

Meet Jesus: As nature responds to his voice

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[0 : 00] You might like to turn to Mark's Gospel. Mark's Gospel and we're in chapter 4, reading from verse 35.

It's on page 839. Mark chapter 4 from verse 35. 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 other boats were with him. And a great windstorm arose, and the waves were breaking into the boat, so that the boat was already filling.

But he was in the stern, asleep on the cushion. And they woke him and said, teacher, do you not care that we are perishing? 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. He said to them, why are you so afraid? Have you still no faith? And they were filled with great fear, and said to one another, who then is this, that even wind and sea obey him?

[1 : 22] Well, this passage is all about the identity of Jesus. And we'll see that from verse 41.

If you look there at verse 41, do you see what they say? And they were filled with great fear, and said to one another, who then is this, that even the wind and sea obey him?

Who then is this? And we know, don't we? We know that he's God's son, he's the promised Messiah, and he's bringing in the new creation. We say, you know, the reason that he can control nature is that he created the whole show, and he's running it.

That's who he is. Yes, friends, we do know, don't we? The Christians amongst us, we know who Jesus is. At least, well, at least in theory.

Yes, friends, we know who he is, but isn't our sin, think about this, isn't our sin testimony to what? To an inadequate understanding, isn't it?

[2 : 29] We choose to ignore him in some area of our lives, you and me. Yes, we do. And so, well, he's got up to a certain point.

He's the God of our salvation, but, well, we get a bit muddled at times, don't we? Is that your life? It's my life. I know that to be true. Sin.

Think about this. Sin is choosing our own wisdom rather than his, isn't it? It's effectively thinking that we're God in this particular situation.

And so, well, there's none of us here today who are a long way from this fishing boat on the Sea of Galilee. Am I right? And so we need, you and me, we need to meet Jesus afresh, do you see?

To get into that boat and encounter the shock of these disciples as they're working out who Jesus is. And aren't they shocked and afraid? So let's go with them to this encounter with Jesus.

[3 : 36] And look, first of all, chapter 4 and verse 35 on page 839. Just look at the first three words. They're sort of connecting words, aren't they?

They're connected to the previous passage. On that day. And what day is that that Mark's thinking about? Well, it's the day that Jesus was teaching in parables about his kingdom.

Do you remember? The growth of the kingdom through his word. And this was the day that also that Jesus was so engulfed with a crowd, chapter 4, verse 1, that he had to actually get into a fishing boat to teach them on the shore.

What a day. So he's tired, isn't he, Jesus, and in need of rest and sleep. Tony Blair was recently criticised for allocating £12.3 million to buy two private executive jets to ferry him, the government, and the royal family to and from venues.

Well, with Jesus, it's a fishing boat. And we see there verse 35. Look with me. On that day, when evening had come, he said to them, Let us go across to the other side.

[4 : 51] And leaving the crowd, they took him with them in the boat, just as he was. And the other boats were with him. So they're there in this boat.

Jesus and the other disciples and other boats were with them as well. Sounds a little bit like a flotilla, doesn't it? Can you imagine the scene? You know, he can hardly escape the crowds, even at sea.

Perhaps it was a little bit like when Ellen MacArthur came home. Do you remember her sailing around the world? 71 days. It was a record solo circumnavigation of the world.

And when she came back, she was surrounded by well-wishers in boats and the press. You know, it was a flotilla of people all around. And Jesus, listen, is the major event of planet Earth.

People know they're onto something. Even at sea, boats are around. You know, this isn't some made-up religion by a maverick in a cave somewhere. You know, writing all sorts of strange things on a scroll.

[5 : 53] No, this is out in the open, in your face, revelation. You know, think about this. This flotilla, you could have probably seen it on satellite pictures.

Big event. So he sets out, doesn't he? Leaving the crowds on the shore. And for Jesus, well, he's exhausted. Puts his head on that pillow, doesn't he?

I guess it's a little bit like a sleeper train leaving Glasgow Central for St. Pancras. Something like that. But we know, don't we? We know that Jesus will be soon awakened.

And the drama, it all ends, look at the end of the passage, verse 41. It all ends with verse 41. In verse 41, we have professional fishermen.

And what are they in verse 41? They're terrified. Just imagine, just imagine that we've lost verses 35 to 40. We've only got verse 41 to go on.

[6 : 52] You know, we get a camera shot of verse 41, these trembling fishermen. And we jump into the verse 41 boat. Why are you so afraid? We ask them. And we follow their eyes and we see what's frightening them.

And what is it that's frightening them? Is it the gales? No. It's a calm sea. And they're terrified. Calm sea. No wind. And they're absolutely terrified.

You know, the radio going in the background. It's the shipping forecast. Do you remember the shipping forecast on the radio? I don't think we have it so much these days. Dogger.

Fisher. German bike. Gale Force 10 on the radio. Sea of Galilee. Calm. No wind. And on that boat, we're not listening to preaching by Jesus.

No. Just the panting of the disciples as they try to get their breath back. And those drooping sails on the boat. Think about it. Communicating without words.

[7 : 51] We take the scene in and we know, don't we, that something strange has happened. Someone has just controlled the planet. And Mark, think about this, he's inviting us into that boat to meet this Jesus.

So we've got two points. Our first point is, does Jesus care about me? And our second point is, isn't he just a good teacher? So our first point, does Jesus care about me?

A few of us from St. George's Tron, we recently had a little bit of training on counselling those with terminal illness. The fact is, friends, we're all suffering terminally.

Paul says that, doesn't he, in Romans. Chapter 5, verse 12, I'll read it to you. Therefore, just as sin came into the world through one man and death through sin, and so death spread to all men because all sinned, says the Apostle Paul.

Yes, we, well, we like to avoid the reality, don't we? The world tries to mask over its biggest problem. But we're all sliding towards it.

[9 : 03] Yes, we are, you and me. The NHS. Well, it seems to churn out statistics these days, doesn't it? I was looking in the Herald on Friday, and the latest thing was, check out your GP, telling us how to check out the statistics of the various GPs.

But one statistic I've never seen published is that 100% of patients eventually die, don't they? I suppose governments wouldn't like to publish that.

Maybe it would lose an election if we were to see the reality of the situation. Mark says, though, he talks into our plight, Mark. Chapter 1, verse 15, he says, I've got some good news for you.

And what's his good news? His good news is that Jesus has visited planet Earth. And we ask the Bible, we say, why did Jesus visit us? And the answer is to deal with death, to reverse it.

And friends, that's the whole plot line of the Bible. Have you ever thought about that? The whole plot line of the Bible is to give us life.

[10 : 09] Wow! How utterly relevant that is, don't you think? Speaks right into our most serious problem. You know, why doesn't the whole of Buchanan Street come pouring through the doors to hear a message about the satisfaction of their greatest need?

And so, friends, you have in your hands, what do you have in your hands? Yes, it's the word of God. And it's victory, isn't it? It's victory over our biggest problem.

Oh, death, where is your victory? Oh, death, where is your sting, says Paul. So Jesus walks planet Earth, doesn't he? And all the time, he's on his way to die in order to give us life.

Isaiah writes 700 years before he turns up. The Lord has laid on him the iniquity of us all. And so, friends, look at verse 38.

Verse 38 is an insult to Jesus. Do you see what they say? Can you see it? Verse 38. Teacher. What do they say? Teacher, do you not care that we are perishing?

[11 : 23] Of course he cares. As his blood dribbles down from the cross for us. As he takes the sin and the wrath that that would otherwise attract on the cross.

Yes, he cares. This is love, says the Apostle John in his first letter, that he laid down his life for us. And so these disciples here in this passage, in the midst of a storm, they're overwhelmed with fear and they get all confused about Jesus and his mission.

And isn't that us at times, friends? Is that you? It's me sometimes. Despite knowing more than these disciples here, we think he doesn't care about our particular situation.

And so, you know, we end up dealing with it according to what? According to our own understanding and priorities. Or rather, our misunderstanding.

You know, he died for us. Yet, well, when things seem to go against us, we can so easily find ourselves with the disciples, can't we? Saying, don't you care?

[12 : 33] It's so easily done that. And so, friends, what does Jesus say to us this lunchtime? And we'll see that in verse 40. Just look there at verse 40.

He says to us this lunchtime, why are you so afraid? Have you still no faith? And perhaps that's a particular pertinent word for someone today.

You know, he's speaking exactly into your situation this day. So Jesus does care, friends, doesn't he? Yes, he does. And the Bible, where does it direct us?

The Bible directs us to the cross, doesn't it? As Jesus dies. Where we have the ultimate expression of care. Think about it. This is how much he cares.

Firstly, he went through the ultimate in breakdown of relationships, didn't he? Do you remember? Eloi, Eloi, lama sabachthani. My God, my God.

[13 : 31] Why have you forsaken me? And then, secondly, it was the worst suffering that this world has ever known. Yes, you and I, we do suffer.

We do suffer. Of course we do. But Jesus suffered our hell to remove it from our account. Do you see?

That is, friend, if you're trusting in him. When we were, when I went down to London to Oak Hill College, we used to have a morning service every morning, Monday to Friday.

And I remember the very first morning service. And we sang a song. We sang a song. I'll just read it to you. It's about, by Christopher Idol. I've not actually heard it sung here in this church.

I'll read verse 3 to you. When you stumbled up the road, you walked for me, O Lord. When you took your deadly load, the heavy tree, O Lord. When they lifted you on high, and they nailed you up to die.

[14 : 33] And when the darkness filled the sky, it was for me, O Lord. And it was for you. He cares for you that much, friend. He cares for you that much.

And then he rose, didn't he? He rose from the dead to give you something that you can't get from this world. Listen, a future orientation.

A certain hope. Looking forward to the new creation. Eternal life with him that can never be threatened or take away. I think that's the ultimate in care, isn't it?

To be safe with your creator. Think about that for all of eternity. To have all your needs met in him. The tribulations of these times are nothing to be compared to the glory that is to be revealed to you, says the Apostle Paul.

And we want to shout that passage, don't we, into this boat for the disciples to hear. So as he slept, tired, he was on a mission to die, wasn't he, Jesus? And little did they know, as he slept with his head on that cushion, that they had listened.

[15 : 42] Not only an exodus out of the storm, but an exodus out of this mixed up world and into a new creation.

And today, the eyes of faith, we can look into verse 38. And we could almost take a snapshot of verse 38, you know, and frame it.

There's a scene of havoc all around. The disciples looking at each other with terror in their eyes. But Jesus, asleep on the cushion. And we could print just one word beneath.

The caption is Exodus. That's what he's up to. Exodus. Removing us from all the distress and all the storms that this life can throw at us.

And bringing us ultimately into the new creation. Yes, friends, this is the care that the disciples couldn't see. And today, well, he's not in the boat today, is he?

[16 : 39] We know that. Not in the boat. But through the worst that this world can throw at you. He's not in the boat, but he's in yourself, isn't he?

Through his spirit. If you're a Christian today, this Jesus lives in you. And so that was our first point. Does Jesus care about me? And our second point is, isn't he just a good teacher?

Well, he is indeed a good teacher, isn't he? And that's what they all noticed in chapter 1, verse 27. And he also has power to heal. Chapter 1, verse 31.

And he forgives sins. Do you remember when he forgave the sin of the paralytic? He was lowered down, wasn't he? Through the roof. And Jesus went straight to his greatest problem. The Pharisee says, who is this?

You know, who can forgive sins but God alone? But in the panic, the disciples, well, they just go back, don't they, to the familiar category of teacher.

[17 : 36] Did you see that there in verse 38? Teacher, do you not care that we are perishing? Teacher, do you not care? But then they encountered, didn't they, listen, his miraculous power over nature.

Think about this. Those fishermen, listen, they saw his godness, didn't they? When he calmed the storm. And for a few moments, his godness was on full display.

His full divinity on display. You know, we can often come across all sorts of strange teaching, can't we? Especially if you go up and down Buchanan Street.

But when someone reorders nature, we're suddenly into a different category, aren't we? We've moved into the realm of what God? Only God could do such a thing. Think about this.

This is what only the creator of the universe could undertake. Is he just a teacher? Absolutely not. This is revelation.

[18 : 39] He's operating as God, forgiving sins, fulfilling scripture, ordering the creation. Friends, we have a glimpse of something here, don't we?

What is it? Just think about this. Think about this. What would the world be like if we were to universalize this power that Jesus is exhibiting?

Universalize it and bring it from a little moment in time to all of eternity. Extend it to the whole of eternity. What would it be like? What sort of environment would that be?

And the new creation comes cascading into our thinking, doesn't it? Here is someone with that sort of power and, listen, intent. A teacher, you know, or a prophet alone might be interesting, a fascinating phenomenon.

You know, he might attract the religious to follow him, but he can't accept God's wrath for you. He can't raise you from the dead. He can't bring in the new creation to meet you, Revelation chapter 21.

[19 : 50] And here, in the boat, we have the person who can do all of that. And so, who are you going to trust? Asks Jesus. And we're forced back to verse 40.

He said, what does he say? Why are you so afraid? Have you still no faith? Shall we pray? Dear Heavenly Father, we thank you so much for sending your Son, Jesus Christ, into this world.

We thank you that he joined our plight. He became one of us. He breathed the breath that he first breathed into Adam. And then he rose again from the dead.

Breathing the first breath of the new creation and bringing that in to all those who trust in him. We thank you, Father, that you were able to take our sin on that cross.

And deal with all of our rebellion. We thank you for this great mystery that's unfolded here. So we pray, Father, in consequence, that we would indeed trust you.

[21 : 03] We would have faith in you and your Son, Jesus Christ. And even through the worst that this world can throw at us, we pray that we'd look to him and we'd see the future orientation that it is to be one of your children in your kingdom.

So we pray that you'd go with us now, Father, and you'd help us to live out what it is to be yours. And we lift our prayer to you in Christ's name.

Amen. Amen. So thank you for coming. And the bookstall is open. And there's also quite a lot of CDs, a selection of CDs over there.

You're welcome to come and browse. Thank you. Thank you. Thank you.

Thank you.