

OpenTheo

Mark 4:35 - 5:20



Gospel of Mark - Steve Gregg

Steve Gregg provides an analysis of Mark 4:35-5:20, which centers on the story of Jesus crossing the Sea of Galilee and encountering a man possessed by demons. This passage highlights Jesus' dual nature as both human and divine, as he displays fatigue and exhaustion but also commands the storm and demons. The story also emphasizes the importance of faith and trust in God's protection, even in the face of danger, and the power of Jesus' command over spiritual forces.

Transcript

The last time we were looking at the Gospel of Mark, it was Chapter 4. We got through the first 34 verses of Chapter 4, which were all about parables. Parables that Jesus taught about the Kingdom of God. I mentioned that there are similar chapters to this chapter in Matthew and Luke.

The one in Matthew is probably more similar than Luke. Luke only has, I think, a couple of parables in that Chapter 8 of Luke. And Chapter 13 of Matthew has the largest number.

Mark has a few parables of the Kingdom of God, most of them related to seeds in one sense or another. The parable of the sower, the parable of the growing seed that grows by itself, and the parable of the mustard seed. And then we read in verses 33 and 34 that Jesus didn't really speak to the crowds without using parables.

He had explained in the earlier part of the chapter that his use of parables was due to his desire to conceal the mysteries of the Kingdom of God from his general audience and to use them as a device to reveal the mysteries of the Kingdom to his disciples. This required, however, that he explain them because the disciples didn't understand the parables any more than the other people did. And the disciples had to come to Jesus and ask him what it meant.

And remember, the first time they asked him in verse 13, he said to them, Do you not understand this parable? How then will you understand all the parables? Which I think he's saying, You see, you don't understand the parables any more than anybody else

does. You need me to explain them to you. And so just as you are asking the meaning of this parable, you will be equally dependent upon me for your understanding of any parables, all parables.

And so we read in verse 34 without a parable. He did not speak to them. That is to the multitude primarily.

And when they were alone, he explained all things to his disciples. So they were his friends. Remember later on, Jesus would say to them in the upper room in John chapter 15, he said, I don't call you any longer servants, but friends, because a friend does not know what his master is doing.

But I have made known to you everything the father has shown me. So that he said, I'm letting you in on my secrets because I trust you because you're my friend. And those people out there on the hillsides, they're not my friends.

Not that I don't like them or something, but they just aren't trustworthy. They are people I don't want to entrust these mysteries to. And in verse 35, we see that Jesus decides to go across the Sea of Galilee, where we will find when we come to chapter 5, that he lands on the other side and meets with the most famous, probably the most famous demonized man in history.

The man who had a legion of demons. And so that's what we come to. This combination of events, the crossing of the sea and the encounter with this man is going to span the chapter division.

We have the last few verses of chapter 4 and going into chapter 5, beginning at chapter 4, the verse 35. On the same day, when evening had come, he said to them, let us cross over to the other side. Now, when they had left the multitude, they took him along in the boat as he was.

And other little boats also were with him. And a great windstorm arose and the waves beat upon the boat so that it was already filling. But he was in the stern asleep on a pillow and they awoke him and said to him, teacher, do you not care that we are perishing? Then he arose and rebuked the wind and said to the sea, peace, be still.

And the wind ceased and there was a great calm. But he said to them, why are you so fearful? How is it that you have no faith? And they feared exceedingly and said to one another, who can this be that even the wind and the sea obey him? Now we see how tired Jesus could get, how exhausted he could get. And then he fell asleep and he even slept through a storm where the boat was filling with water.

I mean, his feet must have even been getting wet. That would wake most people up. Your feet get cold, you know, you kind of wake up and pull them under the covers usually.

But with a storm filling the boat and he's asleep in the stern and he's not, they have to kind of force him to wake up. So we see that Jesus often labored to the point of exhaustion. And then when he was exhausted, he slept soundly and was not easy to wake.

And that illustrates to us something about Jesus that many people do not take adequately into consideration. That is his humanness. We often think of him in terms of our later understanding of him in theology as God.

The disciples at this point did not think of him as God. And that is clear by the fact that after he stilled the storm, they were surprised. And they said, who is this that he can even command the wind and the waves? Now, you and I, with our understanding that Jesus is God, would not have had that question.

We might still have been astonished. We might still have been impressed. But we wouldn't have said, how do you do that? Who is he that can do that kind of a thing? Because our theology includes the fact that Jesus is God in the flesh.

They only knew him at that point as the Messiah, which to them did not translate into a divine person, only an important person, the deliverer that God would send to Israel. But probably thinking of him more the way that the Jews thought of David. Because that's how the Jews expected the Messiah to be.

It was more like David, not really like God, necessarily. And so his humanness, I think they understood better than we do. Because we live after the Council of Nicaea and after the emphasis on the deity of Christ, which came because of the controversies in the fourth century about whether Jesus was God or not.

And then, of course, the council decided that he or established that he is God. And since that time, it's almost been the mark of a cult or the mark of a heresy that it denies the deity of Jesus. And therefore, our orthodoxy drives us to emphasize more and more the deity of Jesus, partly to make sure that people know we're orthodox and partly to refute those who are not.

And yet that was not something that was obvious to the disciples at this point in time. They were disciples, therefore they were Christians. But they did not apparently have a concept of the deity of Christ.

And why not? Because they saw his human side so tangibly, so visibly before them all the time. Graphically, he got tired, he got hungry, he was mortal, he could die. And this is something that has to be understood about Jesus.

Though we do accept the idea and the truth that he was God in the flesh, we often underestimate what in the flesh means. This has been something that theologians have wrestled with, I think, more than they need to. In fact, even after the deity of Christ

controversy in the church, there was a controversy over how many natures Jesus had.

Whether he had one nature that was human and divine, or whether he had two natures, a human and a divine nature. And I think that's splitting at hairs. And I think it is, too.

But it became a real big issue to some of the church fathers. And there was actually another council to decide those issues. And a guy named Nestorius, otherwise a really good Christian man, got excommunicated and declared to be a heresy because he was on the wrong side of that particular controversy.

And so the theologians have wrestled with this idea of this. How is Jesus human and divine at the same time? And the fact is, the Bible doesn't answer that exactly. The Bible says that the word was God and the word tabernacled with us, became flesh and tabernacled with us.

But in that tabernacle, he had human frailties. And one of the doctrines that arose, and is still considered to be an Orthodox doctrine, though I don't believe it's necessarily true, is called the impeccability of Christ. Which means that Jesus, because he was God, was incapable of sinning.

Because God can't sin. And since God can't sin, then Jesus being God can't sin. This is another one of those doctrines that came up, you know, basically to emphasize the deity of Christ.

But the Bible does not indicate that Jesus was immune to human weaknesses. He was tired. He got hungry.

He was tempted. God can't be tempted with evil, but the Bible says that Jesus was tempted. There were things that Jesus could do that God could not, like get weary.

And Isaiah says the Lord does not get weary, and nor does he slumber. We know that God can't die. He can't be tempted.

Jesus could do all those things, because he had not only his divine nature, he had a human nature. And because of that, we find him getting very tired, exhausted even. And he wants to cross over to the other side.

Now whether he knows or does not know what he's going to encounter on the other side is not made clear. He may have simply been wanting to get away from the crowds he'd been teaching all day long, and maybe for several days long, and maybe without much sleep. And we know without much food, because in chapter 3, it says specifically he was not taking time out to eat bread.

In chapter 3, verse 20. And this apparently was not just on one occasion, but it apparently was his policy to work himself to the point of, you know, exhaustion. Not even

taking time out to eat, so that his mother and brothers set out to take him into custody to give him some refreshment and help him to recover.

They thought he was beside himself. And so we see that he was, I guess we could say, a workaholic when it comes to ministry. Most people would say that's not a healthy thing.

I guess it's not if it's, you know, something someone does to escape other responsibilities, or they do it for motives that are other than the right motives. But to be diligent to do the will of God at all times is not a bad thing. Jesus apparently did it continually and worked himself to exhaustion.

So he says, let's cross over to the other side. And so when they had left the multitude, they took him along in the boat where, as he was, because he had been teaching apparently from the boat. So as he was already in the boat, they just decided to move the boat further from shore and across the lake.

And there were other little boats also with him. And I'm not sure exactly why that point is made. They don't figure into the story.

It must be just one of those eyewitness reminiscences that comes up in the narration. That's something you find in the Gospels many times, is that they remember little things that they mentioned that would not be mentioned if someone had not been there and if it wasn't a true story. They're irrelevant to the story.

There were other boats there too. Mark, or more probably Peter, remembers, and Mark's writing Peter's Gospel. In John's Gospel, he remembers things like how green the grass was, or how many furlongs from shore they were when Jesus came walking on the water, and things like that.

These Gospels have many evidences in them of being eyewitness testimony, although Mark doesn't claim to be a witness. He was writing Peter's reminiscences, and the mention of other boats seems to be unimportant, but just something that a person is there to remember. They were not in the only boat.

Now, these other boats, we might think people would try to follow him in these other boats. If they did, they may have gotten sunk in the storm that arose up. It's hard to say.

We don't read that anyone tried to follow him except, well, on other occasions, they would run around the lake to try to anticipate where he was going to land and be there to wait for him. Not this time. And while they were in the middle of the Sea of Galilee, a great windstorm arose and waves beat into the boat so that they were already filling up.

And commentators like to point out how frequently sudden storms arise on the Sea of Galilee because of the local topography. The mountains around it and the ravines between are just conducive to these rapid changes in air pressure and in the rapidly

changing temperature of the air, so that suddenly a calm day just becomes a massive storm. And even though the Sea of Galilee is really only a lake, it actually gets large waves on it.

It's not hard when you read the commentaries to hear some commentator talk about his own experiences on the Sea of Galilee because, of course, anyone can go there now who wants to, and how that almost everybody who's been out in the Sea of Galilee very many times has encountered a storm there because apparently they're very common. This storm, however, might not have been a common one because we find that when they awoke Jesus, he rebuked it. Now, the word rebuke, as I've said before, is not commonly used when addressing anything other than a personal being.

And we do know that Jesus rebuked the fever of Peter's mother-in-law and also rebuked this storm. And that's the only two times we read of anything that's not human or demonic being rebuked. And it's possible that those exceptions exist because they were demonic.

It's possible that the fever that Peter's mother-in-law had was caused by a demonic attack rather than by an organic cause. And why Jesus discerning that rebuked it instead of just healing in the normal fashion. And in this case, although storms were common, perhaps this was not a common storm.

This might have been a demonically inspired storm. It is clear from the book of Job that the devil has some power, if God permits, to stir up storms. Because there was a whirlwind that took down the house that Job's sons were partying in and is said to have killed his sons by the wind blowing the house down upon them.

So, this could have been a storm from the enemy too. It seems the more possible or perhaps the more plausible to suggest it because we know and perhaps the devil knew that Jesus was on his way to have an encounter with a man who was probably the devil's most dramatic victim. And probably the one man on earth, or at least in that part of the world, maybe the only man on earth, in whom Satan could exhibit so great power to torment the human being.

Because that man had a legion of demons in him. And it's obvious that the devil knew that if Jesus would meet that guy, well, the outcome was fairly predictable. And not an outcome that the devil would wish.

And so he may well have hoped to sink Jesus in the middle of the sea. And the waves and the wind, if they were obeying Satan on this occasion, stood to be rebuked because they're supposed to be on the side of their creator. And so he stands up and he rebukes them.

Now, I would say before he did so, when he was asleep and they woke him, they woke

him with the words, Teacher, do you not care that we're perishing? Now, in some of the parallels in the other Gospels, they just say we're perishing or we perish. But here, Mark tells us, they said, do you not care that we're perishing? And here is where their lack of faith is seen. It's not just that Jesus is sleeping through or that they're in danger, but they insinuate, they accuse him, as it were, by innuendo, of not really caring about them.

Not caring whether they live or die. And so they got themselves rebuked too. The wind and the waves got rebuked first.

And, of course, immediately when Jesus said, Peace, that is, be at peace, be still, that immediately the wind and the waves obeyed. But then he had to turn and rebuke the disciples. And he said to them, Why are you so fearful? How is it that you have no faith? The different Gospels have his rebuke in slightly different words.

Matthew 8, 26, he says, Why are you so fearful, O you of little faith? Sort of the same idea. He says, Why are you so fearful? How is it that you have no faith? And in Luke's Gospel, Luke 8, 25, has the parallel. He says to them, Where is your faith? He said something along those lines, and the different Gospels record it a little differently from each other.

But the point is, he accused them of not having the kind of faith that they should be expected to have. Now, what kind of faith should they have had? I mean, after all, the boat was filling with water. They knew the laws of nature.

If this kept going on without interruption, the boat would sink. So why shouldn't they be afraid? Now, was it because as men of faith, they should not be afraid to die? Maybe. Actually, I think when Christians are afraid to die, they exhibit not sufficient faith.

Now, sometimes Christians don't want to die for reasons such as they want to finish raising their children or something like that, which is perhaps a rather selfless reason. But we should never be afraid to die. If we're afraid to die, it means we really don't have much faith in what we say we believe in.

We say we believe that Christians go to be with God when they die, that to live is Christ and to die is gain. But once we are actually thinking we're facing death, the question of whether we really believe that or not comes out in the degree to which we welcome. That which we are willing to say is gain when we're speaking about it in our good health and in our sense of security.

But Paul said it when he was in prison, when he was perhaps not as when he's closer to death than we are. And he said for me to live is Christ and to die is gain. That's true.

And he said it's far better to depart and be with Christ. That's true. And we say we believe it.

We nod our heads even now. But do we nod our heads to that when we actually are told by the doctor we've got two weeks to live? I've often thought it'd be delightful to be told that. I thought, boy, right now I'm in my 50s, almost 60.

Give me a few years, I'll be 60. But my parents lived to be healthy into their old age. They're still alive and healthy.

And, you know, there's a very real possibility I might live another 30 or 40 years, which is not something I'm hoping for. I've been ready to go see Jesus since I was 16. Anyway, I remember back when I was 10 going to the Billy Graham crusade in Los Angeles.

And my grandparents were serving there. My grandmother's in the choir. My grandfather was an usher there.

And they took me. And I was just a little kid in the crowd. But I remember one thing Billy Graham said that time, although I've heard Billy Graham preach many, many times.

I remember that specific night him saying something that seems quite ordinary and obvious to me now. But at the time it struck me hard. He says, since I'm a Christian, I'm not afraid to die.

Well, to me, that almost sounds so rudimentary and so obvious that it's almost embarrassing for me to tell you how that hit me so profound at the time. Because it never crossed my mind. I've been raised in a Christian home.

It never crossed my mind that there were ramifications as to whether I should be afraid to die or not. And anyway, it struck me. I thought, I want that.

I wanted to not be afraid to die, too, because I knew that I was. Not that I thought I was close to it or anything. I just I knew that death was scary to me.

And I actually went forward at that gathering. I had gone forward at an earlier time in my life and probably didn't know what I was doing. But I went forward for that very reason.

I didn't want to be afraid to die. And I don't recall being afraid to die ever again after that. But when I was 16 and when I got to the spirit, I'm not saying this is a fruit of the spirit, but I looked forward to die.

It's not that I wasn't afraid of it. It's almost like I was afraid I'd live too long before dying. I just I hope that I wouldn't be too delayed in going to see Jesus.

And while I don't have a morbid death wish or anything like that, I know exactly what Paul means. He says to live is Christ and to die is gain. If you think you're going to see Jesus, if you think you're going to close your eyes in death and open them and see Jesus face, who wouldn't want that? Well, maybe someone who doesn't believe it.

Now, these disciples, however, probably were not being rebuked for being afraid to die because they didn't know that there's nothing to be afraid of. They lived at a time when God had not really revealed much about immortality or what happens after death. Jesus had not even taught them about the resurrection or anything at this point, as far as we know.

So he probably wasn't rebuking them about being afraid to die. You would be afraid to die if it was just dark and scary on the other side. Probably some people think they should have had more faith that they would get across the lake safely.

And that probably is what he had in mind. Now, why would they think that? Why would they have grounds to think they'll get across to the other side safely? Maybe because Jesus said, let us cross over to the other side. If Jesus said, let's cross over to the other side, he'd never been wrong about anything yet.

And if they were, if he was who they said he was, he's not even going to be wrong. He says we're going to the other side. That's where you're going.

And, you know, as I said in a previous lecture, when Jesus gives a command, it's almost like a promise. Because God doesn't command you to do anything that he's not going to enable you to do. So in a sense, they should have understood his word almost as a promise.

We're getting to the other side. Though, of course, remember, like I said, they didn't know he was God at this point. If a booming voice from heaven had spoken and said, let's go to the other side, they might have had more faith because they would have recognized that as God.

They were still thinking of Jesus as less than God at this point. But maybe he felt like they should have known better than that. And they should have trusted that he knew what he was doing.

Or maybe more to the point is that if they really believed he was the Messiah, it's evident that he had not yet done anything messianic. He had not rescued Israel yet. He had not brought about salvation or redemption.

He had not fulfilled the prophecies yet. And therefore, if he was who he was, then he couldn't die there in the middle of that lake without fulfilling the purpose that God had for him. This is a little bit like when God told Abraham to offer Isaac up before Isaac had fulfilled the promises in blessing the nations.

It was clear to Abraham that Isaac had to have children and had to have a seed that would bless the nations. And Isaac at this point didn't have children. He wasn't married.

And yet God told Abraham to kill him. Well, Abraham was a man of faith. He did not have

little faith on this occasion.

And he actually was willing to go through with it. He figured, well, if he, you know, if he dies, then God's going to raise him up from the dead, I guess, because God's going to fulfill his purposes. And perhaps the disciples should have had that kind of faith.

That if God's purposes with Jesus have not yet come to fruition, then he is not going to die in the middle of the lake. And by extension, they are not either. That boat's not going to go down.

In any case, it seemed to me that they exhibited some faith, and he said they had a little faith, in that they woke him as if maybe he could do something about it. Or maybe they just didn't want him dying peacefully while they're dying in terror. You know, you're not going to sleep through this if we're not.

I doubt that that's it, though. I mean, they rouse him and they say, don't you care that we're perishing? I think what they're saying is, do something. It's sort of like when Mary came to Jesus and said they've run out of wine.

Well, what did she expect him to do? He had never done a miracle yet in his whole life. She didn't know him to be a miracle worker. She didn't know he could turn water into wine.

She'd never seen him do anything like that. What did she expect? I think people just, when they're at their wits' end and they don't know what to do, they come to the person who seems the most competent and say, you know, let's put the ball in his court and see what he says or does. Because remember, when Jesus kind of put his mother off a little bit, she said to the servants, do whatever he says to do.

Well, what did she expect him to do? How could she believe that he'd turn water into wine? I mean, he'd lived 30 years in her home and he'd never done a single supernatural thing. So why would she think he would on that occasion? Though he did. The point is, though, she came to him anyway just because, what do you do? I mean, when there's something that's a crisis, you go to the person who you think is the most responsible, the most competent, the most, you know, wise.

What do you suggest we do? And so they woke Jesus up. They knew he was the guy, if anyone in the boat could do anything, he could. Though they knew he wasn't a sailor, and many of them were.

Many of them were experienced on the Sea of Galilee and had been in storms before probably, and they knew he had probably mostly been a landlubber all his life, but they still, they wanted him to know about the danger. And it was a good thing they did because actually they were right. He did have something he could do about it.

And he got up and he solved the problem with a command. Now, it says in verse 41, when he stilled the storms, it says, then they feared exceedingly. Now this is something we're going to see in this story and in the next one.

That is, when there is danger, the people are afraid. When Jesus fixes it and the danger is clearly gone, they're even more afraid. This is true with the demon-possessed man we're going to see too.

People were terrified of him because he broke chains and he was exceedingly fierce and people wouldn't go near him. And then when Jesus cast the demons out of him, the people thought they were even more afraid. They were more afraid, but of what? The danger was past? What is it that makes people afraid of when the danger is past in these stories? They are clearly afraid when the danger is present, and that's understandable.

But there's two different kinds of fear. And this is something that is only in human nature. I'm sure animals don't have this because it has to do with the more spiritual side, I think, of our perceptions.

And that is, there's the ordinary fear of danger. And then there's another kind of fear where there's no perception of danger. We're just spooked.

This kind of fear is fear of what's usually called the numinous. The numinous is really kind of what we call the spooky, the spiritual. C.F. Lewis explains it this way.

He says, if you were told there was a tiger behind that door, you might be afraid to walk in there. But if you're told there's a ghost behind that door, you'd also be afraid to go in there. But he says, you wouldn't go in if you thought there was a tiger there because you know the tiger will hurt you and kill you.

That's a natural, reasonable fear. But if you believe there's a ghost behind the door and you're afraid, why? What are you afraid a ghost is going to do to you? There's nothing specific in your mind that a ghost could even do to you. It's just spooky.

In fact, I dealt with that in my own life when I was 19 years old and a friend of mine actually saw an apparition which she believed was the devil. And I think it might have been. I'm not sure.

I won't tell the whole story of what she saw. But the point is she thought she saw the devil and she was shaken up by it, really shaken up. And when she told the story to me and my friends, that was the first time in my life that it really occurred to me that the devil... I mean, I knew the devil was somebody in the Bible and so forth that was real, but it brought the devil kind of close to home in a sense as someone that might really be someone I might encounter somewhere.

I actually was afraid that the devil would appear to me. I spent weeks afraid of this. Just

because suddenly for the first time in my life the devil seemed really graphically real and nearby because of this experience my friend had.

And there were at least two weeks, as I recall, maybe three, that I was just afraid to be alone anywhere, day or night. I wanted to be... I lived at home still some of that time, so I was in my parents' house, but I didn't want to be alone in the house in the daytime. I always kept thinking I'm going to look over in the corner and there's going to be the devil looking at me.

I thought I'm going to look into the mirror and there's going to be this monstrous devil face looking back at me out of the mirror. I was really freaked out. And after a week or two I just thought, this cannot go on.

I can't live the rest of my life like this. And so I just appealed to, I guess, my rational powers and thought, what if the devil did appear to me? What in the world am I afraid that he'll do? He can't do anything. You know, greater is he who is in me than he who is in the world.

Resist the devil and he'll flee from you. I knew all those promises and I believed they were true. It was never that I thought the devil was going to do anything to me.

It was just seeing him would freak me out. That's why I was just afraid to see him. And when I thought about it, I said, wait a minute, so what if he appears to me? What can he do to me? And from then on I was never afraid to see him again.

And he never showed up. Now I wish, I'd kind of like it if he would now. Got a few things I've wanted to say to him for a few years.

But anyway, I'm not going to go looking for him. But it truly, I mean, I understand the difference between being afraid because you really are, or sense that you're in danger on the one hand, and you fear for a different reason, like there's something inexplicable here. Something you just suddenly realize there's a presence with you here that you had not reckoned with.

Something you can't explain. Something that is otherworldly. That's what happened here.

They were afraid of the storm. That's a genuine worldly fear. You could drown.

That's an awful way to die, I would imagine, drowning. I've always thought it would be an awful way to die. I could be afraid of drowning.

Though, amazingly, I guess Christians shouldn't be. You know, John Wesley, who was the founder of the Methodist movement, a great Christian in his later years, was a very religious but unconverted man all of his early life. When he was in Oxford, he started a

club called the Holy Club, which wasn't as pretentious and self-righteous as that term would sound today, but rather, Oxford was a Christian college, but there were some serious-minded students who really wanted to get serious about God and wanted to be holy, and they would meet together and read like William Law and some other people who inspired them.

And Wesley went to, he was British, he crossed the Atlantic to go to Georgia in the United States to be a missionary to the Indians. And it was a disaster. He wasn't even born again himself, and he just got into all kinds of scandals and stuff.

I mean, not because he was bad, just because he made mistakes. And anyway, he left Georgia to go back to England, and he was just like a dog with a tail between his legs. He was totally dejected.

He wrote in his diary, I came to America to convert the Indians, but who will convert me? And as he was riding on the ship back to England, there was a terrible storm which threatened to sink the ship. I mean, it really did. It wasn't just his idea as an inexperienced traveler, but the crew of the ship were terrified.

The color had gone out of their faces. They were just truly terrified that this was the end. And yet there was a group of people in the ship that weren't disturbed.

They were Moravian brethren, which was a community of Christians in Germany that had, they'd been persecuted in their home land of Moravia and had fled from persecution to Germany and had settled on the estate of a man named Count von Zinzendorf, a very godly man who let them, about 300 of them, live on his estate, and they started a Christian community there. This was back in the 1700s. They had like a Jesus people commune going on there.

They were the ones, the very first Protestants, to start sending missionaries overseas. Up to their time, Protestants had not done so. And also they started, there was a revival that happened at their community, actually, that was so mighty that they started a prayer meeting that went 24 hours a day for 100 years, 24-7.

It never ended. And the Moravians are still around, but I don't know that they still have the same revival going on that they had in the 1700s. But these were Moravian brethren sitting with their children in this storm at sea that Wesley encountered, and they were just sitting calmly and singing psalms and the children were not afraid and the parents were not afraid.

And Wesley was so struck by that. And he asked them, why aren't you afraid? You know, everyone's afraid. And they said, because we trust the Lord.

We're Christians. What do we have to be afraid of? And he was so convicted about that that once he got to England, he looked up one of the leaders of the group, named Peter

Bowler, and that man, for the most part, preached the gospel to him and let him realize that although he had been a very religious leader himself in the Anglican church, Wesley, he wasn't converted. And he, shortly after that, was converted and owes that very largely to the experience of seeing really converted people on the ship who were not afraid to drown.

And so I guess the Moravians passed the test that the disciples did not pass here. The Moravians did not have little faith. Wesley did have little faith, and so he's a little like the disciples in this situation.

Was Jesus with them in the boat? Of course he was with them in the boat. Wesley's theology told him that Jesus was with him, but he didn't have real faith. That didn't give him any real peace.

But it did give the Moravian brethren peace, and their children too. So there is such a thing as not being afraid of danger. And some of the Psalms, David expresses that.

Even Psalm 27, which we sang tonight, The Lord is my light and my salvation, whom shall I fear? The Lord is the strength of my life, of whom shall I be afraid? And he goes on in that Psalm and says, You know, when the enemy came against me, they were going to eat up my flesh, but they stumbled and fell. He said, If I were surrounded by a multitude of armies against me, even in this I would not be afraid, because God is my strength. God is my confidence.

So the disciples, I suppose, could have had at least as much faith as David, but they didn't. But I'm not going to fault them. The interesting thing, though, is this, that though they were afraid when danger was there, when the danger was over, they were more afraid.

They were exceedingly afraid. The same reaction that the people who saw the deliverance of this demoniac experience, when they saw him clothed in his right mind, they were afraid. We'll see.

We haven't gotten there yet, but this is a reaction people have. They've got reaction when there's danger, but then when the danger is alleviated by supernatural means, it suddenly dawns on them, God is here, or something is here, something I don't understand here, something otherworldly is at work among us, and that gives them goosebumps. That gives them the creeps.

Jacob had that experience when he had that dream about the ladder. You know, he woke up from his dream, and it says he was afraid because God's in this place, and I didn't know it. It's like when it dawns on you that you are just taking into account the things that are in the visible world around you, and then suddenly you realize there's an invisible reality, and it's brushed very close here.

It's right here among us, and we were unaware. And that was the disciples' reaction. They feared and said to one another, Who is this? Who can this be? That even the wind and the sea obey him.

Now, that question should have been rather easily answered. Who is this that the wind and the sea obey? In fact, they should have been able to answer it from the scriptures if they were familiar with Psalm 107. I'd like you to look at Psalm 107 because it's not just that it affirms that God commands the elements and they obey Him.

This could be affirmed in many places in the scripture, God's power over the elements, but there's actually a section in Psalm 107 that is almost like this same story, almost to the letter. It's an amazing similarity. In Psalm 107, beginning at verse 23, it says, Those who go down to the sea in ships who do business on great waters, they see the works of Yahweh and his wonders in the deep.

For he commands and raises the stormy wind which lifts up the waves of the sea. They mount up to heavens. They go down into the depths.

Their soul melts because of trouble. That is, the sailors, their souls melt, their courage evaporates because of the trouble. They reel to and fro.

They stagger like drunken men and are at their wits' end. This certainly sounds like the disciples in the story. Then it says in verse 28, They cry out to the Lord in their trouble and He brings them out of their distresses.

That sounds like this story too. He calms the storm so that its waves are still. Then they are glad because they are quiet and He guides them to their desired haven.

Oh, that men would give thanks to the Lord for His goodness, for His wonderful works to the children of men. Now, the only thing different about this story in the Psalms and the one we just read is that in this story, once the wind and the waves are calmed, the sailors are glad. In this one, the disciples probably were glad once they kind of came out of their shock.

But their first impression was shock because they realized the one they are with can command the wind and the waves and they obey Him. And that Psalm says who that is. Yahweh.

Yahweh commands the wind and the waves. And so this is a demonstration of Christ's, not just His supernatural power, but His authority that is God's authority over the elements, over the creation. For that reason, we see that in a story where we see Jesus' humanity and His human weakness exhibited in His great exhaustion, in the same story we see one of the most clear manifestations of His divine supernatural power.

And these two mixed together was something the disciples didn't quite know how to

combine or to deal with. It's clear they did not yet have in their minds the doctrine of the deity of Christ, which I will say before we go further, raises questions. Can a person be a Christian without knowing that Jesus is God? In many cases, people who believe something less than the deity of Christ are relegated to the realm of heretics or cultists or at least sub-saved people in our minds.

But these disciples didn't know Jesus was God, but were they real disciples? They were. They were His friends. They were His true disciples.

The word Christian just means disciples. And they were, therefore, what we'd have to call Christians if we met them at that time. But they didn't know the doctrine of the deity of Christ.

Does that mean that Christians shouldn't believe in the deity of Christ? Of course they should. Christians should believe everything that they have opportunity to know. But these disciples had not learned that yet.

They were learning even now. And it raises the question, when we meet somebody who is, let's say, maybe a part of a cult, maybe just an immature Christian who doesn't know much theology yet, and they don't believe that Jesus is God, certainly they're wrong. But are they unsaved because of that? I think that depends.

It depends on to what degree their circumstance is parallel to that of the disciples when they didn't know. Obviously, a person who has reason to know that He's God, who has seen that demonstrated in Scripture and rejects it simply because it's unsavory to them, then I would say they're rejecting the doctrine of the deity of Christ. But people who simply don't know it to be true, maybe have never seen it demonstrated scripturally, they may be like the disciples at this point.

They just haven't discovered it yet. They don't know it yet. But if they are truly followers of Jesus, they will.

They will come to that. These disciples were those who had taken His yoke upon them and were following Him and learning from Him. As He said in Matthew 11, He said, Come unto Me, all you who are weary and heavy laden, and I'll give you rest.

Take My yoke on you and learn from Me. And so they had taken His yoke and they were learning, but they hadn't learned everything yet. And it appears to me to be a truth that there are people today, besides Orthodox Christians, who maybe have accepted His yoke, but they haven't learned that much yet.

There are certain levels of ignorance that we might think they have no excuse for. Why? Well, because we live after the Nicene Council, and the Nicene Council determined that once and for all that Jesus is God and it shouldn't be a controversy anymore. But it was, even after that.

There were still whole countries where the belief that Jesus was God was not accepted for as much as a century after the Nicene Council. Eventually, it became the complete orthodoxy of the Church. But, you know, it's obvious that some people can read the Bible and not see it as clearly.

These disciples had been with Jesus personally and didn't see it that clearly. And they were seeing it. They were beginning to see it.

They were beginning to ask the right questions, which if they gave themselves the right answers, they would certainly realize He was God, because even the wind and the sea obey Him. Now, chapter 5. Then they came to the other side of the sea, to the country of the Gadarenes. And when He had come out of the boat, immediately there met Him out of the tombs, a man with an unclean spirit.

Actually, there were many unclean spirits, but apparently one in particular, which was the spokesman for the rest, who had His dwelling among the tombs. And no one could bind Him, not even with chains, because He had often been bound with shackles and chains. And the chains had been pulled apart by Him, and the shackles broken in pieces.

Neither could anyone tame Him. Now, this suggests that this man had once lived in society and had exhibited violent, perhaps criminally violent behavior, or at least just insane behavior that caused people to fear Him, and they actually would have felt more comfortable with Him in chains. So they somehow had subdued Him and chained Him, but He had managed to break the chains, which made everyone terrified.

Well, you can't bind Him with chains. What can you bind Him with? And so He was driven out of the city because no one, of course, felt safe around Him. And so He lived in the tombs.

And always, night and day, He was in the mountains and in the tombs crying out and cutting Himself with stones. But when He saw Jesus from afar, the man ran and worshipped Him and cried out with a loud voice and said, What have I to do with You, Jesus, Son of the Most High God? I am for You by God, that You do not torment me. Now, when a person is demon-possessed, it's really hard to ascertain what part of what they're saying is the demon and what part is them, because there's a sense in which their mind is inhabited and taken over in some measure by demons, but they also have their own humanness too.

They also have their own personality, but it's much overrun. And this is a good example where it's really hard to tell how much this man's personality was completely under the control of demons and how much the demons were somewhat at the mercy of this man's choices too. Sometimes people say, Well, if you're demon-possessed, the demons completely control your will.

I'm not sure. The Bible doesn't say that anywhere. And this looks to me like, as it turns out, the most dramatic and the most severe case of demon-possession recorded in Scripture, because we find out later that he has a legion of demons, which is thousands.

Now, there may have been other people with thousands of demons, but we don't read of them in the Bible at this point. And, you know, certainly his case was a dramatic one, as dramatic as any we'll find in the Bible. And yet this man, despite the severity of his bond, seemed to have the power to come to Jesus and seek help.

He came and worshipped Jesus. That wasn't the demons doing that. The demons were not comfortable in the presence of Jesus.

The man dragged them to the feet of Jesus, because they were in him, and he wanted help. That's what I believe. And when he says, What have you to do with me, Jesus of Nazareth? Have you come to torment me? This is, of course, what demons often said through people.

But is this just the demon, or is this the paranoia that the demons inspire in the insane mind of the demon-possessed person? Have you come to torture me? I mean, Jesus obviously isn't the type to torment people, but the paranoid don't know that. And certainly the language of the demon-possessed person is what, if you could lay him on a couch and keep him there long enough to talk to a psychiatrist, he'd certainly be called, you know, paranoid schizophrenic. You know, like, why would he be afraid that Jesus was going to torment him? Well, the demons may, of course, have had that sense, because they're going to be tormented in the judgment of God.

Maybe they were feeling that and made him feel that way. In any case, Jesus was the only man that this man feared. This man was, everyone else was afraid of him, of the demon-possessed man, because he could hurt people.

He could do damage to people, but this man was afraid that Jesus would do damage to him. But he came to Jesus. Now, I don't believe the demons drove him to Jesus.

I can't imagine what good that would be to them. They were, I believe, as terrified as he was, and maybe that's what made him terrified, because they were controlling his thinking. But it says, when they said, I implore you by God that you do not torment me, it says in verse 8, for he said to him, and I believe that in the Greek this particular place, let me check here, because I do have it written somewhere here.

Yeah, it actually says in the Greek, for Jesus was saying to him, come out of the man, you unclean spirit. In other words, Jesus was already saying, come out of the man, you unclean spirit, and this led to the spirit begging Jesus not to torment it, which means that Jesus commanded the demon to come out before it actually did. There was still, on the demon's part, a desire to negotiate.

Now this is, in one sense, a little encouraging to me, because apart from this story, my impression always was that as soon as Jesus told the demon to go, they went. And that wasn't always the case when I told demons to go. They sometimes don't go the first time that I ask them to or command them to.

In fact, probably more often than not, I have not been, I have not seen demons leave just because I told them to the first time. I used to think that was a defect, and maybe it is. It could well be a defect in me, but at least it's encouraging to know that Jesus could tell demons to go and they wouldn't go immediately, but they'd argue.

They'd try to find a way to negotiate a better position for themselves, because it says in verse 8, Jesus was saying to them, that's what it really reads there, Jesus was saying to them, come out of the man, you unclean spirit, but Jesus having done so, the demons were still saying, what have we to do with you? Please don't torment me. And verse 9 says, then he asked him, what is your name? And he answered saying, my name is Legion, for we are many. Now sometimes people who deal with demon possession, they say you need to find out the demon's name, you need to get its handle so you can command it by name to leave.

And I guess they would base it on this story, but this story really doesn't prove that. Because once Jesus heard the name, he didn't use it. He didn't say, oh okay, your name is Legion, well I command you Legion to come out.

You know, why did Jesus even ask the demon's name? The answer was, my name is Legion, for there are many. Did Jesus not know this? Well I believe Jesus didn't know everything, because he was a man, I think he had to depend on his father for specific revelation about things. But I wouldn't be surprised if Jesus already knew enough about demons to know that this man had more than one.

Or that he even had many. Why did Jesus ask the demon's name? It may be for our benefit, and the disciples. Jesus cast out demons with the word continuously places.

This would be just another case like that, and we would never know that there were thousands of demons in this land if Jesus hadn't made the demon answer for itself, out loud. What's your name? Legion, because there are many of us. That forced confession, that forced self-identification, might have been for the benefit of the hearers other than Jesus.

That we would know, when this case of deliverance was complete, that it had been the deliverance of a man from many, many, many demons, which would not be obvious to us otherwise, without that information being verbalized. And, it says verse 10, Legion begged him earnestly that he would not send him out of the country. Now, in other words, Jesus had already been saying come out, and all this negotiating was still going on after Jesus had begun to say come out.

Jesus had come out, and the demon said, please don't torment me. And Jesus kept saying come out, and the demon's still saying don't torment me, and then Jesus said, what's your name, and then there's this request, don't send me out of the country. By the way, in Luke's Gospel, they asked not to be sent to the abyss.

Both requests were probably uttered in the course of the conversation. Luke records one of the statements and Mark the other, but there was an ongoing conversation going on here in which the demons were clearly trying to negotiate the best possible deal they could get before they were evicted. It says, now a herd of swine was feeding there near the mountains, and all the demons begged him saying, send us to the swine, that we may enter them.

At once Jesus gave them permission. Then the unclean spirits went out and entered the swine. There were about 2,000 swine, and the herd ran violently down the steep place into the sea and drowned in the sea.

Now, this would be a dramatic thing to see. I mean, the man in his condition of demon possession was a dramatic case. The disciples must have been standing with their jaws dropped, you know, watching this whole thing happen.

And Jesus is dealing with these demons, and they're saying, well, don't send us out of the country. There's some pigs over there, send us into there. Now it says, immediately Jesus gave them permission to go in the pigs.

Now, why? Why did he give them permission immediately to do that? It's possible that Jesus just didn't want to prolong this thing, and the demons were saying, we'll go easier, we won't argue anymore if you just send us the pigs. And Jesus may have been deciding, well, I'm tired of this conversation. Okay, go there.

I don't know how long this could have gone on, because there were so many. Jesus certainly was going to win. The demons didn't have any question about that.

They had to do what Jesus said, but they didn't do it immediately. They were trying to get him to agree to certain things. And so he agreed to the first thing that he could agree to, which is that they go to the pigs.

Now, there were about 2,000 pigs, and they stampeded. Some would suggest this means there were at least 2,000 demons. After all, the word legion in the Roman world, which Palestine was in the Roman world, the word legion referred to 6,000 soldiers in the Roman army.

So, if it's literal that there was a legion of demons in there, then there were like 6,000 of them. It's not unheard of for a person to have thousands of demons. There have been other cases known in history.

We won't go into them right now, but this is the only one in the Bible that mentions someone having thousands of demons. And there were 2,000 swine. Did they all get demon possessed? Kind of the impression is that they did.

Although, we're not told that specifically. It may be that just a few demon possessed swine could get the whole herd stampeding. In any case, a thunderous herd of 2,000 swine stampeding over the edge of a cliff into the water is a pretty amazing spectacle to see.

And so, someone says, well, why did the demons do that? If they wanted to be in the swine, and they didn't want to be without a house, so if they had to leave a man, they were willing to go into swine, why did they kill the swine? Doesn't that kind of end their vacancy in the swine? Doesn't that work against their purposes? And I don't know the answer to that. Maybe they knew that going into the swine was just a way they could do some damage before they had to go elsewhere. After all, the demons were probably just malicious.

They wanted to do harm. Or, it may be that the demons didn't know what the swine would do. Maybe the swine, sensing that something was wrong in them, just went berserk.

The demons might have found themselves unwitting and unwilling passengers over the cliff. After all, Jesus in another place, in Matthew 12, said, when a demon goes out of a man, it wanders through waterless places seeking rest. Why waterless places? I don't know.

Maybe they don't like water. But if they don't like water, it sure was a nightmare for them. Of course, meeting Jesus should be a nightmare for demons, and I think it usually was.

Their nightmare may have been even continuing after they went into the swine and found themselves being carried by irrational animals gone wild into the sea. There's no explanations, just the facts. And, you know, someone wonders, well, why did Jesus damage somebody's property? I mean, casting demons into swine so these swine all died.

That's a lot of money's worth of pig. And Jesus, in a sense, destroyed somebody's livelihood probably that way. Well, the Jews weren't supposed to have pigs.

That was an unclean animal. What were they doing with a herd of swine over there anyway? Now, true, it is kind of a Gentile region, but it was mainly Jewish populated. And I don't think Jesus actually did any ministry in his lifetime among Gentiles.

So I think this was probably a Jewish population he was coming to. And this demon-obsessed man was probably Jewish too. And therefore, those pigs were very much out of

place in a Jewish setting.

And so, you know, for them to be drowned may have been a just dessert for the owners. I don't know. Verse 14 says, Now those who fed the swine fled and told it in the city and in the country, and they went out to see what it was that had happened.

Then they came to Jesus and saw the one who had been demon-possessed and had the legion sitting and clothed and in his right mind. And they were afraid. Well, he was clothed in his right mind.

Nothing to be afraid of there. But it was the same kind of fear the disciples had when Jesus filled the storm. And those who saw it told them how it happened to him who had been demon-possessed and about the swine.

Then they began to plead with him to depart from their region. And when he got into the boat, he who had been demon-possessed begged him that he might be with him. However, Jesus did not permit him.

But he said to him, Go home to your friends and tell them what great things the Lord has done for you and how he has had compassion on you. And Jesus departed and began to proclaim in Decapolis all that Jesus had done for him. The man did, I'm sorry.

Not Jesus. And all marveled. Now, some interesting things, I think, here.

The people, when they saw the man better and heard the story, they asked Jesus, they begged him to leave their area. That strikes me as a strange reaction. He had just done them a huge favor.

This man had been a public nuisance and a terror to the region. And Jesus had just turned him into an ordinary guy. No longer a threat.

They should be glad of that. They should think, Well, what else could Jesus do for us here? Or they should have been impressed that Jesus was somebody to pay attention to. Anyone who could cast demons out, maybe he's from God.

But they weren't, apparently, having any of those considerations. It's possible their only consideration was this guy's costing us money. That was an expensive herd of pigs.

Please go somewhere else. I don't know what their concern was. But they were not open to Jesus.

They begged him to leave. It's the only place we know that Jesus went that people asked him to leave. And it may be just because they couldn't deal with this phenomenon of this demon possessed man being set free in such a way that was mysterious to them.

Or perhaps the loss of the pigs. I could see how that would bother them if they were the

owners. But in any case, what's interesting even more is that Jesus didn't have to leave, but he did.

They wanted him to leave, so he left. He didn't force himself on them. He didn't say, Listen, you don't know, I'm God.

And this is where I want to hang out for a while. You can't make me leave. But they asked him to leave, so he left.

He doesn't remain uninvited and unwelcome. But the man wanted to go with him. And this always seemed to me like a sad thing.

This man who was delivered wanted to travel with Jesus. He said, No, you can't do that. Why? Well, this seems to be the first man that Jesus ever commissioned to go out and evangelize.

He says, You go back to your home and you tell people what has been done. Most of the time, Jesus said, Don't tell anyone what I've done for you. Now, maybe he did so here because he wasn't going to be in the area so that the danger of crowds coming out because of this man's story would not materialize because Jesus was going to be spending his time on the other side of the lake and there wouldn't be an issue of crowds and trouble like that.

But it is remarkable that Jesus almost always, when he did things for people, said, Don't tell anyone. But he did tell this guy, Go and tell everyone about this. You will be my messenger here.

And the man didn't have any theology. He probably didn't know as much theology as the disciples knew by now and it wasn't very much. But he had testimony.

He knew that Jesus had power over demons. And that was, you know, the message of the kingdom of God, really. And so he went out and was able to tell that story to people.

And then Jesus leaves the region, but the man doesn't. The man stays. And his testimony is going to be, Jesus figured, the next best thing to Jesus' testimony because everyone knew this guy.

They couldn't deny a miracle in his case. They all knew him. He had been, like I said, a public nuisance.

Had been chained publicly and broken the chains and people knew not to go to that region because he was there. So his testimony was, I'm sure, very powerful. And he began to proclaim in the Decapolis.

The word Decapolis means ten cities. These were ten, as I recall, Jewish cities in a largely Gentile region. And they called it the Ten Cities.

And so all marveled. Now they would have marveled if they'd seen Jesus do these things, but the man's testimony caused them to marvel. And so I guess if Jesus couldn't be there, he left one of his agents there who would have at least a similar impact on people.

Though the man of the tombs could not go and heal and cast out demons like Jesus would have done, so the people still missed out. If they'd had Jesus among them, they could have had all kinds of benefits, no doubt. They missed out on that, but at least Jesus was not left without a witness.

He actually commissioned this man to witness him. One of the few people, the only person I know of, that really wanted to follow Jesus, who was sincere, and Jesus said, No, you can't follow me. I've got something for you to do.

So here's a man whose plight before Jesus met him was about as bad as any that we read of in the Bible, and yet he was the earliest one, after his deliverance, that Jesus trusted to go out and represent him far and wide. He didn't even trust his disciples to do that yet. So this story has a lot of interesting features, obviously.

But we'll stop there because that's how much we have time for, and no more.