

# Mark 4-5 – Amazing Miracles of the Messiah

## An Outline

- I. The Winds and Waves Obey Jesus (Mark 4:35-41)
- II. Jesus Casts Out a Legion of Demons (Mark 5:1-20)
- III. Jesus Heals the Incurable and Raises the Dead (Mark 5:21-43)

## Issues for Discussion

1. **The Winds and Waves Obey Jesus (Mark 4:35-41; Matthew 8:23-27; Luke 8:22-25)** – The disciples have seen Jesus’s power to cast out demons, heal diseases and even restore the lame. They believed in Him this much (as a healer), but Jesus was about to blow out their compartmentalized faith.

Jesus may have been in the same boat, where he taught the crowd in 4:1. He told the disciples to sail to the other side, where He would do another miraculous healing among the Gerasenes (5:1ff). But the journey itself would be eventful. A great storm (“furious squall”) created waves that nearly flooded their boat, but Jesus was asleep in the stern (i.e. back side). Interestingly, this is the only account of Jesus’s sleeping, attesting to the true humanity of Christ, who slept because He was undoubtedly tired from healing and teaching all day. The disciples woke Him, saying, “Teacher, don’t you care if we drown?” Luke records them saying, “Master, Master, we’re going to drown!” Matthew records them also saying, “Lord, save us! We’re going to drown!” Ironically, seasoned fishermen were looking to a carpenter to save them and their boat from the raging storm. They were in true danger (Luke 8:23). Mark’s account provides a unique insight. His account may be the last of a series of things said. Allow me to reconstruct:

One disciple says, “Master, Master, we’re going to drown!”  
Another says, “Lord, save us! We’re going to drown!”  
Still another adds, “Teacher, don’t you care if we drown?”

Notice the switch from “Master” to “Teacher,” greater respect to lesser respect, desperate appeal to frustrated rebuke. The disciples were not rebuking Jesus’s inability to save but His indifference to save: “Don’t you care?!” They did not question Jesus’s power but His motive.

In the Garden of Eden, Satan caused Eve to question God’s motive in forbidden them to eat of the fruit of the Tree of the Knowledge of Good and Evil, as though God were withholding something good from them. In the Book of Job, Job did not question God’s power, but he too began to question God’s motive as he suffered the painful onslaught of boils from Satan.

Don’t we do the same thing today? We don’t question God’s ability to take away suffering, but don’t we often question His motive? Why did He allow my child to die? Why did He allow me to lose my job? What good reason could there be for God to allow all those people to be swept

away in the storm or to be blown up by terrorists? Like the disciples, we rebuke God's intention: "Don't you care?!" We forget the He is God, and we are not! We lose sight of God's sovereignty.

Jesus responded to the disciples, "Why are you so afraid? Do you still have no faith?" Was Jesus right in asking this question or rebuking the disciples? After all, it was a very real storm. Real waves were flooding the boat. They were in real danger? The disciples may have thought, "How can you expect us to have faith when we were about to die?!" And "Isn't that why we called on you to save us?"

Jesus may not have been rebuking them for their lack of faith in His ability to save them but for their questioning God's motive and their devotion to self-preservation over trusting God's sovereign purposes. Jesus would later teach them directly: "Whoever wants to be my disciple must deny themselves and take up their cross and follow me" (Mark 8:34; Luke 9:23 adds "take up their cross daily"). Again, Jesus would say, "If anyone comes to me and does not hate father and mother, wife and children, brothers and sisters—yes, even their own life—such a person cannot be my disciple" (Luke 14:26). The disciples' lack of faith concerned their devotion to Christ, even to follow Him regardless of the cost.

The faith that God calls us to imitate is not simply the conviction that God has the ABILITY to save us from suffering and calamity. I would that even the demons believe this (James 2:19). It is the belief that God is good and His purposes are right, and we can trust both in His motives and His sovereign will no matter what circumstance we face.

As Jesus rebuked His disciples compassionately, He rebuked the wind and waves authoritatively (5:39). The disciples saw that Jesus had power over nature, and nature recognized her Lord and Master. The disciples too needed to recognize Jesus as more than simply a "good teacher" and "healer." He was their Lord and God, who commanded their devotion not just when things seemed to go well for them but even when things did not seem to be going so well. In John 6:26-27, Jesus rebuked the crowds because they followed Him for what they could get from Him rather than for who He was. In Mark 10:17-31, Jesus rebuffed the rich young man because his possessions had greater authority over him than the Lord, from whom He sought eternal life.

Who is Jesus to you? "Why are you so afraid? Do you still have no faith?"

- 2. Jesus Casts Out a Legion of Demons (Mark 5:1-20; Luke 8:26-37; Matthew 8:28-34)** – When Jesus got to the other side of the lake (Lake Gennesaret or Sea of Galilee), He was approached by two demonized men (Matthew 8:28). Likely, one was the leader and primary speaker of the two (Mark 5:2; Luke 8:27). Mark calls the demon an "impure spirit" (5:2) as another way to contrast this demon from an angel. The demon had completely taken over the personality and action of the man. He exhibited superhuman strength (5:3-4) and was self-destructive (5:5). After a near-death experience out on the water, the disciples may have been too exhausted to be afraid; however, the demon was not focused on them but on Jesus. He immediately recognized Jesus's authority as it fell on its knees before Jesus (5:6) and declared in a loud voice that Jesus was the "Son of the Most High God" (5:7). Ironically, the tormenting demon, who had tormented the man as well as the town, now asked Jesus not to torment him (Matthew 8:29 adds "before the appointed time" suggesting the demon's future judgment, cf. 1 Corinthians 6:3; Revelation 20:10 and especially Jude 6).

Jesus commanded the demon to come out. Then, Jesus asked its name. The demon answered that it was “Legion,” for there was not just one but many demons in the man. They begged Jesus not to send them out of the area (Luke 8:31 says “Abyss” cf. Jude 6) but to allow them to go into a herd of about two thousand pigs. Jesus permitted them, and they entered the pigs, and the pigs rushed into the water and were drowned. Scripture gives no comment to explain Jesus’s permission, but the number of pigs may suggest just how many demons may have inhabited the man: at least two-thousand. A Roman Legion was 6000 foot soldiers and 120 cavalry.

Prior to this incident Jesus cast out a demon here and there but not thousands at one time. Like His authority over the wind and the waves, this demonstration of power over a legion of demons reinforced the witness that Jesus was not simply a healer or a good teacher. He was the Lord.

The response was unusual. Normally, people would flock to Him when Jesus performed His miracles, but in this region of the Gerasenes, people were afraid of Him and asked Him to leave their region. Even though they saw the man in his right mind, they feared Jesus. The man was a “known” element. Jesus, the greater Power, was not. They had a handle on the demons, making sure everyone steered clear of the area, but they could not handle the kind of power Jesus demonstrated.

Some have suggested by their reaction to Jesus’s miracle and the fact that they were raising pigs, which were unclean for Jews, that these people may have been Gentiles. If so, they had no prophetically-led inclination to install Jesus as their Messianic King. Jesus did not have to worry about this. This may explain why Jesus told the healed demoniac to tell his own people about what Jesus had done for Him, just the opposite of what He told other Jews to do when He healed them (cf. 1:44; 5:43). There was no concern here from the religious leaders.

We don’t hear too much about demons in our day in America, but that does not negate their reality. Demons do not always operate in overt ways. Even in Scripture, there is witness of Satan operating in Peter, when he tried to dissuade Jesus from going to the cross (Matthew 16:23) and when Ananias and Sapphira tried to lie to the apostles about their giving (Acts 5:3). Paul explained that the worship of idols was really the worship of demons (1 Corinthians 10:20; Deuteronomy 32:16-17). Paul also wrote that Satan sometimes appears in the garb of religiosity (2 Corinthians 11:14-15). Jude warned against messing with demons (Jude 8-10), which some people do today when they go to palm readers or play with Ouija Boards or put faith in the Zodiac. One fringe of YWAM even developed a Hawaiian War Dance (Haka) against the devil, something that is both foolish and dangerous.

- 3. Jesus Heals the Incurable and Raises the Dead (Mark 5:21-43; Luke 8:40-56; Matthew 9:18-26)**  
– The healing of the woman with the issue of blood happened as Jesus was going to heal the daughter of Jairus, a synagogue ruler. It is interesting to note what the Gospel writers include and what they leave out in their respective accounts. For example, Mark records that many doctors failed to heal the woman with the issue of blood, even though she spent all their money on them. Some things never change! Notice, Doctor Luke may have omitted this detail of the account, being a doctor himself and not wanting to disparage his own profession. Mark records Jesus’s exact words to the dead girl, namely, “*talitha koum*,” then translates for his Gentile

readers this Aramaic expression as meaning, "Little girl, I say to you, get up!" (5:41). Luke, the historian, adds some significant details. For example, he records that the people laughed because they knew "she was dead" (Luke 8:53), and later, "her spirit returned" (Luke 8:55), both of which validate a true death.

While this was not the first resuscitation (i.e. raising from the dead) in Jesus's ministry (i.e. the first was the widow of Nain's son in Luke 7:11-17), Mark records this as the first of such caliber as he makes his case that Jesus was not simply a good teacher or healer. He was Lord, the Son of God. He had power over death. This would be clearly demonstrated in the raising of Lazarus in John 11:17-44, where Jesus told the grieving Martha: "I am the resurrection and the life. The one who believes in me will live, even though they die; and whoever lives by believing in me will never die" (John 11:25-26).

Notice also in the healing of the woman with the issue of blood the detail that no one could heal her for over 12 years. She was at the end of her efforts and her money. Jesus was the only One who could heal her. He was no ordinary healer. He was Lord.

Notice also that among everyone crowding Jesus only the woman received instantaneous healing on the basis of her faith (5:34). Jesus knew who touched Him. He merely needed to locate her in the crowd. While Mark and Luke's accounts seem to make this ambiguous, writing "Jesus kept looking around" (5:32) and with Jesus saying, "*Someone* touched me" (Luke 8:46), Matthew's short account suggests just the opposite: "Jesus turned and saw her" (Matthew 9:22; cf. Luke 8:47). Jesus felt power go from Him to the woman according to Luke's account (Luke 8:46). Jesus knew who was healed by Him.

The healing of the woman with the issue of blood must have come as an unwelcome distraction for the disciples and Jairus, who was intent on Jesus getting to his daughter before she died. But to Jesus this was no distraction but a testimony to the woman and to the crowds of the power of God and the importance of faith. Jairus may have thought that since this woman was able to wait 12 years, she could certainly wait another few hours while Jesus helped his daughter; however, God's purposes are never hastily accomplished. God even uses time for His purposes. For example, Jesus deliberately waited two more days before going to heal Lazarus (John 11:6), so that God's glory could be even more glorified in the raising of Lazarus, whose body should have started to decay after four days.

Let us understand this principle, namely, that God does not work in haste, but He is a God of order (1 Corinthians 14:33). Everything is perfect in God's time (Ecclesiastes 3:11). If you are pursuing God's will, there will be no rush or haste or nervous anxiety, because God is always fully in control, and He works out everything according to the perfect council of His will (Ephesians 1:11).

## Discussion Question

Are you trusting in God's goodness, power and sovereignty, or is your life consumed by anxiety, haste and an unwillingness to let go of control? Try to picture and describe to each other what trusting in God's goodness, power and sovereignty might look like in your life.