

Mark

Chapter Five

Introduction

"No Fear" is today's most popular slogan. You see it displayed on clothing and on cars. It represents an in-your-face kind of bravery regardless your circumstances.

The truth of the matter is, "No Fear" is not bravery, it is bravado. *Bravado* is a false sense of courage accompanied by an outward show of defiance. It is bravado because, since these people don't know what the future holds, they can't truly predict how they will handle the future.

You may not know what the future holds, but you can know the One Who holds the future! Knowing that Jesus Christ holds your future, and knowing that He loves you, is the real key to "No Fear."

Our text in chapters four and five of the Gospel of Mark touches four circumstances that strike fear into people. Two involve physical danger, and two involve spiritual danger. These four pretty well sum up all the circumstances you might fear in this life and in the next. They establish that Jesus holds the future - *your* future - and they encourage faith in Him as the basis for having "No Fear."

We want to look at each of these dangers: storms, Satan, suffering, and separation from the body at death.

#1 Have No Fear Of Storms By Faith In Your Savior (4:35-41)

I had a friend once who was taking sailing lessons. One time while I was visiting him in San Clemente, a storm blew in. He grabbed his gear and headed for the marina. He and all the others in his class were waiting for a storm so that they could have a lesson from their instructor in rough weather sailing.

Jesus gave His disciples the ultimate, rough weather sailing lesson as they crossed the Sea of Galilee.

Mark 4:35 On the same day, when evening had come, He said to them, "Let us cross over to the other side."

Mark 4:36 Now when they had left the multitude, they took Him along in the boat as He was. And other little boats were also with Him.

You remember that Jesus had gotten into a boat so He could continue teaching without being crushed by the multitudes. As evening came, He told His disciples to hoist anchor and head across the Sea of Galilee.

Here is an interesting detail. "They took Him along in the boat as He was." They were the fishermen who were familiar with boating; He was a carpenter by trade. But, when the storm hit, they turned to Him for help.

The people you know are often confident in their own abilities to handle things. But eventually some storm will hit their lives, and - if they know you are a Christian - they will turn to you for help.

Mark says, "other little boats were with Him." The Sea of Galilee was dangerous, even for the larger boats. It was especially treacherous for smaller boats. These people, regardless their motives, put themselves at risk to hear Jesus. We, too, should be willing to make every effort to hear the words of Jesus!

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

Mark 4:38 But He was in the stern, asleep on a pillow. And they awoke Him and said to Him, "Teacher, do You not care that we are perishing?"

Mark 4:39 Then He arose and rebuked the wind, and said to the sea, "Peace, be still!" And the wind ceased and there was a great calm.

The boat had taken on water and was sinking. Jesus was asleep. It's a picture of how you should act in life's storms! You may as well sleep, and be at peace, since God is always in control. Fear, though, compelled them to arouse Jesus and to accuse Him of not caring for them. He cut the lesson short. At His command, the wind and the sea immediately became calm.

Mark 4:40 But He said to them, "Why are you so fearful? How is it that you have no faith?"

Jesus applies the lesson. Faith would have overcome their fear. In this case, faith in His Word would have overcome their fear. You see, before they started Jesus said "Let us cross over to the other side." He didn't say, "Let us cross *under* to the other side"! Knowing they were going "over," and not *under* - coupled with the example of Jesus asleep - should have overcome their fear.

Beloved, you have more of God's Word! You have been "...given... exceedingly great and precious promises..."¹ When the storm hit, the disciples ought to have thought back on Jesus' promise to them. When the storms of life hit you, think back on Jesus' promises to you. In fact, search out some promise from God's Word to bring peace in the midst of the storm.

Mark ends this story with a declaration in the form of a question:

Mark 4:41 And they feared exceedingly, and said to one another, "Who can this be, that even the wind and the sea obey Him!"

Mark is doing the work of an evangelist. He tells you that Jesus is God, but he does so in a way that asks you to reflect in your own heart whether you believe it or not. Only God can do what Jesus did; but do *you* believe He is God? And, if you do, have you put your faith in Him to save you?

#2 Have No Fear Of Satan By Faith In Your Savior (5:1-20)

One of my neighbors, a sister in the Lord, thinks that the high schoolers who live next door to me are playing *Dungeons and Dragons*. If they are, they don't really know what they are doing. They are putting themselves in very real danger, giving the devil a foothold in their lives from which to tighten his grip on them and destroy them.

The Bible tells you that there is a personal devil, Satan, loose on the earth today. He, along with a host of fallen angels we call

¹2 Peter 1:4

demons, take unbelievers "captive...to do his will."² The devil and his demons have a host of strategies by which they hold unbelievers captive. You don't have to be demon possessed to be the devil's prisoner.

Demon possession is the ultimate expression of Satan's enslavement, though, so Mark gives you the ultimate example of demon possession.

Mark 5:1 Then they came to the other side of the sea, to the country of the Gadarenes.

Mark 5:2 And when He had come out of the boat, immediately there met Him out of the tombs a man with an unclean spirit,

Mark 5:3 who had his dwelling among the tombs; and no one could bind him, not even with chains,

Mark 5:4 because he had often been bound with shackles and chains. And the chains had been pulled apart by him, and the shackles broken in pieces; neither could anyone tame him.

Mark 5:5 And always, night and day, he was in the mountains and in the tombs, crying out and cutting himself with stones.

These details are real; I don't want to take anything away from their horror. But the truth is, you don't encounter too many unbelievers like this in Kings County. The unbelievers you encounter are no less enslaved, however. Like this demoniac, they are prisoners of the devil's perversions, of the devil's priorities, and of the devil's power.

^They are prisoners of the devil's *perversions*...

The demoniac had "an unclean spirit." "Unclean" means *lewd* or *morally filthy*. That's a good way to describe the perversions that occur all around you, promoted by otherwise "normal" unbelievers.

They are prisoners of the devil's *priorities*...

Not too many unbelievers are living in graveyards. But you'd never know it by their priorities. They are living as if this life were all that mattered; they are ignoring eternity. If this life is your priority, "let us eat and drink, for tomorrow we die."³ Unbelievers might as well live in the graveyard since that is as far as their priorities will take them.

² Timothy 2:26

³ 1 Corinthians 15:32

They are prisoners of the devil's *power*...

The demoniac had supernatural strength to break chains, but the demons within him turned their strength to his destruction as he cut himself with stones. The devil lures many unbelievers with the promise of some power in this life. Often those who achieve power find their lives being destroyed along the way.

Mark describes the encounter with Jesus:

Mark 5:6 When he saw Jesus from afar, he ran and worshiped Him.

Mark 5:7 And he cried out with a loud voice and said, "What have I to do with You, Jesus, Son of the Most High God? I implore You by God that You do not torment me."

Mark 5:8 For He said to him, "Come out of the man, unclean spirit!"

Mark 5:9 Then He asked him, "What is your name?" And he answered, saying, "My name is Legion; for we are many."

The demons recognized Jesus and fell down before Him. Jesus entered into a dialogue with the demons. Many believers look to this account to develop a procedure for casting out demons. Really, the Bible nowhere explains either the physiology or the psychology of demon possession. Scripture only emphasizes Christ's power over demons, not any particular procedure for exercising that power.

There were many demons in this man. A Roman legion was 6,000 men! The word came to mean "a lot." Whether there were 6,000 or not, we don't know; there were enough to affect a herd of 2,000 pigs. Mark is presenting the ultimate example of demon possession to emphasize Satan's ultimate purpose - enslaving unbelievers.

Mark 5:12 So all the demons begged Him, saying, "Send us to the swine, that we may enter them."

Mark 5:13 And at once Jesus gave them permission. Then the unclean spirits went out and entered the swine (there were about two thousand); and the herd ran violently down the steep place into the sea, and drowned in the sea.

No one knows why the demons wanted to go into the pigs. The text doesn't say, and anything anyone says is pure speculation. Jesus must have known the effect they would have on the herd. He allowed them to enter the herd to reveal something important: Demon possession is not the only way that Satan enslaves unbelievers.

Mark 5:14 So those who fed the swine fled, and they told it in the city and in the country. And they went out to see what it was that had happened.

Mark 5:15 Then they came to Jesus, and saw the one who had been demon-possessed and had the legion, sitting and clothed and in his right mind. And they were afraid.

Mark 5:16 And those who saw it told them how it happened to him who had been demon-possessed, and about the swine.

Mark 5:17 Then they began to plead with Him to depart from their region.

It is generally agreed by Bible teachers that these men were Jews who were raising pigs despite the prohibitions of the Levitical dietary laws. At any rate, the loss of the herd was a substantial financial setback for them. The physical cost of having Jesus around was more important to them than the spiritual cures He offered. They would rather the man remained possessed as long as they had their possessions! Their own desire for possessions held them captive.

Mark 5:18 And when He got into the boat, he who had been demon-possessed begged Him that he might be with Him.

Mark 5:19 However, Jesus did not permit him, but said to him, "Go home to your friends, and tell them what great things the Lord has done for you, and how He has had compassion on you."

Mark 5:20 And he departed and began to proclaim in Decapolis all that Jesus had done for him; and all marveled.

Jesus respected their wishes for Him to leave. The Lord must be welcomed, He must be invited. He won't force Himself on you.

The former demoniac was ready to go anywhere with Jesus. Jesus sent him home - to family, friends, and neighbors in the ten city area known as "Decapolis." Jesus first sends you home...

You are to have no fear of Satan! Your Savior has authority over him. Satan is bound within the boundaries God sets. Though he seeks to entrap and even enslave you, he is only a tool in God's hands to further establish your faith.

#3 Have No Fear Of Suffering By Faith In Your Savior (5:21-34)

Thursday a woman in our fellowship, already battling cancer, was told she might have a tumor on her liver. As she spoke with me she expressed no fear - only faith in her Lord and Savior, Jesus Christ! Subsequently she found out it was cancer, and now she's looking toward living out her last few months on earth.

On His way to Jairus' house, Jesus is interrupted by a suffering woman. Let's concentrate on her for a moment.

Mark 5:21 Now when Jesus had crossed over again by boat to the other side, a great multitude gathered to Him; and He was by the sea.

Mark 5:22 And behold, one of the rulers of the synagogue came, Jairus by name. And when he saw Him, he fell at His feet

Mark 5:23 and begged Him earnestly, saying, "My little daughter lies at the point of death. Come and lay Your hands on her, that she may be healed, and she will live."

Mark 5:24 So Jesus went with him, and a great multitude followed Him and thronged Him.

Mark 5:25 Now a certain woman had a flow of blood for twelve years,

Mark 5:26 and had suffered many things from many physicians. She had spent all that she had and was no better, but rather grew worse.

Mark 5:27 When she heard about Jesus, she came behind Him in the crowd and touched His garment.

Mark 5:28 For she said, "If only I may touch His clothes, I shall be made well."

Mark 5:29 Immediately the fountain of her blood was dried up, and she felt in her body that she was healed of the affliction.

The "flow of blood" was probably from her womb. In addition to her physical suffering, such bleeding made her ceremonially unclean and an outcast from Jewish social life. She suffered, too, by the many cures she had paid for at the hands of physicians and so-called physicians.

She pressed through the crowd to touch Jesus. Perhaps there are crowds in your life that hinder you from reaching the Lord: The crowd of unbelief, or of busyness, or of entertainments, or of activities, or of embarrassment. Press through the crowds of your life, through all the things that are blocking you from Him.

The woman with the flow of blood was immediately healed at the "fountain." That means the source of her suffering was healed - not just the symptoms.

Mark 5:30 And Jesus, immediately knowing in Himself that power had gone out of Him, turned around in the crowd and said, "Who touched My clothes?"

Mark 5:31 But His disciples said to Him, "You see the multitude thronging You, and You say, 'Who touched Me?'"

Mark 5:32 And He looked around to see her who had done this thing.

Mark 5:33 But the woman, fearing and trembling, knowing what had happened to her, came and fell down before Him and told Him the whole truth.

Mark 5:34 And He said to her, "Daughter, your faith has made you well. Go in peace, and be healed of your affliction."

At the risk of being misunderstood, I must say that faith releases God's power. Faith is *not* a power, or a force, that you simply tap into at will. But faith does release God's power. It may release His power to endure suffering, or - as was the case here - the power to end suffering. That decision is God's.

Jesus elicited a public testimony from the woman. Sometime or another expect to be in a crowd where the Lord calls upon *you* to say something about how He has changed your life.

"Faith" alone didn't "make her well." After all, she had for years put her faith in other physicians with their remedies. Faith in Jesus alone made her well!

"No Fear" of your suffering comes from putting your faith in your faithful Savior.

#4 Have No Fear Of Sleep By Faith In Your Savior (5:35-43)

The Bible frequently describes physical death as "sleep." When you are asleep, you will awaken again. When your body dies, it will rise again. Only your body "sleeps" in this way; your soul, your spirit, do not ever sleep. When your soul and spirit are absent from the body at death, they are immediately present with the Lord in heaven - conscious, awake, and aware. If you are an unbeliever, your soul is immediately in Hades at death - conscious, awake, and aware of an eternity of punishment that awaits you for having rejected Jesus as your Savior. So, you see, the believer can have "No Fear" of death. That's why Jesus once said,

Matthew 10:28 "And do not fear those who kill the body but cannot kill the soul. But rather fear Him who is able to destroy both soul and body in hell."

Jesus conquers death, and He proves it by raising Jairus' daughter.

In verse twenty-two we read that Jairus was "one of the rulers of the synagogue." Before the year 586 BC, virtually all Jews lived within one hundred miles of the Temple at Jerusalem, so they all worshipped there. In 586 BC, the Jews were carried away into

Babylon and held captive for seventy years. No longer able to worship in the Temple, they established synagogues in every neighborhood that had ten Jewish men or more. The synagogue became the place of assembly, where they would worship and study the Scriptures. Each synagogue had ten leaders who were called elders. Of those ten, one was elected to be the ruler. He was a tremendously important man, not only in their ceremonies, but in all civic matters.⁴

Jairus risked his position in the synagogue, and his place in society, because his daughter was sick. God is faithful to send severe mercies into the lives of unbelievers.

We pick up the story in verse thirty-five:

Mark 5:35 While He was still speaking, some came from the ruler of the synagogue's house who said, "Your daughter is dead. Why trouble the Teacher any further?"

Jairus must have been discouraged! If only Jesus hadn't stopped to help the suffering woman, his own daughter might have been healed. How often do we get discouraged when we see God touching someone else's life while our own answers to prayer are delayed.

Mark 5:36 As soon as Jesus heard the word that was spoken, He said to the ruler of the synagogue, "Do not be afraid; only believe."

We are prone to believe the words of men while doubting the word of God! Jesus had indicated, by starting out for Jairus' house, that He would heal her. The little girl's death didn't change anything as far as Jesus was concerned.

Mark 5:37 And He permitted no one to follow Him except Peter, James, and John the brother of James.

Mark 5:38 Then He came to the house of the ruler of the synagogue, and saw a tumult and those who wept and wailed loudly.

Mark 5:39 When He came in, He said to them, "Why make this commotion and weep? The child is not dead, but sleeping."

Mark 5:40 And they ridiculed Him. But when He had put them all outside, He took the father and the mother of the child, and those who were with Him, and entered where the child was lying.

⁴Jon Courson, *Matthew*, Vol. 1, p. 230.

The mourners quickly turned to mockers. These were professional mourners - hired to intensify the emotion at a Jewish funeral. How do you act at a funeral? Be yourself! If the person asleep was a believer - Smile!

Today, CNN, ABC, CBS, and NBC would all want to cover a resurrection! Jesus put everyone out except the parents and Peter, James, and John. Jesus is not into making public spectacles of His tender care. There is a time for testimony - as we saw with the woman who touched His garment. But we need to remain sensitive to the people we minister to and not use them for our own glory. Famous people who "get saved" fit into this category...

Mark 5:41 Then He took the child by the hand, and said to her, "Talitha, cumi," which is translated, "Little girl, I say to you, arise."

Mark 5:42 Immediately the girl arose and walked, for she was twelve years of age. And they were overcome with great amazement.

Mark 5:43 But He commanded them strictly that no one should know it, and said that something should be given her to eat.

Scripture records three people who died and were raised by Jesus: Jairus' daughter, a widow's son, and Lazarus. Following her resurrection, Jairus' daughter was hungry. Following his resurrection, the widow's son began to speak (Luke 7:15). Following his resurrection, Lazarus came forth walking (John 11:44).

These same three things characterize those who are spiritually resurrected when they are born-again! They hunger for God's Word, they talk to others about the Lord, and they walk no longer bound by sin.⁵

Jesus is Lord over death. Have "No Fear" of sleep. The Apostle Paul said, in Philippians 1:23, that he had "...a desire to depart and be with Christ, which is far better."

Conclusion

Storms, Satan, suffering, and separation from the body strike fear into people. Only a believer, by faith in Jesus, can have "No Fear."

⁵Ibid., p. 238.

Truth is, we are often afraid in these circumstances. I know I am. But I'm not discouraged!

If you are afraid in one of these areas today, then you have what Jesus sometimes calls "little faith." *But even little faith can move mountains!*⁶

Your circumstance was designed for you by God with your little faith in mind. It is already enough for you to conquer your fear.

Little faith is enough for "No Fear."

⁶Matthew 17:20