**The Gospel of Mark Sermon #4**

**Miracles of Jesus**

Theme of Mark:

Jesus: Messiah and Son of God: suffering servant and savior of mankind.

Theme verse: Mark 10:45 For even the Son of Man did not come to be served, but to serve, and to give his life as a ransom for many.

Mark 4:35-41 Jesus just finished telling the Parable of the Mustard Seed.

A huge storm. Boat nearly swamped. (intense squalls are not that uncommon at the Sea of Galilee/Tiberias) What is Jesus doing? Sleeping. Don’t you care? You are not worrying enough!!!

Q: Does he care? Of course he does!!!!! Caring does not = worrying.

Q: What does this tell you about Jesus? He has great trust in God.

Leading this small church, all kinds of stuff happens. Eve was sharing with Jan yesterday…

Q: Do you trust God to take care of you as he will—whether it means blessings or struggles?

What does Jesus say to those of us who are all upset? “Quiet! Be Still!!!”

Psalm 46:10 “Be still and know that I am God.”

v. 40 A great question: Why are you so afraid? Do you have faith or not?

4:41 They were terrified. Who is this guy?

Why such a reaction? Had Jesus not healed, turned water to wine, etc… To us, these are all the same, but when Jesus calmed the storm….

Jesus has power over nature. To an agrarian society this is a blow-away.

So many of the “gods” were gods of nature. Jesus calmed a storm!!!!

Do you get it? Are there any “storms” in your life right now? Have you had some sleepless nights?

If you are like Jesus, you can sleep like a baby. Why? Because you know that it is not up to you. You are not in control. God is.

Heb 13:5 “Never will I leave you, never will I forsake you. So we say with confidence, The Lord is my helper; I will not be afraid. What can mere mortals do to me?”

Q: Do you believe that Jesus really did this—that he calmed a great squall by saying “Quiet! Be still!”?

Four logical possibilities:

1. He neither worked miracles at all, nor claimed to work miracles.

2. He claimed to work great miracles, but was a charlatan.

3. He worked genuine miracles, but he was a sorcerer/worked for Satan. (as his enemies claimed in Matthew 12:24-29)

4. He worked genuine miracles and they validate his claims.

Reasons to believe that Jesus did in fact work wonders, signs and miracles.

1. A great number of the miracles were done publicly, often in front of the greatest skeptics and harshest critics of Jesus. Acts 2:22 “As you yourselves know.”

2. There were tens of thousands of eyewitnesses from every background to these events.

3. The apostles openly proclaimed that Jesus worked a great variety of miracles during the lifetime of those who could have refuted the claims. This is a matter of historical record. (This fact is a notable exception to the claims the believers in other great religious leaders have made.)

4. Both Roman and Jewish histories report at least the general fact that Jesus worked “wonders.” (Josephus, Talmud)

Babylonian Talmud (late first or second century AD) Babylonian Sanhedrin43a-b

On the eve of the Passover they hanged Yeshu and the herald went before him for forty days saying [Yeshu] is going forth to be stoned in that he hate practiced sorcery and beguiled and led astray Israel

Josephus:

About this time there lived Jesus, a wise man, for he was one who wrought surprising feats and was a teacher of such people as accept the truth gladly. He won over many Jews and many of the Greeks. When Pilate, upon hearing him accused by men of the highest standing amongst us, had condemned him to be crucified, those who had in the first place come to love him did not give up their affection for him. for the prophets of God had prophesied these and countless other marvelous things about him. And the tribe of Christians, so called after him, has still to this day not disappeared.

5. Because the wonders and signs of Jesus were common knowledge, the Pharisees and Rabbis in the time period in question tended to claim Jesus did his signs by the power of demons, rather than refute that the miracles occurred.

6. Those who recorded the miracles most carefully and thoroughly (the gospel writers) have every appearance of being absolutely reliable and from eyewitnesses. If Jesus was just a man, then these guys are blatant in-your-face liars.

Why did Jesus work miracles?

1. Because he had compassion. Matthew 14:14 He had compassion on them and healed their sick (and fed them as well)

2. To fulfill prophecy. Matthew 12:40 “For as Jonah was three days and three nights in the belly of a huge fish, so the Son of Man will be three days and three nights in the heart of the earth.” Isaiah 35:5-6 Then will the eyes of the blind be opened and the ears of the deaf unstopped. Isaiah 42:6 A light to the nations, in order to open blind eyes, to bring out prisoners from the dungeon…

3. To validate his message. John 10:36-39

“Do not believe me unless I do what my Father does. But if I do it, even though you do not believe me, believe the miracles, that you may learn and understand that the Father is in me and I in the Father.”

4. As a response to faith. Matthew 8:8-13 centurion Matt 15:21-28 dogs

5. Out of submission to his mom. John 2:1-11.

The Miracles Jesus Did Not Do.

Q: If you had been Jesus, what miracles would you have done?

Jesus had great power with miraculous restraint.

1. Meeting his own needs. Jesus never did a miracle to feed himself (even after 40 days, even when tempted by Satan to do it), to make nice clothing, to make himself less tired…. John 4:6 tired. John 19:28 Jesus thirsty. Mark 11:12, Luke 4:3-4 hungry

Implications: Jesus fully accepted his being made human.

2. Working miracles in order to convince the hard-hearted.

Jesus did not try to take advantage of his position of power to force people to believe.

“And he did not do many miracles there [in Nazareth] because of their lack of faith. Matthew 13:55-58. Miracles can encourage a nascent faith, but should not be used to manipulate the emotions of non-believers.

3. Work a miracle because of a challenge to do so. God cannot be manipulated. Jesus never took the bait to defend his pride. Ex.: Satan in the wilderness.

Matthew 12:38-41 Then some of the Pharisees and teachers of the law said to him, “Teacher, we want to see a miraculous sign from you.”

Will Jesus take the bait?

He answered, “A wicked and adulterous generation asks for a miraculous sign! But none will be given it except the sign of the prophet Jonah. For as Jonah was three days and three nights in the belly of a huge fish, so the Son of Man will be three days and three nights in the heart of the earth. The men of Nineveh will stand up at the judgment with this generation and condemn it; for they repented at the preaching of Jonah, and now one greater than Jonah is here.”

4. Judgment miracle. (I did not come to judge the world but to save it.) Jesus did not retaliate.

The scene in Luke 9:52–56 serves as a good example of the attitude of the apostles.

They went into a Samaritan village to get things ready for him, but the people there did not welcome him, because he was heading for Jerusalem. When the disciples James and John saw this, they asked, “Lord, do you want us to call fire down from heaven to destroy this village?” But Jesus turned and rebuked them, and they went to another village.

5. Jesus did not force people’s will or take away their freedom to choose.

Imagine having the ability to force people to love you or to serve you or to die for you!

God is serious about giving us free will. Satan has no such ethical standard!

6. Jesus did not end the crucifixion. Jesus was willingly killed, and willingly took on the sins of the whole world.

What do we learn from this miracle that Jesus did not do?

We learn that Jesus loves us,

that he respects our freedom,

that he accepted his humanity (he did not consider equality with God something to be clung onto)

that he willingly died for our sins

Mark 5:1-20 Parable of the demon-possessed man

Gerasenes on the East side of Sea of Galilee This man was very scary!!!

v. 6-8 Demons know who Jesus is when people do not.

What do I learn from this parable?

Demons are real.

Demons can have power over people.

But… Jesus has power over the demon world. We do not need to fear.

Jesus has compassion on Gentiles as well as Jews

Mark 4:35-41 Jesus has power over nature

Mark 5:1-20 Jesus has power over the spiritual world/demons

v. 16-17 They were more worried about their income than that the man had been healed.