Series: Kingdom Come

Sermon: Jesus Calms the Storm

Scripture: Mark 4:35-41

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Let me open with a thought.

We don’t know what the purpose of power is.

Lectio:

Mark 4:35-41 Jesus Calms the Storm.

*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. 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?”* [[1]](#footnote-1)

(Show Rembrandt’s *Christ in the Storm* on the Lake of Galilee.)

Imagine it.

Take a moment and look at Rembrant’s Christ in the Storm on the Lake of Galilee.

(Give them a few moments to take in the picture before giving commentary.)

I remember being on a small boat out in the ocean snorkeling a few years back. It is honestly breath taking when it hits you how big the ocean is and how little you are. I can only imagine what it would be like to be on such a little boat. Based on the remains of a 2000-year-old fishing boat found on the northwestern shore of Galilee we can assume their vessel held about 15 men and was only about 26 feet long, 7.5 feet wide and about 4.5 feet high.[[2]](#footnote-2) Imagine 10 foot waves buffeting the boat. The men on deck are literally hanging on for life as the storm raged around them and over them. The text says the boat was filling with water. The fact that Jesus was asleep was either a miracle or a sign of how exhausting ministry had become. Over the atmospheric violence his followers yell for his help. I can imagine him rising to the chaos and grabbing the wooden rail on the boat as he stands up into the storm, his hair, beard and robe whipping in the wind. He props himself up, looks around, opens his mouth, and speaks. His voice does the opposite of what the other voices do. When everyone else speaks the sound is consumed by the storm. When Jesus speaks it envelops it, it envelops everything. Something happens that never happens. Like a master over his trained pet, the storm bows before him. The disciples are literally overwhelmed by his power. Anything is truly possible.

Meditatio:

There are a few things to note from all this:

They were becoming enamored by his power. In context people were watching him heal the sick of incurable diseases, control demons and the spiritual world, and even demonstrate absolute authority over nature.

This led them all to a big question…

What is Jesus going to ultimately do with all his power?

Let’s ask the question like this.

What is the purpose of power?

Let’s look at the overarching layout of Mark for some clues.

John Mark divided the book of Mark into three acts.

* Act 1 - Jesus is displaying how powerful He is. Chapters 1-8a
* Act 2 - The disciples are trying to understand what this means. Chapters 8b-10
* Act 3 - Jesus now models what all this power and work is supposed to do. Chapters 11-16

The disciples want power.

There is even this scene right at the end of the second Act of Mark. The disciples still don’t get what the point of power is. The brothers, James and John, come to Jesus and ask Him if they can sit at his right hand in the new kingdom. There are so many assumptions wrapped in the request to sit on the left and right of Jesus side.

*Mark 10:37–38 (ESV)[[3]](#footnote-3)*

*And they said to him, “Grant us to sit, one at your right hand and one at your left, in your glory.” Jesus said to them, “You do not know what you are asking. Are you able to drink the cup that I drink, or to be baptized with the baptism with which I am baptized?”*

Mark 10:42–45 (ESV)[[4]](#footnote-4)

*And Jesus called them to him and said to them, “You know that those who are considered rulers of the Gentiles lord it over them, and their great ones exercise authority over them. But it shall not be so among you. But whoever would be great among you must be your servant, and whoever would be first among you must be slave of all. For even the Son of Man came not to be served but to serve, and to give his life as a ransom for many.”*

The disciples still weren’t understanding the purpose of power.

They are likely assuming Jesus will take out his opponents and they want positions of power themselves when he assumes the throne. In Luke 9:51-56 these “Sons of Thunder” wanted to call down fire from heaven to take out the people that rejected Jesus. The phrase “right hand” and “left hand” were used to signify honor, strength, protection and power above others in royal courts.

There is a scene where Jesus puts on display the prime purpose of power.

Let’s set the stage.

After countless demonstrations of power (John 21:25), Jesus chooses to let the very evil people the disciples thought they were going to fight off kill Him (John 10:17-18). After Jesus is stripped, humiliated, misrepresented in court, and crucified, one of the soldiers who kills him looks up and makes a statement that defines the book of Mark and the purpose of Jesus and the purpose of power.

Mark 15:39 (ESV)

*And when the centurion, who stood facing him, saw that in this way he breathed his last, he said, “Truly this man was the Son of God!”* [[5]](#footnote-5)

Oratio:

There it is. The purpose of power.

Reconciliation over revenge.

Pardon over punishment.

Compelling compassion over forceful coercion

Rescue over retaliation.

Jesus didn’t come to wipe Rome out; He came to rescue Romans from evil. He came to rescue all of us.

Actio:

The purpose of power is to serve and this generous way of living wins hearts.

Mark 10:45 (ESV) “For even the Son of Man came not to be served but to serve, and to give his life as a ransom for many.”

Who do you use your power to serve?

1. The Holy Bible: English Standard Version (Wheaton, IL: Crossway Bibles, 2016), Mk 4:35–41. [↑](#footnote-ref-1)
2. Crossway Bibles, [*The ESV Study Bible*](https://ref.ly/logosres/esvsb?ref=BibleESV.Mt14.8&off=133&ctx=er+husband%E2%80%99s+reign.%0a~Galilean+Fishing+Boa) (Wheaton, IL: Crossway Bibles, 2008), 1850. [↑](#footnote-ref-2)
3. The Holy Bible: English Standard Version. Wheaton, IL: Crossway Bibles, 2016 [↑](#footnote-ref-3)
4. The Holy Bible: English Standard Version. Wheaton, IL: Crossway Bibles, 2016. [↑](#footnote-ref-4)
5. [*The Holy Bible: English Standard Version*](https://ref.ly/logosres/esv?ref=BibleESV.Mk15.39). Wheaton, IL: Crossway Bibles, 2016. [↑](#footnote-ref-5)