

## **Glory in His Face: God-Man**

**Mark 4:35-41**

**By [David Strain](#)**

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This evening we are beginning a new series of sermons looking at the person and the work of Christ. The title for the series is, *Glory In His Face*. The title comes from Paul's discussion of the way that the Gospel of Jesus Christ changes us, in 2 Corinthians chapters 3 and 4. In 2 Corinthians 3:18, Paul says this. "And we all, with unveiled face, beholding the glory of the Lord, are being transformed into the same image from one degree of glory to another." And then later he tells us where to look to see the glory of the Lord. In the next chapter, he says in verse 6, "For God who said, 'Let light shine out of darkness,' has shown in our hearts to give us the light of the knowledge of the glory of God" - where? - "in the face of Jesus Christ." Glory in His face. You see what Paul is telling us? He is saying to the degree that we behold the glory of the Lord, to that same degree, we will be transformed into His image. If you want to be more like Christ you must dwell long and look intently and gaze into the glory of the Lord shining out towards us in His face, that is, in His person and in His work.

And so we are going to spend the next eight weeks or so, God willing, working mainly from the Gospel accounts looking at different facets of the person and the work of the Lord Jesus. And tonight we are making a beginning by thinking about the perfect union of deity and humanity - joined but not confused, united but not mixed, in the single person of the Lord Jesus. To help us do that would you turn with me now please to Mark's gospel, chapter 4? Mark's gospel chapter 4, and we're going to be reading from verses 35 through the end of the chapter. You'll find that on page 839 in the church Bibles. Before we read, would you bow your heads with me as we go to God together in prayer? Let us pray.

*Our Father, we would take the truth that Paul teaches us that You change us as we gaze on the transforming glory of the Lord in the mirror of Holy Scripture, shining in the face of Jesus Christ, and plead it before Your throne now that by this portion of Your Word You might so show us Christ that we might be drawn to trust Him anew, to flee every empty idol, and receive and rest on Him alone as He is offered to us this evening in the Gospel. For we ask it in Jesus' holy name, amen.*

Mark's gospel chapter 4. We are reading from verse 35. This is the holy and inerrant Word of the living God:

On that day, when evening had come, he (that is, Jesus) 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 to him, "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 the wind and the sea obey him?"

Amen and we praise God that He has spoken to us in His holy, inerrant, and sufficient Word. May He write its eternal truth upon all our hearts.

### **Our Tendency: Doubting and Blaming the Savior**

When I was a boy growing up in Glasgow, I was a member of a uniformed Christian boy's organization sponsored by the local parish church of Scotland called, The Boys Brigade. The Boys Brigade hymn was sung as loudly as it was thoughtlessly by this spotty, unconcerned Glasgow youth, but years later, the words of that hymn continue to circulate often when I need them most, to my great comfort. They express a great truth. Let me read to you the verse, the first verse, and the chorus. It goes like this:

"Will your anchor hold in the storms of life? When the clouds unfold their wings of strife, when the strong tides lift and the cables strain, will your anchor drift or firm remain? We have an Anchor that keeps the soul, steadfast and sure while the billows roll. Fastened to the Rock which cannot move; grounded firm and deep in the Savior's love."

It's a hymn that expresses a vital Christian principle. It reminds us, that in Jesus Christ, if we are believers, we are secure. Those are not words, however, you would have been likely to hear echoing across the Sea of Galilee late one night over the roar of the wind and the waves as a small group of disciples shouted boisterously their lines of confidence and faith above the dent of the storm, not at all. In fact, if you were to listen carefully that night you might hear instead shouts of dismay; perhaps even an angry rebuke aimed at Jesus, who was in the boat with the disciples, asleep at the stern. "Teacher, don't you care that we are perishing?" Sadly, the disciples' question that night exposes what can often be the default setting of our hearts when the crisis strikes, when things start to go terribly wrong. So often our first response isn't confidence in the secure anchorage of our souls, in Christ alone, but in panic, even mounting suspicion that, "If God really cared, if He really loved me, He'd not leave me to this trial."

That's what the disciples were saying to Jesus that night, wasn't it? You catch the note of almost hysteria in their voices as they exaggerate their situation. And notice how, like God's people throughout the ages, they resort first of all to blame. You remember Adam in the Garden. "The woman you gave me, she told me to eat and I ate." You remember Israel in the wilderness. "Why did you bring us up out of Egypt to kill us, and our livestock and our children with thirst?" And here are the Twelve in the boat. "We are perishing in this boat, Teacher, and you don't care!" Isn't that how it goes with us sometimes, when we find ourselves in the crisis, acute and sore and overwhelming? We feel the limits of our own ability to manage have been reached, even surpassed. Isn't that a temptation to feel like the disciples here, sinking, going down? We can't cope, and we've been tempted to wonder, "Where is the Lord when I need Him? Why isn't He listening? Doesn't He know how hard this is, how scared I am, how bankrupt I feel to deal with it? Don't You care that we are perishing?"

What I want you to be sure that you do not miss is the way that the Word of God in our text this evening speaks to our fearful hearts. The Scriptures know that the deep patterns of sin that penetrate to the very roots of our personalities, cannot be dealt with by trite clichés or by pious platitudes. Nothing but the highest doctrine can address our deepest fear. Nothing but the richest theology can answer the subtle unbeliefs that lurk in the labyrinth of our hearts. And so our simple six verse text shows us on the one hand, ourselves, mirrored in the fearful accusations of the disciples. But it also shows us and leads us into a consideration of what is perhaps the highest mystery in the whole encyclopedia of Christian truth. The great mystery of Christ's two natures, adhering in a single, unified person. This, Mark 4 says, is the great help to fearful hearts. This is how to silence unbelief amidst the storm. Look at the glory in His face and see that the Man of Galilee is the Lord of glory! See that the divine Son is the Rabbi sleeping in the boat.

## **I. The Humanity of Christ**

### **A Recap: Jesus' Exhausting Season of Earthly Ministry**

So in the first place, would you look with me in verses 35 to 38? Here, we get to see the humanity of Christ. Verses 35 to 38 - "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." The humanity of Christ. A quick survey of the material preceding the incident recorded here will quickly reveal for us how exhausting a season of ministry this was for Jesus. In Mark 2:23 we learn that on the Sabbath Day He and His disciples plucked ears of corn - they were hungry - and immediately

found themselves embroiled in an argument with the Pharisees about whether they had broken the Sabbath. When He went to the synagogue that day, things go from bad to worse. He heals a man with a withered hand and the Sabbath controversy begins to really gather pace. When He leaves the synagogue, already the Pharisees have joined forces with their natural enemies, the Herodians, to see how they might destroy Him. This is not a restful Sabbath; this is a Sabbath in the worst of conflicts.

And as He leaves, there is a crowd waiting for Him from all over the region. Verse 10 of Mark 2 tells us they are pressing in - rather Mark 3 - pressing in, trying to touch Him, longing presumably for a miracle. Verse 9 says that they were almost going to crush Him so He had to get into a boat and speak to them from off the shore. Sometime later He's teaching on the mountain, He appoints His disciples, the Twelve, to go and engage in ministry, and then He went home, we are told, but the crowd again gathered. Verse 20 - their demands are so strong on Jesus and His disciples Mark says they could not even eat. They couldn't even eat. And then to cap it all off, His family show up. Mark says they tried to seize Him saying He is out of His mind. His own family! The "Bible scholars," we might say, they have a different take on things, however. Look at verse 22 of chapter 3. "Don't worry, Mary," you can imagine them saying, "He's not crazy, far from it. No, no, He's possessed! That's His problem. He's not mad; He's bad!"

And then in chapter 4, while all of that is going on, we have a sample of His regular teaching ministry. Parable after parable, in this case, about the nature of God's kingdom and how it grows through the preaching of the seed of the Gospel. In other words, here's an average season of ministry for Jesus - deeds of necessity and mercy, condemned as ungodly; the overwhelming demands of throngs of needy people crushing Him physically, stopping Him even from eating a hasty meal between pastoral labors; the emotional slap in the face as His own mother and brother and sisters call Him crazy and the religious elite decide that He is demonic. And all the while, He is training the Twelve for ministry, sending them out to serve, and constantly teaching and teaching and teaching the Word of God. And at the end of the day, as the darkness falls, a weary Jesus says, "Let's get out of here." And they pile into the boat and they set sail. The crowds actually pile into boats of their own and follow along with them.

Soon, Jesus is fast asleep, exhausted emotionally, mentally, physically, and not even the storm that descends upon them can wake Him. The wind comes whistling down upon the Sea of Galilee, funneled through the ravines in the mountains that surround the lake, whipping up the waves into a violent squall until the waves are rolling right over the boat and these seasoned fishermen are terrified. It must have been quite a storm. Matthew's version of the storm uses the word, *seismos*, to describe what it was like; it was like an earthquake hitting that little boat. They were terrified! But Jesus is out for the count, sleeping the sleep of one who has spent every ounce of His energy in the service of others. It

is a striking example, isn't it, of the utterly normal humanity of Jesus Christ. He felt as we feel. He wept and mourned as we weep and mourn. He knew joy and sorrow, anger and delight. He needed to rest. He needed the companionship of intimate friends. He understood exhaustion and weariness and heartache. He slept. He bled. He died.

### **A Man Like Ourselves**

Jesus is a Man, a human being, one of us! His humanity was no mere illusion, no mere garment put on to veil His deity from our view. The body of Jesus is not a shell, a mere container for deity, such that if you were to look into His eyes you'd see only omissions shining out. As the *Westminster Shorter Catechism* puts it rather, "Christ, the Son of God, became man by taking to Himself a true body and a reasonable soul." That is to say, He had a human mind, human emotional life, human limitations to His stamina and His strength. A true body and a reasonable soul. The normal pattern of physiological and psychological and intellectual and affective development characterized Him as it does us. Although in His case, as Hebrews 4:6 reminds us, at every stage, at every facet of His humanity, He was without sin. His intellect and will, His mind and emotion, His ego and appetite are uncontaminated by sin. They are without the warp and bias of habitual rebellion, bending His humanity away from complete submission to His Father. None of that was true of Him and yet He was truly human - a body that reached the limits of endurance, a mind that knew some of the things that were to come and some that had passed but not all things, a heart that felt and wept and rejoiced and raged with holy tears and holy laughter and holy wrath. He is a true man.

That is what we meet here in the boat. It's actually what is so very unsettling to the disciples. Jesus is a man like ourselves. Now why does that matter? We have a hint of why it matters in verses 38 and 39. As the storm reached its crescendo, the disciples are panicked, they shake Jesus awake and come to Him with their fears. The wind and the waves could not rouse Him, the storm did not disturb His exhausted sleep, but when the disciples cried out to Him, He woke and went to their defense. Isn't that beautiful? The voice of the elements cause Him no alarm, no concern, but the voice of His people in fear and distress illicit His immediate response. Why does it matter that Jesus Christ is fully and truly man? It matters because as man He knows. He knows our frame and He remembers that we are but dust. And it matters because the one who became incarnate for us is incarnate still. The man of Galilee who slept in the boat now sits enthroned as glorified man reigning on the throne of heaven. John saw, remember, the Lamb standing - Revelation 5:5 - the Lamb standing, looking as though it had been slain. In His flesh, even glorified, He bears the nail marks of our redemption at Calvary.

It matters because He knows our frame. The one who reigns understands. He understands. It matters because we do not have in Jesus Christ a High Priest who is unable to sympathize with us in our weaknesses. As the Authorized

Version puts it so beautifully - "We do not have a High Priest who is not touched with the feeling our infirmities." He *is* touched with the feeling of our infirmities. He knows. It matters because in Jesus we have a man to whom we can turn with our cries in the uttermost extremity of our needs and be sure He always hears us with a sympathetic ear. "He knows our frame from the inside," writes Donald Macleod. He's been where we are. He has walked through the valley of the shadow of death. He has fought with Apollyon. He has been in the darkness where there's no light. He can look down on us in all our struggles, turn to His Father, and say, "I know exactly how that woman feels." He is not only Shepherd but Lamb. And what He saw and felt and suffered here is etched indelibly upon His memory, sustaining a sympathy we can never outreach. He knows. Never think that you are truly alone in your trials. There is one who knows to whom you can always turn who is touched with the feeling of our infirmities. How thankful we ought to be that our Savior bears our humanity in His person.

## **II. The Deity of Christ**

### **A Series of Three Rebukes**

And secondly in this passage we're also shown, aren't we, a glimpse of the deity of Christ. Look at verses 39 to 41. "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 the wind and the sea obey him?'" You may have noticed that actually in our passage there are three rebukes. The first is the implied rebuke issued by the disciples at Jesus for not caring about them in the storm. Their care for Him has been eclipsed by their own care for themselves. But the second rebuke comes from the lips of Jesus. It shows us if the storm had obscured their view of His love for them, nothing, not even the howling winds and the pounding rain and the crashing waves and the sinking boat could shake His devotion to His people. He rebukes the wind and says to the sea, "Peace! Be Still!" Literally what He says is, "Be muzzled!" And the growling elements are subdued and brought to heel at their Master's voice.

A great calm settled over the Sea of Galilee at the measured words of the Lord Jesus. If moments before they had been indignant at what they thought was a lack of concern in Jesus, now look at the disciples. They are awed by the display of authority He has just made. If they had been terrified by the power of the storm, now a new and greater fear grips their hearts as the still greater power attending the mere words of the Son of Man is on display. "Who is this that even a storm comes to heel when He says so?" The contrast is between the Man who moments before was sleeping in the stern of the boat, whose every reserve of bodily strength was exhausted. And this one who stands up and lifts a wearied voice and says to the wind, "Won't you stop it?" and to the waves, "Enough!" and

they obeyed. It's too much for the disciples. They are overwhelmed. It doesn't compute. "Who is He?" The answer, of course, to their question is still beyond them. But the third rebuke in the passage suggests that they ought to have known better.

The first rebuke was the disciples' rebuke of Jesus; the second rebuke is Jesus' rebuke of the storm. The third rebuke, verse 40, is Jesus' rebuke of the disciples themselves. "Why are you so afraid? Have you still no faith?" They ought to have understood and believed. They ought to have known the identity of the Teacher they carried across the water that night. From, for example, the words of Psalm 107 verses 23 and following. Looking to Psalm 107:

Some went down to the sea in ships, doing business on the great waters; they saw the deeds of the LORD, his wondrous works in the deep. For he commanded and raised the stormy wind, which lifted up the waves of the sea. They mounted up to heaven; they went down to the depths; their courage melted away in their evil plight; they reeled and staggered like drunken men and were at their wits' end. Then they cried to the LORD in their trouble, and he delivered them from their distress. He made the storm be still, and the waves of the sea were hushed.

Who is He? He is the Lord of glory, the Maker and sustainer of all things, by whose words all things were made and at whose words all things immediately obey. They ought to have known better. He had told them in verse 35 that they would make it to the other side. If only they had known who He was they would have known that His Word and promise was unshakably sure and certain. As Psalm 107 goes on to put it, "He brings them to their desired haven." They ought to have seen in the Man that they followed the God they adored. They should have known that to live in fellowship with Jesus, even in the worst extremes of human trial, is to be safe.

### **The Storm of Coming Wrath: Silenced by Jesus**

The day would soon come when He would make absolute truth of that principle. The moment would arise when Jesus Himself would be cast into the maelstrom and He'd lift up His own cries to the heavens. Only in His case, the dereliction felt by the disciples in the boat was real, not merely perceived. When Jesus cried out at the cross, "My God! My God! Why have you forsaken me?" it was not a panicked accusation but a heartbroken cry of utter desolation and abandonment. Here is Jesus, now the God-Man, plunged into the storm of God's judgment on our sin. This is the price of our security, the grounds of His promise that we too will be brought safe to the far shore in due course. As Man, He bore our guilt and serves as our substitute. As God, He makes satisfaction of an infinite debt and quenches the fury of infinite wrath.

Brothers and sisters, there is a storm that will never touch us if we are with

Jesus. There is a storm that will never touch us if we are with Jesus, a storm that He has stilled forever, not with a word but with His life. The wrath of God will never, never, never fall on you if you trust in Him because it fell on Him for you. Therefore, the words of Psalm 107 ought to become our own response to the good news that the Lord Jesus Christ is God and Man in two distinct natures and one person forever. Let us be glad that the waters were quiet and He has brought us to our desired haven. Let us thank the Lord for His steadfast love, for His wondrous works to the children of men. Let us extol Him in the congregation of the people and praise Him in the assembly of the elders, for Jesus, the God-Man is with us. And because that is true, we never were nor ever could be more secure. Amen. Will you pray with me?

*Our Father, we bless You that our Savior is no mere Teacher. He is sinless Man and divine Son. And bearing our humanity He reigns and in deity He sustains all things by the word of His power, working them all together for the good of those who love Him and who have been called according to His purpose. Teach us to know and rest in the utter security that belongs to us as we trust in Him, who are safe in His company forever. And give to us joy and gladness as we believe. In Jesus' name, amen.*

Would you please stand with me and receive the benediction?

And now may grace, mercy, and peace, from Almighty God, Father, Son, and Holy Spirit, be with you all now and forevermore. Amen.

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