

## **LOOK AT THE EVIDENCE**

**Mark 4:35–5:43**

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Many of you have been involved in a Bible study or in personal interaction with the Word for today during this week. The Scripture passage is from Mark 4:35 (the last paragraph in Mark 4) through Mark 5. Rather than attempting to read this passage in its entirety, the sermon this morning will constantly interact and touch base with the content of the Gospel of Mark as we find it here in these paragraphs.

There's a character in George Gershwin's *Porgy and Bess* musical which breaks up a Sunday School picnic by singing "It ain't necessarily so. It ain't necessarily so. The things you're liable to read in the Bible, it ain't necessarily so." There are a number of verses to the song, as the character develops them. For example, he has a verse on the historicity of Adam and Eve which he challenges. He has a verse on the age of Methuselah and he also has a commentary on the Flood. At the end of each particular stanza, he recites the refrain "It ain't necessarily so. It ain't necessarily so. The things you are liable to read in the Bible it ain't necessarily so." The difficulty with the song, of course, is that it tackles all the old and easy doubts and doesn't come to grips with the central facets and fact of history: the person of Jesus Christ, who has revealed himself, not simply as a mortal man, but as the supernatural Son of God. The song never challenges that and it's really only when we solve that question that we can look at some of the other issues which the song raises.

The passage of Scripture today affords the modern man an opportunity to look at it and go his way and say, "It ain't necessarily so." Or it affords us the opportunity to look into the true nature and character of Jesus Christ and go away saying, "Truly this man is the Son of God."

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Mark, in the Scripture for today, is giving us four portraits or pictures of the miracle-working ministry of Jesus Christ. As we read the Gospels, we find some thirty-five specific miracles in all which Jesus did. This would be in addition to what are called the “summary sections in the Gospel” where it simply says, “He healed all who were sick” (Matthew 12:15) or “They brought all to him” (Matthew 14:35). But there are thirty-five specific instances in the Bible where Jesus takes action, which are recorded and noted. And of these thirty-five instances, the miracles themselves break down into four different categories: Jesus’ authority over nature or the elements, of which there are nine miracles; Jesus’ authority over demons, of which miracles there are six; Jesus’ authority over illness, of which there are seventeen incidences. And Jesus’ authority over death, of which there are three miracles. The Gospel of Mark, in the section for today, simply takes a representative miracle from each of these categories and shows us the resplendent, radiant Christ, who is working and active and manifesting His power.

**I. In the first miracle presented to us, the miracle of His authority over nature in the storm at sea, we indeed see this as an evidence of His power, His power over nature.**

There are three things we can see in that last paragraph of the fourth chapter of the Gospel of Mark. We can see the characteristics of the storm. We can see some characteristics of the disciples. And we can also see some characteristics of our Lord.

**A.** The characteristics of the storm are that it is sudden and it is great and it is bent on destroying. It is sudden. The disciples out on the Lake of Galilee is so much like life! That lake is very familiar to them. It’s a small lake and, as far as we know, one third of the apostolic group of twelve made their living from the lake. They knew its nooks and crannies. They knew its deep spots and shallow spots. They knew where the school of fish tended to run. And on many a day

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they had leisurely sailed out on the azure blue of the Lake of Galilee, and had had their livelihood met through fishing and being on the lake.

But now, there is a sudden storm which interrupts and changes all their ordinary ways of living.

It's kind of the thing that happens to us—life is filled with a common place. Life is filled with the ordinary events and storms—be they physical, psychological or spiritual—which are so often sudden in their nature. And that which had been very familiar to us, a day which had been going routinely is all of a sudden interrupted with a jangling, jarring crisis. Storms are sudden.

Storms are also great. Mark notes that the winds and the waves which were beating against the boat were great—the winds were great.

If the disciples had been on land, they could have easily gotten away from the storm. Their legs would have carried them a distance. But how often in a storm we're in a situation where we can't use our normal strength. We're in a situation of grief, or a situation of health, or a psychological crisis or a setback, where we'd be able to handle the crisis well and under our own strength on any other day. We're confronted with a problem that's beyond our ability in the natural to deal with. And not having the power—having those legs wrapped up in the boat instead of walking on the land—the disciples have an alternative left. Maybe there's some way to get through to somebody for help. But how can you get through to anybody in a storm? Mark says there were other little boats with them. Can you imagine one of the disciples trying to get up on the prow of the boat and saying something to the effect of, "Hello! Anybody out there?" only to have the words driven back into his face.

We know that the lake provides a natural amphitheater. Jesus often taught by the lake. He communicated His message through the sound waves that were generated by the moment. But there is no communication on a stormy day, when one's words are blowing back into his face.

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Have you ever had a situation where you wanted to reach out to somebody, you wanted to tell somebody what you're going through, and you can't because you're in a storm and your words come back, smashing in your face? The disciples are having to learn something, of course, in this whole story, that in a storm there's really only one who has the power to do something with the communication we give. There is someone in the boat.

Storms are always perilous, always destructive. They always hold that venture of risk. As is the case when we go through a storm in our own crises, which lead us then to understand something else about this story. Not only do we understand something about the storm, but we must look at the disciples.

**B.** I like the story in the Gospels in relation to the disciples. The disciples come across as so honest. There's not any fake spirituality going on here. They're just real human beings. And the characteristic of the disciples in the storm is predictable—fear. I've asked myself why we get afraid in storms. It's very simple. I think there are ultimately two reasons.

We forget past successes that the Lord has accomplished and we forget the word of Jesus. Fear will always result when those two conditions are brought into focus: to forget the past successes. Here in Jesus' ministry, in Mark 1, He had healed a leper. In Mark 2, He had healed a paralytic. In Mark 3, He had healed a man with a withered hand. They had seen the manifestation of His power.

But now, they're in a new situation. It's a new time. It's a different crisis. They hadn't seen Him work in that way before. They were unable to make a transfer, to say logically, "If He worked there, He will work here." How descriptive of the spiritual life this is! No matter how many times the Lord has brought us through, each dangerous time we enter into seems as if—when we

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face it for the first time—that will be the one which will engulf us, forgetting the past ways the Lord has worked.

And also forgetting His Word. It's interesting that Mark says, "That day when evening came, he said to his disciples, 'Let us go over to the other side'" (Mark 4:35, NIV). Jesus didn't shout that at them. He didn't say, "I'm going to say it once, and I want you all to shout it after Me," and put in kind of a cheerleader effect. "Ready boys? One, two, three: We're going to the other side!" No. Real calm. Real quiet. No razzmatazz. Often the Lord incredibly speaks so quietly to us, we don't hear Him, because we don't take Him seriously. We think that He should say it again or say it in a different way. But He simply said, "Let us go across to the other side." Then a few hours later, when the disciples are really having that struggle in the boat, they've forgotten all those calm words. Because when crisis comes, we tend to forget the things that have been spoken to us on calmer days. And the disciples forget.

And because they forget, they come to Jesus and say, "Wake up Master! We're going to sink!" The audacity of that statement—as if any boat in which the Son of God would lay His head would go to the bottom of the sea. That's a real mark of their unfaithfulness at this point. But they had forgotten what He had said.

C. When the Word of Jesus is left lying undeveloped and unapplied to any situation that we're going through, then inevitably fear comes. But the characteristic of the Lord is so beautiful here in this story. He's relaxed. Sound asleep. If ever we see an indication of the humanness of Jesus, it's here. Having been pressed about by the crowds, having a need of respite from the tiredness and the pressing in of the crowd, He is fast asleep. Even though the waves are rolling in the boat and Mark gives us that beautiful picture that Jesus was asleep on a cushion—the only Gospel to note that, and perhaps its a reflection that, after all, Peter's preaching stands behind Mark's

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written Gospel and Peter still remembered His head was on a pillow in the back of the boat. They wake Him up, saying, “Lord, help us!” They weren’t asking for a miracle. They were simply saying, “Lord, one more hand with a pail is really going to help us out in this crisis.”

Jesus, however, stands up and He does two things. He speaks to the winds and He speaks to the disciples. He speaks to the winds and He commands them to be silent. There is a built-in communication ability of the Son of God which we shouldn’t miss. The Scriptures say, “all things are upheld by the word of his power” (Hebrews 1:3). And Genesis says that when the worlds came into existence they came into existence because “God said” (Genesis 1). There is ability in the voice of God to communicate.

We don’t have that ability. Or at least I find it often failing. My little dog doesn’t even want to do what I tell him to do. But here is the Son of God speaking in a scientific way to elements that are supposed to be nonmaterial, communicating to them down the vibes of creation, which He has made, and speaking and listening. It’s a great manifestation of His divinity. Then He speaks to the disciples and He says to them, “Why are you so afraid? Do you still have no faith?” (Mark 4:40, NIV). At least they might have had some faith. They might have had some, but they had none. They had forgotten the Word.

Jesus delivers them from the storm. Sometimes Jesus delivers us *from* the storm and sometimes He delivers us *in* the storm.

I think of another sea storm later in the Book of Acts, chapter 27. Instead of rescuing an apostle from a storm, the Lord desired to let him get shipwrecked. And in Acts 27, we see Paul’s wild ride on the Mediterranean—which if they ever build Bible Land I hope they put that in as one of the fun rides. We see Paul on this wild ride being shipwrecked. God does not deliver him *from* the storm. He delivers him *in* the storm. Whatever way He chooses to go, it is for His own best

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interest and His purposes. For by delivering Saul in the storm, salvation comes to an island. By delivering him from the storm, the events could never have happened.

When we carry problems or when crises surround us, God can do one of two things with them. He can take us out of the crisis, or He can take the crisis off us, or He can give us strength to carry on. Here were the disciples on the Lake of Galilee. He chooses to remove from them the crisis of the storm. He speaks and the winds and the waves obey.

### **II. Coming across the lake, He confronts a man—the Gadarene.**

It is evening time. The fabled wild man from the tombs of Gadara approaches as a gaunt specter in the night. Imagine him—long matted hair hanging down over his shoulders. His beard is full and untamed. Even in the night, when the only light given is that of the moon, one could detect on his body the scars and welts left from chains and ropes and previous beatings. He approaches at a gait, smiting himself with a jagged rock in his hand, chortling incoherently to himself.

Seeing a group of strangers coming across the lake, he runs hopefully in the night air and the eerie Halloween atmosphere to scare the wits out of them, that they might leave his territory. But something happens to him on the way down to the boat. A supernatural visitation occurs, so he runs and falls down in the presence of Jesus, as Jesus steps out of the boat, and he worships Him. Then that schizophrenic nature of his personality emerges and he immediately cries out, “What do you want with me, Jesus, Son of the Most High God?” (Mark 5:7, NIV).

What are we to make of this? There’s so much talk these days about exorcism and demon possession. I think there is always a balance in the discussion of something like that. There are those who deny such a thing exists. We have seen liberal clergymen on the air saying no such thing exists. On the other extreme, there are those who see demon possession in practically everything.

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The demon possessed man of Gadara helps us understand something about the nature of demon possession, and something about the power of the Lord, to come to grips with it and deal with it.

The characteristics the Gadarene demoniac had are shared with all the instances of demon possession in the Gospel.

The first characteristic of demon possession is some manifestation of physical control that the demon has over the body of the person. In the Gospel record, of six cases of demon deliverance or demon possession, the physical control is central to all six. There are two ways the demon might physically control the body. One way: so as to make the person harmless and helpless. Another way: so as to make the person harmful and dangerous. Four of the deliverances have to do with people who have been rendered harmless. Two of them, at least, have to do with persons who have been made harmful.

What do you mean when you say “harmless”? The Gospels note that there are persons who, because of demon possession, have lost their ability to hear or have lost their ability to speak or to control their bodily functions. This loss of sight, in some cases, hearing in others, loss of speech in others, and a type of demonism, is similar in kind to the manifestation of epilepsy. But the Gospels do not misdiagnose demon possession with human illness. Although there are those who are demon possessed so that they cannot hear, speak or see, there are also other healing miracles where no demon possession is associated with the healing of a person who cannot speak, hear or see. There’s also, at the end of Matthew 4, a clear difference noted between epilepsy and demon possession.

So we’re talking about the physical control that the demon establishes upon a person so as to render him helpless—a physical characteristic.

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On the other hand, with the Gadarene demoniac we see the demon manifesting himself by the terrible hurt and crushing nature of the possession, so that destruction is the goal which is in mind.

I would tend to say, on the basis of the Gospel evidence, that unless a person has that first characteristic of some manifestation of physical control, they need not worry about the problem of demon possession in themselves. I think all of us, at one time or the other, have had a fleeting thought, “Am I demon possessed?” As a kid I did. Particularly when somebody said, “Everybody close their eyes. We’re going to cast out a demon in the room, and if you’re not praying, it’ll enter you.” It’s interesting to note that Jesus never did this.

The Gospels also establish a clear difference between mental illness and demon possession. In mental illness, there is nothing to be cast out. It’s a sickness within. Whereas, in demon possession, there is something to be exorcised. But physical control is a manifestation, and it’s reached its hideous and in-depth nature in this man from the Gadarene tombs.

The demons have supernatural knowledge of things which are not on the level of the average person. It is in the Gospel of Mark that, when the demons see Jesus, they confess that He is the Son of God. It happens in Mark 1 in the synagogue, where a man pitches out of his chair and says, “I know who you are. The Holy one of God.” It happens in Mark 1:39, where Jesus, in healing, would not permit the demons to speak because they knew Him. It happens again in Mark 3:11. When unclean spirits beheld Him, they fell down and cried out, “You are the Son of God.” And He strictly ordered them not to make Him known. And it happens again here, in Mark 5.

Supernatural knowledge. Not something which is humanly gained, but an insight into a dimension of the depths of the person of Jesus Christ is noted here. Level of control. Jesus does

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not permit the demons to speak, for He will not have the witness of the devil giving credentials to His Messiahship. His testimony will be that which draws men to God.

I think the testimony of demons also scares people away from God and the Lord knows it and shuts them up. He does not get in conversations with demons. He does not ask them what they've been doing on their long journeys. He does not—nor do the Gospels—try to give us long, in-depth psychological analyses of what is happening within the human mind possessed by demons. It's strictly treated as a matter-of-fact case, and the Lord slams the door on the personality of the demon and makes him leave.

There is, I think, a third characteristic of demon possession, which is manifest here in the Gospel record. That is, the desire—albeit it may be hidden—of the person who's possessed to be free.

Or the desire of the persons who are next to and close to the person who is possessed for them to be free.

In four cases of the six in the Gospels, friends bring demon possessed people to Jesus, that He might exorcise the spirit. In two cases, demon possessed persons themselves are in His presence and that is what's happening here with the man. He wants Jesus to do something. Which is kind of interesting, because it's showing that, even though the demon has control in ultimate analysis, there is still a measure of freedom, of reaching out, of longing, on the part of the entrapped person. Jesus makes that point of identification with the man and proceeds to cast the demon out. Jesus' manner of casting out demons, His manner of exorcism, is very simple. He speaks the Word. As far as we know He never laid hands on the demon possessed in the Gospels. That's not to say it can't be done, but He just never did. He simply spoke. And there was something in His voice, like as when He spoke to nature, that they understood and heard and had to obey. There was no option.

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The demons in this man were worried about where Jesus was going to send them. They asked that He might send them out of the country. It's interesting that each of the Gospels, in this story, gives us a different insight, a different detail which helps us fully understand the event. In Matthew 8, the demons cry out, "Have You come to torment us before the time?" They think that the end time judgment has already moved in on them. In Luke 8:31, the demons beg Jesus not to send them into the abyss. If we cross-reference this with Revelation 9, this is a holding place for demonic spirits which are not permitted their freedom to be on earth. What the demons are asking for, in essence, is that Jesus will not send them from their domain on earth into the pit, but allow them to go some other place. Here we see the power of Jesus in exorcising the demons, that He doesn't simply send them from one person to another, but that when He deals with evil, He casts it out. And since demons are evidently parasitic in nature, they go for the swine first, and then the swine go down into the lake. I think the demons, after the swine drowned, kept right on going into the abyss.

The effect of this should be seen. For this is a great miracle which shows the resplendent power of the Lord Jesus Christ. There is the effect on the town. This miracle as no other challenges their values and their spiritual level. They'd never done anything to help the man. All they had sought to do was to bind him with fetters and chains. Had they ever prayed for him? Had they ever interceded with God on his behalf? Had they ever really cared for the man as a person? No, they had thrust him out and put him aside.

Then when Jesus exorcises the demons and allows their swine herd to be wiped out, which is quite an economic loss on their behalf, you might wonder why is Jesus doing this and allowing this to happen? Jesus could read values very well. And Jesus knew that if He held an election in the town of Gadara and had a little ballot that said "pigs" with an "X" mark after it and another

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one which said “persons,” with an “X” mark after that, the town would have voted by landslide ballot to keep their pigs and have the man demon possessed. Jesus probably thinks, “What you have done in this town is put things ahead of people.” And the implication of that miracle for all of life is fantastic, because Jesus is helping people and not letting things get in the way. The temptation of the devil or of the non Spirit-filled life or non-Christian life is to let things crowd out our attention for people, so that people are sacrificed for things.

How many times has that happened in the American home? Where persons—children—are sacrificed that we might have things? This miracle is thrusting the spear of Jesus’ Word right into our spiritual life and saying, “Where are your values? Have you helped? Are you concerned? Do you love? Does your heart bleed and pray and intercede for persons?”

This man has an effect on him too. It’s not just on the town, but Jesus has an effect on the individual. Matthew says that there were two men. Quite obviously, Mark is simply telling the story of one because evidently one of them comes to a deeper profession of faith in Christ. He goes and witnesses for Christ. So Mark tells his story.

This man comes and begs Jesus that he might go with Him. Jesus says a strange thing. He doesn’t say, “Follow Me” (previously in the Gospels He had said, “Follow Me). But to this man He said, “Go home” (Mark 5:19). That may be the toughest call to discipleship.

The disciples to whom He said, “Follow Me,” become the world’s known figures. Who of us doesn’t know the names of Peter, James, John, Matthew and the rest? They become known worldwide. Their call is to be with Him, to be known. But this man of Gadara remains unnamed. We never know his name. He said, “Go home and tell your friends.” Often we must recognize that the call of Jesus is not to do something great or to be someone great in the kingdom, but to go home and be the witness there, to live out the more difficult call of Christ, to live

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anonymously for Him and for His name, to be unrecognized, unsung, unheralded, but faithful to the Lord. That's the beauty of this man's discipleship.

This miracle should also have an effect on us. Not only the values that this miracle projects on us, but it also has an effect on us in telling us a little bit about what hell is like. Hell is possession by Satan to its infinite and worst degree. If you want to get an individual idea of what hell is like, look at the hell within the heart of one person in Gadara and you will begin to understand something of the horror of it all.

### **III. There is the evidence also, in the Gospel of Mark, of Jesus' power over illness. It is seen in the story of the woman.**

We see in this woman her medical condition first. Mark says for twelve years she had been hemorrhaging. Then, he says, she had suffered much under many physicians (Mark 5:26). I don't know if that means she had physically suffered under physicians. I kind of associate it more with mental suffering. There's a mental suffering that happens in a person's life when he goes from one doctor to another, and when the doctor shakes his head and says, "For you, there's no hope." This woman refuses to take "no hope" for an answer. She keeps going; she keeps going until finally she's exhausted her financial resources. She spent, Mark said, all she had (Mark 5:26). It's interesting to compare this with Luke, because he's a doctor. He simply notes that she had something so bad that no one could help her anyway, so he kind of helps us see the medical profession in a good light. She'd spent all she had. And she only grew worse. With her medical condition, there was also her social condition. Sometimes, we don't see on the surface, but according to Leviticus 15, she was ceremonially unclean. Anyone that had a hemorrhaging condition like this woman had was to be an isolated, quarantined person. Every person she touched became unclean. Every bed she lay on became unclean. Every seat she sat on became

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unclean. Everything she touched was unclean. And if somebody touched her or touched what she touched, they became unclean. And they couldn't go home at night and hold their children in their arms or kiss their wife. They had to sleep outside. They couldn't go to the temple and they couldn't go to the synagogue and they couldn't take part in the feast days. So she was someone you wanted to stay away from.

How often it is that the sick also become isolated. There aren't people wanting to break through into the isolation. We call them "shut-ins." That's the term we use. That was what this woman was. She was shut in.

But we see her...she gets word of Jesus. I heard something I really like about this woman's spiritual condition. She had faith. She had tremendous faith. The minute she hears about Jesus, she says, "If I just touch his clothes, I will be healed" (Mark 5:28, NIV). Her statement was not, "If I can get to him, then I wonder if He will make me well." The "if" was on her part, not on Christ's part. She was certain that if she could get to Him she would be healed.

That's coming from a person who's heard everything from doctors for twelve years and still believes. Great faith. Something else I like about her: Finally, she hung tradition on the wall and said, "I don't care what tradition says, I'm getting through to Jesus." I like to picture her going through that throng, and there are the self-righteous people, keeping their garments clean.

They're in the synagogue and they're looking fine, and they're in the temple and they're doing their duties, and they believe they're clean before God. Only, they don't know that this woman is unclean and she's defiling them. She's going through the crowd, pushing people aside. Every time she touches somebody, they're unclean and they don't know it.

If ever external religion had its sufficiency, it's in this true religion of the heart. That's what it consists of. This woman was breaking through to touch Jesus.

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Jesus does something with her faith. He strengthens it. He points it out. He stops and He looks around. Mark has used that word once before, in Mark 3:5, where in the synagogue He looked around and He eyeballed, person-to-person, everybody in the synagogue, and He does that with the crowd. He looks around, person-by-person, and examines with His eyes, as He is saying, “Who touched Me?” This woman realizes that it was her, so she indicates that it is. I believe Jesus had a good motive for bringing this out. He wanted the woman to know that she had something to do with her healing. It wasn’t all just Him. It was also her. Her faith had put her there. Maybe He also wants her to understand that He healed in spite of her limited methodology of faith. She thought that there was something magical to being healed, that if she could just touch the clothes, do the magical kind of thing, she would be well.

But Jesus turns and says, “Woman, it wasn’t that at all.” It was in her. It was of the heart. It was your faith. Go your way—authority over illness.

#### **IV. In Jesus, there is also evidence of His power over death with the story of Jairus, who comes to him—a ruler of the synagogue.**

How wonderful the Master is. He never stereotypes people. He doesn’t say, “Oh! You’re the ruler of the synagogue. I don’t want to have anything to do with you.” Or, “You’re the ruler of the synagogue. You can help Me. I think if I could get all the rulers behind Me, I could do well. If I get your daughter up and on her way again, it’s to My advantage.” There’s no relating to a person for what Jesus could get out of it, no stereotyping of the individual. No conditions even laid down by Jesus, saying, “If you give so much in the offering—My apostolic funds are a little depleted—I’ll be glad to heal your daughter.” No conditions are laid down.

Here is the man, concerned about his little girl, one of the Gospels notes, “who is twelve years of age” (Luke 8:42). Jesus’ attitude toward death here is so beautiful and powerful. He sees her

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death as sleep. It's very clear, and perhaps brought out the clearest in the Gospel of Luke, that the girl really was dead. She was not in a coma. She was really dead. But He says, "She sleeps." There was something about Jesus' attitude toward death that was quickened later to the apostle Paul's mind when he said, "We shall not all sleep, but we shall be changed" (1 Corinthians 15:51). But the habit of Christians looking at death is not just seeing it as cessation of life at all, or as the termination of anything. A gentler, more euphemistic, softer term is used to describe death for someone who's in Christ.

Jesus then spoke to her. Here are the words of Jesus in Aramaic, breaking through the Gospel text, "Talitha, cumi" (Mark 5:41). It's as if Peter, who originally preached the sermon, perhaps, and Mark, who later wrote it—it's as if Peter can never get away from hearing Jesus speak in the stillness of that room with just a few of them there. Jesus is still speaking Aramaic to the girl, and maybe to the whole world who would believe in Him. He's saying, "I say to you, rise." Again, it's His Word that does it. It's His Word that will raise the dead on resurrection morn. He will come with a cry of command and with a shout, He will say it again, "I say unto you, arise." The working power over death in the life of this girl is emblematic of what He is going to do to everyone who believes in Him.

The disciples, the parents, the child, are told not to say anything about this miracle. Let the crowd think that Jesus' diagnosis of a coma was right. Let them not think it was death. His ministry is going on. He has desires that He wants to communicate, that He is the Messiah. He doesn't want to be besieged by people inviting Him to the graveyards. He knows that there is a future Resurrection day, so He will go on with His ministry. But He has done something very powerful. A portrait from the Gospel is emerging which shows us something fundamental about Jesus. We either believe this or we don't. We either trust Him for eternal life or we don't.

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The character who sang, in Porgy and Bess, “It Ain’t Necessarily So,” had a very sad experience. He wound up causing the alienation of Porgy and Bess toward each other. He winds up breaking up their loving relationship. I suppose a person who is a cynic, who does not believe when there are clear evidences presented for belief, eventually winds up with a disintegrated life, with an inability to put things together. Life, in order for it to reach its full flower and its fruition, must have faith and love joined together. Only then can life really flow and be well. The fate of every person who looks at the ministry of Jesus with the cocked eye of the cynic and with the muttered words “I dare you,” really never penetrates through to understanding of the person of Jesus himself.

In these four portraits from the life of Jesus, we see something very powerful about the nature of the gospel. There’s always a happy ending to the story. Earth has no sorrows that heaven cannot heal. The gospel is good news. It is saying that Jesus Christ will make things work out ok. There is no storm. There is no possession. There is no illness. There is no death of which He is not the Lord and Master. He indeed is sovereign of all. We must see Him as such and be filled this day, once again, with the glorious news of the gospel of Jesus Christ. Jesus is God’s Son. I am God’s child through Jesus.

### **Closing Prayer**

We rapidly, our Father, have surveyed the landscape of the Gospel of Mark. Literally, we have run with Jesus. We have seen the rapidity of His actions. Your Son, and our Savior. We’ve seen His work—how He doesn’t simply touch one life and then wait twenty years to do something again. But, day by day, moment by moment, He’s reaching out, doing something, working the good news of His kingdom. That truth causes us, in this prayer this morning, heavenly Father, to turn to Thee and recognize that in the release of Thy power among us, You are not simply doing

## **LOOK AT THE EVIDENCE**

### **Mark 4:35-5:43**

something for one person and then waiting for a long time to do something for somebody else.

But You are breaking through, doing many things very rapidly, spontaneously and over all of us.

We have a need, Lord Jesus, to keep up with You. We have a need to keep Your sensitivity toward persons. We have a need today to be clothed with Your power. We have a desire to see, released in this Your body, what You released in Your physical body when You walked the earth. We too wish to see the day of the Lord. We thank You that this day has begun. We're thankful that Your power is already being released. We're thankful that sin and its power and its authority have been broken. We're thankful for the healings which have taken place in our body the last few weeks, as several individuals in this Your church have been graciously restored by You. We realize, Lord, that this is a portent, a sign of what is yet to come. That You are beginning, always beginning, the good news. Clothe us with Your power. Draw us ever-nearer to You, that we might not treat You as an object of belief, a God out there and up there, so far that we cannot draw close. But let us draw into the inner circle of relationship with You, where we can know You, not as a doctrine, but first as a person, where we cannot just simply read about You, but where we can commune with You and love You and joyously share in Your burdens and in Your victories. Let the good news go on today, ever-increasing in our lives through Jesus, we pray. Amen.