

JESUS AND THE STORMS OF LIFE

- 1) **Mark 4:35-41 - Jesus calms the storm** - "On that day, when evening had come, he said to them, "Let us go across to the other side." [36] And leaving the crowd, they took him with them in the boat, just as he was. And other boats were with him. [37] And a great windstorm arose, and the waves were breaking into the boat, so that the boat was already filling. [38] But he was in the stern, asleep on the cushion. And they woke him and said to him, "Teacher, do you not care that we are perishing?" [39] And he awoke and rebuked the wind and said to the sea, "Peace! Be still!" And the wind ceased, and there was a great calm. [40] He said to them, "Why are you so afraid? Have you still no faith?" [41] And they were filled with great fear and said to one another, "Who then is this, that even wind and sea obey him?"

Miracles like this are included in the Gospel accounts to show Christ's mastery over the outward, material world around us. His work isn't limited to interior, psychological and spiritual transformations. He can make all things work together for good in your life. We're meant to include **material needs** in His good work in our lives. Prayer and the presence of Jesus can change real events. Notice the reaction of the disciples - **verse 41** - "And they were filled with great fear and said to one another, 'Who then is this, that even wind and sea obey him?'" They had heard good teachers and prophets before. There was an authority in this Man that was of a totally different order.

Jesus wasn't angry because the disciples woke Him up. His concern was for their fear and panic - "**Teacher, do you not care....?**"(38). They, like all of us at times, **knew** Jesus was present, but had lost sight of the **significance** of His presence. He wanted them to have confidence in His power and love. He did **not want them to feel they were facing life alone**. Particularly, He wanted them to learn to have faith and peace **inside** their hearts even when the **outside** of life was churning with strife and difficulty. The passage really tells of storms on both the **outside** of life and the **inside** as well. Whether or not Jesus took the time to rebuke the waves and change the circumstances (sometimes He did not), the disciples had the same Heavenly Father at all times. Trust would bring peace, even if the waters remained rough and the winds high.

- 2) **Mark 5:1-20 - Jesus heals the demon possessed man** - "They came to the other side of the sea, to the country of the Gerasenes. [2] And when Jesus had stepped out of the boat, immediately there met him out of the tombs a man with an unclean spirit. [3] He lived among the tombs. And no one could bind him anymore, not even with a chain, [4] for he had often been bound with shackles and chains, but he wrenched the chains apart, and he broke the shackles in pieces. No one had the strength to subdue him. [5] Night and day among the tombs and on the mountains he was always crying out and bruising himself with stones. [6] And when he saw Jesus from afar, he ran and fell down before him. [7] And crying out with a loud voice, he said, "What have you to do with me, Jesus, Son of the Most High God? I adjure you by God, do not torment me." [8] For he was saying to him, "Come out of the man, you unclean spirit!" [9] And Jesus asked him, "What is your name?" He replied, "My name is Legion, for we are many." [10] And he begged him earnestly not to send them out of the country. [11] Now a great herd of pigs was feeding there on the hillside, [12] and they begged him, saying, "Send us to the pigs; let us enter them." [13] So he gave them permission. And the unclean spirits came out, and entered the pigs, and the herd, numbering about two thousand, rushed down the

steep bank into the sea and were drowned in the sea. [14] The herdsmen fled and told it in the city and in the country. And people came to see what it was that had happened. [15] And they came to Jesus and saw the demon-possessed man, the one who had had the legion, sitting there, clothed and in his right mind, and they were afraid. [16] And those who had seen it described to them what had happened to the demon-possessed man and to the pigs. [17] And they began to beg Jesus to depart from their region." [18] "As he was getting into the boat, the man who had been possessed with demons begged him that he might be with him. [19] And he did not permit him but said to him, "Go home to your friends and tell them how much the Lord has done for you, and how he has had mercy on you." [20] And he went away and began to proclaim in the Decapolis how much Jesus had done for him, and everyone marveled."

Several lessons unfold in this dramatic account:

- a) ***The nature of the battle in which we are engaged*** - Notice how Mark clearly states the futility of human attempts to restrain this man (3-4). This was more than insanity or depression. Paul seems anxious to show that ***all of us*** (not only the demon oppressed) are engaged in this ***kind*** of battle (see ***Ephesians 6:10-18***). Satan looks for the openings in our minds through deception, temptation, anger, etc. Notice that Paul seems to indicate that a lack of prayerfulness in our lives stems from our forgetfulness of the nature of the battle we are engaged in (***Ephesians 6:18-20***).

- b) ***Notice the profession of the demons - see 5:6-7*** - "And when he saw Jesus from afar, he ran and fell down before him. [7] And crying out with a loud voice, he said, 'What have you to do with me, Jesus, Son of the Most High God? I adjure you by God, do not torment me.'" Notice that this demonized man initiates both the contact and conversation with Jesus. The very presence of Jesus poses a threat to this demonic stronghold. Jesus' presence is a ***new, strong source of disturbance***. This demonic acknowledgment of Jesus shows their recognition of the threat Christ's presence is to their dark kingdom. Consider James' words in ***James 2:19*** - "You believe that God is one; you do well. Even the demons believe—and shudder!" The demon's position and confession before Jesus is all ***defensive***. They fear His coming judgment. The Christian confession of Christ's Lordship is motivated by ***love***. It's not the ***words*** but the ***heart*** behind them that marks discipleship and devotion.

- c) ***Notice the delivered man's response -18-20*** - "As he was getting into the boat, the man who had been possessed with demons begged him that he might be with him. [19] And he did not permit him but said to him, "Go home to your friends and tell them how much the Lord has done for you, and how he has had mercy on you." [20] And he went away and began to proclaim in the Decapolis how much Jesus had done for him, and everyone marveled."

The demons were ***threatened*** by Jesus' presence. Now set free, the delivered man wants to go on with Him. In his enthusiasm he is willing to leave everything and follow Jesus wherever He goes. But Jesus doesn't want this man to be dreaming about what he would do on the mission field. ***He wants him to spend his life exactly where he has been all along***. This makes great sense. Wherever our witness eventually takes us, we must always ***start*** where we are. Those who had lived close to this man had the best chance to observe the drastic change in his character and lifestyle. This Gentile could have a unique ministry that the Jewish apostles did not yet possess. This is where the light could shine the brightest. The most fruitful ministry is not always to be found where there is the greatest sense of adventure. Mature followers of Jesus learn to make this

distinction.