal with the chaos of the call, it's another thing to accomplish the call.

But what ended up happening is the disciples continued to say, yes, sir. And what do we learn from this chaos?

The chaos of the call reveals to us the king has authority over our wills. not just our mind, but what we do with our lives, with our wills.

[23:46] Chaos number two. And the last one, the chaos of the storm.

This is the whole story. But the real chaos comes at the end. it comes when Jesus starts walking on the water.

Before, they're just struggling and rowing. They're not frightened, they're a bit tired, but they're not emotional. As a matter of fact, we might hold them up as heroes.

They never quit. Jesus said, go to the other side, and we're going to do it. And they rowed. But it was only when he began to walk that it says that they were terrified.

And then after Jesus comes near them, gets in the boat, the winds die, and then they're utterly astonished. Do you see that they're on an emotional roller coaster?

[24:49] Oh, I'm so fearful. And then, what just happened? And they're astonished. But here's the thing that links those two emotions.

Both of those emotions came from unbelief. And you say, wait a minute, they were astonished. Yeah, I wish I could bring to you a Greek text, because in the original language, Mark is putting together a bunch of words to talk about what it means to be utterly astonished.

Here's the way we might read it, if we're trying to just take the words and put it. It says they were exceedingly out of abundance in themselves astonished.

Here's what it means. They were completely beside themselves. They were stupefied, completely flabbergasted.

They were overwhelmed. And that doesn't come because you go, praise Jesus, he calmed the sea. No, no, no. They're still acting out of unbelief.

[26:03] And here's the unbelief. When they first encountered the storm, they were fearful. When Jesus finally calmed it, here's what they were going. I can't believe you did that.

I can't believe it. And that's what they're doing. their astonishment is that I can't believe Jesus had disability. And that's unbelief.

You see, the right response was to bow before him. But they're going, way to go, amazing! I didn't know you had that in you!

But here is the real issue. In their roller coaster, that they're on, the king has authority over their emotions.

And so I'd like you to just look at this. Everything that makes up the interior life where we really live is our mind, our will, and our emotions.

[27:10] And all of these are the chaos that Jesus is in control of. And so I invite you as we prepare to close by midnight tonight.

As we prepare to close, I want you to think with me. Let's get your mind wrapped around something. There's some things you and I know about life, and it is in this story.

Here's one. Following Jesus does not free us from experiencing storm. Now some people would say, really?

Yeah, that's the truth. Following Jesus doesn't make you exempt from storm. As a matter of fact, there's a Christianity that's being proclaimed in Africa.

I have to counter it. It's called the prosperity gospel, and I have to counter it everywhere I go. But if you follow Jesus, what he really wants to do is to give you everything you ever wanted, meaning money, health, everything.

[28:20] You see, here Christ is just simply after a comfortable life, not a life on mission that would even give their life for his name.

And so we need to be reminded that life is hard, and that is not strange. that's why Peter would say, you're suffering, but don't think of this as something strange.

Following Jesus does not free us from experiencing storms. But think with me a little more. Many of our storms are not our own fault.

They're not our fault. Just like these disciples. They didn't sin. They actually did the right thing. And I want you to think with me on another level.

We cannot still our storms in our own power. That's what this story is telling us. We're going to face storms. They're not your fault.

[29:30] And you're not going to be able to break through it in your own power. And so we come back to the king, and what do we see Jesus doing? He's standing and he sees them and he prays for them.

I believe God wants us to get this message today. Jesus sees not only your trouble, he sees you. And he knows how you're reacting.

You see, when these disciples were rowing and everything, the particular words that the Holy Spirit gave Mark is that they were tormented. Yes, they were straining at the oars, but in their hearts they were tormented, and Jesus could see that.

The word that is used here for see is the same word John used in John 1, 47 to 48, and here's what it says. Jesus saw Nathanael.

He saw him coming, and he said of him, behold an Israelite in whom there is no deceit. He could not only see his body coming near him, but he could look into his soul, and he says, I see you.

[30:49] No wonder Nathanael said, how do you know me? I've never met you. How do you know me? And Jesus said, before Philip called you, you were under the tree, and I saw you.

You see, if we're going to go into 2024 with a bold faith, we've got to say, Jesus sees me, and he not only sees and cares, but he intercedes.

That's why he stayed on the mountain to pray, and he prayed about his own strengthening to go to the cross and not bypass it with the crown they were offering, but he was also praying for them.

No wonder this is a sign. When Jesus would die, rise again physically, ascend into heaven physically, and he would perch himself at the right hand of God the Father, and right in that place, he intercedes.

He is able to save, the writer of the Hebrews says, to the uttermost, those who draw near to God through him because he always lives to make intercession for them.

[32:04] Let us praise the king who in the chaos sees not only what we're going through, but how we're reacting to it. And he's not put out, he's not saying, I wish you were better.

He's just simply saying, I'm praying for your heart and your hardship. Oh, I love the king of the chaos.

But the story tells us that Jesus didn't just stay on shore, but he enters into our storms and he speaks to our fears. Augustine, in his wonderful work that I read earlier this year, Confessions, he says this about Jesus, he came treading the waves, so we put all the swelling tumults under his feet.

Christian, why are you afraid? He's walking on the waves. Nothing can stop him. Nothing can defeat him.

And so we find Jesus entering into our storms. He's not an aloof king, staying on the shore, but he comes walking out right where we're suffering, and then he speaks, listen, take courage, it is I, to not be afraid.

[33:26] And he speaks right to the problem, and this is what Jesus is doing today. He enters in right to your problem, and in 2024, when you are at your worst, when life is at its darkest, when the fear is all around you, and even in you, he says, peace I leave with you.

my peace I give you, not as the world gives do I give to you. Let not your hearts be troubled, neither let them be afraid. John 14, 27.

Jesus said, I have said these things to you, that in me you may have peace, in the world you will have tribulation, but take heart, I've overcome the world.

John 16, 33. John 20, Jesus shows up in the locked room on Easter Sunday night, and the only message he repeated twice, peace be unto you.

Thomas didn't come because of unbelief, he wasn't in the room, but in John 20 at the end, he's in the room, once again Jesus shows up, peace be with you.

[34:49] I want to tell you some good news about the king. It's not about you, it's about the king. He enters into your storm, and he speaks to your fear.

And then last of all, well, the last one I will share, but not the last, please meditate on this passage. Here's what I get from this story.

Not only does Jesus see us and pray for us, not only does he enter our storm and speak to our fears, but listen carefully, Jesus guarantees our destiny and he heals our hearts.

Now you say, how does he guarantee our destiny? Well, I just want to very briefly say to you that when Jesus came walking out on the sea, Mark, and only Mark says this, he intended to pass them by.

Now, scholars who are much brighter than me wrestle with this, so I'm glad God only gave me a simple mind. Okay, so some scholars say, oh, well, the Greek really means he came near them. [36:00] Not so. Not so. He intended to pass them by. What do we make of that? Well, here's what I make of it. You see, Jesus is teaching a lot of things through this story.

Hey, I'm seeing you and I'm praying for you. I come near you. But notice what else he's doing. I'm intending to pass you by because I'm going to be on the shore when you get there. He's assuring their destiny. It reminds me of Jesus in that upper room on the night in which he was betrayed.

And he said, let not your hearts be troubled. You believe in God, believe also in me. In my father's house are many rooms. If it were not so, I would have told you. But I come.

I will come again and take you to myself so that you may be where I am. You see, what Jesus is doing by trying to pass them by is to teach another lesson.

[37:12] And that is, when you get to the shore, I'll be there waiting. And that's what Stephen experienced. They're killing him. All he is doing is following Christ and preaching his message.

And they're throwing stones to stone him to death. And Stephen looks up, Father, forgive them. They don't know what they're doing. And when he prayed that prayer and he looked into heaven, Jesus is standing, no longer sitting on his throne.

He's standing up and he's ready to receive Stephen. Listen, friends, if we're going to hold on in 2024, we not only need to know that Jesus is praying for me and sees me and that he even comes near, but there is a future and it is secure.

you know, Jesus, what he wants to do today is heal some heart. And Rob said it well when he was talking about what theme we're looking at today, and that is the disciples' hearts were hardened.

And here's how it was hardened. Unbelief. If you study about hardened hearts in the New Testament, here's what it always means. It means someone lacked spiritual perception, they didn't think right, and as a result, they didn't believe.

[38:49] Their thinking affected their faith. And this is what God wants to heal today.

He wants to soften our hearts. I need my heart healed. They did not understand the loaves.

You know, when Jesus fed the 5,000, he spoke to hard hearts later, and Mark, and he said, in Mark 16, he says, you picked these loaves, you served these loaves, how many basketfuls did you pick up?

Oh, 12. 5,000 people, and there were leftovers. Oh, wait a minute, I also fed the 4,000. How many basketfuls did you pick up?

7. Do you get it? Jesus is more than enough. He's not miserly.

[40:04] He's more than enough. And because they did not believe that, they didn't think it, they didn't let it capture their mind, they were led astray. So here, my friends, is the final word.

I wonder if Paul had something similar in mind, when he wrote Romans 12. 2, and this is our application. In the New Living Translation, the one I've chosen before you, Paul writes this, don't copy the behavior and customs of the world, that's the chaos of the crowd, don't do that, but let God transform you into a new person by changing the way you think mind.

Then, when he changes the way you think, then you will learn to know God's will for you. There's the will. I know his will and I submit to it.

will. And that will is good. It's pleasing. It's perfect. It's the right thing for you.

And it brings pleasure to your heart. And it will mature you, the word for perfect. perfect. And so, my friends, where are you wrestling?

[41:40] Is it in your mind? Are you fighting God in your will? Are you struggling in your emotions? The king of the chaos has authority over it all.

As we begin 2024, let's do what Paul said. Put yourself on an altar. Surrender to him.

For some of you, this may be the first time you've ever heard a message like that. And here is the issue. Jesus came to carry you to heaven.

And he did that by dying on the cross for your sins and rising again. And all he wants you to do today is to know that's a fact.

Give him yourself and let him bring you peace. If you would like to make that decision, I'm going to be up here after we conclude.

[42:48] I'll ask the worship team to come. But let us pray. Father, thank you for teaching us about the king of the chaos. help us now to think, to live, and to feel your manifest presence.

In Jesus' name, amen. need need need need need need need need need