

Mark 4:35-5:43: Part 1

Introduction

1. One of Mark's stated goals is to reveal that Jesus is the Son of God
2. In essence, He is out to prove that Jesus is God in the flesh
3. Today and next week we are going to look at three events that serve this purpose by demonstrating Jesus's power and authority over nature, demons, and finally death and disease
4. The three events make up one section so they really should be viewed together
5. However, due to the amount of material I will be breaking the section up into two parts
 - a. This week we will look at the first two events where we see Jesus exercise command over the natural world and the spiritual world
 - b. Next week we will look at the third and final event where He exercises command over death and disease
6. In addition to revealing Jesus's divine nature, these three events will also reveal something to us about the nature and practice of genuine faith

A. Jesus demonstrates His authority over nature (READ 4:35-41)

1. Jesus had just finished a long day of teaching the masses on the shores of Galilee and decides to get into a boat and travel across the sea to the other shore (on the east):
 - a. Mark's gospel contains some additional details that Matthew and Mark do not which might indicate that he heard it from someone who was actually in the boat—in fact, since Mark's gospel is based off the preaching of Peter, and Peter was a fisherman, it might have been Peter and it could have been his boat
 - b. You will also notice that there were other boats that followed along (something not mentioned in Matthew and Luke)
2. As they were sailing the eight-mile journey across the lake, a **"fierce gale of wind"** (37) came upon the sea and almost sank the boat:
 - a. The words Mark used describe a sudden and violent storm with gale force winds and massive waves
 - b. It was evening which is normally the calmest time to be on the water because the winds are generally at their weakest (this is why fishing was done in the evening), but storms of this magnitude were especially dangerous at night
 - c. Storms like these are common on the Sea of Galilee because it sits in a basin surrounded by high mountains and the wind enters this basin from the southwest and sweeps across the water causing violent storms and large waves
 - d. That's exactly what we have here with waves **"breaking over the boat so much that the boat was already filling up"** (37)—Matthew says the boat was **"swamped"** and **"in danger"** (presumably of sinking)
3. What we see next is a demonstration of Jesus's power and authority over nature:
 - a. If this weren't so serious it would be a bit comical—the seasoned fishermen are all panicking while the carpenter is sound asleep in the back of the boat (does it remind you of another similar OT story? Jonah)

- b. According to all three gospels, the disciples thought they were going to die (e.g. perish) and Luke indicates they called on Jesus to save them
 - c. Mark reveals, however, that their words to Jesus were actually a rebuke (38): **“Teacher, do You not care that we are perishing?”**
 - 1) There’s a bit of irony in this if you think about it—especially in light of why Jesus came (John 3:16): **“For God so loved the world, that He gave His only begotten Son, that whoever believes in Him shall not perish, but have eternal life.”**
 - 2) Jesus wasn’t sleeping because He didn’t care, rather His sleeping provided the context for Him to challenge His disciples on their lack of faith in Who He was
 - 3) It’s not clear what they expected Jesus to do to save them here—they knew Him well enough to know there was something special about Him—after all He had healed the sick and cast out demons before their very eyes—but they were clearly dumbfounded by what He did next to save them
 - d. Jesus stands up, rebukes the wind and the sea, and immediately everything is calm (39): **“And He got up and rebuked the wind and said to the sea, ‘Hush, be still.’ And the wind died down and it became perfectly calm.”**
 - 1) Not only does He supernaturally calm the storm, but He does it with two words (in Greek): **“Hush, be still.”**
 - 2) All three gospels say He **“rebuked”** the wind and see:
 - a) This is the same word used of Jesus when He casts out demons
 - b) It refers to the issuing of a command and represents authority over that which is being rebuked
 - c) So what we have here is a demonstration of Jesus’s complete power and authority over nature—a demonstration of His deity because only the Creator God can control the Creation with a Word
4. Not only does this event reveal Christ’s deity but it reveals something about the nature of faith (40): **“And He said to them, ‘Why are you afraid? Do you still have no faith?’**
- a. You might notice a small footnote in some of your Bibles indicating that the word for afraid might also be translated as **“cowardly”**
 - b. That might be a little strong here from an English standpoint, but it’s clear that Jesus is referring to a having a lack of faith (40): **“Do you still have no faith?”**
 - c. The emphasis is on the fact that in spite of all that they had seen and knew about Jesus they still lacked faith in Who He really was—this is a common theme in Mark because there are five other instances where Jesus rebukes his followers for the same thing
 - d. This stands out even more with their response (41): **“They became very much afraid and said to one another, ‘Who then is this, that even the wind and the sea obey Him?’”**
 - 1) They had seen him heal, cast out demons and now command the wind and the sea
 - 2) Yet, they still didn’t have faith in Who He was
 - 3) When they evaluated what they saw it lead to more fear than it did awe
 - 4) This just goes to show that seeing and believing (e.g. faith) are not one and the same

B. Jesus demonstrates His authority over demons (5:1-20)

- 1. Immediately upon getting to shore Jesus encounters a man possessed by demons (READ 5:1-13)
 - a. Matthew and Luke add some more details:
 - 1) There actually two men, but Mark only focuses on the one

- 2) The man actually lived in the tombs (caves in the mountainside), rather than a house
 - 3) He was naked (“**had not put on any clothing for a long time**”)
 - 4) The man was so violent that no one could pass by the area without being in danger
 - 5) In fact, he was so strong that no one could subdue or bind him, even with shackles and chains
 - 6) Night and day he would scream and cut himself with stones
- b. The main demon actually initiates the confrontation with Jesus:
- 1) When the man sees Jesus “**from a distance, he ran up and bowed down before Him;**” (6)—which is the first indication of Jesus’s superiority over the spirits
 - 2) When Jesus commands the demon to leave the man, the demon attempts to resist by trying to exercise control over Him (7): “**and shouting with a loud voice, he *said, “What business do we have with each other, Jesus, Son of the Most High God? I implore You by God, do not torment me! For He had been saying to him, “Come out of the man, you unclean spirit!”**”
 - a) It was a common belief in Jesus’s day that by using the name of a spirit one could exercise control over the spirit, and incantations and instructions for this have been found in the ancient magic papyri (writings) of the day
 - b) The demon does this when he refers to Jesus both by name and title, “**Jesus, Son of the Most High God**” (7)
 - c) He questions Jesus’s right to cast them out, “**What business do we have with each other...**” (in other words, “what gives you the right to interfere with our business?”)
 - d) He even tries to bind Jesus with an oath not to torment him, “**I implore You by God, do not torment me!**”—Matthew indicates that the demons were accusing Jesus of tormenting them before the appointed time (more on this in a bit)
- c. The demon relents and leaves the man (5:9-13):
- 1) Jesus asks the demon his name and he responds, “**My name is Legion; for we are many.**”—asking for the demon’s name serves two purposes:
 - a) It demonstrates authority (in the same way the demon attempted by calling Jesus by name)
 - b) It reveals the magnitude to the man’s possession
 - 2) The demon begs Jesus not to send him and the other demons out of the country and permit them to enter a nearby herd of pigs (11-12):
 - a) It was also common belief that demons were territorial, actively working within geographic regions—that seems to be the case here
 - b) Jesus “**gave them permission**” and they left the man and entered the herd of 2000 pigs which ultimately run off a cliff and drown in the sea
 - Why would Jesus give such permissions?
 - One clue is Matthew 8:29 where the demon asks Jesus if He has come to torment them “**before the time**”
 - Another clue is found in Luke 8:31 where it says they were imploring Jesus not to “**command them to go away into the abyss.**”
 - This is clearly an eschatological reference to a specific time in the future when God will send Satan and his minions to the Abyss for 1000 years and then release them only to ultimately judgement and cast them into the Lake of Fire

where they will be tormented for all eternity (described in Revelation 19:20-20:10)

- Jesus permitted this because He came to bind the strong man (Satan) and plunder his house
- The time for Satan's judgement and eternal torment had not yet come

2. Obviously, this event reveals the deity of Christ, but like the first event it also teaches us something about the nature of faith because Mark records two responses to this event (READ 5:14-20)
 - a. One response is fear and it's what we see from the masses (14-17):
 - 1) After the herdsmen reported what happened the entire city came out to see for themselves
 - 2) They discover the formerly possessed man in a radically different state:
 - a) He was "sitting down" rather than running around threatening people
 - b) He was "clothed" rather than naked
 - c) He was "in his right mind" rather than screaming among the tombs
 - d) As a result, they "**became frightened**" (another way to say it would be "terrified")
 - 3) After the eye-witnesses described what happened, the whole city begged Jesus to leave their region (16-17)—the grammar suggests they wanted Him to leave **permanently**
 - b. The other response is gratitude and it's what we see from a single man, the one who was delivered from the demons (18-20):
 - a. When Jesus begins to leave, the man begs to go with him:
 - a) The grammar suggests he did it continually
 - b) The grammar also suggests that his desire was to "**remain**" with Jesus, not simply go with Him
 - b. Jesus refuses, but not because He doubted the man's sincerity, but rather because the man had a task to accomplish (19): "**And He did not let him, but He *said to him, "Go home to your people and report to them what great things the Lord has done for you, and how He had mercy on you."**
 - c. And, it a true sign of gratitude the man does exactly that (20): "**And he went away and began to proclaim in Decapolis what great things Jesus had done for him; and everyone was amazed."**
 - d. When you think about it, this is actually where preaching the Gospel actually begins—what Jesus has done for us and that He had mercy on us