

## **The Word that brings peace.**

### **Mark 4:35-5:43**

It has been an extraordinary last couple of weeks.

Plans, especially travel plans, disrupted.

Jobs we felt were secure, threatened or lost

Empty shelves in supermarkets and fights in the aisles, something we have never seen before.

Our meetings gone on line.

All because of a virus, a virus to which we have no immunity – a novel virus that no one saw coming, that can threaten with death

This virus has brought disruption, death, and fear as we feel ourselves losing control of our lives – individually and collectively

As we sense how fragile our lives are, how tenuous our hold on the good life we have taken for granted.

Some of us may have sensed that fragility before – when labour didn't go the way we had hoped or planned, when our husband or wife or child got sick, or we were the victims of random evil

And it is unsettling

Unsettling to have the routine of your life changed by forces you never anticipated, unsettling to be told there is a threat lurking in a handshake or a hug, unsettling to think that you have to keep your distance from your grandchildren, or keep your children distant from your parents

Unsettling, fearful – to have to recognise that despite all your training, planning, resources you are not in control and there are forces out there that can take from you what is most dear to you in a moment, or in a week or two.

The people we meet in Mark 4 and 5 had lost control, were also facing disruption and destruction.

The fishermen amongst Jesus' disciples, despite all their skill developed over a lifetime of making their living fishing the sea of Galilee, were now overwhelmed by the storm they were experiencing, unable to keep the boat afloat, fearful of losing their lives

'Teacher, do you not care that we are perishing' they shouted over the noise of the storm.

The demon possessed man had lost control of himself – been reduced to rags, homeless, outcast amongst the tombs. And his society had lost control of him, unable any longer to subdue or chain him.

The woman with the flow of blood had slowly been impoverished and marginalised, made unclean by her bleeding in a society that excluded the unclean. She had tried what she could, spent all her money seeking a cure, but her efforts could not restore her health or acceptance.

And Jairus, for all his social position and wealth – a synagogue ruler, was not able to do the one thing every parent wants to do – not able to keep his beloved daughter safe.

Can you recognise yourself in these people? They are living our fears.

Overwhelmed by events that threaten death.

Lives thrown into chaos by forces too great for them.

A life diminished, moved to the margins, by a sickness for which there was no cure

Confronted with our powerlessness to prevent what we most fear.

Yet Jesus is there in their stories, their lives, and He is not overwhelmed or powerless.

He rescues and restores.

He is 4:38 so unconcerned by the threat of this storm that He sleeps. And when roused, with a word 'Peace! Be still!' He silences the storm. Under His word creation becomes again a place that supports, not threatens, life. Do you feel the power of that?

Try yourself silencing the wind, even just a gentle breeze, with a word, and you will see why they say "Who then is this."

When the demon possessed man runs at Jesus, he falls at Jesus' feet. The demons acknowledge that Jesus is in charge. They call him Son of the Most High, and beg his permission vv. 10-12 to go to the pigs, for they cannot resist his command to leave the man. Jesus grants them their wish, and removes their threat from the area forever as the pigs plunge to their death. The man is left restored. Restlessness gone, he now sits, 'clothed and in his right mind.' And he is sent home, no longer homeless, sent home with a good message of mercy. The witnesses are terrified of this power. V.15

That enduring sickness – 12 years – Jesus had power to heal. He brought infectious wholeness – just a touch – and she was restored, not just to health but to her society. And by His word He overcame her fear and assured her that her healing was His gift, His gift to keep.

And Jairus? Tested by delay, he received his daughter alive again when she was beyond all human help. The mourners at the house laughed at Jesus vv. 38-40 when he said the girl was not dead but sleeping. And we would have too, and then become angry at him for giving grieving parents false hope. Yet Jesus takes her lifeless hand and addresses her Talitha cumi – little girl, arise – and she does.

What is so fearful to us

Nature out of control

A disintegration of our personality we cannot resist

The chronic sickness we cannot cure

Death which robs us of those we love, to whom our hearts are tied

Jesus does not fear.

They are all subject to Him, subject to the rule of His word

Jesus is never at a loss, never in a situation that He cannot make good

And those whom He hears, those who come to Him for help, need not fear.

Jesus is clear

Mark 4: <sup>40</sup> He said to them, “Why are you so afraid? Have you still no faith?”

5: <sup>36</sup> But overhearing what they said, Jesus said to the ruler of the synagogue, “Do not fear, only believe.”

Trusting Him, we need not fear.

That is still true, Trusting Him we need not fear. He is in control. There is nothing we experience, not even a viral pandemic, that is not subject to Him.

What does His power mean for us?

Reading this passage should I say that trusting Jesus, who is the same today as He was then, you need not fear because He will stop you getting the corona virus?

Or trusting Jesus you need not fear because if you get it He will stop you getting really sick

Or trusting Jesus you need not fear because if it goes as badly as possible he will stop you dying or even cause you to come back to life?

No

This part of God’s word tells us that trusting Jesus you need not fear whatever befalls you because Jesus is bigger and better than you imagine.

These mighty works recorded in the gospel are not here to say – Jesus did that for them then, and He will do that for you today.

They are signs, signs that point to Jesus’ purpose – what He came to do, and signs revealing Jesus’ person – who He is

Jesus started His public ministry in Mark 1:14-15 preaching the Kingdom of God, saying that the time was fulfilled and the Kingdom of God, the longed for reign of God, was at hand.

Mark 1: <sup>14</sup> Now after John was arrested, Jesus came into Galilee, proclaiming the gospel of God, <sup>15</sup> and saying, “The time is fulfilled, and the kingdom of God is at hand; repent and believe in the gospel.”

The Kingdom of God was a phrase that caught up in it all that was promised God’s people in the Old Testament of the end time

The time when God would judge the world, and remove from the world all evil.

That time would be a time of peace and wholeness, of prosperity and security, a time of justice and righteousness when God’s people would dwell in God’s presence, and never again be driven from His presence.

It was the time when God would give His people new hearts, pour out His Spirit on them, gather them from all the nations of the earth, raise the dead to undying life.

A time when creation itself would be made new

A time a people oppressed by injustice and violence, by sickness and death, longed for.

Jesus was preaching that that Kingdom was near, because He was here. He was the King of God's Kingdom now come amongst His people.

Jesus' purpose was to bring that reign, to ensure that there would be a time when death would be no more, when all evil that diminishes and destroys life would be gone, when all His people would enjoy peace and wholeness.

These mighty works in Mark 4 and 5 are signs pointing us to the truth that Jesus is the one who brings God's reign, and that to experience the goodness of that reign we need to repent and put our trust in Jesus, that is stop trusting ourselves and running our own lives our own way and start trusting Jesus and letting Him run our lives.

But to bring that reign the cause of disorder, the cause of death had first to be dealt with. And that cause was our sin

The sin of the first man, Adam, and all our subsequent sins. Sin, where we like Adam choose not to believe what God says or follow His instruction, but instead choose to believe the lies we want to believe and use God's good gifts – the hand He has made, the mind He has given us – to defy Him.

To deal with sin Jesus resolutely, purposefully, set His face to Jerusalem. It is because He came to deal with sin that Jesus' death dominates the gospel story.

If Jesus was just a teacher of techniques to let you control the universe for your happiness – He wouldn't have gone to die on the cross.

If Jesus was just a faith healer whose purpose was to make us healthy and wealthy now – He wouldn't have gone to die on the cross

If Jesus just wanted to be a source of power we could tap into when we wished – He wouldn't have gone to the cross.

If Jesus had in mind the establishing of an earthly kingdom just for the believing Jewish people of his day – he wouldn't have gone to the cross.

But He did go to the cross, deliberately

He taught repeatedly that He had come to be crucified and die again, that it was God's will that He die and rise again.

Mark 8: <sup>31</sup> And he began to teach them that the Son of Man must suffer many things and be rejected by the elders and the chief priests and the scribes and be killed, and after three days rise again.

Mark 9: <sup>31</sup> for he was teaching his disciples, saying to them, "The Son of Man is going to be delivered into the hands of men, and they will kill him. And when he is killed, after three days he will rise."

Mark 10: <sup>33</sup> saying, "See, we are going up to Jerusalem, and the Son of Man will be delivered over to the chief priests and the scribes, and they will condemn him to death and deliver him over to the Gentiles. <sup>34</sup> And they will mock him and spit on him, and flog him and kill him. And after three days he will rise."

He resolutely journeyed to Jerusalem despite the dismay of his followers

And when He arrived, In the garden of Gethsemane as He contemplated draining the cup of God's wrath, He did not turn away from God's purpose for Him even though He felt its horror

Mark 14: <sup>35</sup> And going a little farther, he fell on the ground and prayed that, if it were possible, the hour might pass from him. <sup>36</sup> And he said, "Abba, Father, all things are possible for you. Remove this cup from me. Yet not what I will, but what you will."

And why?

Because He knew that His Death would be the ransom that would set His people free from condemnation and death

Mark 10: <sup>45</sup> For even the Son of Man came not to be served but to serve, and to give his life as a ransom for many."

He knew His death would bring forgiveness of sin in the new covenant

Mark 14: <sup>24</sup> And he said to them, "This is my blood of the covenant, which is poured out for many.

That His Death would turn aside God's wrath from us as He drained in death God's just anger at our rebellion

Jesus knew that His Death and rising would establish an eternal kingdom, the eternal kingdom promised by God, that day when

Revelation 21: <sup>3</sup> And I heard a loud voice from the throne saying, "Behold, the dwelling place of God is with man. He will dwell with them, and they will be his people, and God himself will be with them as their God. <sup>4</sup> He will wipe away every tear from their eyes, and death shall be no more, neither shall there be mourning, nor crying, nor pain anymore, for the former things have passed away."

That His Death and rising would establish an eternal kingdom for all people in every age, people of every nation and race and language who turn and put their trust in Jesus

People beyond the people of His own day, who would have longed for Jesus just to stay with them to heal their diseases and rescue them from overwhelming forces.

But Jesus who could silence a storm by His word, could have blown His enemies away with His word, did not. He went purposefully to Jerusalem to die

It is because Jesus stuck to His purpose to be the King of God's Kingdom that you and I need not fear today, nor any day, not even the day of our death.

He is now the Living Saviour who is gathering His people into His eternal kingdom

The Living saviour who gives to all who trust Him His Spirit to help us grow to be like Him in loving the Father and doing His will whatever our circumstances, to bring honour to our Father through honouring Jesus with our trust and obedience in all things and all times.

Jesus is the Living saviour who is Lord of all events and all times – for the good of His followers

And while He can heal whom He will, deliver from danger whom He will  
sometimes for your good

He will let the ship sink

He will not return you to a right mind

He will let you suffer sickness and not heal you

He will let you die – let you die now to raise you to the last day

Jesus is the Living almighty saviour who will make even your death serve His good purpose for you, for He has prepared something better for you than more of this life, or having your plans in this life fulfilled.

He has secured for believers the new heaven and earth where death will be no more and He will wipe every tear from our eye.

You and I Need to grasp that

There may come a time in the months ahead where you long to just put out your hand and touch the hem of His garment and be healed

Where you long for him to say to someone you love – arise

When you will ask – if then, why not now

If for them, why not me, or my husband or wife, or my child

And their might be some cruel people who will say if you just had more faith .....

Even though in the gospel we see all those rescued by Jesus had just enough faith to ask Him, to reach out to Him

You need to be convinced that the purpose of these stories is to show you Jesus, who He is and what He came to do, not to promise you that He will do the same for you today.

That the purpose of these stories is to show you what you do need to know, that Jesus is God's King who can bring all who trust Him into God's eternal kingdom

The Almighty, Kind, the Living King and Lord whose purpose is bigger and better than giving you more of life in this world, a world marked by sin and death, a world of groaning and tears, a world of disorder and destruction.

And alive for ever He is always the King, the Saviour, who is close to His people and hears their cry, who is close to you if you are a believer, and hears you

The disciples were wrong to think that Jesus did not care because they could not see him caring, sharing their distress and fear.

Jairus had to resist the temptation to think that because Jesus didn't answer his plea when he thought he needed to, Jesus had left it too late

The living Lord is not asleep

Not overwhelmed

Not tired out or resentful of people coming to Him

His timing is never wrong and He is

Never confronted with a situation too difficult for Him

His word is never powerless to do what He intends

Jesus is the living Saviour who always keeps His promises

So in this storm, when sudden disaster threatens to overturn your life

Let His powerful word ring in your ears

His promise to give rest to all who come to Him

His promise that He is with us always

His promise that He will raise all who trust Him from the dead to eternal life

His promise that nothing will separate us from his love

And believer let that word give you comfort, peace and courage.

And if you do not yet know Jesus but are drawn to Him in your need, drawn like that woman because you think in Jesus there may be healing and hope

Know that His same powerful word beckons you into relationship with Himself.

Did you notice - Jesus stopped, and despite the impatience of the apostles He singled her out

Singled her out so she could hear

Mark 5: <sup>34</sup> And he said to her, "Daughter, your faith has saved you; go in peace, and be healed of your disease."

With that word she knew that Jesus was not a distant impersonal source of power, someone of whom she should be afraid,

She knew that He was the Lord who knew her, and who gave her freely wholeness and peace, the peace of being loved and included in the family by the almighty King whose word ruled heaven and earth.

As you come to Jesus that is the peace Jesus calls you to know, the peace He gives to all who put their faith in Him, who believe His gospel that He has died for their sins and risen with authority to judge and to forgive, the peace of being forgiven and included in Jesus' family, His people

In our world, where you feel again your frailty, your powerlessness in the face of destructive disruptive forces beyond your control

Listen to the powerful word of the crucified and risen King

Trust Him for what He promises you – forgiveness, new life, eternal life – and know peace.