

TBC – 8/29/04 p.m.

## DOES JESUS CARE?

Mark 4:33-41

**Intro:** This past week many of us have had the privilege of sitting again under the ministry of Mr. Jerry Bridges. He has been with us many times before, and always with great blessing. And this past week was no exception from what we have learned to expect as Jerry opens the Word to us.

His theme has been, *Living By Faith*, a subject which ought to be of great importance to every child of God. I strongly urge all of you to get the tapes or CD's of his messages, those of you who heard Jerry as well as those of you who didn't hear him.

As Jerry mentioned in one of his messages, it used to be thought by many of the Lord's people that living by faith meant living without any regular income, and simply trusting God to meet our needs. It was a subject of special interest for pastors and missionaries, anyone devoting his life in a full-time way to the Lord, but if you had a regular income you really couldn't live by faith.

The truth is that all of us who know the Lord are called to live our lives *by faith*. *It simply means that we are to live our lives from day to day trusting God!* And it extends to every part of our lives, to every detail. The Christian life is a life in which we all should be learning to trust God. We never trust God completely, but we should be growing in both our desire and our ability to trust Him. But it is only possible through the enabling power of the Holy Spirit. And every trial give us fresh opportunities to trust the Lord in ways which we have not had to trust Him before. Trust is faith. We are to trust God for the Person He is. We trust Him for His promises. And we trust Him in His ways. And this is the area where we may have the most difficulty. We know that God is faithful, and that He cannot be anything but faithful because He is God. We know that He is true to His promises. But we often have trouble with His ways.

My text tonight is the last nine verses of Mark 4. The scene is "by the sea side" according to the first verse of the chapter. The "sea side" in the Gospels is usually the sea of Galilee. Actually it was like a large lake – about thirteen miles long, and six miles wide. The Jordan River entered the sea of Galilee from the north, and flowed out of the sea of Galilee to

the south. In our Lord's day there were nine cities which dotted the shore line of the sea. It was a good place to fish, and some of the disciples had made their living on the sea of Galilee before they were called to be disciples, and then apostles, of our Lord Jesus Christ. It was about 700 feet below sea level. The scenery around the sea of Galilee was not spectacular at all, and yet there is a beauty about it that made and makes it very unusual. When we visited Israel over twenty years ago, and saw many of the sites where certain Biblical events were supposed to have taken place, and usually there was a Catholic church on the site, Lucille said to me more than once, "Well, the Sea of Galilee is one thing they cannot change."

On the occasion which is recorded for us in Mark 4, our Lord chose this place to do some of His most important teaching. In fact, the crowd was so great that the Lord got in a boat and from the boat He taught the people who were standing on the shore. He taught them parables, but it was after He had completed His teaching that He taught His disciples the meaning of the parables. So our Lord's ministry was directed especially to His disciples, twelve of whom were to become His apostles. The explanation that the Lord gave as to the meaning of the parables was directed especially to His disciples. See Mark 4:10 and 34.

Two things stand out in the parables. One is the ultimate success of the kingdom of God. The other was that the disciples would be confronted continually with opposition in the work that the Lord had called them to do. But in spite of the opposition, the Lord would accomplish the work that His Father had sent Him to do. The Lord was the Master Teacher, and all of His teaching had to be encouraging to His disciples.

But the time came when the day was over and the teaching had been done, and so the Lord revealed to the disciples what He wanted them to know. Let me call it,

### **I. THE LORD'S TEACHING (Mark 4:33-34).**

Note that on this occasion He did not teach the multitude, but He taught His disciples. And Mark in describing it said, "And when they were alone, He expounded all things to His disciples." Notice the word that Mark used here: "Expounded." This is an interesting word. It means *to unloose, to untie*. Or to use another word, He *explained* the meaning of the parables. To the majority of the people who listened to the Lord's

teaching, it must have just have been just a series of stories. But unknown to them, those stories were packed full of important truth.

People look at the Bible in different ways, don't they? In high schools and colleges you will sometimes find a course entitled, "The Bible as Literature." Such a course may not be common today, but there are people whose interest in the Bible is purely literary.

Others think of the Bible as a source of ancient history, but it is generally looked upon with a high degree of scepticism. But we know that the Bible is absolutely true in all ways, its history included. In fact, it is the most reliable book of history that has ever been written.

In many places the Bible is considered a book of religion, for use in ritualistic services, but such people rarely look at a Bible except on Sundays, and even then it may not be their own personal copy, but one provided by the church. But again such people never have been taught that the Bible is important in guiding our lives in our relationship with God.

But the disciples were different. And most of us here tonight are also different. We believe it is the Word of God, and we come together to hear it "expounded"! We want its truth to be untied for us, explained in a clear and meaningful way. We want to know the truth that we are to believe. We want to know what we need to be, and what God wants us to do. To us it is the most important book in all the world. We believe it is the only book that God has given to the world.

When we first became Christians, we soon learned that we needed to know all that we could learn about the Bible. We read it every day. We love it. We love to hear it expounded. We enjoy memorizing it. We love to think about it. And it was a happy day when we learned that God has given us the Holy Spirit to guide us into all the truth. Read the Gospels carefully, and you will see that the Lord laid the greatest emphasis upon His teaching. And we need to have the same emphasis in our lives.

But now let us move into verse 35 and see for the disciples He had a plan that He wanted them to do.

## **II. THE LORD'S PLAN (Mark 4:35).**

The Lord has plans for all of us. It is not stated as clearly for us as it was for the disciples, at least on a daily basis. But the Lord guides in our lives, and we certainly do not know what may happen on any particular day. But the Lord providentially leads us day by day. For the disciples on this particular day, it was very simple: “Let us pass over unto the other side.” The other side of what? Obviously, the other side of the sea of Galilee. How would they get there? By boat. It was not very far to the other side, but they had no motorized boats in that day. And so they depended mainly on rowing, but they probably could take advantage of a wind by putting up their sails.

But the part that I want you to note is that He said, “Let us pass over unto the other side.” It was the Lord’s expressed purpose when He asked them to get into a boat, that He intended for them to get to the other side. They had probably done that many, many times, but all unknown to them this was going to be a different trip. But He was not deceiving them when He told them that they would go to the other side.

But what happened?

### **III. AN UNEXPECTED STORM (Mark 4:37).**

The location of the Sea of Galilee is such that storms can arise in a very short period of time, and the waves can get dangerously high. That is what happened on this occasion. Water filled the boat, and it looked like it would sink and throw every man on board into the water where they very likely would drown.

That is the way life is, isn’t it? There have been lots of people who have tried to climb Mt. Hood, clouds come up very quickly, climbers lose their way in a blinding snow storm or heavy cloud, and some never make it back down alive.

Life is like that. Somebody suddenly gets very sick who may have been in excellent health up to that time. Or we may get caught in an accident of some time. Or a loved one gets lost. We never really know what may happen. David in the Bible had a lot of problems, very difficult and dangerous problems, usually because of his enemies. Although God had had him anointed to be the king of Israel, he got so discouraged at one point that he moved down among the Philistines to live. Life has its trials for everyone. No one escapes!

But what made this trial particularly difficult, was:

#### **IV. WHAT THE LORD WAS DOING (Mark 4:38).**

He was in the back of the ship sound asleep with His head on a pillow, and, from all appearances *completely unaware of what was going on!*

Please turn with me to Psalm 42, and look with me especially at verses 3 and 10. We don't really know who wrote this Psalm, but we may have had people ask this in a sneering way to us, *but we may have asked this question ourselves when we have been suddenly overtaken with a storm of some kind.*

“Where is your God?” How distressing it is when circumstances seem to indicate either that the Lord does not know, or does not care, what is happening to us!

Now notice:

#### **V. WHAT THE DISCIPLES DID, AND WHAT THEY SAID (Mark 4:38b).**

They awoke the Lord, and asked Him a question that showed how great their distress was. “Lord, carest Thou not that we perish?”

Let me tell you that when you get men who were accustomed to the Sea of Galilee, thinking that they were all going to die, you can be sure that the storm was a killer! They thought that they were going to die! Notice that they called Him, “Lord.” They actually used the word, “Teacher.” The NASB translates this question, “Teacher, do you not care that we are perishing?” Or, we could translate it, “Teacher, doesn't it matter to you what happens to us?” Judging by the circumstances, it looked like the Lord didn't really care about the disciples. Have you ever felt that way? This was testing time for the disciples. Not all of the preparation for the ministry takes place in the classroom. The Lord is always putting us in circumstances to test, *and to strengthen*, our faith, not to destroy it.

Turn with me to another Psalm, #121.

What are we going to say about Psa. 121, verses 3 and 4?

How are we going to explain the fact that the Lord Jesus was asleep? That is simple: it is evidence of His true humanity. But you and I know that the Lord Jesus Christ was not only a true, but perfect, human being, but He was also totally God. Somehow (and here we enter into one of the secrets of His Person) although the Lord was asleep, He was perfectly aware of all that was going on, and He kept his disciples who felt that they were going to die. The ship did not sink, did it? Not a life was lost, was it? Here we have one of the many unsolved mysteries of the Person of Christ. As Man He got tired and weary and needed sleep for the restoration of His strength. But as God, He was always awake, had everything under His complete control, showing in this instance that there is never any circumstance that can arise that we should not trust the Lord. He has not always spared His people, but He either cares for us and delivers us, or He takes us to Himself, even through death, that we might be where it is “far better.”

Finally we have:

## **VI. A GLORIOUS DELIVERANCE (Mark 4:39-41).**

What a glorious lesson the Lord was teaching them! He does not always work like this, but let us remember that He can. There is nothing impossible with Him!

The chapter ends with three main points:

- 1) What the Lord did (v. 39).
- 2) Two questions the Lord asked the disciples (v. 40).
- 3) What the disciples learned (v. 41).

**Concl:** It was many years later when the Apostle Peter was concluding His first epistle that he penned these words:

5 Likewise, ye younger, submit yourselves unto the elder. Yea, all of you be subject one to another, and be clothed with humility: for God resisteth the proud, and giveth grace to the humble.

6 Humble yourselves therefore under the mighty hand of God, that he may exalt you in due time:

7 Casting all your care upon him; for he careth for you (1 Peter 5:5-7).

It was on that ship that night on the Sea of Galilee, that Peter thought he was going to die. But instead he learned that with God it does matter to Him what happens to us! Let us learn that too, that we may trust Him fully.