

## **Title:**

Trusting God when life hurts

## **Introduction**

One thing we all will face in our lives are trials.

In this year Erika and myself faced:

- The loss of our pets for 4 days
- a daughter writing off a car, visiting her in hospitality stress of purchasing 2 cars and all that goes with that.
- People lying to us
- The loss of money

I am sure many of you have faced different trials

Sometimes we respond well.

But other times not so well.

By that I mean:

- You worried, panicked and became sinfully fearful.
- You isolated yourself from the body of Christ
- You become problem focused instead of Christ focused
- You did not ask God for wisdom
- You did not depend upon Christ, His Word or His character
- You may at times have panicked, responded in fear.
- You may have wondered: where God is, is He still in control, can He change things.

Then this sermon is for and I as it teaches us to trust in Christ when life hurts and to trust in His word and His character.

## **Historical Background**

Mark writes to believers facing severe persecution from Nero.

These believers may have responded in panic, cowardice and lack of faith.

Some may have thought that God did not care for them.

Mark recalls an event in which Jesus displays His sovereign power and authority over creation in a severe trial.

He also shows how the disciples responded in contrast to Christ's response to the trial.

The disciples failed the test of faith due to a lack of faith.

The main point of this passage is a demonstration of Christ's authority over creation.

However, there are several discipleship lessons in this story:

- There are lessons on how not to respond in trials as demonstrated by the disciples
- There are lessons in how Christ responded to the same trial.
- Then there are lessons we can deduce from how a believer should respond to a severe trial.

## **Read Passage Mark 4:35-41**

### **Proposition**

2 ways to respond when life hurts

1. In panic and unbelief
2. In dependence upon Christ, His character and His word

### **1. In panic and unbelief**

- Setting
- Crisis
- Responses

#### **Setting**

*<sup>35</sup> On that day, when evening had come, he said to them, "Let us go across to the other side."<sup>36</sup> And leaving the crowd, they took him with them in the boat, just as he was. And other boats were with him..*

**<sup>35</sup> On that day,**

Mark was indicating to His readers that Mark 4:1-34 represents a single day of teaching

- Vs 1--20 Jesus taught the **parable of the different soils**(sower)- different kinds of **hearers**
- The unbeliever who rejects Christ because of their heart condition:
- **The hardened hearts**- unresponsive to the gospel,
- The **shallow heart** which has a **superficial response** to the gospel who respond emotionally to the gospel but with affliction, their faith collapses and they fall away,
- The **crowded heart** by worldliness, the cares of the world, the love of money & things crowd out the word and it becomes unfruitful.
- **The Believer whose heart** is prepared by God, who hears the word, receives it and **bears fruit.**
- Jesus explained **the reason for parables** was to **veil truth to those outside** His kingdom as a **form of of divine judgment and mercy but to those inside.**
- But to those inside they come to understand the **truths of Christ** , the gospel and its implications.
- Vs 21-25 Jesus teaches **the parable of the Lamp** under the basket to highlight the importance for **those saved to proclaim the** gospel.
- Vs 26-29 Jesus teaches **the importance of waiting and** depending upon God to bring about **the growth and the regeneration** in the hearts of those chosen by God in His kingdom.
- Vs 30-34 Jesus taught the **parable of the mustard** seed which highlighted the difference **between the beginning and the end manifestation** of the kingdom of God.

This **was a full day of teaching.**

***when evening had come***

This meant **that light was fading** and there would have **been a lack of sight** as they went out onto the **sea of Galilee.**

***he said to them, "Let us go across to the other side."***

The Grammar and all the specific **details highlight the eye witness** account.

Jesus and His disciples were on the western shore of the Sea of Galilee, and for reasons not mentioned, Jesus wanted to cross over to the eastern shore.:

It could have been:

- To escape the popularity of the crowds for a brief respite
- Or intentional to have the Divine appointment in the country of the Gerasene's to deliver a man possessed by a legion of demons, who would turn out to be a fruitful hearer that would become a faithful witness of God's grace and power in Christ, in that region. Mark 5:1-20,
- But it may also be that since he had been teaching the disciples His word.
- The word of Christ is intended to produce faith.

***17 So faith comes from hearing, and hearing through the word of Christ. Romans 10:17 (ESV)***

- And genuine faith must always be tested.
- That's why they needed to cross over to face a severe test of faith.
- It's not enough that they were able to repeat the lesson Christ taught them.
- They needed to practice that lesson by faith in a real test of faith.

Note Jesus words:

***Let us go across to the other side***

The grammar indicates that Jesus was urging His disciples to join with him and cross over to the other side.

***36 And leaving the crowd, they took him with them in the boat, just as he was.***

Jesus takes leave of the crowd and most likely climbs over from the preaching boat into the boat with his disciples.

***And other boats were with him***

The boat may not have been large enough to accommodate everyone and so there were other boats that were filled with disciples with Him.

## **Crisis (trial)**

***37 And a great windstorm arose, and the waves were breaking into***

***the boat, so that the boat was already filling***

The Sea of Galilee is known as Yam Kinneret today,

- the sea of Gennesaret in Luk 5:1,
- the sea of Chinnereth in Num 34:11,
- Chinereth in Jos 12:3
- the sea of Tiberias John 6:1 named after Tiberius Ceasar Augustus.

It is a large fresh water lake (+21km)-long and (11,3)km wide, (210 meters) below sea level and is the lowest fresh water lake on earth.

It gets its water from the Jordan river and underground springs.

(48,3km) north east is Mt Hermon which rises (2804 m) above sea level.

The cold air of Mt Hermon and warm rising air from the Sea of Galilee sometimes produces severe weather conditions.

Since the sea of galilee is surrounded by high mountains forming a basin.

Strong in the afternoons cause fishermen to fish mainly at night.

But storms at night are particularly dangerous.

***37 And a great windstorm arose,***

Great = GK "megas" It was above standard in intensity.

Windstorm= Gk for whirlwind, hurricane or tempest.

***23 .... And a windstorm came down on the lake, ... Luke 8:23 (ESV)***

Luk 8:23 indicates that the windstorm came down the slopes onto the lake which would have caused great waves filling the boat.

***24 And behold, there arose a great storm on the sea, ...Mat 8:24***

Mt 8:24 uses a GK term seismos where we get the term seismology from which means violent shaking, shock.

***Mark 4: 37...and the waves were breaking into the boat, so that the boat was already filling***

In 1992 one such storm generated 3 M-high waves causing flooding to the city Tiberias.

This most likely was similar conditions.

The disciples were **most likely bailing out the water**, but the boat was covered with waves.

...*he boat was being swamped by the waves... Matthew 8:24 (ESV)*

...*and were in danger. Luke 8:23 (ESV)*

The trial they faced was:

- Beyond **their control**
- Beyond **their strength**
- Life **threatening**
- They could not simply **decide to walk** away from it

Just like you and I very often face trials that are **beyond our ability to control**, beyond **our strength**, may be **threatening** and you simply **cannot find a way of escape**.

You're in it.

It could be **financial**, it could be **the death of a loved one**, it could be **health related**, it could be your own **struggle with pornography**, or **your lust for money** or the loss of **money**, or it could be **corrupt** people that have stolen from you.

You and I **will in our lives face** these kinds of situations.

## **Contrastive responses**

*Mark 4:38–41 (ESV)*

*<sup>38</sup> 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?" <sup>39</sup> 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. <sup>40</sup> He said to them, "Why are you so afraid? Have you still no faith?" <sup>41</sup> 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?"*

We'll alternate between Jesus' response and the disciples' responses.

## **Jesus response**

*<sup>38</sup> But he was in the stern, asleep on the cushion.*

We see that Jesus was fast asleep and remained asleep even with a boat in a hurricane.

He was untroubled in the midst a great adversity.

We can assume:

- He was soaked to the bone
- The boat would have been rocking violently
- He was sleeping on wooden planks with a small cushion under his head.

We see in this part of Scripture dramatic picture of Christ humanity contrasted with His deity (the fact that He is God).

- He was exhausted after a hard day of intense ministry, yet untroubled in the calmness of His divine power.
- He would soon be awoken to simply rebuke a massive storm with his words and it would listen.

## Disciples response

But note how His disciples respond to the adversity?

***And they woke him and said to him, "Teacher, do you not care that we are perishing?"***

Some of them were experienced fisherman.

1. They go to Jesus and woke Him. (That is something I believe each of us should do- go to Jesus about the issue)  
But what we see next is something we should not imitate.
2. Basically they panic (they respond in fear: Teacher do you not care, Teacher are you not concerned, were dying out here.

In essence they run to Jesus, but begin by accusing Him of not caring or showing no concern

- Jesus is asleep, most likely from exhaustion, but this does not at all mean that He does not care, or that He is not loving.
- But it reveals the mindset of one who is anxious, fearful to such a degree that they actually doubt the character of God

How often in the trials you face, do you start off in panic or anxiety (worry) and then it transitions to doubting God's goodness, love or caring.

We tend to equate God's Love and caring with it going well with us and comfort. That is not necessarily the case.

## How does Jesus respond.

***39 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. 40 He said to them, "Why are you so afraid? Have you still no faith?"***  
**Mark 4:39–40 (ESV)**

Jesus response comes over decisive and immediate

- From being asleep due to exhaustion as a frail human being, we see this passage demonstrating Jesus as the all-powerful God of creation.
- Jesus rebukes the wind, as if it was a living being, a unruly troublemaker
- He does not shout but simply speaks to the sea
- Peace -gram indicates it's a command to be silent
- Be still- Gk term which means to muzzle a beast, or to put to silence

The grammar indicates immediate results

- The wind ceased, it stopped, ceased
- there was a great calm,(an unruffled surface on a body of water). It became like a mirror.(from 3 meter waves to a mirror of water instantly).

The experienced fisher men recognized it as supernatural power over creation.

Jesus then turns to the disciples and rebukes the disciples.

***He said to them, "Why are you so afraid? Have you still no faith?"***

Jesus confronts His disciples' hearts.

- They had been entrusted with the secrets of the kingdom, The revelation of Jesus Christ and the gospel.
- They had witnessed God the Father declaring Jesus as His beloved son at His baptism 1:11
- They had heard Demons declaring Him the Holy one of God 1:24
- They had witnessed His authoritative teaching 1:22
- They had seen His authority over demons 1:27
- They had seen His authority to heal the sick 1:34



- They had seen His authority to forgive sins 2:10
- They saw that he had authority over the sabbath day 2:27

Yet their hearts lacked confidence. (Term afraid= cowardly or lacking confidence)

2ndly Their hearts lacked faith

Instead of them relying upon Christ and His word, they were doubting.

They had fear(lacked confidence) because they lacked faith.

## Disciples response

So those:

- who were panicking,
- Who were accusing Christ of not caring,
- who were cowardly,
- who were not believing(had no faith)

were confronted with a display of God's sovereign power over creation.

***41 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?"***

Jesus supernatural display of power over creation filled them with great fear(terror), a natural response to God's presence

The presence of the supernatural is more frightening to man than the most destructive natural forces.

Nature we can understand to a large degree.

But meeting God for an unbeliever brings terror to one's hearts.

He is the most dangerous being in the universe.

We see examples of this in the Scriptures

***22 And Manoaah said to his wife, "We shall surely die, for we have seen God." Judges 13:22 (ESV)***

***5 I had heard of you by the hearing of the ear, but now my eye sees you; 6 therefore I despise myself, and repent in dust and ashes." Job 42:5-6 (ESV)***

***5 And I said: "Woe is me! For I am lost; for I am a man of unclean lips, and I dwell in the midst of a people of unclean lips; for my***

**eyes have seen the King, the LORD of hosts!” *Isaiah 6:5 (ESV)***

***John 17* When I saw him, I fell at his feet as though dead. But he laid his right hand on me, saying, “Fear not, I am the first and the last, *Revelation 1:17 (ESV)***

Unbelieving sailors with Jonah

***16* Then the men feared the LORD exceedingly, and they offered a sacrifice to the LORD and made vows. *Jonah 1:16 (ESV)***

In the presence of the infinitely powerful, holy God, you immediately become aware of your sinfulness and unworthiness, your smallness.

Jesus disciples were cowardly or timid in the face of great adversity

But they showed great fear, terror in the presence Christ display power over creation.

You and I understand how something in creation can bring about the physical death of a person.

But God can destroy (description of the ruin, and torment and torture the unbeliever experiences in Hell) both your body and soul in hell

***28* And do not fear those who kill the body but cannot kill the soul. Rather fear him who can destroy both soul and body in hell. *Matthew 10:28 (ESV)***

**Back to our text.**

What surprises me is that even with the display of Christ power over creation.

The Disciples still do not come to the conclusion that Jesus Christ is the son of God.

They ask a fundamental question however to one another from here on:

***“Who then is this, that even the wind and the sea obey him?”***

**Who is this Jesus?**

If you are an unbeliever this morning, you too must answer this fundamental question.

**Who is Jesus?**

Eyewitness accounts reveal that:

- a man, exhausted in ministry,
- But also that He was God:

He was not merely a good teacher, or an insane person.

Jesus, by the power of his word, spoke and the forces of nature submitted to Him.

## In summary

There is a contrast between Jesus's response to the trial and His disciples

Jesus demonstrated

1. Calmness in trial
2. Faith in God Word, will
3. Authority over creation
4. Compassion for His followers
5. Willingness to rebuke them for their cowardliness and lack of faith

His disciples demonstrated

1. Panic, accusing God of not caring
2. fear and faithlessness
3. Terror
4. ask the key question: who is He

## Application

How do you respond to trial?

1. Do you panic?
2. Do you accuse God of not caring?
3. Do you respond in sinful fear?
  - Fear is sinful when it keeps you from obeying God's command.
  - Fear is sinful when it causes you to disobey God's commands
  - Fear is sinful when it causes you to think and act selfishly
  - Fear is sinful when it springs up from thinking unbiblically
  - Fear is sinful when it flows out of unbelief

(Dr Wayne Mack)

4. Do you stop believing in Christ's?
  - a. His Loving character

- b. His All powerfulness
- c. His presence
- d. His sovereign control in trials
- e. His justice
- f. His salvation
- g. His Lordship

Know this: After you have died, you will face judgment, and in that day you will face God. If you're an unbeliever...

Will your response be terror as you **face Christ as judge** and an **eternity in Hell**,

You may say to me Karl, **I am a believer**, I often respond just like unbelievers to trials.

How should I respond to trials?

1. In **panic and unbelief** (is the way of the unbeliever)

Or

This brings me to the second point

### **3. In dependence upon Christ, His character and His word**

This passage reveals to us the account of the **Disciples who witnessed** Christ as a man exhausted and asleep and as creator who **displayed** His of power over creation.

It revealed **their panic**, **their accusations of not caring**, their cowardliness, their lack of confidence and lack of faith in Christ.

They were on the **journey** to saving faith.

Its only in Mark 8:29 that Peter began to answer the question **who Jesus really is**

***27 And Jesus went on with his disciples to the villages of Caesarea Philippi. And on the way he asked his disciples, "Who do people say that I am?" 28 And they told him, "John the Baptist; and others say, Elijah; and others, one of the prophets." 29 And he asked them, "But who do you say that I am?" Peter answered him, "You***

**are the Christ.” Mark 8:27–29 (ESV)**

But even then, He did not understand that Jesus would die on the cross and rise again on the third day.

And its only at the foot of the cross that we hear the Gentile confession of the Centurion stating, that Jesus is fully understood as the Son of God.

***<sup>39</sup> 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!” Mark 15:39 (ESV)***

Its only once you have come to the foot of the cross,

When you see Christ death for your sins,

when you trust Him as Savior and Lord can you move on to responding correctly to major trials .

## **(Application)**

So how should we face adversity

WE should remind ourselves of how God acted here to save his people then and how he responds to you as His child now.

1. God the Son is not distressed or fearful over the trial He allowed in your life
2. He is at total peace about His purposes and plans for you
3. Jesus is the all-powerful saviour and is not limited in what He can do.
4. Jesus simply uses His word and there is immediate subjection of all creation to His word.
5. He is present with you in every trial
6. Jesus is most concerned about your heart problem, your fears and your lack of faith than the size of the trial, or the danger of the trial.
7. Jesus uses trials to shape our character and to glorify himself.

***<sup>3</sup> because you know that the testing of your faith produces endurance;<sup>4</sup> and let endurance have its full effect, so that you may be mature and complete, lacking in nothing. James 1:3–4 (NRSV)***

***<sup>7</sup> so that the genuineness of your faith—being more precious than gold that, though perishable, is tested by fire—may be found to result in praise and glory and honor when Jesus Christ is***

revealed. 1 Peter 1:7 (NRSV)

## So, what should you and I do?

1. **Emotions:** We should **not respond in panic** to trials and adversity, but in calmness and dependence

**<sup>6</sup> do not be anxious about anything, but in everything by prayer and supplication with thanksgiving let your requests be made known to God. Philippians 4:6 (ESV)**

2. We should **not respond in fear** that leads to faithlessness

3. We should **trust in His Word**(ps19:7,11)

**<sup>7</sup> The law of the LORD is perfect, reviving the soul; the decrees of the LORD are sure, making wise the simple; Psalm 19:7 (NRSV)**

**<sup>11</sup> Moreover by them is your servant warned; in keeping them there is great reward. Psalm 19:11 (NRSV)**

4. His **character:** **All presence** We should trust that He is with us

**<sup>20</sup> ...And behold, I am with you always, to the end of the age.” Matthew 28:20 (ESV)**

**<sup>7</sup> Where can I go from your spirit? Or where can I flee from your presence? <sup>8</sup> If I ascend to heaven, you are there; if I make my bed in Sheol, you are there. <sup>9</sup> If I take the wings of the morning and settle at the farthest limits of the sea, <sup>10</sup> even there your hand shall lead me, and your right hand shall hold me fast. Psalm 139:7–10 (NRSV)**

5. **Wisdom:** He all knowing We should **go to Jesus for wisdom, and show us the way of escape.**

***If any of you lacks wisdom, let him ask God, who gives generously to all without reproach, and it will be given him. James 1:5 (ESV)***

**<sup>13</sup> No testing has overtaken you that is not common to everyone.**

**God is faithful, and he will not let you be tested beyond your strength, but with the testing he will also provide the way out so that you may be able to endure it. 1 Corinthians 10:13 (NRSV)**

6. **All powerful I& Sovereign** We should **trust in His Power**

**<sup>25</sup> To whom then will you compare me, or who is my equal? says the Holy One. <sup>26</sup> Lift up your eyes on high and see: **Who created these? He who brings out their host and numbers them, calling them all by name; because he is great in strength, mighty in power, not one is missing. Isaiah 40:25–26 (NRSV)****

- a. God's **authority and power** is displayed over all of creation

7. We should **trust in His goodness** and love (He cares)

- b. Gods **intensions are for our good** and not our destruction(Rom 3:23)

**<sup>38</sup> For I am convinced that neither death, nor life, nor angels, nor rulers, nor things present, nor things to come, nor powers, <sup>39</sup> nor height, nor depth, nor anything else in all creation, will be able to separate us from the love of God in Christ Jesus our Lord. Romans 8:38–39 (NRSV)**

8. We should trust in His example

**<sup>21</sup> For to this you have been called, because Christ also suffered for you, **leaving you an example**, so that you should follow in his steps. <sup>22</sup> “He committed no sin, and no deceit was found in his mouth.” <sup>23</sup> When he **was abused, he did not return abuse; when he suffered, he did not threaten; but he entrusted himself to the one who judges justly. 1 Peter 2:21–23 (NRSV)****

- c. God is not anxious or panicked in trials but calm  
d. God uses His Word to deal with the situation  
e. God uses His word to confront sinful heart response, so should we

### **IN summary**

The main point of this passage was **a demonstration of Christ authority over creation** for his unbelieving **disciples that were on the journey towards** salvation.

But secondly we see how the disciples fail the test of faith and respond in panic and unbelief, things we should not emulate.

But as we look at the examples of Christ saving His disciple, we also see the keys in facing severe adversity

To go to Christ, to trust in His character, and to trust in His word.

## Conclusion

2 ways to respond when life hurts

1. In panic and unbelief
2. In dependence upon Christ, His character and His word

John Owen wrote

***He that can at times retreat to the contemplation of His glory, will be carried above the perplexing prevailing sense of any of these evils, or confluence(convergence) of them all...whatever presses urges, perplexes, if we can but retreat in our minds to a view of His glory, and a due consideration of our interest in it, comfort and support will be administered to us....in the contemplation of the glory of Christ they will find rest for their souls.***