

“Who is this man?”

A sermon by the Rev. Frances Savill

Sunday, June 20, 2021

Mark 4:36-41

Link- The Bible Project – Gospel of Mark parts I and two

<https://bibleproject.com/explore/video/mark/>

So, we are in Chapter 4 of Mark’s gospel, and Mark is wanting us to answer the disciples’ question, “Who is this?”

So far in Mark’s gospel we have seen Jesus heal, and cast out evil, set people free from pain and disease, all that was hurting and destroying them.

We have seen the crowds flock to Jesus, and he cares for each person. NO one is turned away.

The disciples and Jesus left the crowds behind and went out on the water in their boat. Jesus fell asleep – caring for so many people-teaching, healing, bringing life and healing and wholeness to others, must have been exhausting physically, spiritually and emotionally.

Several of the disciples were fisherman, they were in good hands on the water. But suddenly a fierce wind came up. The waves threatened to swamp the boat. These experienced fishermen knew they were in grave danger.

Think for a moment about the picture that Mark paints for us. The waters, the deep, the wind and the waves threatening life should remind us of different stories in the Bible.

First, the waters of creation. The waters are a symbol of chaos. God’s Spirit hovered over the waters of the deep, and brought life and order out of the chaos.

Remember the flood? The waters overwhelmed the earth and all was destroyed, except those who were kept safe by God in another boat.

So here are the disciples in a boat with Jesus, and they are threatened by these waters of chaos. They are going to be overwhelmed, the boat is going to be torn apart. All of them are going to drown. And there is Jesus asleep in the boat.

Does it ever feel like chaos is about to overwhelm the world, or overwhelm your world? Are there ever moments when the darkness is closing in?

The picture is that Jesus is so close. And when the disciples call out to him and wake him, he commands the wind and the waves. With a word, just like at the dawn of creation, order comes. The forces of chaos are pushed back and stilled. The storm, as quickly as it came, is ended.

The disciples are no longer filled with fear at the storm, but now they are filled with awe and fear of the Lord, the holy reverence, of Jesus sitting in their boat.

And the question Mark asks is who is this that even the wind and the waves obey him.

And for us that know who Jesus is, it seems there is another question, maybe a deeper question for us.

The second question, the question for us it seems to me, after you know that Jesus is the Messiah, the son of God, is “Will you trust him?”

In the midst of the storm, when chaos threatens, will you trust him to calm the winds and drive back the chaos and save you?

Will you trust this world to him and his ways?

When chaos is threatening, and evil seems to win, and it seems that we are going to be overwhelmed, will you trust him and his ways?

Will you trust him with your life?

Will you trust him in your death?

Hear the words that we shared in our Assurance of Forgiveness from the Heidelberg Catechism:

My only comfort in life and in death is that I am not my own, but belong body and soul, in life and in death- to my faithful Saviour Jesus Christ.

He has fully paid for my sins with his precious blood, and has set me free from the tyranny of the devil.

He also watches over me in such a way that not a hair can fall from my head without the will of my Father in heaven: in fact, all things must work together for my salvation. Because I belong to him, Christ, by his Holy Spirit, assures me of eternal life and makes me wholeheartedly willing and ready from now on to live for him.

Thanks be to God.