

March 18, 2012 by Steve Brandon



Fear and Faith

Mark 4:35-5:43

1. Fear without Faith (4:35-5:20)

2. Fear with Faith (5:21-43)

Ten of the most common fears that people experience are listed below.

Claustrophobia - Fear of Enclosed Spaces
Arachnophobia - The fear of spiders (this affects women more than men).
Germophobia - The fear of germs or dirt.
Astraphobia - The fear of thunder and lightning (our household knows about this one)
Acrophobia - The fear of heights.
Trypanophobia - The fear of injections.
Ophidiophobia - The fear of snakes.
Agoraphobia - The fear of situations in which escape is difficult (crowded areas, open spaces, or situations that are likely to trigger a panic attack).
Cynophobia - The fear of dogs (often associated with a bad experience with dogs in the past).
Triskaidekaphobia - Fear of the Number 13 [\[1\]](#)

These are fears that have names. We can add to these other fears which are common, but may not have names: fear of losing your job, fear of dying, fear of loneliness, fear of uncertainty about your future, fear of failure, fear of making decisions, fear of conflict, fear of rejection, and fear of public speaking. The fact is that in this life, we have fears. Now, some fears are good fears, and other fears are bad fears (as we shall see in our text).

In our text today, we will see Mark telling us of how Jesus continued to reveal who He was through signs and wonders. We will see four encounters that Jesus will have with people. And in each of them, the sheer power of Jesus is put on display. We continue to see Jesus for who He really is. Only the Lord of the universe is able to do such things as Jesus did.

But, as Jesus reveals Himself, there is a sub-theme throughout all of these encounters. The dynamics of fear and faith are present in all of them. Thus, the title of my message this morning: "Fear and Faith." Let us look at the first scene: "Jesus Stills the Sea". In this scene, we see my first point, ...

1. Fear without Faith (4:35-5:20)

Mark 4:35-41

On that day, when evening came, He *said to them, "Let us go over to the other side." Leaving the crowd, they *took Him along with them in the boat, just as He was; and other boats were with Him. And there *arose a fierce gale of wind, and the waves were breaking over the boat so much that the boat was already filling up. Jesus Himself 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?" And He got up and rebuked the wind and said to the sea, "Hush, be still." And the wind died down and it became perfectly calm. And He said to them, "Why are you afraid? Do you still have no faith?" They became very much afraid and said to one another, "Who then is this, that even the wind and the sea obey Him?"

This is a great story. Matthew tells it. Luke tells it. In fact, Matthew and Luke tell all four of the stories we will read today; and they tell them all in the same succession. These stories put forth the power of Jesus over nature in such a great way.

The setting is the end of a very long day. Jesus had just finished teaching a very large crowd of people. The crowds of people that Jesus had ministered to were large and demanding. On one occasion the crowds were so large that Jesus ordered a boat to be prepared for Him to escape the crowd, lest they overcome Him (3:9). Another time, the demands of the crowds were so much that He and His disciples did not even have time to eat (3:20). And now, it is evening, and Jesus tells the disciples to get into a boat, so that they might go to another region. He may have wanted to go into another city to expand His ministry, such as the time when Jesus said, "Let us go somewhere else to the towns nearby, so that I may preach there also; for that is what I came for" (Mark 1:38).

Jesus may have wanted to distance Himself from the crowds for His own well-being. This was certainly a factor, as Jesus was exhausted and found sleeping in the boat. This was not your run of the mill lazy boat ride, which would rock you to sleep, as an infant being held in a rocking chair. No, this was a violent storm in a small open boat. Look again at how Mark describes the storm. Verse 37, "And there arose a fierce gale of wind, and the waves were breaking over the boat so much that the boat was already filling up."

The Sea of Galilee is known for its violent storms that rush on in an instant. The high hills that surround this lake make ideal wind tunnels for the wind to come whipping across the sea. So, picture the scene with me. There were thirteen people in the boat. That's about all that the boat could hold, so it was quite full. They departed the land when it was calm. About half-way across the lake, the wind whips up. The waves whip up. Pretty soon... Whoosh! Whoosh! The water is coming over the boat. Can you feel it? Can you feel the wind? Can you feel the cold? Can you hear the loud, crashing waves that are coming in upon the boat? Can you see the boat taking on water?

Soon, everyone on board is soaked with the spray of water. And Jesus is asleep in the stern (that is the back of the boat). It's a good look into the humanity of Jesus. He's exhausted. It's the only thing that can explain Him being asleep in such a storm. While Jesus was at peace, the disciples are terrified.

Above the sound of the waves, they were shouting to Him, "Teacher, do You not care that we are perishing?" (verse 38). Now, this is significant, because a handful of these disciples were fisherman; they spent their lives on the sea. They had been through a few storms in their lifetimes. To see them so afraid means that this was a really big storm, which merely highlights the awesome power of Jesus over the wind and the waves.

And Jesus, perhaps groggy from His sleep, stands up in the boat and speaks to the water. He said, "Hush, be still" (verse 39). And we see two miracles take place. First, the miracle of stopping the wind "and the wind died down" (verse 39). This was marvelous in and of itself. But, if this was the only thing that Jesus did, it would mean several hours until the sea returned to its calm, as the waves would slowly dissipate. Thus, the second miracle: the stopping of the waves -- "it became perfectly calm" (verse 39). Jesus calmed all of the waves; there were no ripples in the water when Jesus was done. It was perfectly calm.

Jesus, then, addresses the issue of the disciples' hearts. In verse 40, He asks, "Why are you afraid? Do you still have no faith?" This displays my first point: Fear without Faith.

That's the place of the disciples. They lacked faith. They lacked belief. They lacked trust. And Jesus knows this is why they had fear in their hearts. They were in a dangerous storm, and they weren't trusting in the Lord. We know clearly the natural application of Jesus' rebuke. We who trust in Jesus have no reason to fear.

The Bible often commands us not to fear. "Do not fear, for I am with you" (Is. 41:10; 43:5). "Do not fear, I will help you" (Is. 41:13). "Do not fear, for I have redeemed you; I have called you by name; you are Mine" (Is. 43:1). And if we are His, we will be protected until our dying day. Even Jesus, Himself told us, "Do not worry [Do not fear about the future] ... if God so clothes the grass of the field, which is alive today and tomorrow is thrown into the furnace, will He not much more cloth you? You of little faith!" (Matt. 6:30-31).

In other words, we should not fear, because God is with us. And yet, Jesus was right there with them. And they were fearful of the storm. They were fearful of drowning in the storm. Even though Jesus had taught them; even though they had seen the miracles of Jesus, they still didn't believe. By the way, we will see this throughout the gospel of Mark. The disciples are exposed to everything, and yet still they fail to trust Jesus. In this instance, their lack of faith turned to fear. Thus, Fear without faith.

Those are good words for us. Jesus is with us; we need not fear. And so, church family, any fears that you may be facing in these days, I exhort you to realize that God has promised you, "I will never desert you, nor will I ever forsake you" (Heb. 13:5). "The Lord is my helper, I will not be afraid. What will man do to me?" (Heb. 13:6).

Now, as helpful as these things are, this is not the end of the story. Their fear of the storm quickly turned elsewhere. Verse 41 says, "They became very much afraid and said to one another, 'Who then is this, that even the wind and the sea obey Him?'" First, they were afraid of nature. Now, they were afraid of Jesus. Any fear that they had of drowning was now lost. They were no longer fearful of the wind and the waves. Instead, they were fearful of the One who controls the wind and the waves! They were fearful of Jesus!

They had been walking with Jesus for some time now. They had seen and witnessed His miracles. They had seen countless demons driven from people. They had seen countless people healed of their diseases. They saw lepers cleansed and paralytics healed and withered hands restored. But nothing compared with the awesome power of calming the storm. What's more fearful than the storm outside the boat? To have God in your boat.

Now, why were they so fearful? Because they had no faith. They had fear without faith. We see a similar story at the beginning of chapter 5.

Mark 5:1

They came to the other side of the sea, into the country of the Gerasenes.

Finally, the storm had calmed, so that Jesus and the disciples were able to cross to the other side of the sea. They left the northeastern portion of the sea, near Capernaum, where Jesus had been ministering. And now, they came to the southwestern portion of the sea. It wasn't that far away, as the Sea of Galilee is only 13 miles long and 8 miles wide. Continuing in verse 2, ...

Mark 5:2-5

When He got out of the boat, immediately a man from the tombs with an unclean spirit met Him, and he had his dwelling among the tombs. And no one was able to bind him anymore, even with a chain; because he had often been bound with shackles and chains, and the chains had been torn apart by him and the shackles broken in pieces, and no one was strong enough to subdue him. Constantly, night and day, he was screaming among the tombs and in the mountains, and gashing himself with stones.

This is one of those scenes in the Bible that it's easy to read about, but to still totally miss the emotions of what's taking place. Jesus and His disciples get off the boat and they are met by a wild man. He is described as a man "with an unclean spirit" (verse 2). In other words, he was demon possessed. We shall find out later that he was possessed by many demons.

Verses 3 and 4 tell us a little history about this man. On several occasions, the people of the Gerasenes had apprehended him somehow. They had bound him with shackles and chains. But, he broke through them and escaped. "No one was strong enough to subdue him" (verse 4). Instead, he spent his days screaming among the tombs, gashing himself with stones (verse 5). Luke tells us that this man was naked, too wild for clothes (Luke 8:27). Matthew tells us that he had a buddy with him, who was likewise demon possessed. Their presence among the tombs was so much so that nobody was able to pass by the road. The man was crazy enough to shut down the road.

That's what demons do to individuals. They take control. They make people do harmful and destructive and bizarre things. So, picture the scene as described in verse 6, ...

Mark 5:6

Seeing Jesus from a distance, he ran up and bowed down before Him;

The sight of this naked, out-of-control, madman, running toward you would be enough to put a few goose bumps all over your body. But, he stops short of hurting Jesus. Instead he bows down before Jesus. And then, we have this interaction between Jesus and this man.

Mark 5:7-10

and shouting with a loud voice, he *said, "What business do we have with each other, Jesus, Son of the Most High God? I implore You by God, do not torment me!" For He had been saying to him, "Come out of the man, you unclean spirit!" And He was asking him, "What is your name?" And he *said to Him, "My name is Legion; for we are many." And he began to implore Him earnestly not to send them out of the country.

You can picture it. Back and forth. Jesus is saying, "Come out of the man." The man is saying, "Do not torment me!" Back and forth they went. When the demons realized that they were finished, they had a plan.

Mark 5:11-13

Now there was a large herd of swine feeding nearby on the mountain. The demons implored Him, saying, "Send us into the swine so that we may enter them." Jesus gave them permission. And coming out, the unclean spirits entered the swine; and the herd rushed down the steep bank into the sea, about two thousand of them; and they were drowned in the sea.

This shows that this man had upwards of 2,000 demons in him. No wonder he was so out of control. Now, this didn't escape the notice of others. No, those in charge of the swine saw everything that happened. Jesus continues to reveal who He is! He is the Son of God, who has come with power to this earth!

Mark 5:14-17

Their herdsmen ran away and reported it in the city and in the country. And the people came to see what it was that had happened. They *came to Jesus and *observed the man who had been demon-possessed sitting down, clothed and in his right mind, the very man who had had the "legion"; and they became frightened. Those who had seen it described to them how it had happened to the demon-possessed man, and all about the swine. And they began to implore Him to leave their region.

Notice here how these townspeople responded exactly the same way that the disciples did when Jesus calmed the storm. They saw the power of Jesus unveiled. They saw the man who broke through the chains and shackles, sitting there clothed and in his right mind. All because of the power of Jesus. "And they became frightened." Isn't it interesting that they saw Jesus up close and personal, and they didn't want Him. Instead, they begged him to leave their region. "It's too much! We don't want that sort of power in our town! So, get out." They had Fear without Faith (4:35-5:20).

If this teaches us anything, it teaches us that the presence of God is no guarantee that people will trust in God. Let's get rid of the notion that if people would only see God for who He is, they would believe in Him. We see this several times in the book of Revelation, regarding the trumpet and bowl judgments. His power is clearly seen in the execution of His final judgment. But those on the earth refuse to repent (Rev. 9:20). Instead, they blaspheme God (Re. 16:8-11).

Jesus told the story in Luke 16 of the rich man and Lazarus. And when Lazarus was suffering the torments of hell, he pleaded with Father Abraham to send someone back to warn his brothers of the impending danger of those who love the world. Abraham said, "They have Moses and the Prophets; let them hear them" (Luke 16:29). But, the rich man replied, "No, ... but if someone goes to them from the dead, they will repent" (Luke 16:30). Abraham corrected his theology, "If they do not listen to Moses and the Prophets, they will not be persuaded even if someone rises from the dead" (Luke 16:31). In other words, the Scriptures are sufficient to induce faith. Miraculous works, even of the most extra-ordinary kind, are no guarantee that people will believe in Jesus.

The people of this town feared Jesus. He gave them their road back! He restored this man to sanity! And they wanted nothing of it. They lacked faith in Jesus. They wanted Jesus to leave. They had Fear without Faith (4:35-5:20).

And yet, not all was lost. Not all refused to believe. Look at verse 18, ...

Mark 5:18-19

As He was getting into the boat, the man who had been demon-possessed was imploring Him that he might accompany Him. And He did not let him, but He *said to him, "Go home to your people and report to them what great things the Lord has done for you, and how He had mercy on you."

Jesus had transformed this man. Whereas once he was tormented by the legion of demons inside him, now he had faith in Jesus. And he wanted to go with Jesus back across the lake. But Jesus said, "No. You go to your own people. You tell them what the Lord has done for you. You tell them how He had mercy on you" (verse 19). We see Jesus healing others of demons and illnesses in Mark 1:34 and 1:44. In those verses, He tells them not to speak about Him and what He has done. But, here, He tells this man to tell others. Jesus knows that He isn't coming back, so He tells the man to go back to his own people and speak of Jesus.

This is the greatest form of evangelism. You simply tell people what God has done for your soul. You simply tell people of how God has been merciful to you. "I was dead in my sins. I was born a child of wrath. But God, being rich in mercy, because of His great love with which He loved me, even when I was dead in my transgressions, made me alive together with Christ. I have been saved by His grace! I didn't deserve anything. But, God has given me everything. He has been so good to me. He can be good to you too. Simply believe in Him and trust in Him" (Ephesians 2:1-10).

And as you say such things to others, trust that the Lord will use the seed that you sow for His glory. That's what took place with this man.

Mark 5:20

And he went away and began to proclaim in Decapolis what great things Jesus had done for him; and everyone was amazed.

Let's move on to my second point. Beginning in verse 21, we have two miracles which are closely linked. And with both of these miracles, we will see, ...

2. Fear with Faith (5:21-43)

In the first two stories, we saw Fear without Faith (4:35-5:20). The disciples weren't trusting in the Lord in their peril. Instead, they were fearful. The Gerasenes were not trusting in the Lord. Instead, they were fearful. But, now, in the next two stories in chapter 5, we will see something different altogether. We will see believing people coming to Jesus in their desperation, trusting that Jesus will help them. They come to Jesus with fear, but it's a good fear. That's why I have called my second point Fear with Faith (5:21-43). The people in these next two stories have a healthy fear of Jesus. They have that sort of fear that the Bible commends.

Throughout Scripture, we are commanded to "Fear the Lord." The fear of the Lord is the beginning of wisdom (Prov. 9:10). There are great blessings to be had for those who fear the Lord. Psalm 103:11-13 tells us, "For as high as the heavens are above the earth, so great is his steadfast love toward *those who fear him*; as far as the east is from the west, so far does he remove our transgressions from us. As a father shows compassion to his children, so the Lord shows compassion to *those who fear him*" (ESV). This is the sort of faith that we'll see, beginning in verse 21.

Mark 5:21-24

When Jesus had crossed over again in the boat to the other side, a large crowd gathered around Him; and so He stayed by the seashore. One of the synagogue officials named Jairus *came up, and on seeing Him, *fell at His feet and *implored Him earnestly, saying, "My little daughter is at the point of death; please come and lay Your hands on her, so that she will get well and live." And He went off with him; and a large crowd was following Him and pressing in on Him.

Jesus is back near where He was at the end of chapter 4 -- by the seashore. We see a synagogue official come to Jesus. His name is Jairus. He was one of several rulers in the synagogue. He was certainly a God-fearing man. Really, not all the Jewish leaders were against Jesus.

His daughter was sick, and so, like many others, he sought Jesus for help. His daughter was so sick that she couldn't even come to Jesus. She was laid up in bed, at the point of death. Again, here is a passage filled with emotion, if we would but spend a few moments thinking about it. We find out in verse 42 that this daughter was 12 years old. I can relate to Jairus. I have a 12 year old daughter. It would shake me if she would contract some terminal disease. It would shake me to see her body dwindle away to the point of death. I would be going any place to look for any help that could be given to me.

Jairus was a desperate man. "He fell at His feet and implored Him earnestly" (verses 22-23). He was scared, fearing for the life of his daughter. You can also see Jairus' faith. He's seeking the One who can heal. He's on his face before Jesus. He's pleading earnestly that Jesus come and lay His hands upon His daughter. He believed that this would be sufficient to heal her (verse 23). Remarkably, Jesus began to follow Him, even as the large crowd pressed upon Him (verse 24).

Now, on the way, we encounter a desperate woman. She comes in fear with faith to Jesus. Here's how Mark tells the story, ...

Mark 5:25-29

A woman who had had a hemorrhage for twelve years, and had endured much at the hands of many physicians, and had spent all that she had and was not helped at all, but rather had grown worse -- after hearing about Jesus, she came up in the crowd behind Him and touched His cloak. For she thought, "If I just touch His garments, I will get well." Immediately the flow of her blood was dried up; and she felt in her body that she was healed of her affliction.

Now, unlike Jairus, this woman is unnamed. Unlike Jairus, this woman is not someone of standing. And yet, she comes just like Jairus did -- desperate for healing.

We don't know exactly what sort of problem this woman had. Mark is intentionally discrete about it. He merely says that it was a hemorrhage. This would have made her unclean and excluded from worship (Lev. 15:25-27). She had tried everything to solve her physical problem. She had gone to physician after physician, looking for help for twelve years (verse 26)! She sought help for as long as Jairus' daughter had lived. But, none could help. In fact, if anything, things got worse.

So, she went to the great physician. Great was her faith, "If I just touch His garments, I will get well" (verse 28). This didn't come from nowhere. In Mark 3:10, we read of how Jesus "healed many, with the result that all those who had affliction pressed around Him in order to touch Him." She was seeking the same thing. Longing for the healing touch. And as it happened, she was successful in her plight. She managed to touch Jesus (verse 27). And she was instantly made well (verse 29).

Such was the power of Jesus. He can calm the storm with a word. He can cast out thousands of demons with a word. And by faith, you merely touch His garments, and you are made well. This is what Jairus wanted also, right? He wanted Jesus to come and touch His twelve year-old daughter. It's what all of us need: the healing touch of Jesus. We need Jesus to cleanse us and make us whole. And though today He doesn't touch us with His physical hand, we can still know His healing power.

We simply need to be desperate enough to seek it out. Are you desperate enough? Does your heart resonate with Jairus and this woman? Do you feel that all you need is for Jesus to touch you, and you will be made well? This is the gospel! In our desperation, we simply come to Jesus, looking for His healing touch. We bring the desperation. He brings the healing.

The story continues in verse 30, where we see Jesus fully aware of His power to heal, ...

Mark 5:30-34

Immediately Jesus, perceiving in Himself that the power proceeding from Him had gone forth, turned around in the crowd and said, "Who touched My garments?" And His disciples said to Him, "You see the crowd pressing in on You, and You say, 'Who touched Me?'" And He looked around to see the woman who had done this. But the woman fearing and trembling, aware of what had happened to her, came and fell down before Him and told Him the whole truth. And He said to her, "Daughter, your faith has made you well; go in peace and be healed of your affliction."

It's right here that we see the link between fear and faith in this story. This woman had Fear with Faith (5:21-43). When she was found out, she was fearful. She was trembling. And yet, in faith, she still stepped forward to explain the whole situation. And Jesus commends her: "Your faith has made you well." Let's walk in faith. Let's trust the Lord for our healing. Like this woman, who sought healing for twelve years, so our healing may be a long time coming. Let's trust the Lord.

In verse 35, we are brought back to the story of Jairus, ...

5:35-36

While He was still speaking, they *came from the house of the synagogue official, saying, "Your daughter has died; why trouble the Teacher anymore?" But Jesus, overhearing what was being spoken, *said to the synagogue official, "Do not be afraid any longer, only believe."

Once again, Jesus confronts this whole dynamic of fear and faith. When news came from home that his daughter had died, Jairus was fearful. Jesus exhorts Jairus in the right way. "Do not be afraid any longer, only believe" (verse 36). This was a word of encouragement. Jesus was saying, "All is not lost! Trust me."

Jairus had brought his daughter to Jesus based on what he had heard of Jesus--He was the master healer. But, Jairus hadn't heard of Jesus raising anyone from the dead. In his mind, hope was lost. By the way, this is when it is most difficult to trust Jesus -- when all seems lost. Jairus had no hope of his daughter being made well. The logical thing to do would be to dismiss Jesus, as those who came from his house had said.

But, Jesus had other plans. "Jairus, ... trust me." Here's what happened, ...

Mark 5:37-43

And He allowed no one to accompany Him, except Peter and James and John the brother of James. They *came to the house of the synagogue official; and He *saw a commotion, and people loudly weeping and wailing. And entering in, He *said to them, "Why make a commotion and weep? The child has not died, but is asleep." They began laughing at Him. But putting them all out, He *took along the child's father and mother and His own companions, and *entered the room where the child was. Taking the child by the hand, He *said to her, "Talitha kum!" (which translated means, "Little girl, I say to you, get up!"). Immediately the girl got up and began to walk, for she was twelve years old. And immediately they were completely astounded. And He gave them strict orders that no one should know about this, and He said that something should be given her to eat.

Jesus raised this girl from the dead, like He did Lazarus (in John 11)!

These four miracles are a clear demonstration of His power. He calms the storm. He casts out thousands of demons. He heals with the touch. He raises from the dead. This is the Christ we worship. If He can do these things, we can trust in Him.

The question before us this morning is this: do you have faith? Are you fearful? Are you desperate? Or, are you defiant? The cross ought to calm all our fears. Let's look to the cross and trust in Jesus.

This sermon was delivered to Rock Valley Bible Church on March 18, 2012 by Steve Brandon.

For more information see www.rvbc.cc.

[1] <http://psychology.about.com/od/phobias/p/commonphobias.htm>