

Sermon Based Small Group

Series: "More. Jesus." (Gospel of Mark)

Title: "It's [Not That] Complicated"

Scripture: Mark 4:35-41

Date: February 24, 2019

Introduction

- Share a recent experience of ...
 - "I shoulda seen it coming;" or
 - "It was way less complicated than I feared it would be;" or
 - "I'm not taking it on because I'm afraid it might get too complicated."

Reviewing the Teaching

- What stood out to you as a potentially significant takeaway in this week's teaching?
 - Why did it stand out?
 - How does it relate to you in your life situation now?
- This teaching claimed to "de-complexify" what we sometimes think of as intimidating or impossible, or perhaps irrelevant -- living out God's word into real life.
 - Did it do that for you?
 - What questions do you still have?
 - What is the biggest hurdle you face in living it out?
- More...Jesus: What was your situation when you asked the question, "Teacher, don't you even care that we are about to die?" Did God bring you to the point where you saw that faith was simply living as if Jesus is in the boat?
- Sower...Seed...Soil. God, His Word, My Heart.
 - The stilling of the storm translates the Parable of the Sower from theory to life. Dirt is dirty! When Jesus sowed the word of the storm into the disciples' hearts, the lesson was tough, visceral. The disciples saw the Word of God, incarnate in Jesus, in a terrifying new way. Jesus planted the word that He is with us in the storm, the disciples only saw the storm.
 - How did you react to Jesus calling the disciples cowardly? How about His lack of compassion?
 - What is the lesson we learn when Jesus demonstrates that He is Lord over chaos, over uncontrollable storms at sea?
- What is the significance of the phrase "on that day" (v. 35)? (It was the same day as he taught the parable of the soil. He's now putting the teaching into practice)
- Why were the disciples terrorized in verse 41? There is a deep fear that comes when we find ourselves in the presence of God. In Isaiah 6, Isaiah saw His sinfulness and unworthiness to be in God's presence. What was behind the disciples fear?

Digging Deeper

- Read one of the following passages from the Scriptures the disciples of Jesus knew and claimed to believe. If these passages had come to their mind during the storm, how might they have helped them “work with their minds” in a way that Jesus would not have had to say to them, “Why are you so afraid? Do you still have no faith?”
 - Psalm 107:1-3; 23-32
 - Psalm 46
- Read Jonah 1, and point out the many parallels, but more particularly the contrasts, between Jonah 1 and the storm passage in our text today. Given the many obvious parallels, what do you think the contrasts between Jonah 1 and Mark 4 are intended to teach the readers (i.e. us!)
- Do you have a “go to” biblical passage that most helps you “live as if Jesus is in the boat?”
- Read Exodus 34:10. Does fear take on a different meaning here? This statement is a lot to chew on, but it is worth the effort:

Since God’s acts, as well as His power and holiness and majesty, not only cause fear, but also demand acknowledgement, the term (fear) in these contexts denotes not mere elementary fear resulting essentially from threat but also fear relating to the author of the threat, so that it becomes reverence and submissive recognition. (TDNT IX, p. 201)
- Fear takes us in one of two directions. Cowering, emotional fear makes us slaves. Fear also leads us to awe and respect. In Proverbs the phrase, “the fear of the Lord is the beginning of wisdom” is continually repeated. Read Exodus 1:15-22 and 18:21. Basically, a God-fearer has chosen to live by the Law. Fear is no longer emotional. It is now something to reflect on. We consider God’s direction for our conduct and do it. The one who fears God is now the one who keeps the Law, the one who is faithful to it. Fear becomes worship and there is nothing to fear! Why does a God-fearer have nothing to fear? How does an intimate relationship with God destroy our fears?
- When we live in awe and respect before God, there is no reason to be afraid of God. He loves and cares for us. When we live in faith, nothing else is to be feared. Is there a time when you took this to heart? Tell the group about it.

Applying it to Life

- The disciples are expert fisherman - yet were afraid on the water. Have you ever been made to look like a fool in an area you are supposedly an expert in?
- The two application questions from the teaching were:
 - Have you let Jesus in the boat?
 - If you’ve done that, when was it, and at what time(s) has that made the most practical difference for you recently?
 - If you haven’t done that, what do you think your biggest resistance factor is?
 - What one way would it make the most difference for you this week if you simply just lived as if Jesus is in the boat?

- Jesus asked, “How is it that you have no faith?” A few verses back, the disciples asked Jesus, “Teacher, do you not care...?” The storm was bad. The disciples could have drowned.
 - What was the disciple’s reaction to fear? Do you think they felt God should not have sent the storm? What else could they have been thinking?
 - How did you react when your storm came along?
- Why is it important that Jesus was in the boat? Did He abandon them in the storm? What would you rather have, no storms or Jesus with you in the storm? Why?
- Is cowardice controlling your life? Are you *afraid* of being faithful?
 - What is one area in your life you are struggling to be faithful?
 - What is stopping you from letting Jesus in the boat?

Prayer

- Begin your prayer today with worship. Praise God for loving you. Praise God for giving direction for your life. Pray with reverence and awe.
- Continue to pray for specific needs in your group.
- Is there something from the message that you would like to pray about?