

THE DESIRED HAVEN

“...and he departed, and went and hanged himself.” Matthew 27:5

“Then said Jesus unto him, Go, and do thou likewise.” Luke 10:37

“Then said Jesus unto him, That thou doest, do quickly.” John 13:27

Last week Danny started talking about the importance of Bible study in the Christian walk. He also talked about our capacity to handle the “winds” of trouble and strife that sometimes blow in our life.

I want to pick up on both of those themes and take them a little further.

Open your bibles to **Mark 4:36-41**

1. STUDY THE CONTEXT:

Jesus had had a big day. He'd been working tirelessly since Mark 3:22.

- He had answered the Pharisees claim that he was from the devil
- He had taught by the seaside all day
 - o he told the parable of the sower,
 - o the grain of mustard seed,
 - o the leaven in the bread,
 - o the wheat and the tares,
 - o the hidden treasure,
 - o the pearl of great price
 - o The householder
- These were some of His first parables and people marvelled at the way He taught. He was a consummate preacher and teacher, and these illustrations would have been growing inside Him for a long time.

And now he is tired.

He probably hasn't eaten all day

But repeatedly in the book of Mark you will see Jesus moved with compassion for the people and this motivates Him to keep going.

But eventually He has to stop. He has to seek a place away from the crowds to recharge his batteries.

2. STUDY THE SETTING

The sea of Galilee is a freshwater lake about 100 kilometres north of Jerusalem. It is about 24 kilometres long and 10 kilometres wide at its largest point. It is over 200 metres below the level of the Mediterranean sea.

On the Eastern side there are the Golan Heights, a series of mountains and cliffs that rise up to 900 metres above sea level. Strong cold winds would rush down from these heights, and blow over the warm waters of the Sea of Galilee, and it was that would whip us violent storms very quickly. These storms often happened very quickly.

These hardly fisherman had spent their life on the lake – it was their job. They were not easily scared. But this storm is like nothing they have ever seen before.

3. FIND KEY WORDS and WORD ASSOCIATIONS

- Ship – 1 Thessalonians 4:4.
- A great wind – troubles by circumstances – Revelation 7:1, Jeremiah 51:1
- Waves - troubles by relationships – Revelation 17:15

4. PERSONAL APPLICATIONS

Verse 36 – Jesus Enters the Heart

Jesus is taken into our lives, as He is.

- God created man in his own image (Genesis 1), and man returned the favour.
- Often we like to think of Jesus other than “as He is”
 - The liberals make Him more “tolerant” than He is
 - The conservatives make Him more “harsh” than He is
 - The charismatics make Him more “miraculous” than He is
- We need to search out who Jesus is for ourselves – by prayer and bible study.

And the message of Jesus to Paul is, JUST TRUST ME.

Verse 37 – The Normal Human Condition

The wind is screaming in their ears, they are shouting to each other but can't hear.

Oars are being ripped from their hands

They are splashing around in water on the bottom of the boat – ankles, knees,

Their eyes are becoming more and more fearful

The strain is becoming intense as they put their last reserves of strength into the task.

These keep going until the boat is **nearly full** and about to sink.

We can get completely overwhelmed by our problems, by the circumstances or the relationships in our life, until we think we can't cope.

There are three ways you can handle this situation:

1. ***Remain miserable – keep rowing in your own strength***

“In his own strength man is strengthless.

Prophets and Kings 175

This was my experience for 15 years or more – struggling in my own strength and being miserable.

2. *Abandon ship – the reaction of so many.*

Do you know why most people who stop going to church do so:

- a. They have a lifestyle issue that overwhelms them – Circumstances (wind)
- b. They have a relationship problem in the church – Relationships (wave)

Things get real when we talk about struggling with sin and making no headway.

When we have an issue in our life that we cannot overcome.

And we come along to church knowing that we have not experienced victory during the week.

And we can go on for year after year after year after year, thinking “I’m just not trying hard enough – what is wrong with me.”

3. *Awaken Jesus. – make it real. If we are to deal with the tempests in our life we need Jesus on board.*

Revelation 3:15 – It is a loving God that says that.

If we don’t make that decision for ourselves – the circumstances of the wind up of human history is going to make it for us. The daily decisions that we make are taking us slowing toward abandoning ship or waking up Jesus.

We need to despair of self-dependence and rest in Jesus.

Don’t wait until the boat is full to wake up Jesus.

Verse 38 – The Test of Faith

What is Jesus doing? He’s asleep at the rear part of the ship.

Why is Jesus asleep? Two reasons –

- he is very tired
- he is testing them

Can you imagine Jesus looking at the weather before he gets into the boat and knowing that a storm is going to brew.

Thinking to Himself – they have been listening to me all day, and saying AMEN a lot, the theory is good. Let’s see how they go in practice.

We can come to church every week, we can even come to prayer meeting – and we can say, Amen brother. But what is happening when the heat is turned up, under a little pressure.

While ever we are trying, Jesus will step in to the background. He will only intervene if invited. While ever we are trying to save ourselves, we are putting Jesus asleep in our own experience.

When they finally take note of Jesus, how do they react?

In Matthew 8:25 we see more like a prayer – “Lord, save us, we perish.”

Notice the brevity and simplicity of the prayer. No long winded proclamations here.

No,
Oh, God, of hill and flower, that handpainted every petal and leaf
Oh, God of planet and stars, that hung the moons of Jupiter

Are we praying, acknowledging the fact that Jesus is still on board the ship, and able to do above what we ask and think.

Verse 39 – The Power of Christ to Heal our Lives

When Jesus is on board, the boat is never going to sink – Are you with me?
A bush that's burning with Jesus, will never be consumed.
You can go into a fiery furnace with Jesus, and you will be alright.
If you have Jesus in your life, you are going to make it – we cannot be lost, with Jesus on board.

I can picture Jesus standing up
When Jesus stands up, what do they do? Stop rowing and step back.
Jesus comes walking from the back of the ship to the front.
Finally they have let him take control.

Rebuked the wind – all our trials and our circumstances he lays them in the dust.
Said to the sea – Peace, be still – He says to those turbulent relationships that cause so much friction and problem our lives and put in a position where we think we are going to sink –
CALM DOWN, HAVE PEACE. (John 14:27).

5. FIND THE MEANING OF WORDS – Etymology (not entomology)

Instantly there is a great calm. In the Greek it means “calm, cheerfulness, smile” A great smile.

Contrast the meaning of “fearful” in verse 40 with “feared” in verse 41

In verse 40, the word is Dilos – timid, fearful, faithless – two other places where it is used – Matthew 8:26 (the parallel passage), and Revelation 21:8

Those that do not learn to trust the Lord implicitly will not get to heaven.
Too often by our thoughts and words and actions we give evidence that we are not prepared to trust him totally. We feel that we cannot trust him totally.

Jesus is saying these words with compassion and the greatest love.
Unless you learn to trust I cannot use you.
Unless you learn to trust me you will have no part with me.

I am timid, fearful, faithless
Therefore, I am not going to commit myself emotionally to something that may disappoint
Therefore, I am not going to commit myself socially to something that may disrupt my lifestyle too much
Therefore, I am not going to commit myself intellectually because it is so contrary to popular thought
Therefore, I am not going to commit myself spiritually as it will mean giving up too many things I love.

Jesus says that these have their part in the lake that burneth with fire and brimstone.

But in verse 41 it says – they feared exceedingly – they had a “mega phobia” – they were literally, physically scared.

But that word also to have reverence for, and to therefore have reverential obedience.

In Revelation 14:7 it says “Fear God, and give glory to him”

Psalm 107:23-30

If you want to learn to trust God – spend some time at sea.
Or drive in the snow in Denver.

God allows people to be taken to extremity to test their faith.
But we pray that having taken people to their wit's end, they are not at their faith's end.

People at their “wits end” this is the only time in the scriptures that this words wits is found.

The Hebrew word here translated **wits** is found 149 times in the bible only once translated wits.
On 145 occasions it is translated “wisdom”

End – this word in the Hebrew is found 49 times, only once translated “end” – most other occasions it is translated swallowed up or devoured.

Examples:

Aarons Rod turned into a snake
Joseph has a dream about ears of corn
Korah, Dathan and Abiram swallowed up by the ground.

When we are at our wisdoms end – when all human attempts, tries, thoughts, powers are at an end – look to Jesus. He will still be there

When our wisdom has been swallowed up and devoured – then we are ready to talk to Jesus, that is the only time that we will be willing to come to Jesus.

At that point Jesus is willing to “wake up” and become active in your experience, in a way that he was not able to when you were still trying to battle the storm on your own.

Desired = delightful, pleasant, pleasurable
Haven = enclosure

Garden of Eden: Eden = pleasure
 Garden = enclosure

God wants to guide us into an experience with him like the experience of the Garden of Eden.

Are we today more problem conscious than power conscious.

Today we seem to focus on the problems – less learn to focus on the power.

APPEAL:

If you are sick on focussing on the problems.
If you have had enough of the wind and the waves
If you are feeling “full up” this morning
If you are at your “wits end”

If you are determined from this day forward to focus on the power to overcome the problems,
rather than the problems themselves.
If Jesus has been asleep in your experience
If you would like to wake Jesus up.

LORD, SAVE ME, I PERISH!!!