

**NOTES FROM STEVEN DRIVER'S SERMON – Sunday 15th Sept. 2024 am**  
**TITLE: “Coming to Jesus with our chaos”   TEXT: Mark 4 verses 35-41**  
**Scripture references from the ESV**

*Mark 4: 35-41 On that day, when evening had come, he [Jesus] said to them, “Let us go across to the other side.”<sup>36</sup> And leaving the crowd, they took him with them in the boat, just as he was. And other boats were with him.<sup>37</sup> And a great windstorm arose, and the waves were breaking into the boat, so that the boat was already filling.<sup>38</sup> But he was in the stern, asleep on the cushion. And they woke him and said to him, “Teacher, do you not care that we are perishing?”<sup>39</sup> And he awoke and rebuked the wind and said to the sea, “Peace! Be still!” And the wind ceased, and there was a great calm.<sup>40</sup> He said to them, “Why are you so afraid? Have you still no faith?”<sup>41</sup> And they were filled with great fear and said to one another, “Who then is this, that even the wind and the sea obey him?”*

Often, our lives feel like chaos! It might be:

- The chaos of work – endless pressure or responsibility
- The chaos of family – just getting the children off to school in the morning or a deeper level of chaos when trouble hits
- The chaos of health – when we are not well and have to manage endless medication or appointments

We can feel overwhelmed by it and often we adopt coping strategies to help us, but these do not resolve anything. We might be addicted to our phone or laptop, endlessly scrolling through videos, or we might bury our head in a novel, watch movies or listen to music. We can spend hours trying to fix the chaos that is happening around us, and lie awake worrying about what the next day will bring. Our culture offers us drink and drug use to dull the pain caused by the chaos in our lives.

- Deep down in their hearts, most people think that there must be a better way.
- The gospel shows us that better way, so well illustrated by the passage above.

Jesus was with his disciples after a full day of teaching by the waters of the Sea of Galilee, and it was his decision to cross to the other side. Since some of the disciples were fishermen, going by boat was a natural mode of transport. It seems like an idyllic scene – Jesus with his closest friends gliding across the water as the sun was setting, looking forward to a quiet night after a busy day.

However, while they were crossing the water, a fierce storm blew up. The waves were getting ever bigger, and the boat was filling up with water. Those disciples who were fishermen must have been trying all they knew to save the boat from sinking, but they were being overwhelmed by the water and so became more and more terrified. This was chaos!

### **The sea is a symbol of chaos**

Throughout the Old Testament, large bodies of water, from lakes to oceans, denote destruction, death, and demonic and satanic powers as a result of the sin in the world. Look back to Noah and the worldwide flood, Moses being apparently trapped by the Red Sea, and Jonah in the storm as just a few examples.

### **Chaos feels like a storm in which we are trapped**

Even if we are the person with the most experience in the situation we are facing, we can quickly feel that we are in way over our head and fear that we will drown. That is why we try so hard to escape, or at least dull the pain. We might try to control what is happening, but without success. That is the disciples' part in the story.

- Yet in the narrative of this particular chaos, there is one man who was so little bothered by the chaos that he was actually having a nap.

This is Jesus' part in the narrative. It was he who had suggested going to the other side of the lake. He had been teaching all day and, in his fully human body, he was just plain tired. The disciples were not happy that Jesus was just sleeping through the chaos so they woke him up, querying if he was the least bit bothered that they might all drown (**v38**)!

Perhaps they thought that, even though he was not a fisherman, he could help with bailing out or maybe pray.

- Jesus did something that no one expected – he rebuked the wind and spoke to the sea (**v39**).
- The sea listened to him and there was calm.

There was stillness in the dark, apart from among the disciples. They were more afraid than ever (**v41**). However, Jesus was always in control of all the chaos of the storm, no

matter how violent it was. He directed the disciples to get into the boat, knowing exactly what was going to happen, because he allowed it.

The question the disciples asked (**Who then is this, that even the wind and the sea obey him?**) is a question we are called to ask too.

**Jesus is the same sovereign God of the Old Testament, who had control over the powers of chaos**

**Jesus, though fully human, is also fully God.**

In this setting, he displayed the same sovereignty that caused the worldwide flood, then dried it up, and that parted the Red Sea so that his people were set free.

**Jesus is that same God who is praised throughout the Psalms as the God who has power over all the chaos in our lives.**

More than that, he came to deal with the evil in the chaos. He came to:

- Seek and save the lost
- part the sea again
- rid creation of death and decay, the satanic powers and the chaos that rules within our hearts

We see him do this on the cross, going down into death but not staying there. Instead, he rose again into new life, so that we might have that life too.

That does not mean that we are free from the impact of chaos now. In fact, we may well find that the chaos grows, as Jesus tells us it will. However, he also offers us the correct way to respond to the chaos around us.

**Instead of ignoring it, escaping it or trying to control it, we can submit our chaos to Jesus.**

How do we go about submitting our chaotic lives to Jesus?

1. **We need to recognise who Jesus is.** Jesus is fully human and fully God, and we need to seek to grasp this ever more deeply.
- **As fully human,** he is not a God who is unable to sympathise with us in our weakness. He clearly got tired, and he also experienced the chaos of life around him. He was tempted in every way and did not sin, and he suffered at the hands of the chaotic powers of the rulers of his day.

- **As fully God**, he is the one who created the stars in the sky. Through him, all things were made and in him, there is life. He is the sovereign God, the King of kings and Lord of lords. He is the one to be feared.

Indeed, the disciples were filled with great fear, but the fear of the Lord is not like the chaotic fear of the sea. The fear we experience in everyday life is messy, unloving and life-destroying.

**The fear of the Lord is clean and pure.**

**It is the beginning of wisdom and it endures forever**

When we fear the Lord, we hold this fear in Jesus over the fear of the chaotic world.

When we recognise Jesus in this

way, we realise that he is the one in control, and allowing it to happen, so we can rest safely in that knowledge. There is

a reason behind it, even if we cannot see why, and that should humble us.

**Recognising who Jesus is means that we can rest secure,**

**knowing that he is in control of the situation and that he knows what is going on in our hearts**

- 2. We need to respond in honesty.** Because Jesus is both fully human and fully God, we can bring everything to him in prayer. The disciples felt able to question whether he cared – that is raw honesty as they expressed exactly what they were feeling.

We are invited to that same level of honesty. When we pray, we can bring all our sinfulness, our pain and hurt to him. We can bring all of our chaos to him. We can do this since he knows it all already and we can know he is in control of it.

- In our work situation, we can share how we feel about our boss, the next job we have to do and how overwhelmed we feel.
- In our family situation, we can honestly express our feelings about what is happening, whether it be annoyance with family members or a sense of failure on our part
- In our health situation, we can ask God to heal us but we can also express the painfulness of what we are going through.

**Prayer is not telling God something he does not know.**

**Prayer is for our benefit, because as we pray, he ministers to us perfectly in it.**

**3. We need to receive his word.** The chaos of the storm stops, not when Christ opens his eyes, but when he speaks his word. He speaks into our chaos when we

- recognise who Jesus is and have a fear of the Lord that is right
- see his humanity and his ability to sympathise with our weakness
- respond in honesty and unload all our chaos

He gives us his word, which reminds us of who he is in our situation. The scriptures root our identity in him. Having listened to the groans of the messy chaos in our lives, he does NOT just leave us to it.

- Our Lord is a compassionate God – he weeps with us in our mess and answers our chaos with his perfect truth

In his word, we find a correction for the sinful way in which we are responding to the chaos. It is not that the chaos is bad and we are good. In every situation, we are sinners and Jesus lovingly corrects us.

- When you are annoyed, his word reminds you how much you are in need of forgiveness yourself. It reminds you that you are deserving of wrath, but because of his great love for you, you are his child.

We need the truths about God that we have in our heads to truly move into our hearts. The psalms show us how the word works in our prayers. We speak out truth about God and it helps us to see the bigger picture. As we pour out our annoyance and anger, his word corrects us and humbles us. We find comfort in our identity in him, knowing that we are in him and he is in us in every situation.

**As we read his word, it reminds us that we are adopted into the family of God  
not because of anything we have done,  
but because of everything he has done for us.**

Finally, we can find a sure and certain hope in his word, as he reminds us that, one day, the chaos will cease. Because of

what Christ has done on the cross, the final outcome will be: **a new heaven and a new earth, for the first heaven and the first earth had passed away, and the sea was no more. (Rev 21:1).**

- There will be an end to chaos and disorder
- There will be a time when Jesus declares **"Peace. Be still"** to all the chaos in creation and we will finally all have rest in him

Our culture cannot offer anything that compares with this and until then, he is with us. In the midst of the chaos, he wants us to draw closer to him, submitting all of it to him.

**Let us recognise who Jesus is, respond to him and receive from him.**

**Let us come to Jesus with our chaos.**