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The Jesus Identity

Studies in Mark's Gospel

Introduction

How would you define 'faith'?

How does God strengthen and/or grow our faith?

Mark 4:35-5:43 is significant in that it shows Jesus at work releasing a captive of Satan and reversing the powers of sickness and death. While showing us the power of Jesus, we also encounter a man who deals with people sensitively and with great intimacy as he meets them and responds to their great needs. Mark's account of the events in this passage seem to feature two themes: faith and the question, 'Who is this man?'

Mk 4:35-41

1. In the face of the storm, why do you think Jesus questions the disciples' faith (Mk 4:40)? What would 'faith' have done in this situation?

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2. In Mark 4:41 the terrified disciples ask each other, "Who is this? Even the wind and the waves obey him!" If the storm is now over, why do you think the disciples are terrified instead of relieved?

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Why is this narrative not about overcoming 'the storms' of our own lives?

3. Given that this voyage by boat was at his suggestion (v35), what might Jesus have been hoping to achieve?

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Mk 5:1-20

4. How does Mark describe "Legion" before and after his encounter with Jesus? What is the effect of these descriptions on the readers of this gospel?

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Why do you think Jesus commands "Legion" not to follow him, but to stay behind? (Note the reception the people of the Decapolis give Jesus some time after this event in Mk 7:31-37).

5. We have previously read of Jesus expelling many demons prior to this event. What more do we learn about Jesus and the Kingdom he proclaims from these verses?

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6. Why do you think the Gerasenes ask Jesus to leave in v17?

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Mark 5:21-43

- 7. The healing of the women is sandwiched in the middle of Jesus' raising of Jairus' daughter. This A-B-A structure leads us to think about parallels and contrasts between the two events. How are Jairus and the woman 'opposites'? What do Jairus and the woman have in common?

The parlous plight of a woman suffering from menstrual bleeding for 12 years cannot be over-estimated. See Lev 15:25-33.

- 8. How do you understand Jesus' words, "Daughter, your faith has healed you..." in verse 34?

- 9. What do we learn here about faith and the Kingdom of God? [note the contrast with Mk 6:6]

- 10. Why do you think Jesus 'conceals' this most remarkable miracle of raising a dead girl to life?

Conclusion

Throughout these events, Jesus' words and actions beg the question, "Who is this man?" Who can command a storm to cease? Who has power and authority to expel a 'legion' of demons and return a man to his right mind? Who has the power to reverse the uncleanness that defined the suffering woman's life? Who can even raise the dead? Who is this *man*?

- 11. Have there been times in your life where Jesus might have tested and/or refined your faith in him?

- 12. In what areas of your life might your faith in 'this man' now need to grow?