

Christs Great Power

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[0 : 00] Let's turn again to this chapter that we read. And I want us just to look at this section, verses 22 to 39.

Again, a section I think we're all very familiar with, but as we go through this gospel, we'll just go through it section by section. And in the previous section, we've seen Jesus as a great teacher, and as he is teaching, he tells us that there will be different responses to his teaching.

We saw that some people will be careless in their hearing, some people will be emotional with their hearing, that there will be some people, and as they hear, the cares and concerns of the world will come into play and choke the good seed, and then there will be others where the good seed falls on the good ground and it brings forth fruit.

But the important thing, the thing that we have to emphasize over and over again, is that people come under the Word. Because while there might be, we've seen that there are different responses to the Word, the important thing above all is to come under the Word.

And that is why it is so important to, not only for you yourself to come under the Word, but for you to bring other people under the Word.

[1 : 27] Because faith comes by hearing. That's what the Bible tells us, that faith comes by hearing, and hearing by the Word of God. So, whenever we come to the Word and read the Word, there is always the potential that a soul will be brought to know Jesus as Savior.

Whenever we come to the Word, we also know that if we are already believers, there is the opportunity for us to grow. Because Jesus himself, part of the high priestly prayer, what he was praying was, sanctify them through the truth.

Thy Word is truth. So, Jesus has prayed to the Father that his people will be sanctified through the Bible. It's like a river running over, renewing, refreshing, cleansing.

So, it's so important that people come to the Word. And I suppose that's one of the great things. For instance, the Gideons, many people, say, for instance, in a hotel, have picked up the Bible at night. Maybe they've never been in the habit of reading it, and that's where a change has come into their life. Some people have been converted there and then.

[2 : 41] Other people, it has made them start to think and begin to take an interest in the things of God and to begin to seek God. So, it's so important that people come under the Word, under the reading of the Word, and under the preaching of the Word.

Now, Jesus, after preaching, he then says to them that they were going to go over. One day, verse 22, he got into a boat with his disciples, and he said to them, let us go across to the other side of the lake.

And I don't know what the weather was like. It doesn't tell us what it was like when they left. But, it says, and a windstorm came down on the lake, and they were filling with water and were in danger.

So, as they moved off, it probably was all right. And I think we're aware of that, how sometimes the weather can change incredibly quickly. Some mornings, you get up, and it's a grand morning.

And before lunchtime, the wind and the rain, everything, the whole climb, everything has changed so quickly and so radically. Well, it certainly happened here very, very quickly, because a terrible storm broke out.

[3 : 53] And it wasn't just a strong breeze. It was fuchs, because we've got to remember that some of these men who were in a panic in the boat were seasoned fishermen, people who were used to these very waters.

And they went, and they woke him, saying, Master, we are perishing. So, you see, these men were gripped by fear. And it's an awful thing when a person is overcome with fear.

Just fear is an awful thing, but people feel that their life is, as it were, slipping away from them. And they go, and they find Jesus asleep. And it's a wonderful thing, this, because here is Jesus, and it is showing so clearly the humanity of Jesus.

Jesus is God, God of very God. But he is also man, Jesus Christ, the God-man. And it's here we see the real humanity of Jesus, because God, as God, cannot, slumber or sleep.

We read about that in the Word. But here is Jesus in his human nature. Jesus Christ, here he is asleep. And not just, as it were, dozing.

[5 : 13] You know how sometimes you can, as it were, doze with kind of one eye open, or one ear. Maybe not one eye open, but one ear open, so that you're kind of conscious of every sound going on.

But it seems that he was sound asleep. And I believe there were two reasons for that. One was that Jesus was exhausted.

And we've got to remember that, that the work that Jesus was engaged in was an incredibly strenuous work. It was demanding physically.

It was because they moved around on foot. They were walking. And it wouldn't appear that he got all that much rest. It was spiritually demanding. It was emotionally demanding.

Because when you're dealing with people's issues and problems all the time, it's an incredible drain on one's natural resources. And sometimes people have the idea that if a person is involved in sort of full-time work, or involved with God's work, that somehow that you'll always be energized, and that everything will be the easiest work in the world.

[6 : 23] Well, supposing we don't think about all the emotional pressures and drain, and all the mental demands that's involved. Just a side people often forget is a spiritual.

Because if you are involved with anything for the Lord, be absolutely persuaded of it, that Satan will do all in his power to upset, to mar, to spoil, to destroy.

And a lot of people forget the unrelenting temptation and battle and struggle that people have if they are involved in the work of the kingdom.

Some people think that if a person is a minister or a missionary is involved, that Satan doesn't bother with them. It's the very opposite. You become, and it's even when a person becomes committed to the Lord.

If a person, when a person begins to show an interest in the Lord, Satan will, we saw that in the parable of the sower, when the good seed was being sown, Satan straight in there doesn't want.

[7 : 26] He's attacking. And so it goes on. And it becomes more and more vehement the more a person becomes involved. When a person becomes a member, where they become, where they make this public declaration that they're on the Lord's side, Satan says, I'm going to get him.

But the great thing, what we've always got to remember, is that however powerful and however threatening is, and we'll see that in a moment, the Lord is always greater. So we've got to remember that.

But we're just saying that sometimes people have the idea that if you're involved in the Lord's work, then that you should always be fresh and everything. He says, well, here's the Lord Jesus Christ himself.

And there are times he talks about that weariness that he is experiencing. And you can hear him, he says, the foxes have holes, the birds of the air have nests, but the Son of Man, he doesn't have anywhere to lay his head.

It's just this unrelenting demand that was placed upon him. So here we find and believe that Jesus is absolutely exhausted. But the other reason I believe he's sound asleep is the trust that he has in his Father.

[8 : 35] Because Jesus has said, look, we're going over to the other side. And as it was always happening, in our nature, he was depending, in order to be our substitute, he had to live like us.

And so he exercised this trust, this dependence upon his Father. And that's what he was doing. In a sense, that's a pillow that Jesus was resting on, the trust that he had in his heavenly Father.

And so that's why he was able to sleep like a baby. And what an example to us of this great trust.

But the disciples didn't have it. And we see that their faith, that's why Jesus said to them later on, he said, where is your faith?

Because you see, they should have exercised faith. Because Jesus said to them, let us go across to the other side of the lake. That was his word of promise. He's saying to them, look, we're going

over to the other side.

That should have been enough for them. But of course, the disciples, I suppose, are just like yourselves. And there are times that we lose sight of the Lord when the storms of life come in upon us.

[9 : 46] Sometimes it might be family trials. It might be physical troubles. It might be financial failures. There's a host of things that can come into our lives that sort of rock us.

And everybody experiences these things from time to time. How do we deal with them? Well, if we're trusting in the Lord, we ought to bring everything to the Lord in prayer.

And of course, one of the great problems for the disciples at this particular time was that as they looked out, they could see the storm. As they looked in, all that they could see was fear.

And you know what the problem was? They weren't looking up. If they had looked up, they would have seen Jesus. And Jesus is the one who can control the storm. And he's just going to show them that.

And it's so true for ourselves. Because so often, that's what we're doing. We're looking around. And we're seeing things threatening. And we see things that maybe we're not too sure just how to deal with.

[10 : 49] And we hate it when we get into situations and circumstances that are beyond our control. Because we like to be in control. But sometimes, we're not.

And we don't like it. And that's why we've got to look to the Lord. Because if we haven't got control of things, that's when the fear comes in. And so the disciples, that's what had happened.

Jesus was out of the equation. And they were looking around them. And they were looking into themselves. But they weren't looking up. But thankfully, they did. And they went to Jesus.

They did the right thing. And Jesus, of course, is the one. And they wake. Master, they say, we are perishing. And let us be persuaded of this.

If you today are in a storm, and maybe you're in your own personal storm, and maybe you've cried to the Lord, and the Lord is not responding, don't give up. Because the Lord has a reason.

[11 : 48] He has a purpose in everything. The Bible tells us that there is a time and a season to every purpose under heaven. And we've always got to remember that.

One of the things that you study, well, if you study the Bible all the way through, is the incredible pattern to God's working. And sometimes he seems to move so slowly.

But all was God as a big picture. And our lives are part of the thread that is running through that big picture. And God is not going to go any quicker than you want him to.

God will go at his own time, at his own pace. And that's where we've got to learn to trust him. And depend upon him. And believe in him. Believe that he knows even when we don't know.

And so the Lord is watching over them. even, and remember that, my friend, the Lord is seeing you, the Lord is caring for you, even maybe when you don't realize it.

[12 : 54] But we find that Jesus, he gets up and he rebukes the wind and the sea. And of course, it tells us that the disciples, they were afraid.

There was a new fear came into their heart. Because all of a sudden they realized what we have just seen is extraordinary. if you see, if you were to see some miracle take place regarding something that you weren't very used to, you might not appreciate just how miraculous it was.

But for these men who lived on the sea, they knew what they had just seen was extraordinary. what I'm saying is supposing that was the first time people were crossing that stretch of water in a boat and Jesus performed that miracle.

They may not have realized just how miraculous it was because people might think, oh well, the sea will just calm in a moment. but you and I know that that doesn't happen because even when the wind drops the sea will continue for a long time after to surge.

There's still that, the motion in the sea and you'll find it, we know that here, even particularly if it's a north wind on the boat. even after a day where the wind has gone, there's still that roll, there's still that surge in the sea.

[14 : 25] It takes quite a while to quieten down. Well, it just happened instantly. The wind went and the wind, it was a flat calm. These men had never, ever, ever seen anything like that.

They knew that it was impossible. What they had witnessed was in the realms of the impossible. And that's why fear came into their heart when they saw.

And they were aware. And they were saying, who then is this that he commands even winds and water? And they obey him. And so Jesus is saying to them, where is your faith?

And so often, I'm sure Jesus is saying the same thing to ourselves. Where is your faith? Because unbelief is such a curse and I'm sure the one thing that we all want to be rid of is unbelief.

Lord, I believe. But don't we often so add, help my unbelief. If you follow the Lord Jesus Christ, I know that the one thing you want to exercise more and more is a total belief and trust in the Lord.

[15:40] Every day. But sometimes, like the disciples, our faith is weak. And then we find Jesus as he has just exercised command over the natural world.

We find him now exercising command over the spiritual relevance because when they reach the shore on the Gerasenes or elsewhere it's termed the Gadarenes, we find this man who is absolutely out of his mind.

Somebody who is possessed by devils. Legion. There were many devils in him. And the man was deranged. He had lost his reason. He had lost his mind. And the people from his own village had tried everything.

They had tried to chain him. They had tried to enclose him. It didn't matter what they did. He was uncontrollable. He would just break the chains, break the bonds and he would be raging around the countryside striking terror into everybody.

And so we find that this poor man meets with Jesus. And in a sense when we look at this episode we just see something of what the demonic is really like.

[16:53] Sometimes we underestimate and I think more and more we're beginning to minimize the force and the power of evil.

And I don't want us to focus too much upon it because I don't want to give too much place to the devil and I don't want to make us think more of the devil than he is. But what we've got to remember is the Bible tells he's a roaring lion and he's going about seeking whom he may devour.

That is his mission. That is his intent. Even today. Sometimes he comes as an angel of light but he is wholly destructive in his intent and always trying to strike at the glory of God.

But the amazing thing is that the devils believe in God and they tremble. There's not an atheist amongst the devil. There's not one atheistic devil anywhere.

And there's not one devil that doesn't fear in the thought with regard to the thought of God because they know the reality and the power of God.

[17:59] God. But here is this man Legion. And you'll notice how straight away there's a recognition that this is Jesus.

What have you to do with me Jesus son of the most high God? You know it's really quite extraordinary. Jesus has come to his own people. To his own land.

And they don't recognize him. That's what we're told in John. He came to his own and his own received him not. And here's this man filled with devils.

And the devils are crying out what have you to do? What are we to do with you Jesus? They're recognizing straight away this is a Christ. So that there's a recognition in hell even when there isn't a recognition on earth.

And what a solemn thought that is. Now we find that it tells us in fact in Mark's account that this man ran to Jesus.

[19:00] And here it just tells us when he saw Jesus he cried out and fell down before him. This man knew that he needed deliverance.

And yet at the same time there was a fear of that deliverance. And you know there's an awful lot of people like that. I believe our churches are full of people who know they need saving.

and yet they're scared of being saved. Maybe there's somebody like that here today. You know you need to be saved. Deep down you want to be saved.

And yet there is a barrier because you're scared of being saved. You're scared of what it will mean for you.

What it will do to you. My friend never be scared of it. because God will only do you good. Your life from the moment that you are saved you are brought into eternal life.

[20:07] We tend to so often think of eternal life as something that happens after we die. Eternal life begins here and now. And when a soul is saved that's what happens.

Eternal life begins. Life that shall never end. Body will die but your soul won't. And the life in your soul that vibrance that spirituality that union with Jesus death doesn't end it.

In fact the moment of death a transformation takes place in the soul so that the soul will be conformed fully to Jesus Christ.

Christ. So don't shy away from this because people do. I know. I did. And what I'm saying here I know from my own experience because many a time I sat under the gospel knew that I needed to be delivered and saved even wanted to be delivered and saved and yet can I put the hand up saying but not just now because I don't know how it will affect me.

I don't know what will happen. My friend will do you nothing but good. Don't push him away. Don't hold back. Well here's this man and we find that Jesus deals with him and it's an amazing scene we find before us here because the devils cry out to Jesus and say look don't put us down into the abyss.

[21 : 45] Can we go into these pigs this large herd of pigs that was feeding there and he gave them permission and the demons we read in verse 33 came out of the man and entered the pigs and the herd rushed down the steep bank into the lake and were drowned.

Now as we know we have a fuller account of all this in Mark's gospel but sometimes we've got to try and visualize a scene and I think for Legion at that moment as the devils went out of him into the pigs and he stood on that slope grassy slope watching the pigs there was about 2,000 of them careering down the slope and one after was obviously a big drop and straight down into the sea and one after another of these pigs hammering down the slope and careering off jumping off into the water and being drowned the noise the stampeding and maybe for pigs I don't know maybe squealing there would be this incredible noise and then the total and the squish of the water charging down it would be an incredible scene and then total silence and if anybody was watching that they would have been scratching their heads and saying I don't believe they would be rubbing their eyes I don't believe what I'm seeing but Legion was seeing what would have happened to him were it not for Jesus

Legion was seeing visually before him before his very eyes what his end would have been destruction and death but he had been delivered by Jesus and so we find that there are two reactions and we've seen this before we just mentioned at the end of this section we see the two reactions one from the people of the community and they wanted Jesus to go it's quite an extraordinary request we don't want Jesus I don't I can't think of anything worse and you know there are many people in our land and that's exactly what they're trying to do we're seeing it over and the media are indeed highlighting quite awful this attempt to eradicate any shape or form of Christianity in our land we don't want Jesus it's an awful thing well that's what the Gadarenes were like we don't want you please go they were filled with fear they had seen something happen that they just couldn't figure it out here was this man who was the terror terrorized the community nobody could tame and there he was he was sitting clothed in his right mind and that whole hillside which had been full of pigs was empty and they were filled with fear and I think there was also an awareness of the spotless purity of Jesus that made them feel uneasy they didn't like being beside the spotless purity of Jesus it exposed who they were themselves but then we see the very opposite because we see Legion Legion wanted to go with Jesus on one hand the whole community wanted Jesus to go but Legion said I want to go with you that's what Jesus what they saying the man from whom the demons had gone begged that he might be with him he didn't just say to Jesus Lord I would like to go with you he begged him he was pleading please please let me go with you and you know we see Jesus as mercy here to that community because Jesus made that man a missionary he appointed him a missionary that's what he said he said return to your home and declare how much God has done for you isn't that wonderful the worst thing that Jesus could have done for that community would have been to take Legion away with him because then he would be removing everything not just himself but he would be removing somebody who could bring the word to that community wasn't it wonder see the mercy of God he did this out of his love and mercy and he said to to to see

[26 : 32] Legion I'm sure Legion and you can understand when you come to newness of life when you come to faith in Jesus Christ you want to be with the object of your faith that's what love wants to be with the object of love and we want to be with the Lord and Legion having been so demented through the devils I'm sure he was afraid that once Jesus would go that they might return and he was he says I want to be with the man who delivered me but Legion was going to have to learn that his life was a life of faith and that although Jesus was away from him physically he was still with him spiritually that a union now had taken place a union that could never be severed and even although

all these devils were to come back to Legion they couldn't undo they could never rule and reign in his life as they had in the past he would come to discover that he would learn that but Jesus had a work for him to do and Jesus has a work for every person that is brought into the kingdom different works everybody in here is a different work because the

Lord has given everybody different abilities different gifts different qualities and he wants you to use these for his glory for people's good and that's the beauty of a working church and sometimes we tend to think that in order to work we've got to organize things Jesus didn't organize any more for this man and he just said right I'm going to tell you what to do go back home and tell what things God has done that's it and you know that's the greatest work that we would just tell people just sit down with them and have a blether and tell and talk and then bring highlight because you know something everybody in the community was going to say to Legion what happened in fact Legion wouldn't really have to go and say to people hey I've got a story to tell you people would be asking him what has happened and you know my friend it's a wonderful opportunity for you as well when people come to you and say hey you become a

Christian what's happened what do you have now that you didn't have before people are asking these kind of questions and for instance you may be able to say to them I have great peace I never had great peace before but I have now wouldn't change it for the world and you have the peace of Jesus in your heart my peace I give you that's what Jesus said that was his legacy that's what he bequeathed to the church I give you my peace and so we find that that's what this man did he went round the community telling what great things that Jesus did proclaiming throughout the whole city how much Jesus had done for him what has Jesus done for you well one thing the bible tells us and it's a great thing that God so loved the world that he gave his only begotten son that's what Jesus has done and then it says whosoever believes in him whosoever any person whosoever believes in him shall have eternal life shall never perish that's good news let's pray

Lord our God we ask thee to bless us and help us to lay hold more and more upon the wonder of this truth we pray to that we might be able to give thanks for all the good things that we receive in life we pray Lord to help us as we go on day by day we commit everyone in here all our homes our loved ones wherever they are wherever they go to the care and to the keeping of God oh Lord protect us shield us and shelter us and may thy grace mercy and peace indwell us and surround us forgive us our sin for Jesus sake Amen