

Sermon outline notes: Hope in a Hopeless world

Mark 4 v 37– 5 v43

Introduction

In chapters 4 and 5 Mark is recounting four incidents in the life of Jesus, and though each has distinctive features of its own, all these incidents have one thing in common—they all depict a situation of human powerlessness.

1) Mark 4 vv 35–41 A Storm at Sea.

- The Jews had a superstitious dread of the sea. In their mythology the sea was closely associated with primeval forces of chaos which they believed God had to subdue in order to create an ordered universe.

2) Mark 5 vv 1–20 A Demon Possessed Man.

- A man who was powerless to change his situation. Also all attempts to help had failed abysmally - society had given up on this man.

3) Mark 5 vv 25–34 A Chronic Invalid Woman.

- A woman's gynaecological problem rendered her permanently unclean by the standards of Jewish law.

4) Mark 5 vv 21–24; 35–43 A Bereaved Parent.

- We can enter in the desperation, the blind panic, the tears that this father felt as his daughter was dying.

Each of them, cried for help and more to the point each of them found it. Each express that cry in a different way:

The disciples cry is a rather churlish question.

The demon possessed man's cry is a tortured rebuttal of Jesus assistance.

The woman's cry didn't use words at all.

The father's cry lays aside all dignity with a desperate plea - "please come".

Why are these stories here in Mark's gospel? According to the bible we are all helpless. Helplessness is part of our human condition. But says Mark we are no longer *hopeless*. Something has happened, something that throws a beam of light across this darkness of human despair—Jesus has come. Jesus has come with power, power even to raise the dead.

Points to Ponder

- 1) Share first reactions to the sermon. What points spoke particularly to you?
- 2) What questions arise for you from these four stories?
- 3) What is the relationship between crisis and faith in your life? How have you been like the woman, or like Jairus? The man in verse 35? The mourners in verse 40?