

Mark Chapter 4 v 35 - 41

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[0 : 00] Good morning. Welcome to all of you. It's good to have visitors amongst us from various parts of the UK. I do welcome you, especially in the name of our Lord Jesus Christ.

We're here because of him, because of God the Father, because of God the Holy Spirit. And our verse that is up on the screen behind me is taken from the end of Matthew 28, where Jesus is giving what's called the Great Commission.

He's sending out his disciples, and he tells them, Therefore go and make disciples of all nations, baptizing them in the name of the Father, of the Son, and of the Holy Spirit.

We are a people who believe in a triune God, believe in God the Father, God the Son, and God the Spirit. We can't explain it. That's the wonderful thing.

We can't explain God. He is beyond our understanding. But he's revealed himself to us, made himself known to us as Father, Son, and Holy Spirit. They're one God and three persons.

[1 : 04] And it's important that we continue to remember that in that sense, that God himself is a fellowship. God himself is a family. God himself is not just in that sense individualistic, but that Father, Son, and Spirit have loved each other from all time and all eternity.

And our first hymn is a hymn of praise to each person of the Trinity. It's number 55. We give immortal praise. Let's stand and sing as we worship God in his fullness in his Trinity.

Number 55. Because God has made himself known to us, because God himself has come to us in the person of the Lord Jesus Christ, there is this wonderful access by which we can come to God in prayer.

So let us all pray together. Amen. Amen. Amen. Amen. Amen. Amen. Amen. Amen. Amen. Amen. You, O Lord, are the great and awesome God, the God who is far and beyond our comprehension, the God who is not like us, for you are the creator and we are your creation.

We are those who have been fashioned and formed according to your wisdom and power. We are those, O Lord, who thank you that today we can come to you, great and awesome as you are, our maker and creator though you are we thank you that we can come and know you lord it's only because you've made yourself known that we can know you lord we we confess that so often as human beings we try to make god in our own image we try to make a god who is like us the god who puts up with our sins a god who turns a blind eye to a falsehood and evil we want a god who can be manipulated as we manipulate others but you're not like that in any way for you are holy and pure you are the god who is totally different to us lord that you do not lie there is no falsehood in you there is no evil in you there is no sin in you there is no selfishness or pride in you everything about you is perfect and lovely and great everything about you is marvelous and wonderful and oh lord we want to come and bring you our praise this morning for who you are because you are deserving and worthy of the worship and praise of all of our hearts and lives for you are the god who is and is and always has been we thank you especially again oh lord for all that you've done for us thank you that you have not only made us but provided and given to us again and again all that we need we thank you oh lord that you are the god who especially has given to us your son the lord jesus christ that through him we might not only know about you but enter into that living and personal friendship with you thank you that you created us as human beings for that very purpose that we might know you and enjoy you and enjoy you and yet oh lord because of our sin because of our iniquity because of our evil lord we have become separated from you cut off from you lord we're ignorant of you lord so many of us don't even know anything about you yet oh lord you have made yourself known you came to us who came into this sinful and broken world as jesus christ the god man you lived amongst us seeing and experiencing the sorrow the grief the pain of what it is to live in this world you were in every way like us except that you never sinned rather than that oh lord you fulfilled all righteousness you lived that perfect life you kept all the commandments of god on our behalf for us

where we failed you succeeded and more than that you went to the cross and suffered and died in our place taking the punishment and the blame that we deserve we thank you lord jesus that death couldn't hold you but you rose again and that you're alive forevermore and that all who put their faith in you will in you find themselves restored to the god who is creator redeemer and savior we pray oh lord that this morning as we come to worship our hearts may be filled to overflowing with thankfulness for all that you are and all that you've done we pray oh lord that we might meet with you that you would speak to us through your wonderful word in the bible and that lord we might know that we have met with the living and awesome god help us then be with us now for we ask it in the name of jesus christ amen if uh those who are sunday school and uh other activities crash they'd like to go down to their activities now please going to come to time of uh intercessory prayer particularly can i again encourage you to uh make

[6 : 31] time next saturday afternoon three o'clock just down the road at our dear friends at westcliffe congregational church um to join with them for 150th anniversary uh it's uh we don't often get opportunities to do things like that um church anniversaries have gone out of fashion haven't they even when i was younger there was quite a popular thing every year there'd be a church anniversary and a tea and so on and uh we've been invited to that so it'd be really good if as many of us could go and join with them uh down there and uh gwyn evans is the preacher um just a few matters for prayer particularly um all of you i think will have heard of the terrible earthquake and tsunami in indonesia just uh earlier this weekend and uh death toll is at least a thousand um the terrible situation once more in that part of the world so do need to pray for that nation it's uh uh very needy nation as we know in times past but um pray for them uh also it's always good for us to remember to pray for those the persecuted church um some of you will get the open doors newsletter i'm sure they particularly asked for prayer in for northern india uh india has been moving up the persecution ladder as it were open doors of a top 50 persecuting nations and north and india now is at number 11 um and we really need to pray for our brothers and sisters there uh hindu nationalists are very much on the rise very very uh violent and antagonistic um so we need to pray for our brothers and sisters their churches are being uh um destroyed pastors and christians are being attacked and killed uh and also um be good for us to remember closer to home then our dear friends at west cliff and the other local churches too in prayer at this time we rejoice with them at god's faithfulness 150 years of his goodness but we know that they would love to see greater sense of the lord's blessing and souls saved so let's pray let us pray lovely hymn it's good to be here with you i'll just apologize at the start i'm a little bit uh rough not so much as i was um so if i sniff a bit my apologies so i thought we would look at a passage in mark the same passage that we read um slightly different the same account it's found in matthew mark and in luke but reading from mark chapter 4 verses 35 to 41 and it's on page 1006 in your church bibles and i'll just pray and then we'll go to the word that day when evening came he said to his disciples let us go over to the other side leaving the crowd behind they took him along just as he was in the boat there were also other there were also other boats with him a furious squall came up and the waves broke over the boat so that it was nearly nearly swamped 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 he got up rebuked the wind and said to the waves quiet be still then the wind died down and it was completely calm he said to his disciples why are you so afraid do you still have no faith they were terrified and asked each other who is this even the wind and the waves

obey him they went across the lake to the region of the gerasenes okay father i just commit this time into your hands i ask that you would speak to each and every one of us here you'd open our hearts to what you have to say to us and that you give me strength to bring out truths from your word for our encouragement and for your glory in jesus name amen okay just like to ask you a question have you ever been in a storm at sea maybe you have maybe on a ferry there's a guy at our church who has been a fisherman for all of his life he's retired now and fishes occasionally but he was describing one day to me a situation when he was in a great storm this is in scarborough and he was in a trawler and he was about seven or eight miles away from the pier and the lifeboat this was before there was communication into ship communication and a lifeboat guessed their location and came out to escort them in and he describes with the lifeboat behind him the trawler in front just running as almost surfing on the waves never having been so fast in this boat in his life and there was a danger because the stern was up the back of the boat that the bow would just be pushed under and then they would go under and he describes the lifeboat when it was on the other

side of the wave behind them couldn't even see their mast now that must be scary being in a storm and you know storms they are beyond our control and they are fearful and they show our fragility now I don't know how scared he was he describes some adrenaline in that situation too but I certainly would be afraid and in a storm a big storm at sea

I think everyone would be afraid now these disciples they were in a storm and they feared so just drawing out a few details of this storm to start with Jesus he'd been with great multitudes and he said at evening time let us him and the disciples go over to the other side so it was their job to get to the other side Jesus was tired and so he went to the back of the boat and settled down to go to sleep and as they got on with their business another account tells us that they were sailing as they got on with that a problem arose they had to get to the other side but a problem arose and this great storm rushed into the sea of Galilee and interestingly Galilee is the lowest freshwater lake in the earth on the earth second only to the Dead Sea which is the lowest saltwater lake and apparently the winds just rush in and create huge storms but let's not forget some of these disciples were sailors they knew what they were doing and so they were trying probably trying to get to the other side despite this storm as it started building up and the boat started filling and they were very afraid and Jesus was asleep and they woke him up but a great storm something that was too much for the disciples it was great fear it caused great fear and you know what life is full of fears you know there's circumstances for all of us that are too great they're beyond our control and fear comes down perhaps you have some fears you could maybe think of some of your fears what things do you fear what things do I fear

I have a few examples on a piece of paper I wrote a few fears things that we all fear some of you might fear some of them some of you might not fear others of them but think perhaps at school would you make friends in your workplace what if you don't make friends that's a fear what if you were to be bullied that's a fear what if you don't achieve the grades that you need to go to university that is a fear that can come down upon you what do other people think of me how common is that the proverb says fear of man brings a snare and you think what do people think of me and you fear what they think of you expectations you might have expectations you might think I want to do this in life I want to do that or your family might want you to achieve certain things or your friends might and when you don't live up to those expectations fear comes or you might even fear not living up to those expectations what about work what will you work as what will you do what if you can't find the job you want they're all fears what if you can't provide for your family perhaps a bit later on in life what if your spouse dies that's a fear what then loneliness is a fear when I'm left alone what will I do you know there's so many things that we can fear maybe even fear in the prayer meeting the public prayer meeting standing up to pray there's so much that we fear in life and can fear you know I just thought a couple of weeks ago so much of life is dealing with a series of I don't know there's you know I don't know what I'm going to do things are beyond us so life breeds fear so much is beyond us we know what it's like and what does it do it robs us fear is a robber it robs us of our peace how does it come it comes as a cloud you know imagine a cloud descending in a circumstance that's too great and before you feared it was fine but the cloud comes down and perhaps you wish you could push it up or get underneath it but it's too much and it distorts reality and for some of you your fears they might be strongholds real real issues and for others less so maybe just niggles the fact is we all have fears and they're bad now circumstances that are difficult trying circumstances and situations a bit like this storm they show us something they show us fragility okay so I'm wanting us to look at this fear or the choice of faith there's fears in our lives but what are we going to do fear or the choice of faith and fears show fragility show a lack of power you know the disciples in this situation they were quite capable some of them were sailors but they were trying to get across the lake and they lacked the power over the storm imagine had they been able to just say what

[18:16] Jesus did peace be still it wouldn't have been a problem for them they'd have just got over the other side without having to fear the disciples were fragile they were weak they were vulnerable we fear when we fear because we lack the power because we are fragile okay we are you know occasionally with my family we are historic housing association members and we would occasionally view houses around the country Castle Howard is one of them and you go in there and there's 100 year old pieces of furniture saying fragile do not touch or do not sit on things like that and I remember going to Castle Howard actually and there was a tulip vase which was I don't know how old maybe 400 years old and was extremely fragile and apparently it's a real pain to disassemble and to clean but you can imagine you dropped it and it would smash okay we're fragile

we're fragile people but sometimes we don't think so you know the bible it has lots to say about this I'll turn to a passage but just before I do I don't know how well it fits in but I thought of Samson Samson a man who was strong and in our culture today we think we're strong how strong was he this is amazing he went down to the city of Gath in the midst of the Philistines and he was with a harlot he shouldn't have been okay but they surrounded him to try and capture Samson and what did he do he lifted up the gateposts which would have weighed at least 10 tons and he walked 36 miles with them from here to Scarborough and back nearly but not only that he went up a height higher than that of Helvellyn in the Lake District if any of you ever hiked that it's a good hike okay but carrying these 10 ton gates he was extremely strong but you look at his life and you see weakness there were situations he couldn't deal with and cope with and he gave in and eventually he lost his life he had his eyes put out and he lost his life so you know what despite strengths we are weak we have fears and we are weak

Isaiah chapter 40 I'm going to read a few verses from there Isaiah says this he says all flesh is grass us and all its loveliness is like the flower of the field the grass withers the flower fades because the breath of the Lord blows upon it surely the people are grass the grass withers the flower fades but the word of our God stands forever this is a biblical theme Peter quotes it in the New Testament Moses I think in Psalm 90 he writes something very similar but you know something despite our strengths and our capabilities we are weak and we are just like grass why do situations overwhelm us and fears come because we are weak I'm getting this point across in fact we can see this even in death in Hebrews chapter 2

Paul perhaps whoever writes it he says this Jesus came and dwelt in a human body like us he shared in our struggles so that through death through dying he might destroy him who had the power of death that is the devil and released those who through fear of death were all their lifetime subject to bondage so fear of death I was talking to someone just a couple of days ago and he says so many people he talks to are afraid of death whether it be cancer or maybe they've got this problem you know so many people are afraid of death it's a reality something that we cannot control so we fear because we are weak fear robs us of our peace but what are we looking at what I want us to look at fear or the choice of faith and you know there's an antidote and there's only one and it's faith faith is the antidote faith is the solution to fear so back to this passage in Mark this storm has come upon the disciples beyond their control they say teacher do you not care that we are perishing what do you say he arose maybe it was a bit groggy peace be still and it just stopped like that but then he rebuked the disciples what do you say why are you so fearful how is it that you have no faith and they feared him said who is this that the winds and the waves obey him the disciples end up fearing

Jesus he had more power than the storm but look at what he said to them why are you fearful how is it that you have no faith now do you read that and think that's unfair you might do I know I've certainly thought that before that's a bit unfair weren't you a bit harsh to say that should they have feared well I would have feared if waves are coming into your boat in the middle of a lake but no Jesus says they were to trust him why what had he said he said let us cross over to the other side let us go to the other side and who was in the boat Jesus was in the boat with them they weren't to fear because he was with them and who is he Jesus is the everlasting one I'm going to read a couple of verses from Colossians this is what we see about him we see that he is the image [24 : 38] Jesus of the invisible God the firstborn over all creation for by him all things were created that are in heaven on earth visible and invisible whether thrones or dominions or principalities or powers all things were created through him and for him and he is before all things and in him all things consist Jesus Christ the one who stilled the storm is the creator of everything you know I love the stars I love astronomy it's amazing and there's maybe I said this last time I was here but there's an estimated 100 billion galaxies observable galaxies each with 100 billion stars in and you know what Jesus he was there at creation and more than that he created everything so the disciples should they have feared he was able to rebuke them because he was with them they were to trust him and you know what we need to trust him when fears come into our lives they reveal our fragility but we need to trust him we need to have faith in him from fear to faith which will you choose just a thought what is faith sometimes it can seem confusing you know is it something I try at is it something God gives me is it something I

I don't know sometimes it can confuse you it can confuse me but what it is is not mental and intellectual assent it's not just some stuff going through your head it's trust and dependence you

know it's clinging on to Christ and who he is that's our walk isn't it we're to daily trust that's what faith is about trusting daily in Jesus Christ in Hebrews we see that without faith it is impossible to please him you know we cannot please God without faith so in a situation of fear what are we going to do are we going to trust or fear only faith pleases God Jesus wasn't pleased with the disciples they should have trusted him and it's a biblical picture is this idea of trusting despite fears I'm going to read from a couple of psalms

David had so many wonderful experiences we can draw on and I'm going to read in psalm 34 and in psalm 56 okay so psalm 34 David says this I will bless the Lord at all times his praise shall continually be in my mouth my soul shall make its boast in the Lord the humble shall hear of it and be glad oh magnify the Lord with me and let us exalt his name together that sounds great doesn't it why I sought the Lord and he heard me and delivered me from all my fears they looked to him and were radiant and their faces were not ashamed this poor man as in David cried out and the Lord heard him and saved him out of all of his troubles and I'm reading in

Psalms 56 and just one verse verse 3 whenever David again whenever I am afraid I will trust in you these Psalms were written at the same time about the same situation what had happened David had been the harp player for Saul and also his commander until he was demoted but Saul had repeatedly tried to kill him and he was fleeing he was getting out but Jonathan he had a little test and just to prove if with this arrow shooting I can't remember it all now but anyway David fled from Saul he was so fearful he went via the showbread to get some bread and Goliath sword but in great fear great fear for his life he went to his greatest enemies the Philistines and if we know anything we know that David killed Goliath David killed a Philistine and he got into the midst of his greatest enemies and what happened

Psalms 56 in the title it says this a Psalm of David when the Philistines captured him in Gath his enemies realised who he was can you imagine how afraid you would have been David was so afraid but what did he say whenever I'm afraid I will trust in you and the Psalm the first Psalm I read was afterwards after he'd been delivered he said I sought the Lord and he heard me he's looking back now and God delivered me from my fears therefore he will praise the Lord so David he knew about fear but what did he say whenever I'm afraid I will trust in you from great fear to faith and his faith his trust in the Lord delivered him from his fears so for us we are to take hold of him we're to take hold of his promises

[30 : 20] God's character is seen in his words we're to take hold of his truths we're to pray we're to pray over them we're to wrestle with them I have a number of verses you know there's times I'll be honest there's times I struggle with fears what am I to do we're to take God's truths we're to give them to him he's written them down for us for a reason just a few you'll probably know them Luke 12 Jesus said do not worry what is life life is more than food body more than clothing don't worry in fact I became a Christian through that passage be not anxious in the same passage a bit further on seek first the kingdom of God and its righteousness and all these things will be added unto you what else did Jesus say fear not little flock he's referring to us we're just a little flock but fear not little flock all these promises in

Timothy God has not given us a spirit of fear but of power and of love and a sound mind what else did he say we saw it just at the end of Matthew just after where we read from the start Jesus said lo I am with you always even to the end of the age these are promises a couple more be anxious for nothing but in prayer and supplication with thanksgiving I always forget that make your requests known to God and the peace of God which surpasses all understanding will guard your hearts and your minds in Christ Jesus in fact just before that verse it says the Lord is at hand God is near cast all your cares upon him one more in Hebrews I quoting from the Old Testament I don't know where but I will never leave you nor forsake you do you know how many negatives are in that apparently in the original it's

I will never never leave you nor will I ever ever ever forsake you how definite does it get and then it says and so we may boldly say the Lord is my helper I will not fear what can man do to me you know guys these are promises fears will come into your life lives fear will come into my life and it does and what do we do you we have to wrestle we have to struggle we have to take hold of him in faith take his truth to him so you know when this cloud of fear we have seen fear we have seen how we are fragile we are seeing faith but when this cloud of fear comes down it is overwhelming I can tell you it is your fears can seem so great you can think will

I ever find peace does God even care I know I thought that does he even care in my struggles that I'm having the answer is yes absolutely he does we've got to take hold of him you know I was sent through James his notes I can't remember what his surname was is but the guy who is from Lefosca in Cyprus and he spoke on the armour of God and I missed the final message but he spoke of the shield of faith take the shield of faith by which you'll be able to quench all the fiery darts of the wicked one and he described the Roman shield as big 125 centimetres by 75 I think reinforced plywood and even described a battle apparently where someone had 220 darts stuck into it or something like that but what does the shield of faith do it quenches the fiery darts and you know Satan's fiery darts are fear primarily fear you know one of the greatest darts that he throws at us is fear so when you're in a situation and you think does God even care just take hold of this shield of faith take hold of his promises and faith and quench quench fear choose faith and it's hard David chose faith and he found it hard now just a couple of warnings perhaps additional thoughts as we're thinking of faith dispelling fear don't pop pills don't pop verses don't take them like they're pills sometimes we can do that and do not worry yes all right I won't have to worry for the day we just swallow them and think we're sorted but the point is these are promises about God's character that's the wonder of it they're truths about the person and not truths in their own right in some senses they're useless on their own it's only with

[35 : 44] God the person of God behind them that they have any value so don't just pop verses into your mouth and eat them and think great I'm sorted you you know if that happens then we need to consider what we are doing before God where are we standing and in Peter by the way Peter he was probably in the boat in the middle of this storm who then saw it stilled in 1 Peter 5 some well-known verses to you he says this be clothed with humility for God resists the proud but gives grace to the humble you know God can resist us as Christians if we're proud it's not a good place to be therefore humble yourselves unto the mighty hand of God that he may exalt you in due time casting all your cares upon him for he cares for you we've got to humble ourselves before

God we've seen how the disciples they were fragile in this situation fragile in the storm fears the situations were beyond their power and what we've got to do is we've got to humble ourselves we've got to realise that I cannot deal with these situations I've got to come to God I've got to come to him in humility and as we humble ourselves unto him we cast our cares on him because he cares for us I heard of a man who went to speak at a Wycliffe translator conference or something like that and he spoke and he mentioned this passage and someone came up to him afterwards and said they were a translator and he said I just translated that verse into a foreign language I don't know what it was I was always rubbish at language and translated it this way what concerns you and me concerns

God what concerns you concerns God you know in your struggles and your difficulties and your fears God is concerned and he cares but he just asks humble yourself unto him the creator because he cares for you we're fragile people we come in fragility we say help to God and he helps us he helps us and he will give us peace he can calm the storm he can give us peace within you know just a practical point mentioned the shield of faith in Galatians we're told that if we bear one another's burdens we fulfill the law of Christ oh yeah then I read James's notes and he spoke about the tortoise shell which was

I mean you've probably seen films or pictures of it where they all put their shields in a square and whatever and you know together share some of your fears be open with each other and you can bear one another's burdens and in faith together you can pray and give these truths to God okay and that's a wonderful thing that the church can do for each other edifying each other so as I draw to a close then we've been looking at fear been looking at faith and I asked at the start fear or the choice of faith which will you choose it's a simple message you know in the midst of the storm and storms come and storms come for me what are you going to do just think what good does it do to give into your fears Jesus said which of you by worrying can add one cubit to your stature you're not going to grow by worrying we've got to lay these aside it's difficult we've got to trust we at our group back at our church in

Harrogate unchurched children but we sing one of the songs and I won't sing it to you but it's when Christ's in the vessel you can smile at the storm smile at the storm smile at the storm and I can't remember what else it says but when Christ is in the vessel when he's in the boat with you Jesus was in the boat with the disciples and in this new covenant we've got Christ in us the hope of glory okay when Christ's in the vessel we can smile at the storm it's a truth you know behold Jesus's

power his power in your life as we follow him he has the power to deliver us from all our fears that's what David said I sought the Lord and he heard me and delivered me from all my fears apparently I haven't counted but there's about 300 times in the New Testament where fears and you know not fearing are mentioned it's such a big theme because the fact is life is hard life is difficult and often beyond us but we're not to be afraid of that because we have

[41 : 20] Christ with us we have this treasure in earthen vessels and we're to trust in God the God who made us the God who cares so much Jesus in the storm what was he doing he was asleep there's a verse in Isaiah that says I'll turn to it because I can't remember it it's in Isaiah chapter 26 and it's a lovely verse sometimes I can't remember oh yes you will keep him in perfect peace whose mind is stayed on you why because he trusts in you you know there's times I fear and I just give this to God and you say I'm trying to trust I'm not doing a very good job but I'm trying to trust and as we trust as we actively come to him and trust the one depend on the one who can deal with our situations he keeps us in peace inside so finishing then drown your fears not

God's promises don't drown God's promises and who God is drown your fears when fear comes into your life which it will because life is hard and there's situations that are beyond our control drown your fears big or small in God's promises and take hold of him take hold of him because I tell you we won't let you down you know we don't want to suffer the same rebuke that the disciples did why were you fearful how is it that you have no faith the disciples they got to the other side and you know we're on a journey aren't we really and we've got to get to the other side but let's do so trusting the saviour okay from fear to faith I'll just read the benediction or doxology from Jude to him who is able to keep you from stumbling or drowning sorry I thought that was quite relevant and to present you before his glorious presence without fault and with great joy to the only God our saviour be glory majesty power and authority through Jesus

Christ our Lord before all ages now and forever more amen don at who guarded o and so for you you