

Mark 4-5

Please open your Bible at the end of Mark 4 which has been read to us.

We are continuing our one-year journey through the Bible, and this is week #31. We are seeing that the whole Bible is one story, and all the way through it is about Jesus Christ

Our Lord Himself makes this clear:

“The Scriptures,” He said, “bear witness about me,” (John 5:39). The whole of the Bible bears witness about Jesus Christ.

When I was growing up, I remember learning a phrase in Sunday school about how the Old and New Testaments fit together: The New is in the Old concealed; The Old is in the New revealed.

Everything in the New Testament is anticipated in the Old Testament. The New is in the Old concealed. But ‘the Old is in the New revealed.’ You cannot fully understand the Old Testament without the New Testament. The Old Testament is about promises made. The New Testament is about promises kept.

So, when we come to the birth, life, death and resurrection of Jesus Christ, we are at the center of the Bible story. It’s all about Him.

We looked together at how Jesus Christ was born into the world. He was born of a virgin. He did not arise from the human race; He came to the human race.

God became a man in Christ Jesus. “The Word became flesh and dwelt among us,” (John 1:14a).

The angel said to Mary,

*“The Holy Spirit will come upon you, and the power of the Most High will overshadow you; therefore, the child to be born will be called holy— the Son of God.” – **Luke 1:35***

The child to be born will be called holy! Here was something entirely new in the world. This had never happened before and it will never be repeated. What was born was not holy and what is holy was not born until Jesus Christ came into the world.

Then we saw that the Holy Son of God was tempted. No one has ever been tempted to the degree that Jesus was. He is the only person who has ever faced the full force of Satan's power.

Imagine three airmen flying jets over enemy territory during a war. They are shot down, captured, and then taken by the enemy for interrogation. One by one they are brought into a darkened room.

The first airman gives his name, rank, and serial number. They press him for information that he knows he should not give, but he also knows that the enemy is cruel, and eventually they will break him. So why go through all that? He tells them what he knows.

A second airman is brought in. He also gives his name, rank, and serial number, and they begin to pump him for information. He is determined not to give in. So, the cruelty begins. Eventually it overwhelms him. He breaks and tells them what he knows.

Then the third airman comes in and gives his name, rank, and serial number. "You will not break me," he says. "Oh, yes we will," they reply. "We have broken every man who has ever come into this room. It is only a matter of time; you'll see."

The cruelty begins, but he does not break. It is intensified, and still he does not break. So, it is intensified again, until it becomes unbearable, but still he does not break. Finally, there comes a point where they have tried everything they know. "It's no use," they say. "He is not like any other person we've had in this room. We can't break him."

Now, which of these three airmen faced the full force of the enemy? The only one to know the full force of the enemy's assault is the one who did not break. So, don't ever think that Christ's temptations were less than yours.

Only Christ knows the full power of temptation, because only Christ has withstood the full force of the enemy's assault. Jesus was tempted in every respect as we are, but He was without sin (Hebrews 4:15).

There is where we have been in the Bible story: Jesus Christ is introduced to us. He was born. He was tempted. And what we are going to see today is that Jesus Christ is God with us, and that he is Sovereign. He is the King of Kings and Lord of Lords.

If you turn back to Mark 1, you will see what happened next: Verse 13 tells us that Jesus was tempted in the wilderness.

Then we read in Mark 1:14-15:

Now after John was arrested, Jesus came into Galilee, proclaiming the gospel of God, and saying, "The time is fulfilled, and the kingdom of God is at hand; repent and believe in the gospel."

Gospel means 'good news.' What is the good news?

The good news is that the kingdom of God is at hand. A kingdom means that there is a king. A ruler! And the good news is that this king has come! His kingdom is 'at hand.' It is near. It is about to unfold.

Today, we will look at four stories from Mark 4-5 that unveil Jesus as the Sovereign Lord. And then I want us to see why this is good news for us today.

Jesus is The Sovereign Lord

1. Jesus is the Sovereign Lord over disasters (Mark 4:34-41).

On that day, when evening had come, he said to them, "Let us go across to the other side." And leaving the crowd, they took him with them in the boat, just as he was. And the other boats were with him. – Mark 4:35-36

Notice that Jesus leads his disciples into a storm. Jonah got into a storm because he disobeyed the Lord. But here the disciples get into a storm because they do what Christ tells them! Christ said, "Let us go across to the other side of the lake!"

And a great windstorm arose, and the waves were breaking into the boat, so that the boat was already filling. – Mark 4:37

Jesus never promises a storm free life. In the world you will have trouble (John 16:33). It is "through many tribulations that we must enter the kingdom of God" (Acts 14:22).

Notice that when trouble comes the disciples assume that Jesus doesn't care about them: They say, "Teacher, do you not care that we are perishing?" (Mark 4:38). How much is that like us?

Then we read,

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. – Mark 4:39

Karen and I watched a program this week in the American Experience series on PBS. It was on Woodstock, the rock concert that captured the spirit of a generation 50 years ago. 400,000 people gathered for three days.

On the third day, dark clouds gathered, and it was clear that a major storm was brewing. Someone on the platform grabbed the microphone, and started chanting, “No rain, no rain, no rain.” Then they got 400,000 people to join in: “No rain, no rain!” Until the heavens opened and they were all drenched!

The human spirit does not have power over the elements. We do not have power over the rain or the flood or the wildfire or the tornado, or the mudslide or the volcano or the tsunami. But when Jesus rebuked the wind, the wind ceased, and there was a great calm, (v39).

Jesus is the sovereign Lord over disasters.

2. Jesus is the Sovereign Lord over demons (Mark 5:1-21).

Then we have the story of a man with an ‘unclean spirit’ (Mark 5:2). Somehow the power of Satan had laid hold of this man and he could not get free.

Night and day among the tombs and on the mountains he was always crying out and cutting himself with stones. – Mark 5:5

Jesus described the devil as a thief who comes “to steal and kill and destroy” (John 10:10), and where stealing, killing, and destroying are most rampant, there his activity is most directly to be discerned.

This man was clearly a threat to the entire community. The local authorities had tried to restrain him. They put him in chains, but he “wrenched the chains apart, and he broke the shackles in pieces. No one had the strength to subdue him” (Mark 5:4).

So, the whole community lived in fear. The authorities were not able to stop this! They would hear this man crying out on the hills at night. It must have been hard for the people to sleep. No one had the strength to subdue him (Mark 5:4).

But when Jesus commanded the evil spirits to leave this man, they left! When the people in the town heard, they came out to see what had happened, and they found the man who had been possessed by the demons “sitting there, clothed and in his right mind” (Mark 5:15).

Jesus is the sovereign Lord! He is Lord over disasters; even the wind and the waves obey Him. He is Lord over the demons; even they have to obey Him.

3. Jesus is the Sovereign Lord over disease (Mark 5:21-34).

Then Mark records the story of a woman who had been suffered from a debilitating illness for twelve years” (Mark 5:24–25). This lady had spent all of her money consulting various doctors, but in spite of their efforts, her condition was no better. She had ‘suffered much

under many physicians, and had spent all that she had, and was no better but rather grew worse, (Mark 5:26).

Thank God for doctors and for all of the accomplishments of medical science. But this woman was in the place where there was nothing more that the doctors could do for her.

A few weeks ago, when I was in the foyer after the service, I met a woman who was new to the church. She told me that she was a nurse and that she had spent her career working in an intensive care unit.

I said some things about the value of her work and the importance of her calling, to which she said, "Yes but we have a 100% failure rate, in the end."

Sooner or later every person comes to the place where there is nothing more that the doctors can do. And that was the position this woman was in.

She felt that Jesus could help her. If she could just reach Jesus, she would be healed. When she touched His clothing, "the flow of blood dried up, and she felt in her body that she was healed of her disease" (5:29).

Jesus said to her, "Daughter, your faith has made you well; go in peace, and be healed of your disease," (Mark 5:34).

4. Jesus is the Sovereign Lord over death (Mark 5:35-43).

Then Jesus came to a home where there had been a great tragedy. A twelve-year-old girl had died, and the wake was already in process. But when Jesus arrived, he sent the mourners out of the house.

Only the girl's father and mother, along with Peter, James, and John, remained. Jesus took the girl's hands and said, "Talitha cumi!" (which means, "Little girl, I say to you, arise!"). To the absolute amazement of everyone in the room, "the girl got up and began walking" (5:41-42).

For anyone who has lost a loved one, the pattern of this story is beautiful and profound. The daughter of Jairus is ill. There is a delay in Jesus coming while he ministers to the woman who touched his garment. The girl died during the delay, but when Christ comes, she rises from the dead.

Jesus is giving us a glimpse of the full blessing that we will know when His kingdom comes. For all who have lost a loved one: In this world, there will be death, there will be a delay, and there will be a resurrection. This resurrection will come when Jesus Christ arrives in all his power and all his glory.

Jesus is the Sovereign Lord! He is Lord over disasters, over demons, over disease, and even over death itself.

Three Observations:

1. Christ Saves Because He is the Sovereign Lord.

This is really important. Jesus saves precisely because he is the Sovereign Lord. If he not the Sovereign Lord, he is not able to save. But because he is the Sovereign Lord, he is able to save.

One of the most damaging misunderstandings of the gospel is the idea that you could have Jesus as Savior but avoid Him as Lord, as if you could receive what Christ offers and at the same time ignore what He commands.

You sometimes hear people talk like this: 'I asked Christ to be my Savior, but I never really made him Lord.' The assumption is that we can somehow separate the Savior from the Lord. Therefore, we can have faith without repentance, justification without sanctification, forgiveness for sin without the pursuit of holiness.

That is a fundamental misunderstanding of the gospel. Jesus Christ is presented to us as the Sovereign Lord who saves. He is able to save *because* He is the Lord. The fact that Jesus is Lord qualifies Him to act as Savior.

When I was around 5 years old, my father took me on a number of occasions to a junk yard. The place was filled with scrap cars, and it was a marvelous place for a child with a vivid imagination to play.

My dad used to go there to get spare parts that he needed for our very old car. The system was simple in the junkyard, you could strip pieces that you needed off the cars, and then pay for them at the gate on the way out.

The problem was that some people had got into the habit of taking parts off the cars, throwing them over the perimeter fence, walking past the gate without paying, and then picking up the stuff outside.

So, the junk yard had cleared a 'no go' area round the inside of the fence. They ran a rail around the perimeter and brought in guard dogs that were leashed to this railing. As long as you did not go near fence, you were perfectly safe.

One day, I had climbed up into the cab of a wrecked truck. I was enjoying an imaginary world of truck driving, when suddenly one of the guard dogs broke free from its chain and came bounding towards the cab.

I was terrified.

I remember my father coming over grabbing a stick and fending off the dog. He saved me by subduing the dog. In order to save his boy, he had to subdue the dog. If he had not been able to subdue the dog, he could not have saved his boy.

The Lordship of Jesus is good news. Christ is able to save us from our enemies because He is sovereign over them. It is the fact that he is Lord that qualifies him to act as Savior. He is able to save precisely because He has the authority of Lord.

For everyone who calls on the name of the Lord will be saved – Romans 10:13

If he's not Lord, he can't save! At the Orchard we like to summarize the gospel in four words: Lord, Sin Savior, Faith. The Lordship of Jesus is good news. That's why he is able to save sinners like us.

There is so much more to the gospel than being saved from hell by believing in Jesus. Christ invites us to enter His kingdom and to discover the blessing of living under His rule. He calls us to a whole new way of life that is made possible by His power working in us.

2. Our world aches because it rejects the Sovereign Lord.

When Jesus delivered the demon-possessed man and the people came out to see this man sitting there clothed and in his right mind, we read, "they began to beg Jesus to depart from their region" (Mark 5:17).

You would think that they might have said, 'You have solved the biggest social problem we have in this community. Would you stay for another two weeks because we have another ten problems? If you can solve this, you can solve these other ones too!' But that's not the reaction. That is not the response of our world to the Sovereign King.

The rejection of Jesus led to the cross, which was the ultimate expression of our world's contempt for God. God sent His Son into the world. The Word became flesh and dwelt among us. We rejected the Lord of glory. We mocked Him, we spat on Him we nailed Him to a cross.

A world that rejects Jesus is a world that continues to ache under the curse of disasters, demons, disease, and death. If the only one who can subdue the dog is evicted from the Junkyard, who will save the boy?

We live in a Christ-rejecting world: He came to His own and His own did not receive him, (John 1:11)

But notice two things. First, Jesus does not leave the people who reject Him in total darkness.

*And they began to beg Jesus to depart from their region. As he was getting into the boat, the man who had been possessed with demons begged him that he might be with him. But Jesus 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." And he went away and began to proclaim in the Decapolis how much Jesus had done for him, and everyone marveled. – **Mark 5:17-20***

That's exactly the possession we are in. We live in a Christ-rejecting world, but Christ has not left that world without a witness. Why are we here? Our destiny is to be in heaven, so why are we here? The same reason that this man was left by Jesus. There is a community that rejects Jesus who desperately needs to know what Jesus had done for them.

But this is not the end of the Bible story. On the third day, Jesus rose from the dead. And when He ascended into heaven, the Father said to Him, "Sit at my right hand until I make your enemies a footstool for your feet" (Hebrews 1:13).

The day is coming when all of Christ's enemies will be put under His feet. We wait for that day. When the kingdoms of this world will become the kingdom of our Lord and Christ. He will reign forever and ever and under the blessed rule of our sovereign Lord, there will be no more disasters, no more demons, no more diseases and no more death. When that day comes, God will wipe away all tears from our eyes.

3. Peace grows as you submit to the Sovereign Lord.

Did you notice that in these four stories, recorded by Mark, peace follows where the Lordship of Christ is unveiled?

To the storm, the Lord says "Peace! Be still! And the wind ceased and there was a great calm (Mark 4:39). He brings peace to the man who was distraught: crying out cutting himself (Mark 5:5). Christ the Lord brings him to a place where he is sitting clothed and in his right mind (Mark 5:15).

To a woman who has suffered for years, He says, "Go in peace, and be healed of your disease (Mark 4:34).

And in a home, where there is weeping and loud wailing, He says, 'Little girl, I say to you, arise! (Mark 4:38, 41). When he leaves, peace has been restored.

Where Christ reigns, peace always follows. These two things are brought together in one of the best-known verses in the Christmas story:

Of the increase of his government and of peace there will be no end – Isaiah 9:7

Here's what that means for us: The way to know greater peace in your life is to submit yourself more fully to the Lordship of Christ.

Is there someone here today and your soul is tearing itself apart? There's something you want, and you don't have it?

There's only one answer. There's only one way to peace for you. Submit your hopes, your dreams, and your desires to Christ as the Sovereign Lord: Learn to say Your will be done!

Of the increase of His government and of peace there will be no end! The more you submit your life to His government, the more you will enjoy His peace.

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