

Mark 4:30-41  
Faith is the Best Response to Jesus  
3/6/22

**ILL:** A backslidden **Fisherman** was sailing w/ his godless **Crew** when a storm rose and threatened their ship. His crew begged him to pray; but he said, "It's been a long time since I've even gone to church." But, his terrified Crew insisted, so he grudgingly shouted, "O Lord, I haven't asked You for anything in **15 years**, and if You get us safely to port, I promise that I won't bother You again for another **15!**"

RN: How vital is it to **know** Who God is when you're drowning? How vital is it to **treat** God **right** when you're drowning? How vital is it to know what God is **saying** to you when you're drowning?

AN: When life threatens to sink us, our survival depends on knowing God so well that our Faith, Submission, and Self-Control help us cooperate w/ His Grace.

**BI:** Jesus uses Parables and His Authority to **identify** Himself, so the best response to Jesus' Self-revelation is always Faith. **Please turn to Mk 4:30-41.**

- I. Today, we'll see what Jesus uses **to picture** His transforming power.
- II. And, we'll see how Jesus uses **Parables** in His teaching.
- III. Finally, we'll see **Whom** Jesus reveals Himself to be.

**Faith is the best response to Jesus. [PRAY]**

*In (4:26-29), Jesus began to sum up His Parables w/ another farming story that explains the KOG. This week, in (4:30-41), Jesus is going to again stress the nature of the KOG, s/t His Followers can see that it doesn't come w/ political revolution, religious legalism, or self-serving greed. It only comes w/ through the—**power of God.***

(TRN) In (30-32), Jesus pictures the KOG's **transforming** power.

**Mark 4:30-32 (NASB95)** <sup>30</sup> **And [Jesus] said, "How shall we picture the kingdom of God, or by what Parable shall we present it? <sup>31</sup> "[It is] like a mustard seed, which, when sown upon the soil, though it is smaller than all the seeds that are upon the soil, <sup>32</sup> yet when it is sown, it grows up and becomes larger than all the garden plants and forms large branches; so that THE BIRDS OF THE AIR can NEST UNDER ITS SHADE."**

**(31-32)** This mustard seed Parable is like the Parable of the seeds in (26-29). But, this mustard seed Parable zeros in on **transformation** rather than multiplication.

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<sup>i</sup> "Pray Without Ceasing," INFOsearch Pro ver 4.3P.

A. IOW, this story is about how the KOG starts from a teeny-weenie little beginning, but ends up in huge, infinitely overpowering ending. **Consider this—**

1. Every spring in Palestine, teeny-weenie little mustard seeds take root and eventually grow into bushes so large that birds can nest in them.

2. In a similar way, the KOG rises from teeny-weenie, little beginning. But on Judgment Day, God will make it infinitely more powerful than anyone could imagine.

B. Jesus is the perfect example of the kind of transformation that this Parable is talking about. To the World, Jesus begins as some teeny, little hick rabbi from Galilee.

1. But, God gradually reveals that Jesus is His Great, Grand, and Glorious Divine Son, Who heals the sick, exorcises demons, and raises the dead.

2. And, on the **Day of Judgment**, God will establish Jesus as the Divine Righteous Judge Whom every angel, human, and demon must call, “**Lord,**” like it or not.

C. We’re examples of the KOG, too. To others, and sometimes even to ourselves, we seem like teeny-weenie, little nobodies.

1. But, God gradually reveals that we’re His great, grand, glorious sons and daughters, who move His hand through Faith, Holiness, Obedience, Prayer, and Service.

2. And, on the Day of Judgment, God will set us up as a holy jury to help judge Satan, demons, and the wicked who serve them.

D. Now, Jesus includes another compelling Truth in this Parable when he talks about “**the birds nesting in its shade.**”

1. The **OT** uses the same kind of image to talk about nations nesting in great empires of **Babylon** and **Egypt**, s/t they can enjoy the peace and prosperity of these kingdoms<sup>ii</sup>. And in this case, Jesus is making the same kind of reference.

E. He’s saying that the teeny-weeny, little beginning of the KOG will wind up sweeping every kind of person into its Great, grand, glorious peace and prosperity. IOW, Jesus is saying God’s Grace isn’t only open to Israel; it’s open to everyone.

1. In His Kingdom, there will be neither Jew nor Gentile, powerful nor weak, famous nor infamous, rich nor poor, beautiful nor ugly.

2. There will only be a Great, grand, glorious Family of the blood-bought Brothers and Sisters, loving and serving their Heavenly Father and each other.

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<sup>ii</sup> Ps 104:12; Ezek 17:23; 31:6; Dan 4:9-21

**F. ILL:** Many years ago, an **English Nobleman** visited the **Fiji** Islands. He was an atheist, so he criticized an **Old Chief** saying, “You’re a great leader, but what a pity that those **Missionaries** fooled you! They only want your money. No one believes the **Bible** anymore. People are tired of hearing about Christ dying on a cross for our sins. It’s an old, **worn-out** story. They know better now. I’m sorry they **fooled** you.”

The Old Chief’s eyes flashed as he said, “Do you see that great rock? We used to **smash** our enemies’ skulls on it. See that **furnace** next to it. We used to **roast** their flesh in it. If it hadn’t been for those good missionaries and the **Gospel** that changed us from **cannibals** into Christians, you’d be our dinner <sup>iii</sup>!”

**G. APPL:** Some people see us as dopey, little nobodies. But, we **are** God’s Children, who move His hand through Faith, Holiness, Obedience, Prayer, and Service.

God makes us into His **Children**, so Faith is the best response to Jesus.

(TRN) In (33-34), Mark describes Jesus’ use of Parables.

**Mark 4:33–34 (NASB95)** <sup>33</sup> *With many such Parables [Jesus] was speaking the word to them, so far as they were able to hear it;* <sup>34</sup> *and He did not speak to them without a Parable; but He was explaining everything privately to His own disciples.*

**(33)** Mark says that he’s giving us a sample of the Parables that Jesus uses to teach His message.

A. But, Mark zeros in on this one all-important fact about the Parables: The ability to understand them comes to each listener by God’s Grace through Faith.

1. IOW, the Truths of these Parables begin to dawn on people as they Trust in Jesus. But, these same Truths grow evermore dim as people doubt Him.

B. **READ THAT** understanding real spiritual Truth is a gift from God that can be humbly accepted or arrogantly rejected w/ predictable results following each decision.

1. On the **1** hand, Faith opens the soul up to transformation, blessing, and eternal reward. On the other, doubt buries the soul in decay, defeat, and eternal judgment.

**(34)** Mark repeats the **Insider/Outsider** theme again by saying that Jesus constantly uses Parables in His teaching.

A. Jesus can explain them to those Believers who are growing closer to Him through active Faith, b/c **relationship** w/ Jesus opens up the depths of spiritual Truth to us.

1. IOW, God is ready, willing, and able to teach us deep Truths about Himself, His ways, and real life through a personal relationship w/ Jesus.

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<sup>iii</sup> “The Wonderful Change,” INFOsearch Pro ver 4.3P.

B. **Putting it differently:** Jesus is ready, willing, and able to **personally** lead us from the Darkness of Doubt to the Light of Faith when we Trust Him.

**C. ILL:** The 19<sup>th</sup> C. Danish theologian Soren Kierkegaard identified **2** kinds of religion: **Religion A and Religion B**. Religion A is Faith in **name only**. It's the practice of attending church w/out genuine Faith in the living Lord. But, Religion B is a life-transforming, destiny-changing experience. It's a definite commitment to the crucified and risen Savior. And, it establishes an **ongoing** personal relationship b/t a **forgiven** sinner and his **gracious** God<sup>iv</sup>.

**D. APPL:** The ability to see God's Truth is a gift from God that we can respectfully accept or rudely reject. So, we can believe that Faith opens us up to transformation and Eternal Life while doubt opens us up to stagnation and eternal death.

**Relationship** opens the depth of spiritual Truth, so Faith is the best response to Jesus.

*In (4:35-41), Mark returns to Jesus' public ministry. And, in the 4 stories that follow up to (6:2), Mark spotlights Jesus' miracle-working power. God is using these miracles to help people Trust in Jesus as **The Son of God** and **The Christ**, b/c God wants them to **stop** defining Jesus according to their own self-serving desires.*

(TRN) Jesus reveals His **Divine** identity.

**Mark 4:35-41 (NASB95)** <sup>35</sup> *On that day, when evening came, [Jesus] said to them, "Let us go over to the other side."* <sup>36</sup> *Leaving the crowd, they took Him along with them in the boat, just as He was; and other boats were with Him.* <sup>37</sup> *And there arose a fierce gale of wind, and the waves were breaking over the boat so much that the boat was already filling up.* <sup>38</sup> *Jesus Himself 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 got up and rebuked the wind and said to the sea, "Hush, be still!" And the wind died down and it became perfectly calm.* <sup>40</sup> *And He said to them, "Why are you afraid? How is it that you have no faith?"* <sup>41</sup> *They became very much afraid and said to one another, "Who then is this, that even the wind and the sea obey Him?"*

(35-36) At dusk, Jesus says, **"Let's go over to the east side."** This is mostly a **Gentile** area, so Jesus is probably trying to get a break from the pressure of ministry.

A. Then, Mark gives us this eyewitness detail: His Followers take Him, **"just as He is."** IOW, w/o any seeming preparation, Jesus just leaves in His teaching boat.

1. This looks like a spur-of-the-moment decision. But, as we'll see shortly, God's working behind the scenes for to reveal a deep Truth to His Insiders.

B. Now, as Jesus and His Followers take off, a flotilla of other boats tags along. Clearly, Jesus' popularity is growing.

(37) Suddenly, a “**fierce gale**” whips up, and **10’** to **15’** waves start flooding Jesus’ boat. Mind you, this is no **LA** windshield sprinkler. This is a **howling hurricane!**

A. And, as such, flotilla following Jesus scatters in all directions as everyone fights for their lives. IOW, it’s every man for himself!

C. **Maritime Archeology** says that Jesus’ boat is about **26.5’** long x **7.5’** wide x **4.5’** high. And, these details are crucial, b/c they help us measure the size of the storm against the size of Jesus’ boat.

1. IOW, this teeny-weenie little boat looks insignificant in this killer sea, until we zero in on the fact that Jesus is at the helm.

(38) We see a very strange scene: The bitter winds are screeching. The angry lightning is flashing. The killer waves are crashing. But, Jesus is **sleeping!**

A. The only time that we see Jesus sleeping in the Gospels is in the middle of this storm. And, this shows us how much He trusts His Father to take care of Him.

B. As unattainable as this may seem, we can get there, too. Through God’s Grace and **repeatedly choosing** to Trust God, we can learn to relax in ferocious circumstances.

1. We’ve all known Christians who’ve had peace while fighting cancer, or grieving for a dead child, or suffering through a failing marriage. IOW, we’ve all seen how God can help us face our worst nightmares w/ **Trust, Courage, and Strength.**

2. But, we’ve seen the other side as well. We’ve seen Christians rage at God in doubt and panic when their worst nightmare lands on them hard w/ both feet in golf shoes.

C. And that’s what happens here. In contrast to Jesus, His terrified, waterlogged, and surly Followers screech at Him, “**Teacher! What’s wrong w/ You? Don’t You give a hoot that we’re drowning? Do something or we’re all—drowned rats!**”

1. In contrast, besides showing perfect Faith, Jesus shows perfect Humility. Despite His Followers’ abuse, He doesn’t lash out at them. Instead, He takes care of business.

(39) Jesus wakes up and **rebukes** the wind and **silences** the sea. He just says, “**Shut up!**” And swiftly, the sky clears, the wind fizzles, and the waves fall.

A. The **Greek** imperative verb in this verse is fascinating. The verb for “**rebuked**” means “**to command, order, rebuke, or scold.**”

1. Jesus uses this same verb when He rebukes demons (1:25; 3:12). What’s more, it’s a technical term used in Jewish exorcisms for bringing demons under God’s rule<sup>v</sup>.

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<sup>v</sup> Edwards, 150.

B. The Greek verb for “**Hush, be still,**” means “**be silent, be speechless, or be muzzled,**” **lit., shut up.** And, Jesus uses this verb as if He’s speaking to a person.

1. IOW, demonic forces have stirred up this hurricane on the Sea of Galilee, s/t they can prevent Him ministering to the Gentiles.

C. But, this miracle shows that Jesus is **the** Strong Man (3:27) Who can plunder Satan’s house. Moreover, when Jesus shuts up the hurricane, He fulfills a revealing prophecy:

**Psalm 107:23–29 (NASB95) EXCERPTS** <sup>23</sup> *Those who go down to the sea in ships . . .* <sup>24</sup> *have seen the works of the LORD, and His wonders in the deep.* <sup>25</sup> *For He spoke and raised up a stormy wind, which lifted up the waves of the sea . . . Their [souls] melted away in [their] misery . . . Then they cried to the LORD in their trouble, And He brought them out of their distresses.* <sup>29</sup> *He caused the storm to be still, so that the waves of the sea were hushed.*

1. IOW, only God can silence the hurricane. So, **Jesus is God!**

(40) Jesus asks His Followers **2** questions: “**Why were you so cowardly?**” And, “**Why did you lose your Faith?**”

A. W/ these questions, Jesus brings them to their senses and helps them to see how they failed. First, they need to get a grip, b/c Jesus is committed to them.

1. IOW, Jesus will lead them through life’s storms, b/c vowed to do so. Consequently, killer waves and screeching demons can’t break Jesus’ pledge, b/c He **rules** nature, and He **defeats** demons.

2. So, no earthly or unearthly threat can do any permanent harm to Jesus’ Followers. In fact, all that these threats can do is give Jesus a chance to prove Himself Divine.

B. Now, Jesus’ Followers torpedoed their Faith when they let doubt, panic, and anger take over. Doubt, panic, and anger can’t coexist w/ Faith, Submission, and Self-control.

1. IOW, Doubt and Faith are mutually exclusive. The more Faith you have, the less doubt you have, and visa-versa. So, we have a choice to make in our hurricanes:

2. We can choose to doubt and fail. Or, we can choose to Trust and succeed. Doubt feeds on immaturity and cowardice while Faith feeds on maturity and courage. So, be warned, **hurricanes force the choices—**

(41) Jesus questions knock the emotional wind out of His Followers. So, all they can do is ask, “**Who is He really? Even hurricanes do what He says?**”

A. And, that's **OK**, b/c w/ this hurricane, b/c Jesus asks His Followers to stretch spiritually, intellectually, and emotionally. **Here's why**—He wants them to think outside the religious box and see Him for **His Divine Self**.

B. But, this challenge is off the charts for them. They can wrap their minds around hurricanes, but God in the flesh? That's **way, way, way** out there!

1. Still, Jesus did arrest the hurricane and muzzle the demons behind it. So, Jesus' self-revelation terrifies them even more than the violent, drowning, demonic sea.

2. After all, how do you act in the presence of Almighty God? Jesus' answer to that question is very simple—**You simply Trust in Him**.

**C. ILL:** There was a little town that had no liquor stores or bars. But **1** day, a **Businessman** decided to build a nightclub right on **Main Street**. The little town's **Churches** were so upset that **1** of them hosted several all-night prayer meetings, and asked the LORD to **burn down** this den of iniquity. Then, one stormy night, lightning **struck** the nightclub. The resulting fire burned it to the ground. The Businessman heard how the Churches had prayed, so he **sued them** for the damages. His **Lawyer** claimed that their prayers had caused his loss. But, the Churches hired a **Lawyer** and fought the charges. After much thought, the **Judge** said, "It's the opinion of this court that wherever the guilt may lie, the **Bar Owner** is the one who really believes in prayer while the Church **does not**!"

**D. APPL:** Jesus asks us to stretch spiritually, intellectually, and emotionally, b/c He wants us to see Him in a new Divine Light. So, we must accept what we see.

We can open up to **godly change**, b/c Faith is the best response to Jesus.

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<sup>iv</sup> "Religion or Relationship," Ibid.

<sup>vi</sup> "Expect the answer," Ibid.

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