

STUDY COMMENTS
TRINITY UNITED METHODIST CHURCH
IHOP BIBLE STUDY
Session: June 3, 2003

Gospel of Mark 4:35 - 5:43

As you read, recall that we approach our study of Mark by sections and not by chapters. The sections are reported in The Gospel Chart of St. Mark. This is a separate resource soon to be printed in a pdf. file related to this Gospel. (If not available now, it soon will be.)

I. Read Mark 4:35 to 5:43 in one reading.

II. This reading is the second part of three sections in a group of readings titled "The Tools of Power and Teaching Others to Use Them." This weeks reading demonstrates Jesus' power to altering the human situation (weather and healing). All the stories concern different kinds of "bad weather."

THE KEY POINT TO REMEMBER IN THESE READINGS IN THE STATEMENT
"There is something worse than death. It is never having lived!"

Vss. 4:35 - 41 is the calming of the storm. Jesus uses a "gut trip" statement in vs 40, "Why are you so afraid?" Our purpose is to answer this question. What is the basis of their "fear?"

Why were the disciples so afraid? 1) -- They did not learn the lesson of Jesus' Baptism in the first chapter--in baptism we die to this world. In baptism we die to this world and are raised again in the world of the spirit. If we have died to this world, then what in this world can harm us? Bad weather? No. High seas? No. Bad human experiences? No.

2) — The disciples did not take advantage of their spiritual resources. Deep within them is their Altar of Spiritual Resources — given to them at conception. Like the Disciples, we are asleep to these tremendous resources. Jesus reminds us that if we have faith the size of a mustard seed, we can say to the mountain, move to the sea, and it will move! However, during our lifetimes, we use only a minuscule amount of these spiritual resources.

A second question raised by Jesus is "Do you still have no faith?" O-o-o-o, what is the faith of which he speaks. Be careful to avoid "head trip analysis" in your answer.

Faith is Full Surrender — "I give up! Do with me what you will." In this instance, the Disciples did not fully surrender themselves, *nor did they surrender their situation*, into God's hands. When we remember that the "reward for the deed is in the deed itself," then we understand that their *unfaith* was rewarded by fear. The opposite is true, when we live in full surrender, the reward for this deed is peace, harmony, and no fear!

II. With each of the three stories (in Chapter 5), research them in your study materials and write a brief report on what you learn.

5:1 -20 The Demon Possessed Man--

In this episode we meet the Evil Spirit, who always is The Big Lie. This man is so filled with living impossibility, that he chooses to live among the dead; he is as dead as any of those in the ground: he is spiritually dead! If the "reward for the deed is always in the deed itself," then the demoniac's reward is quite clear.

There are some scholars who liken all of chapter 5 to the spiritual condition of the Jews at the time of Moses. This early situation is mirrored again in the experiences of the Jews at Jesus' time — they were sick and possessed of Evil Spirits. Personally, I'm not much in favor of this interpretation because it socializes and makes public — instead of personal -- the human condition. This makes it one step removed from the personal human condition.

5:24b - 34 Sick Woman with a bleeding--

The lesson here is the demonstration of the realness of the Spirit — The woman touches Jesus cloak, and he feels the difference. She touched the cloak in a time of need, which is different from being jostled about. This is a common experience. When people come to us for emotional, physical, and/or interpersonal help, we can be drained of energy through our intense listening and/or actions. When authentic need meets authentic response, the energy of the Holy Spirit is entirely palpable.

The actions of Jesus result in the woman no longer being a victim, but rather she is now a victor. She is now free from victimization.

5:21-23, 31 - 43 Jairus's Daughter

The common expression for "death" at the time of Jesus was to use the phrase "not dead, but sleeping." So, it is not possible for Jairus' daughter to be "asleep." In this instance, Jesus raises the little girl from the dead. Again, this is a story about people being victimized by their situation: the man's daughter is dead. In raising the little girl from the dead, demonstrates two things: 1) Jesus is in full command of his Altar of Spiritual Resources. 2) Christians, when victimized, have a choice between being victims or victors.

The underlying theme here is "awakening." It reminds me of the film/video "Vanilla Ski," that was about full surrender and awakening from spiritual slumber.

IV. The four stories in this section concern people victimized by their circumstances. The

calming of the storm is a story of those victimized by the environment; the demon-possessed man is victimized by demons; the sick woman is victimized by long-term illness; Jairus' daughter is victimized by death. One of the hints in Biblical studies is that when the writer uses the same theme three times--or more-- in a row, the message is particularly important.

Using gut trip analysis, what is the experiential lesson taught in these stories?

1) Take seriously the act of Baptism. 2) Practice using you Altar of Spiritual Resources.

V. One Sunday soon, I'll be preaching on Mark 35 - 41, the Calming of the storm. My title is "Don't you care if we drown?"

What would be a "life story" to illustrate this sermon at the very beginning?

One story shared at the IHOP study was about a worker crawling into a commercial flour bin to check on a job of spraying silicon on the inside walls to keep the flour from sticking to the sides. Because it was a cold day, he shut the manhole cover. By mistake, another worker began filling the bin with flour. The man kicked the sides of the bin until he was discovered and removed. However, the man was hospitalized a long time to recover of lung damage.

What would be your 3 or 4 scriptural points?

- 1. Rebuke the wind — as a tool from your Altar of Spiritual Resources**
- 2. "Why so afraid?" --- not taken baptismal vows seriously nor believed in the death we died in baptism. This statement also proves the disciples are asleep to these spiritual resources.**
- 3. "Do you have no faith?" The response is to ask for full surrender to God.**

What is your gut analysis of this scripture?

We live in fear until we are convinced and/or convicted of being asleep to the deep spiritual resources we already have. Then, we have a choice, when victimized by our situations, to either be a victims or a victors!