

# Who is this Man?

He has authority over creation!

Sunday the 20<sup>th</sup> of June 2021

**Mark 4:35-41 NRSV**

Jesus Stills a Storm

*<sup>35</sup> On that day, when evening had come, he said to them, "Let us go across to the other side." <sup>36</sup> And leaving the crowd behind, they took him with them in the boat, just as he was. Other boats were with him. <sup>37</sup> A great windstorm arose, and the waves beat into the boat, so that the boat was already being swamped. <sup>38</sup> But he was in the stern, asleep on the cushion; and they woke him up and said to him, "Teacher, do you not care that we are perishing?" <sup>39</sup> He woke up and rebuked the wind, and said to the sea, "Peace! Be still!" Then the wind ceased, and there was a dead calm. <sup>40</sup> He said to them, "Why are you afraid? Have you still no faith?" <sup>41</sup> And they were filled with great awe and said to one another, "Who then is this, that even the wind and the sea obey him?"*

## **Introduction:**

Albeit our text consists only of six verses, the account of how Jesus Stills the Storm is extremely dramatic. Mark transports the reader as if he/she has become an eyewitness to the waves crashing over the boat and of the fear which gripped the seasoned fishermen of their craft being swamped.

Have you ever been caught in a storm at sea or in a lake? Have you ever had waves break over the vessel you were in? This is more than Manly Ferry near the heads during a wild storm, albeit you can feel that you are being tossed around by the force of the waves: Jesus and His disciples were in an open boat, and what they were experiencing was perilous, to say the least.

## **Background:**

Today's Gospel reading reveals a structural change in Mark's Gospel. In recent weeks Mark has been announcing Jesus' teaching on – What is the Kingdom of God like? He now moves us into another section, which the readers would be asking, "Who is Jesus?" Over the next few weeks, we will be encountering the phrase in the Gospel reading – "who is this man?" each of the various accounts will reveal another aspect to answering their question – who is Jesus? Yet, the

readers have been informed of the answer at the very beginning of Mark's Gospel: Mark 1:1

***The beginning of the good news (the Gospel) of Jesus Christ, the Son of God***

Mark spends the rest of the Gospel revealing the evidence that drew him to that conclusion: Jesus Christ – the Son of God.

**Opening prayer:**

Gracious Father, grant that the words of my lips and the meditations of all our hearts be pleasing in your sight, O Lord, our Rock and Redeemer. Amen.

**Exegesis:**

***Jesus said to them, "Let us go across to the other side.*** There is no ambiguity. Mark was letting the reader know that Jesus was in control. It is at Jesus directive that they head across the lake. The mention of "***Other boats were with him***"; This statement is essential as a recognition that the Disciples, many of whom were fishermen, and other fishermen, the professional sailors, were obviously not hesitant to travel across the lake at evening: we know elsewhere in the Scriptures where there is a reference that the Disciples had been fishing all night, reinforcing today's account that they were comfortable travelling across the lake at night.

Mark is recording the events as if he were an eyewitness. However, he was writing much later, and many of the Commentators agree that the eyewitness would have been the Apostle Peter – sharing again with Mark what actually happened.

***<sup>37</sup> A great windstorm arose, and the waves beat into the boat, so that the boat was already being swamped.***

Such a dramatic change – you can feel the urgency in how Mark described the squall, the waves crashing into the boat and the realisation that they were in danger of being swamped.

The irony of the next verse, Jesus was sleeping: ***<sup>38</sup> But he (Jesus) was in the stern, asleep on the cushion; and they woke him up.***

Whether Jesus sleeping was through exhaustion or whether he was having a peaceful sleep during the pending danger is not revealed. However, the text suggests that the disciples were surprised that he was sleeping as he was asked.

***"Teacher, do you not care that we are perishing?"***

Then circumstances change again:

***<sup>39</sup> He woke up and rebuked the wind, and said to the sea, "Peace! Be still!" Then the wind ceased, and there was a dead calm. <sup>40</sup> He said to them, "Why are you afraid? Have you still no faith?"***

Two verses and the Disciples world was again turned upside-down. Mark revealing the simple wording of the **Peace – Be Still!** Adding the words, **there was a dead calm**. The emphasis is that Jesus was in control. Jesus had the authority over the elements, commanding the elements of wind and water with the words **Peace – Be Still!**

Before they could even reflect on what had just happened, Jesus rebuked them: ***He said to them, "Why are you afraid? Have you still no faith?"***

Why the rebuke?

They were on a mission. Jesus had called them to be part of that mission! – Jesus was teaching them nothing would hinder that mission coming to completion, not the squall, not the danger of the boat being swamped.

Hence the words ***Why are you afraid? Have you still no faith.***

The mission of God will be accomplished!

The Disciples response

***<sup>41</sup> And they were filled with great awe and said to one another, "Who then is this, that even the wind and the sea obey him?"***

A simple question why did Mark include this account of Jesus calming the sea in his Gospel?

Mark is challenging people to think who is it that has authority over nature?

The answer – the Creator – God?

John1:1-4

**In the beginning was the Word, and the Word was with God, and the Word was God. <sup>2</sup> He was in the beginning with God. <sup>3</sup> All things came into being through him, and without him not one thing came into being. What has come into being <sup>4</sup> in him was life,<sup>[a]</sup> and the life was the light of all people.**

Who is Jesus?

Colossians 1

**<sup>15</sup> He is the image of the invisible God, the firstborn of all creation; <sup>16</sup> for in<sup>[h]</sup> him all things in heaven and on earth were created, things visible and invisible, whether thrones or dominions or rulers or powers—all things have**

been created through him and for him. <sup>17</sup> He himself is before all things, and in him all things hold together.

Philippians 2:6-8

who, though he was in the form of God, did not regard equality with God as something to be exploited, <sup>7</sup> but emptied himself, taking the form of a slave, being born in human likeness. And being found in human form, <sup>8</sup> he humbled himself and became obedient to the point of death— even death on a cross.

**Who is Jesus?**

We know who Jesus is. By Jesus calming the storm, he revealed he has authority over creation. He was far more than a good teacher. He is our Lord and Saviour, the one who has authority over creation:

***"Peace! Be still!" Then the wind ceased, and there was a dead calm.***

Like his first Disciples – we too are not to be afraid but exercise our faith in Him! Jesus will accomplish His mission at St. John's Gordon.

To God be glory forever

Amen

***References:***

- I. *Bible Speaks Today – The Message of Mark* – Donald English
- II. *The New International Commentary on the New Testament – The Gospel of Mark* – William L. Lane.
- III. *The Pillar New Testament Commentary – The Gospel of Mark* – James R Edwards.