



Sermon Notes: Brendan Leighton,

9 March 2025

“More than a Carpenter”

Readings: Mark 4:35-41,6:1-6, Psalm 107:23-32, Romans 1:1-7

Introduction

Have you ever been in a situation where you have felt powerless?

Maybe in a situation where you had no control, maybe an illness that is chronic or just very severe.

There are all sorts of situations where we are or have felt powerless.

Ale and I spent a couple of years up in Darwin. It was Christmas Eve. We were driving to our Christmas Eve service, we had gotten in the car, and I had just checked the weather; 1% chance of rain. And so we started driving, Ale was pregnant with Lily at the time.

After a few minutes the sky changed, a massive cloud rolled in and the winds picked up in an instant. As we were driving, the wind gusted enough for you to feel it move the car, and after a few minutes suddenly a branch about three metres long and as thick as my leg flew diagonally at our windshield smashing the glass, not shattering thankfully. But I pulled over and got out to check the damage, the windshield was holding up but it was cracked all over which made visibility very tricky. I was thinking I would need to stick my head out the window to see. And as I'm checking the windshield, a loud crash sound came from behind our car, as another sizable branch fell from a tree. See we were surrounded by a particular type of tree. These trees were not native to Darwin and every storm, massive branches would get blown down. There we were in the middle of a 80 meter strip of them. I knew we had to move and I got back into the car, and then the rain came, heavy rain; visibility was 0, crashing branches as big as the one that smashed into our windshield, started falling more frequently and you could hear as more branches fell and I knew that I just had to drive; completely blind, with a smashed windshield, heavy rain... just have to drive to get away from these falling trees before a larger one hit us.

Now I could vaguely tell where the road was by the angle of the car but I could barely make out anything and we just had to roll forward and hope and pray we could get out of this strip of trees before a branch smashed us, or another car crashed into us.

Have you ever felt powerless? Have you felt fear of a situation beyond your control? Well, I have good news today because that fear and powerlessness is not just a reality of being human, but a reality Jesus came to save us from. Today we are going to think about power, about Jesus and about fear, and how we can respond to a powerful, yet compassionate God.

But first Let me pray and we will unpack our text. [PRAY]

Now, our passage is a long one. We have three stories we are going to move through. I will draw out some verses along the way so please once more keep the text in front of you.

Let's start Our first section Mark 4:35- 41

You might know the story. Jesus finishes teaching the crowds (verse 35) and he tells his disciples to head over to the other side of the sea (verse 36). They get on a boat, they check the weather app and see a 1% chance of rain but by verse 37 a storm has blown in unexpectedly. The text says a furious squall which is the kind of sudden storm I experienced in Darwin. However, the disciples didn't have the benefit of either a roof or the land, the sea is tossing them back and forward and the waves are coming into the boat; the boat is filling up, and they are bucketing it out, panicking; these fishermen who know this sea so well, they know

this isn't going to end well for them. As they realise this, (verse 38) they see Jesus at the back of the boat sleeping. They wake him, **“Jesus! Don't you care? We are going to drown the boat is going to sink.”**

Jesus stands up, with the storm raging around him; the waves toss back and forward, the rain falling, the wind screaming and Jesus rebukes it. Quiet! Be still! And it listens. Everything goes calm. He looks at his disciples and asks them a question, a question we are going to come back to. Why are you so afraid? Do you still have no faith?

And something incredible happens, they realise something, they didn't realise before; just how powerful Jesus is. The storm that they were terrified of is no longer what they fear. But now they fear the power far beyond even the storm, the one who speaks and creation listens. (verse 41) They ask; “Who is this? Even the wind and the waves obey.”

They haven't seen anything like this kind of power. Now, they have seen Jesus do other miracles. But now they see those miracles were just the tip of the iceberg. Jesus, the one they follow, is far beyond even the power of nature itself. And their response is the right one. Fear of something so far beyond our ability to control, power so vast you can't even comprehend where it ends. Why are you so afraid? Jesus asked them. They were afraid because the power of the storm was going to kill them, now they are afraid Of Jesus and his power even beyond that and they haven't fully grasped who he is.

And that's why Jesus' second question is essential too. Do you still have no faith? Do they still not trust me? He asks. They asked; Don't you care if we die? But of course, they should know that Jesus does care, Jesus does love them. And He uses His power to save them.

But Jesus' power goes beyond the natural world, and we see this in our second story. We are going to keep moving through the three stories and tie them together at the end our second story From Mark 5:1-20.

The disciples get out of the boat and arrive near a graveyard, and we meet a new kind of power. A demon! And in verse 3 we read that no one could bind him anymore, (verse 5) that even chains of iron would be broken by this man possessed by a demon, no one could subdue him. And then this mighty powerful demon sees Jesus and immediately falls to his knees, terrified of Jesus. “What do you want with me, don't torture me?” he pleads. Now at first, this might seem smaller than the storm, and in some ways sure, but now we are seeing Jesus' authority and power not just over the physical world but also the spiritual world.

These mighty demons are terrified of Jesus and his power. As we read the story, we get a glimpse of the scope of this spiritual power. Because it turns out, that this is not one demon, but thousands, Legion they say is their name, they plead for mercy and Jesus sends the demons away. They all flee; they possess a herd of pigs and flee into the sea and drown.

The pig tenders, the people who take care of the pigs, see this and what do they do? They flee to the nearby town and the town comes out to see this man, they see the formerly possessed man, free from the demons and they were, (verse 5) afraid. So afraid they plead for Jesus to leave. They have seen the power, there are two thousand dead pigs as evidence, and they are terrified of Jesus.

Everyone is, except for one: the former demon-possessed man, who pleads to go with Jesus, because he has seen something the others haven't, he has seen that Jesus uses his power with compassion. This man was freed by Jesus from the slavery he was in. He pleads; “Take me with you”, Jesus however, sends him out to proclaim the good news, he becomes an evangelist of Jesus and everyone who hears the full story is amazed.

This is the pattern; Jesus is powerful, terrifyingly powerful. But how does he use that power? He saves the disciples; he frees the demon-possessed man. Those who don't understand who Jesus is, are terrified, even the disciples, because they haven't quite understood it yet, but those who do, understand.

We'll look at our last story to really bring it all together (Mark 5:21-43)

Jesus has crossed the sea yet again and arrives to a crowd ready to hear His teaching. And a man, Jairus, a synagogue leader, comes to Jesus and falls at His feet, (verse 23) he earnestly pleads for Jesus to save his dying daughter; "Put your hands on her and she will be healed" he says. He has some understanding of the power Jesus has, Jesus can heal the sick and so Jesus compassionately goes with him.

The crowd is gathered around, and we are introduced to another sick person. A woman who has had a bleeding disease for 12 years approaches Jesus. Now this disease would have isolated her, by Jewish law, she would count as unclean and so needed to be separate from the community. But this woman knows Jesus has the power to heal her. But there is something she has misunderstood about Jesus and that is his compassion. She thinks she needs to sneak in and get healed, but as she does (verse 30) Jesus stops and says, "Who touched me?" He knows they were healed; He knows power has gone out from Him. And He isn't asking because He doesn't know who touched him, but He asks to let her come forward.

But you can imagine Jairus, 'What is Jesus talking about?' His disciples say to Him, 'Jesus, you're in a crowd of people, heaps of people are touching you'. But Jesus persists and I imagine Jairus is getting anxious, but eventually this woman comes forward and she is trembling with fear.

Why? Because she knew Jesus was powerful, but she didn't understand He was also full of compassion, she confesses, but Jesus wants something to be clear for her to understand: she was not healed because she snuck up and stole Jesus' power, it was because she trusted Jesus could heal her. Now Jesus wants her to know his compassion together with his power, has freed her from her suffering, just like the demon-possessed man.

As this is happening, some people from Jairus's household approach and say; 'It's too late, your daughter is dead, leave the teacher alone'. Imagine the pain; a few minutes too late, maybe if they just went straight there, but it's too late now. But then Jesus says, 'Don't be afraid, just believe in Him'.

Jesus, Jairus and a few of the disciples continue to the Jairus's house, He tells the mourners to leave and tells them not to weep, 'she is just sleeping,' they laugh at the absurdity. Because they neither understand Jesus' power nor His compassion. Jesus, Jairus and the disciples go in to see the girl and just as when He spoke and the storm went silent, and just as He spoke and the demon ran in fear, he spoke (verse 41) "Little girl, get up" and she does! She was dead, but Jesus woke her from death.

'Who is this man?' the disciples asked. This man, who wields such power.

'Let me follow you' said the formerly demon-possessed man, who was freed from his spiritual slavery.

'He can heal me' whispered the woman. And Jesus said, 'I do so willingly'

Can you really save her? pleaded Jairus, and Jesus raised her from the dead.

This is Jesus.

Powerful beyond comprehension yet wields that power with compassion to save those who need it.

And that is really a glimpse of the gospel. The truth is because of sin we were all as good as dead, like that little girl. But Jesus came in his power, and with compassion He bore the wrath of every sin upon himself, a storm of unfathomable proportion of every bit of wrath due for every bit of sin would pour out upon Jesus, who in compassion, would suffer it for his people. He would send it away to free us from it, as he freed the man from Legion, he would heal our hard hearts as he healed the woman, and he would give us new life, as he brought the little girl back to life.

Jesus, powerful and compassionate, has promised to save us forever. And he asks us to trust him in that. In (Mark 4:40) He asks the disciples 'Do you still have no faith?'

He told the woman (Mark 5:34) that her faith in Him has healed her.

And he tells Jairus, 'Don't be afraid, just believe'. Have faith, trust Jesus!

And it seems appropriate that we ask ourselves that same question.

I asked at the beginning, have you ever felt powerless or afraid? And there is an aspect of that as Christians, that as I am driving blind in that storm, that I can say I don't need to be afraid, if I feel powerless, because the one who holds all power is with me. We teach this to our daughter Lily, if she is scared Jesus is always with her and she can pray to him. This is true, this is part of the hope we have, but we have a greater hope than that.

There is a deeper truth beyond our own circumstances, a deeper truth that rings true for every person. Because the truth is, we were powerless in our sin, we would turn away from Him and because of sin, there was inevitably judgment for those sins. But here is the good news: Jesus came to deal with death, to end it, and to deal with sin, to free us from it. And all the freedom and hope comes from one condition: faith, which is just another word for trust; trust in Jesus, trust that He has the power to free us from sin and trust that He has the compassion to see it done.

Easter isn't far away where we can focus on the death, He paid for us and the resurrection giving us hope beyond. But today the question we need to ask is a simple one: do we trust Jesus? Because there are powers far beyond our ability to control, there are circumstances, we cannot bend to our will. But Jesus has already in compassion and power, offered salvation. We are offered forgiveness for our wrongs, offered healing for our hearts and all we need to do is say yes Jesus, I trust you, I have faith in you.

It doesn't mean that we don't feel afraid, but when we do, we can bring that fear to the foot of the cross and say Jesus, help me. It doesn't mean there won't be difficulties beyond our ability, but it does mean when we are overwhelmed, we can go to the One who has all the power and ask for comfort and help.

This is the good news of Jesus Christ: mighty, powerful, and yet compassionate and loving. So let us praise Him for who He is and what He has done for His people.

Amen

Mark 4:35-6:6

Mark 4:35-41 - Jesus calms the storm

Sub point - Fear of God's Power and Authority

v41 - The power to control Nature is terrifying and raises the question; Who is this man?

Mark 5:1-20 - Jesus casts out Legion

Sub Point - Even the Demons Tremble at Jesus (James 2:19)

V6-7 Legion is terrified of Jesus

V13 Legion must obey Jesus

Mark 5:21-43 - Jesus Raises the dead girl and heals the woman

Sub point - The right kind of fear

V33 - The woman is afraid when she is caught

V34 - But Jesus uses his power to release the woman from suffering

Sub Point - The wrong kind of fear

V35 The daughter is dead

V36 Don't be afraid, just believe

Mark 6:1-6 - A prophet without honour

(This is a good example of a lack of faith and trust in Jesus and his power in both wisdom and miracles, however I think I cut this given the breadth of the passage)

Big idea: Jesus has power and authority over everything

Response: While Jesus power is terrifying, his nature of love/compassion means that power is used for the good of those who trust him.

Application: We can have confidence in the promises God makes in love for us.