

Jesus Calms The Chaos of Life

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[0 : 00] Hold your clap until I get finished. I would like to add my word of welcome to those who are expressed this morning by Lisa.

And man, this is off the cuff. I greet you in the name of the one who is holy. Now this week I was reading in 2 Chronicles as Solomon was building the temple.

And it says that when he got to the Holy of Holies, he inlaid everything with pure gold. And he built the cherubim that oversees the most holy place.

And I was just sitting there and I wrote in my journal that I am so glad that Jesus has made it possible for me to go into the holy place. And so this morning, you sang that this morning that he is holy, holy, holy.

And he is worthy. But he's the one that allows us to go into the holy place. And so I just greet you in the name of Jesus. And it's really a great honor to be here this morning.

[1 : 03] And it's nice to continue our series out of Mark, which is a story of discipleship. If this is your first Sunday with us, you know, we've been working through Mark's gospel.

And we're considering what it means to be a disciple of Christ. That's what we're looking at, what it really means to be a disciple of his. And we're looking at Peter's life because Mark is based on Peter's testimony.

It's Peter's life testimony. So that's what the gospel of Mark is. And so we look at Peter and we say, okay, this is what it meant to follow Jesus in his day. Mark is also a Christology.

And so because it's a Christology, we also have a chance to see who Jesus is, to see him for who he really is, not for how we imagine him in our minds. You know, during his earthly ministry, Jesus, the people did not know how to quite handle him.

There was not a settled view about who Jesus really was. And when Jesus asked the disciples, who do the people say that I am? There was a lot of different responses. Well, some say this and some say this and some say this and some say this.

[2 : 10] And of course, Jesus says, yeah, but who do you say that I am? And that's where Peter gives his great confession. You are the Christ, the son of the living God. But during his ministry, the people were not settled like that.

And so there was not a belief in him as the one true God. So if you're here this morning and you're not yet a follower of Jesus, if that is you and you're here this morning and you don't even know if you believe in Jesus, that puts you somewhere in that paradigm of uncertainty.

It puts you there. You're uncertain to who Jesus really is. And so it's my hope, and I believe the hope of this church, that this morning you would really see Jesus, that you would see him with your heart and your eyes and understand who he is.

Now, this morning we are continuing in our series in Mark chapter 6. And it's on the backside of one of the biggest miracles that Jesus ever did, which was the feeding of the 5,000 with five loaves and two fish.

Now, he did many other things. I mean, up to this point, he's already healed the sick. He's already cast out demons. He's already done a lot of different things, things that were worthy of the people's attention.

[3 : 27] But the feeding 5,000 men, and it could have been as high as 10,000 to 15,000 people there at the time. You know, they're using men, but if their family's there, it could have swelled to a huge number.

But this is a great, big, you know, miracle that he did. We're on the backside of this this morning. It's on the backside. This has happened. And this really affected the people around Jesus who were a part of that miracle, the people that he fed.

Because in John 6, 14 and 15, it says this. When the people saw the sign that he had done, they said, this is indeed the prophet who is to come into the world.

Perceiving then that they were about to come and take him by force to make him king, Jesus withdrew again to the mountain by himself. And so the people were so overwhelmed with the fact that they were fed by five loaves and two fish, they finally said, this is the man, thee with a capital T. He is the man, and we are going to make him king. Now, I think the idea that Jesus just walked away and went to a secluded place is a very unique response, don't you think?

[4 : 44] I mean, how many people do you know who would go away, move away from a crowd if they were trying to make you king? I don't think that King Charles III over the UK would hold that same conviction.

I mean, he just spent \$125 million celebrating himself being king over England. And so I don't think that that is a normal way of response.

We want you to be king. No, you go away, and I'm going off to a secluded place. And so that is a very unique response. And it's within that tension, that tension of the people's response and their desire to make him king, and his trying to get away from them that we are here this morning. And that's why Jesus puts his disciples in a boat and says, go away. And so let's look this morning at how our text reads, if I can get it to term.

Thank you very much. And our passage is in Mark chapter 6, verses 45 through 52. And we'll just kind of look at this this morning and see how this really applies to us, okay?

[5 : 56] And so beginning in verse 45, it says this. Immediately, now this is immediately after the people desired to make him king, he made his disciples get into the boat and go before him to the other side, to Bethsaida, while he dismissed the crowd.

I would simply say this to you, that in one of the commentaries I read, what this indicates is that Jesus had complete authority and power to dismiss 15,000 people with a word, to say, go. And so he had the power to do this. And after he had taken leave of them, he went up to the mountain to pray. And when evening came, the boat was out there on the sea, and he was alone on the land.

And he saw that they were making headway painfully, for the wind was against them. And about the fourth watch of the night, he came to them walking on the sea.

He meant to pass them by, but when they saw him walking on the sea, they thought it was a ghost. And they cried out, for they all saw him and were terrified. But immediately he spoke to them and said, take heart, it is I, do not be afraid.

[7 : 05] And he got into the boat with them, and the wind ceased, and they were utterly astounded. For they did not understand about the loaves, but their hearts were hardened.

Once again, the Sea of Galilee plays a big part, a big part in framing the person of Christ. This is another Sea of Galilee story, and it frames his person, but it also frames his authority.

And again, it's probably a little bit rough on the sea. Now, even though the disciples were probably very experienced seamen, they probably in their mind were thinking, not again.

I mean, the last time we came out here, we almost sunk, and Jesus was asleep in the back. And so in their minds, they were probably saying, he sent us out here again, and it's bad again.

Now, it's not as bad as the first trip that he sent them on, but it's still a rough night for them. You know, having spent many years on Beaufort Inlet and around, you know, bringing ships in and out of the port, one thing that I know is that things can change very quickly.

[8 : 15] You can have very calm weather one minute, and you can have very rough seas the next, and it doesn't take a whole lot of time. Sometimes it happens so fast, you're just amazed by it.

And so things can change very quickly. One minute it's calm, next minute it's rough. You know, this story speaks into the life experiences of us as followers of Jesus, but also those who are unbelievers, because what it says to us is that we all go through seasons of calm and chaos.

You know, being human, being a human being, living this life, brings those kind of expectations into our lives. Because things don't always stay the same.

They don't always stay like we want them to stay. Change is always around the corner. Changing our lives is always there. And it affects our routine.

Now, I am a very routine-oriented person. My wife, who's up front, she will tell you this. I am a creature of habit. I get up basically at the same time, unless I'm working early.

[9 : 29] I start waking up around 5, 15. I start waking up. I get up every morning. I make coffee. I read. I do my study. I do those things. I eat the same thing.

I go work out. I mean, I am a routine guy. And I like routines. And I hate change. I really hate change.

Now, what this says to us in the church, this idea that change is always around the corner from us, it says this, that we can get in trouble in a hurry.

It doesn't take all day for our life to really change. I want you to consider an Old Testament character, and his name is Job.

If you ever have read the book of Job, it's a very great book. But Job was the greatest of all the people in the East. He was a wealthy, wealthy man.

[10 : 26] Now, here's some of the stuff that he owned. He had 7,000 sheep, which is a huge number. He had 3,000 camels. That's like having 3,000 Cadillacs.

A man who had 3,000 camels was mobile. He could move. He could get things done. And so his wealth made him great in the eyes of the people. He had 500 oxen, 500 female donkeys, and he had many, many, many servants.

Job also feared God, which meant that he was wealthy, but he also had a spiritual depth to him. Job was a spiritually deep man.

And so he had all these things, yet in an instant, in that instant, everything was gone. All his wealth disappeared within a couple of days.

All of it was taken. And then you add to the fact that his children all die. And then his health is taken away. Now, I want you to think about this for a moment.

[11 : 34] I want you to let it sink into you. Most of us have never, ever, ever been in anything like that where we have lost it all in a matter of time.

And it's the suddenness of change. It is that sudden change that comes upon us that unnerves us all. It really does, because when change comes, it always comes very quickly.

And so it's that really suddenness of change. Another thing that really can bother us is God's sovereignty in the change. You see, Job's problems came because God allowed Satan to do certain things to him.

Satan came to him. And God says, have you considered my servant Job? Well, yeah, I've considered him. And he loves you because you've given him so much. Take it all away and he'll curse you.

And so God says, all right, everything he has is yours. Do with it as you will. You see how that is? God in his sovereignty is involved in this. Because nothing that happens in your life or my life ever happens outside of his divine will.

[12 : 41] It never happens outside of his divine will for our lives. Now, this is a mystery. And it can be very hard for us. Because we don't always understand why God does what he does.

You see, chaos will come. Times of testing will come. God is involved. But we don't know why he's involved. And we surely don't understand why he does what he does. It can be a mystery for us.

But it's being in those mysteries, being inside of that mystery of why God is doing what he's doing, is that it causes us to ask questions.

We begin to question, you know, why is God doing this? And it also teaches us something very important. And that is that there are divine purposes for both the calm and chaos in our lives.

All right? There are divine purposes for this. It's not happening in a vacuum. It's because God has a divine purpose for it. Now, this storm was not like the one in Mark chapter 4.

[13 : 43] It was not as bad of a night. In fact, it doesn't even call it a storm. And our text does not say that the disciples were afraid or that they were about to sink.

It just says that they were making headway painfully. They're making headway painfully in a boat. You know, that word painfully is best understood to be tortured.

They were in a situation where it was torturous to get through the waves and get where they're going. And I can say this, that being on rough waters is excruciating at best.

If I go to sea on a normal day, I can get to a ship in 16, 18 minutes. If it's a rough day, it takes 45 to 50. And you just have to be very slow.

And it's torturous because the swell just won't let you. And you'd have to take your time. And so I want you to understand that the disciples are rowing a 23-foot boat.

[14:49] And it's not like it's so bad that they can't. It's just that it's torturous for them. They're not making any time. You know, we feel this way when we're going through times of testing or times of chaos in our lives.

It feels like it's painfully slow. And it seems like they're always going to last forever. But it does raise a very interesting question as to why Jesus sent them out there in the first place.

You know, why did Jesus look at his disciples at a time when the people were celebrating him and all this and say, get into your boat and go to the other side? Why did he do this?

Well, I think, in my view, I see two main reasons that he does this. Firstly, Jesus removes the disciples because it was too easy for them to be a part of the crowd.

You know, crowds have a life of their own. And we've seen this over the last few years in the inner cities as inner cities have exploded with people rioting and they're breaking into stores and they're doing all these things.

[16:01] A crowd can have a life of its own. And it sucks people in. It draws us in because of just the, you know, just the sheer excitement and energy that's being produced.

It's what they would say is the mob mentality. It just really kind of does that. And so, you know, one reason I think that he tells them to go is because the disciples could very easily be sucked into that. Yeah, he is the man. Let's make him king. They could be easily drawn into this. Secondly, I think the reason that he sent them away is because Jesus is always concerned about the matters of the heart.

It's always about the heart with him. And our text does clearly say that their hearts were hardened. And so Jesus is not so much worried about being king.

He's worried about the disciples' hearts and where they are. You know, the desolate places that Jesus sends us into, they can be delightful or they can be difficult.

[17:14] But there's always a place in those that we can experience God. There's always a place where we can experience God and grow in our faith. And so this would be the purposes of the calm and the chaos that God is allowing, Jesus is allowing to happen in the lives of his disciples.

It's because he has a purpose for them. Now, I am not trying to put a smiley face on testing. I am not trying to do that. That would be simplistic.

You know, most people, when you're going through a test, and this has probably been said to you over the years, if somebody knows that you're really struggling or that you're going through a time of great difficulty, they sometimes will look at you and they will say, well, you know, God is sovereign.

Well, yes, he is. But that doesn't make you feel any better. Knowing that God is sovereign, I mean, you're going through a time of great testing. And so I'm not trying to say, you know, smile, be happy, you know, going through your testing, because that is a very simplistic view.

However, when chaos does come, when trials do come, we do have an anchor. We have an anchor that holds us. And this anchor is sure because we believe that Jesus alone has the power to end the chaos and bring peace.

[18:34] It is Jesus alone who can do this. Now, there are two themes that really run through our text. R.T. France says that it's the supernatural power of Jesus on display.

It's the supernatural power of Jesus and the disciples' inability to cope with it. So it's those two themes run through the passages. His authority, his power, and the disciples' inability to grasp it. So let me ask you a question. How would you respond if you were in a boat, 3 o'clock in the morning, okay? Been there and done that one. I've been up that time of morning.

How would you respond if you're in a boat on a dark night and it's a little bit rough, and all of a sudden you look and you see somebody walking on the water? How would you respond? I would probably pass out in my seat on the boat.

I mean, because I'm not looking for that at 3 o'clock in the morning. And so, you know, this idea that Jesus has the power to change those kind of things, you know, is kind of interesting to us.

[19:42] Scripture does speak about God's authority over the oceans, the power of God over the oceans. Habakkuk 3.15 says it this way.

You, Lord, have trampled the seas with your horses, the surging of the mighty waters, where it's like God has trampled the seas and they're surging down.

He stomped them down. The next one is a psalm of lament, and the people are desperate and they say, look, your ways are through the sea, your path through the great waters, yet your footprints are

unseen.

You lead your people like a flock by the hand of Moses and Aaron. I believe this is looking back at the Red Sea crossing where God divided the waters, and Israel walked across on dry land, and Moses and Aaron led them through.

And they say, that is you, God. You divide the waters, and your footprints are unseen. We can't even see that you're there. In Job chapter 9 and verse 8 and verse 11, it says this, and they're speaking about God's creative power, and it says this, who alone stretched out the heavens and trampled the waves of the sea.

[21 : 04] Behold, he passes by me, and I see him not. He moves on, but I do not perceive him. You see, God has the authority over the oceans.

Jesus, being very God of very God, has the authority over the Sea of Galilee. He is powerful to end the chaos. Now, it does raise an interesting question, though.

Why did Jesus intend to pass by his disciples? Because they're out there working. It reminds me of my father in his bathroom in the garage, I might add, has this picture over the toilet.

And it's got two men in a skiff, and it says, pray to God, but row toward shore. So it's like, Lord, help me, but you got to row. So his disciples are doing this number.

They're rowing a 23-foot boat. So why was Jesus just going to pass them by? What was the purpose in all of this? You know, I really don't know why he was going to do that.

[22 : 10] I don't have an answer for you. I will say this, though. I do think that sometimes going through a time of great testing is very sobering to our faith. You remember, Jesus is worried about their heart.

He's not so much worried about their safety. He's worried about their heart. And by allowing them to experience this, what is he doing? He's trying to build their faith in him.

And so I do think that testing and trials and those kind of things are sobering to our faith. They help us go through faith. And that is why there's times that when you get on the backside of a trial in your life that you can kind of look back and say, yeah, I kind of see what God is doing.

I kind of understand now what he was trying to do. Now, it's not always pleasant, but I do think we see it sometimes on the backside. Or it could simply be that Jesus, by hesitating, was just trying to remind them and us who he really is.

Do you understand who I am? You know, only the one who created water can walk on it. I did read there were some people that think that he was walking on sandbars.

[23 : 25] And I thought to myself, well, that's an interesting thought. I mean, that Jesus was simply walking on sand. But the creator God is the only one who has the authority to do this, to walk on water.

You see, we're just like the disciples. We have fear and we have doubt. And I do think sometimes within our own imaginations, within our own imaginations, imaginations that we see ghosts that overwhelm our senses.

Now, hear what I'm not saying. I am not saying that we see dead people, all right? We're not Haley Jo Hoffman in the movie. We're not, we don't see dead people.

I'm not saying that. But I am saying this, and I think this is very important for you, that some of our greatest battles are internal. They are internal of the heart and the soul.

Our greatest battles are not always what we're going through. It's inside of us. It's what we're doing inside. And so I think we're just like the disciples.

[24 : 31] They see something they've never seen before and it scares them. We go through things that we've never gone through before and it scares us. It's very interesting though that Jesus does not rebuke his disciples.

In fact, he doesn't even rebuke us. He just simply reveals himself and says, take heart. It is I. And that is the same word used when Moses said, when he's asked God, who do I say sent me when I go back to Egypt?

And he says, I am who I am. Jesus is using the very same term here. I am. Take heart. I am. See, he's not rebuking them.

He is shoring up their faith. You see, Jesus is the only one who can bring peace like this. And that's because nothing, nothing that you or I will go through can separate us from the love of God in Christ Jesus.

There is nothing that can separate you or me if you're a follower of Jesus from his love. Not even times of great testing and chaos when you feel like the waters are over your head.

[25 : 51] Nothing can separate you from his love. And sometimes Jesus does not even feel close to you. And I get that.

I mean, I understand there's times that you're praying and maybe you don't feel like your prayers go as high as the ceiling in your house. And it feels that way, but Jesus is always near.

Just like he steps into the boat with the disciples, he steps into your life. He's always there. Now, this is all wonderful, and I get it. I think it's all wonderful promises. But there's also a warning in our text this morning.

And the warning is this, and I want you to consider this. The power of Jesus can open your heart, okay? You can do that, of faith, or it can harden your heart. You know, remember, the disciples' hearts were hard when it came to understanding the loaves and the fishes.

Now, how does this work itself out? I think it works itself out in two distinct ways. Number one, it's an encouragement because the disciples had sufficient reason to believe because of all they had been through.

[27 : 04] I mean, they'd already seen Jesus do mighty things. They'd already seen that. And so they did have ample reason to believe. They had performed miracles themselves.

They had cast out demons. They had preached the gospel. They had good reason to believe. And all that they saw were the top of the mountain kind of things.

You know, the top of the mountain experiences. And I think all of us love to be on top of the mountain. We love that. We love those kind of experiences.

However, top of the mountain experiences can often lead to complacency. Years ago, I was teaching a high school Sunday school class and a young lady went on a missions trip.

And she had not been really consistent as a young lady before she went on the trip. So she comes back from the trip and she's, man, she's, oh, this is so great.

[28 : 09] It's going to be so, it's been so good and I'm going to do this. And I looked at her and I said, you're going to come down the mountain here pretty soon. Be careful. You see, coming down the mountain can be very difficult.

We want to stay up top. And that's, the disciples were there. They saw top of the mountain stuff.

And I think that's kind of what, why they were complacent in their hearts because they did not really understand what was happening.

But they had reason too. They had a reason. That's an encouragement. They had reason to believe in this Jesus. It's a warning because it says this, that we are reminded that miracles and signs and wonders will not convince a hardened heart.

Do you understand that? That miracles, seeing things that you've never seen before will not convince a hardened heart. In fact, rank unbelief can exist in the presence of the miraculous. Rank unbelief can exist there. When Jesus raised Lazarus from the dead and the people saw it, people who were from the Pharisees were there and they ran back and they said, this is what he has just done.

[29 : 32] He just raised a dead man. And their response was not, we must worship him. Their response was, we must get rid of this man. You see, those kinds of things don't mean that your heart's going to change.

And it's very interesting to me that unbelief or a hardened heart can show itself not only in those who are not yet followers of Jesus.

It can show up in their hearts for sure, but it can show up in ours as well. It's very interesting that that is manifest in the lives of men who had put their confidence in Jesus.

So it can happen to either side. We're not immune of unbelief or a hardened heart. So what do we do with this this morning?

I mean, how are we going to apply this, this miraculous sign, this Jesus walking on the water, his disciples seeing him, the reason that he moved them away, the hardness of their heart.

[30 : 39] What do we do with this? Well, if you're not yet a follower of Jesus here this morning and you're here, I would ask you this. Are you rowing against the wind this morning? Are you like in the boat and you're kind of rowing against the wind and you're terrified what is about to happen?

You know, the fear of what lies beyond the grave grips a lot of our hearts. And if you're here this morning, you're not following Jesus. That might be what you're afraid of.

You're afraid of what is to come. But are you doing it in your own strength, trying to do it on your own? These kind of fears can happen to us, especially when it's dark and stormy and we don't know what's coming and we don't see what's coming.

You know, Jesus treads over what terrifies you. And the biggest terror of your life is, if you're not following Jesus, is death. But he has treaded over death.

He has conquered death. He walked into death and then was raised from the dead.

[31 : 47] And so he conquers that. He treads that. And so if you like him this morning, I think you need to go beyond that because that's not enough. I would just charge you to believe in him.

Believe in the one who does mighty things. Believe in the one who can walk on water, the one who gets in the boat beside you. Believe in him.

If you are here this morning, you are a follower of Jesus, I kind of ask you the same question. Are you in the boat this morning trying to do everything by yourself?

You know, going through times of trial, going through tough times, are you the one who says, I got this? I've got this. Is your head down?

And you're just trying to get through it on your own. Honestly, speaking for myself, that probably describes me. That's my natural tendency.

[32 : 49] When things get tough, I just hunker down and just say, I want to get through this come heck or high water. I'm going to do it. That's me. And it's very hard for me sometimes just to say, God, you got this and I want to trust you because I feel like I need to do some things.

If that is you this morning, if that's where you find yourself, I have an encouragement from you and it's taken from Hebrews chapter three. And I want you to listen to this because this is speaking to the church and about where we are and the chaos of our lives and what's going on and what might happen when you leave the doors this morning.

Listen to what it says. Take care, brothers and sisters. I'm adding the sisters part. Lest there be in any of you an unbelieving heart leading you to fall away from the living God.

But exhort one another every day as long as it is still called today that none of you may be hardened by the deceitfulness of sin.

For we have come to share in Christ if indeed we hold our original confidence firm to the end. As it is said today, if you hear his voice, do not harden your hearts as in the rebellion.

[34 : 14] Encourage each other day after day as long as it is called today that we would not fall away in sin.

May God bless you with comfort and may you exhort the brothers and sisters to live faithfully through this life, through this life, which one moment is very calm and the next moment is very rough.

Let me pray for us. Lord God, you are a magnificent God. You are the king of glory. You are worthy of all praise and honor and majesty.

You are the creator God. You are the exact representation of the Father. You are the glory of the Father.

We thank you that you are the first and the last. We thank you that you draw us near to the Father and to that most holy place and we worship you and we cry out to you for grace.

[35 : 23] We thank you for the rough times in our lives, Father, as you use them to sharpen us. You chasten whom you love, Lord God, and that is a hope that we have.

And so I pray for this church and I pray for these people and I pray, Father God, that you would strengthen them and guide them and that they would sense you close and they would cry out to you in faith.

And we ask all these things in your name and for the glory of your name. Amen. Amen. Amen. All right, if you will, grab your cup for communion this morning.

We've been trying to use a little bit of liturgy in our services and this is something that we've done in Moorhead. I've done it in a couple other places that they've allowed me to speak.

And so this is, I'm going to have, is this going to be up on the screen? The Heidelberg Catechism? Stand by. It's going to be on the screen here in just a second.

[36 : 28] This is a question, the very first question of the Heidelberg Catechism. Heidelberg Catechism was a teaching tool to the church to remind the church of all the glories that they had in Christ and what it means to be a follower of Jesus.

And it is an amazing thing because it's all Scripture and they use verses to prepare us and to remind us of who Jesus is. And so it does ask a question and you can get your bread out this morning.

And this, and it says this and I'll read the question and then I want you to read the response. Are we ready? In the back. Not ready. We're not ready yet. Oh, we are? Hold on.

Hold on. Jason's saying, hold on, hold on. I'm sorry. Let me just go on without it.

How's that? I'll read it to you. All right. Let me just read it to you. The question is this. Very first question of the High of Work Catechism. As you prepare your hearts for communion, it says this.

[37 : 38] What is your only comfort in life and in death? And so it asks that question. What is your comfort? Where is your comfort in life and death? The answer is this.

That I am not my own, but belong body and soul in life and in death to my faithful Savior, Jesus Christ.

He has fully paid for my sins with his precious blood and has set me free from the tyranny of the devil. He also watches over me in such a way that not a hair can fall from my head without the will of my Father in heaven.

In fact, all things must work together for my salvation. All things. Because I belong to him, Christ, by his Holy Spirit, assures me of eternal life and makes me wholeheartedly willing and ready now on to live for him.

Brothers and sisters, based on those promises, you can celebrate the breaking of the body of Jesus Christ for your sins because he's delivered you from the power of sin and death.

[38 : 52] So thank him for his body. And as you take the cup this morning, remember that it was, your body has been redeemed.

Your sin has been paid for. It is covered. If we confess our sin, he is faithful and just to forgive our sin and to cleanse us from all unrighteousness.

That is something that he does. And so you can rest in him this morning because you belong to him. Let's celebrate together. And after they shared his supper together, the disciples stood up and sang a song.

So let's stand up together and sing, okay? Let's see. When we