

Creation's Lord

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Date: 27 August 2000

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[0 : 0 0] Welcome to another Sermon on the Web from St. John's Shaughnessy Anglican Church in Vancouver, Canada. You are free to use this mp3 audio file and to redistribute it to others without alteration and without charge. After the sermon, listen for more information about St.

John's Shaughnessy Church and the St. John's website. The following message is from the August 27, 2000 service at St. John's Shaughnessy. The Reverend David Short delivered his message from the book of Mark, the fourth chapter, verses 35 to 41. The title of the message is Creation's Lord.

Well now we come to the end of Mark chapter 4 and you may be glad of that, although I must say this has been one of the most remarkable and helpful chapters for me personally. It's all about the power of God's Word and how it works secretly in our lives, bearing fruit over the long haul.

And as we come to the end of the chapter, in this event, that remarkable event in Jesus' life that Linda read to us, the stilling of the storm, it's the first of three outstanding miracles of power that demonstrate Jesus has supernatural, divine abilities. He stills the raging of the storm, he stills the raging of a demon in someone's life and he raises the dead to life.

And if you were to read it over quickly, all the forces that oppose us and threaten to overwhelm us, be they nature, be they evil or death itself, are subject to this one Jesus Christ.

[2 : 1 6] You may know that there's always been a group of Bible commentators who find miracles hard to believe. They refuse to accept them as Mark wrote them and they try and transform the miracles from events and real occurrences into helpful moral tales.

And I dived into my shelf this week and pulled out William Barclay's commentary on Mark. And Barclay says about the stilling of the storm that we can't take it literally. This is how we ought to take it. He says, Well, as we'll see, the only problem with that is that's the exact opposite of what the story says.

The text tells us that when they realised Jesus was there, they yelled at him to get up and take a bucket and start bailing out lest they should all drown. You see, you can't domesticate these events. You can't, if you try and reduce it into something that will just palliate our fears or be a therapy for our anxieties, we miss the point. And there are two points, there are two key lessons for us in this episode, both of which I think are a little alarming and both of which come as a surprise.

And the first comes to us from verse 41 in the question of the disciples when they say to one another, Who is this that even the wind and the sea obey him?

[4 : 0 3] The disciples are shocked by Jesus' command and power. How can a human being command nature? It is beyond mortal capacity. Let's look at it.

In verses 35 and 36, after the teaching parables, Jesus sets out with his disciples to cross the lake to the quiet side. It's been a frantic time.

And Jesus is utterly exhausted, so exhausted in verse 38, that he falls asleep in a violent storm. In verse 37, it's no ordinary storm.

The boat is in the hands of experienced sailors, as men who are daily on this lake. They know a minor storm from a major one. And they are convinced, verse 38, that this is it.

Their time is up and that they will perish. And so they shake Jesus and they call, they yell at him. In verse 39, Jesus awakes and speaks a word of rebuke to the wind and to the wave.

[5 : 1 0] And it happens. He says, and in the Greek, it's be quiet and stay quiet. Sit down and stay down.

It's total and masterful control. And the disciples are stunned and not a little afraid. And they ask, who is this?

As I think we are meant to ask the question, who is this that even the wind and the sea obey him? When I worked as a youth worker, I taught this passage to a group of pre-teens in Australia. And I took them down to the beach as a kind of visual aid. And we had a king tide running that day, six, eight feet waves.

And all the kids stood on the shore and yelled at the waves until they were hoarse and nothing happened. And who is this who can command the sea? Who indeed?

[6:10] We know from the Old Testament that it is God alone who rules the raging of the sea. This is unique supernatural power. This is God in the flesh. This is the Jesus whom we believe in.

And that's the first point, the first lesson from this passage, that Jesus is God in the flesh. But there's something more. If you look at verse 40, don't you find this an unusual verse?

In verse 40 he said to them, Why are you afraid? Have you no faith? Putting it in modern English, Why are you afraid? Do you still not trust me?

Now why does Jesus rebuke them so strongly? Why does he speak such harsh words to them, I think, understandable fear? If the only lesson from this passage is Jesus' power and deity, don't you think Jesus would be pleased that they came to the place of asking the question, Who is this?

And then he'd gently lead them on. But he doesn't. He rebukes them. Why is that? Well I think the answer is in verse 38. In the words that they speak to him.

[7:19] Teacher, they say, Do you not care if we perish? They say to him, Jesus, how can you be asleep?

You are not concerned. You do not care. Your sleep, your inaction, your failure to see our danger, your total silence is beyond our understanding and it leads them to doubt his love and to doubt his care and it is that that Jesus rebukes.

You see, he does not expect them to have all their theology straight and to completely understand who he is yet. But he does expect them to trust him even when he seems to be doing nothing.

Let me say that again. He expects them to trust him even when he does not seem to be doing anything for them. You may find, as I do, that it is not so difficult to trust Jesus when we see wonderful things happening, when we see obvious answers to prayer, when we see miraculous intervention, when we see God's power and when God intervenes.

I think it's even easy to believe sometimes. But what happens when heaven is silent? What happens when the storm arises and the wind and the waves threaten to overwhelm us?

[8:44] And it seems as though Jesus is asleep in heaven and we pray that there is no answer. The question is, does he care? Does he really care? And the point, the second lesson of this is Jesus wants to be trusted when it seems like he is doing nothing and fast asleep.

I think this is a brilliant end to Mark chapter 4. You see, in the parables about the seed and the soil, Jesus' power is constantly hidden.

His power is real and it's divine and it's active. But it is precisely when we don't see his power that we are meant to trust him. Can we trust Jesus' power?

Can we trust it when our children seem to be in such difficulty? Can we trust Jesus' power when he doesn't seem to answer prayer and the church that we belong to seems to be moving directions that oppose God?

Can we trust Jesus' power in our declining years when everything seems to be more difficult and fear threatens to swamp the boat? Can we trust Jesus' power when we feel engulfed by loneliness and a sense of futility?

[10:01] Here is the passage in God's word for us this morning. His power is real and his care is strong. And he invites us to put our trust in him both when it is easy and when it is most difficult.

Amen. Amen. That address is tjohns.org on the website you will also find information about ministries worship services and special events at st john's shaughnessy we hope that this sermon on the web has helped you and that you will share it with others you