

Jesus Calms the Storm

Introduction

- Have you ever thought you've known someone...
 - and then found out something new about them that has changed your whole perception?
 - forced you to reassess everything you thought you knew in light of your new knowledge?
 - some things now fit into place in a way they hadn't before; others now become questions or puzzles...
- For instance, a friend from University days who I discovered was gay after we were both graduated and working:
 - provoked in me not just a reassessment of who he was, but also forced me to ask questions about how myself - had I not been paying attention over the previous years? how good a friend was I to him that he had felt forced to keep that part of who he was from me for so long...
- Here the disciples are forced to ask, "who is this man?"
 - always worth asking, "how well do I know Jesus?..."

Exposition

(33) With many similar parables Jesus spoke the word to them, as much as they could understand. (34) He did not say anything to them without using a parable. But when he was alone with his own disciples, he explained everything.

- Context of teaching the disciples, they have a growing understanding:
 - they've seen healings, they've heard the preaching, they've heard the parables...
 - they are always asking "what is Jesus saying, what does he mean, what is this all about, where is this going, "who is this man?"

(35) That day when evening came, he said to his disciples, "Let us go over to the other side."

- Jesus taking the initiative. Planned the events that followed? His desire was certainly that they grow in understanding and faith, and he took them into situations where that would be possible
 - he does the same with us still, allowing us to come to places (sometimes uncomfortable) where we can learn and grow... discipleship...

(36) Leaving the crowd behind, they took him along, just as he was, in the boat. There were also other boats with him. (37) A furious squall came up, and the waves broke over the boat, so that it was nearly swamped. (38) Jesus was in the stern, sleeping on a cushion. The disciples woke him and said to him, "Teacher, don't you care if we drown?"

- Only Mark mentions other boats.
- This journey has been taken by disciples at Jesus' initiative, and with faith in him:
 - makes it all the harder for them to understand what is happening and Jesus' reaction to it... has Jesus led them into this?
 - cf situations where we wonder what on earth God is doing... why has he allowed us to get into the situation we find ourselves in?
- Meanwhile, Jesus is at peace!
 - quite inexplicable to the disciples!!
- Disciples are certainly not at peace... indeed, their tone when they wake him is more like an accusation! why the accusation?
 - because they couldn't see why he had allowed them to enter such a situation;
 - the storm Jonah faced was a consequence of disobedience... but this...?
- This was not mere surprise that he could sleep through the storm: anger & fear!
 - yet they still turned to him... did he force them to this point, where they had the

opportunity to lean on him **for themselves** and not just see him heal and help others?

- Reminder of geography and weather conditions, potential severity of the storm; size comparison of Galilee with other lakes/lochs we might know?

(39) He got up, rebuked the wind and said to the waves, "Quiet! Be still!" Then the wind died down and it was completely calm.

- Authority!
 - by his voice alone - references to that?
 - God speaks and things happen: from creation through to the end of the Bible!
 - immediate effect...

(40) He said to his disciples, "Why are you so afraid? Do you still have no faith?"

- Here is the faith growing bit... Jesus is saying to them, "So, what do you make of that?..."
 - for faith and fear are mutually exclusive in the Bible!
 - Jesus asks: "will you take me for who I am? will you **now** trust me?"

(41) They were terrified and asked each other, "Who is this? Even the wind and the waves obey him!"

- Fear again, but of a different sort - and order!
 - but also shows that these frightened disciples realised something of the significance of what they had just seen...
 - **if he really stilled the storm... then he must be... God!?**

Conclusions & Lessons

- **Jesus is Lord of nature** - a new layer to the emerging picture of Jesus' identity in Mark's gospel
 - for if he is God, then this will be so, and if this is so then it permits us to come to the conclusion that he is indeed God!
 - The God who dried up the sea to make a safe path for his people to cross into the land of divine promise now makes a safe way for his new people across the sea...
 - In Mark already seen Jesus as:
 - one upon whom the Spirit rests, sees heaven opened, responsive to the Spirit's guidance, receives the testimony of demons as to his divine nature;
 - one who preaches and teaches with a new ring of authority;
 - one who heals the sick, expels demons, forgives sin;
 - and now, as one who has authority over wind and wave...
 - Who is this man?
 - who do we recognise Jesus as?
- and will we allow him to disciple us, to take us to potentially uncomfortable places where he can help us grow?