

# Encounters with Jesus

## Week 5: Jesus Encounters Power

Mark 4-6

Dr. Matt Cassidy ---- February 11, 2024

We're doing a series together called "Encounters with Jesus." And in that series, we're looking through the gospels of the New Testament that tell the story of Jesus. We're looking for how people are having encounters with Jesus. We want to see that if they had a firsthand experience with the Lord Jesus, what that was like. And even more important than the people is the Lord Jesus Christ himself. We're trying to come to terms with the definition of who Jesus, the Messiah, was. Is the man who is written about in the Bible the one that is in our minds? Is that who we're putting our hope and trust in? What we think about Jesus is the most important attribute we have about our souls. And we want to make sure we're worshiping and serving the one that's in the Bible.

So, today we're going to look at encounters that Jesus has with power and authority. We're going to look at encounters where Jesus is demonstrating His power and strength. And if you want to see the power and strength of something, one way is to look at the opponent that's been defeated.

Case in point: Sonny Liston. Sonny Liston was the heavyweight champion of the world from 1962 to 1964. He was ferocious. And no wonder—he learned boxing in the Missouri State Penitentiary. He was a thug. He was unstoppable. His strongest opponent was Patterson. He fought Patterson twice, once to take the title of the world heavyweight champion, and then to defend it. Those fights were two years apart. The total time in the ring? Four minutes and twelve seconds. He knocked him out, first round, both times.

Sonny Liston was called the most intimidating fighter of that time. The number one contender, a British fighter--in the fight for the championship, his manager said, "We're not getting into the ring with Sonny Liston. As a matter of fact, we don't want to be on the same street with Sonny Liston."

A commentator said that Sonny Liston was going to ruin boxing because he couldn't lose and no one wanted to fight him. A boxing promoter said, "We talk about Mike Tyson and his

powerful punches, but Sonny Liston was by far more ferocious and more indestructible.” One of the trainers who actually trained George Foreman and Mike Tyson said that no one punched harder than Sonny Liston.

And then in 1964 a twenty-two-year-old young man said, “I’ll fight him.” And he went into the ring with 7-1 odds against him. Sonny Liston couldn’t answer the seventh ring bell. They threw in the towel. Now Liston’s trainer said that Sonny had come in with an injured shoulder and it was just a bad night for him. So, they had to fight for it again a year later. And that fight gave us the single-most iconic photo in boxing. As a matter of fact, Sports Illustrated had a special edition called “The Greatest Sports Photos of a Century.” And on that special edition this was the cover. This is the iconic photo.



That’s Muhammed Ali standing over Sonny Liston. Muhammed Ali would get a new nickname: “The Greatest.” You want to know how strong and powerful Muhammed Ali is? He put Sonny Liston on his back in 2.12 seconds. That’s all there was.

If you want to know the power and the strength of Jesus, look at the opponents that He defeats. And we’re going to look at this in the Book of Mark, chapters 4 through 6. And we’re going to look at it in the way that Mark writes it. Mark has this style, and it’s intense and it’s fast. He uses the word “immediately” forty-one times in his gospel. That’s more than seventy percent

of all the New Testament usage of that word. So, he wants to go boom, boom, boom, and learn from that breathtaking experience.

The other thing that Mark does that the other writers don't do is that he uses more passion and more emotional description than the other writers. He understands that facts will give you a certain amount of information. But Mark is an experience learner. He wants us to feel, because truth and meaning are found in the experience, not just in the facts. And so, we're going to be looking at how people respond to the various encounters. And here's the big point: we want to see that this is the Jesus that's in the Bible. We're going to look at how He responds. We're going to look at how others, His opponents, respond, and those watching around Him. Because Jesus comes to this life, and the people following Him appropriately give Him titles that were fulfillments of the Old Testament prophecies, like Son of God and Son of Man, Messiah, the Christ.

Many of us often use titles and phrases, but we don't fully grasp the depth of what they mean. And so, in these stories, especially the way that Mark tells them, He says, *Sure, I'm those things, and so much more*. He's going to put on graphic displays of the fact that He is the second person in the Godhead; that everything, visible and invisible, was created by Him and through Him, because of Him. In fact, He holds all things together, that Jesus in the Bible is the King of all creation. That's His point.

And you can tell the power and the strength of a person by his opponents that he defeats. And so, Jesus is lining them up: *Let's brawl*. This is what it's going to look like.

### **Story 1: Jesus' Encounter with Poseidon and Zeus**

In the first encounter, Mark 4, Jesus encounter Poseidon and Zeus, the god of the seas and the god of storms. There's a modern quote that says, "Every wise man fears three things: the storm at sea, a night without a moon, and the anger of a gentle man." In this story there will be two of those three things that wise men fear. This will be a storm at sea at night. They won't see the moon.

Jesus and the disciples have just finished a very full day of ministry on the upper west bank of the Sea of Galilee, and they're getting in a boat in the evening, and they're rowing across to go to the northeast side of the Sea of Galilee. And in that evening row, it says, "A furious

squall broke loose on the boat.” Now a squall is a sudden storm. And Mark wants us to know that this one is angry. This is a furious squall. This is a localized hurricane that has found its way to the Sea of Galilee. And it says that the boat is cracking and sinking. The men are drowning.

Meanwhile, Jesus is sleeping in the back of the boat. It says that His head is on a cushion. And so, the men are frustrated with their inability to bail fast enough, and so they run to Jesus and they wake Him up. And they yell at Him, “Teacher, don’t you care that we’re going to drown?” And just to make sure we’re clear here, these are not a bunch of landlubbers who don’t know any different. At least four of these men are generational, seasoned fishermen. They know what to fear and when to fear. They’re afraid—they’re very afraid.

### **Mark 4:39**

**He got up, rebuked the wind and said to the waves, “Quiet! Be still!” Then the wind died down and the water was completely calm.**

So, they wake Him up, and “Jesus got up,” verse 39, “and He rebuked the wind and said to the waves, ‘Quiet! Be still!’ And then the wind died down and the water was completely calm.”

There are two observations that are stunning. The first one is, look at the words themselves and how they are spoken. Jesus doesn’t roll up His sleeves and get worked up and maybe throw out a *You shall not pass!* He doesn’t need props. And what’s very important here is that He doesn’t appeal with an incantation. An incantation is when you call upon a higher power. *In the name of God, stop, storm!* He doesn’t say any of that. He just says, “Quiet.” He says two words: “Quiet. Still.” And these are simple commands like you would give to a rowdy dog. *Sit. Stay.*

The second observation that is even more astonishing is this: that the storm, the wind and the waves, obey Him like a dog on a shock collar. There are two commands, there are two acts of submission. *Zeus, quiet!* And all the wind stops. The storm immediately ends. *Poseidon, stay! Quiet!* And the waves in the middle of a crest go flat. Now it’s just glass, absolute silence. You could hear a kitten purr on the far side of the lake.

This isn't just someone like an Old Testament saint, a prophet or priest who has access to great power calling upon God to help them. He's not just showing that He has power. In this, Jesus is demonstrating that He is the power. Anything and everything with power is merely on loan from Jesus. This is the power that only God has, and that's the demonstration here.

### **Mark 4:41**

**They were terrified and asked each other, “Who is this? Even the wind and the waves obey Him!”**

And this is a firsthand response from those men who were in the boat and how they were reacting. Verse 41 says, “And they were terrified and asked each other, ‘Who is this? Even the wind and the waves obey Him!’”

Before, they're yelling and screaming because it's so loud with the wind and the waves. The boat is being swamped, they're going to drown. After, it's perfectly calm. It's still and peacefully quiet. And now they're terrified. They were afraid, and now they're terrified. Wow.

By the way, what were they expecting? They wake Jesus up and they say, “Teacher, don't you care that we're going to drown?” I think there are only two points of expectation there. “Teacher, don't you care?” This is like, *Teacher, teach us out of this thing, or say something encouraging like teachers do. Or, Teacher, don't you care?* Maybe that's what it was—the counseling attributes of Jesus. *Don't you care that we're all going to die? How about some hugs before we go down?*

I think what they were saying is, *Do something!* And then Jesus stands up and says, *Sit. Stay.* And the men thought, *That's not what we were thinking about when we said, “Do something.” We were afraid in the storm, and now we're terrified. Man, we miss that storm. Man, we miss that storm! That's not what we had in mind.*

### **Application #1: Is This Your Idea of Jesus?**

What you think about Jesus is the very most important attribute of your soul. Is this the Jesus that you have in your mind when you think about Him? This kind of power and this kind of authority? Or is it Jesus who is “merely”—merely a teacher. *He has great wisdom, He is a great*

*teacher*. Or a healer. We go to Jesus because we want tranquility within our souls and our bodies. We want Him to make us feel good in some way. We want to be tucked in. *Jesus, tuck me in bed when I've had a particularly bad day.*

This one is so much more. These men have been following Him for maybe years, and they didn't know this about Jesus, that He is the King of all creation. And He tells it what to do. There's something profound in this Jesus, because He attracts us to Him, and then the closer we get, the brighter He becomes, and we're repelled by that. He is amazing and causes us to wander into knowing Him, and then we see that and we're terrified and fear causes us to run away. What do you do when your greatest fear is towards something that's good?

C. S. Lewis does a wonderful job trying to explain this kind of new fear in his space trilogy. It's kind of strange, but Lewis writes himself into the story. C. S. Lewis is in the story. And in this one particular scene he finds himself standing before an archangel, and he's paralyzed in fear. But it's a different kind of fear. Look what he writes, "My fear was now of another kind. I felt sure that this was something that was 'good' but I didn't know that 'goodness' could cause such a response. And this was a very terrible experience. As long as what you are afraid of is something evil, you may still hope for good to come and rescue you. But suppose you struggle through to the good and it's more dreadful? What happens when the very comforter is the thing that makes you uncomfortable? Then, indeed, there is no rescue possible: the last card has been played."

The strongest opponent in the imagination of these sailors and their families is that they would be in a storm at sea at night—a ferocious squall. And that was fearful. But when Jesus said, "Quiet" and "Still," they were terrorized.

## Colossians 1:15-17

**The Son is the image of the invisible God, the firstborn over all creation. <sup>16</sup> For in Jesus all things were created: things in heaven and on earth, visible and invisible, whether thrones or powers or rulers or authorities; all things have been created through Him and for Him. <sup>17</sup> Jesus is before all things, and in Him all things hold together.**

This is how Paul summarizes the nature of Jesus. In the context of this story it makes sense. “The Son is the image of the invisible God, the firstborn over all creation. For in Jesus all things were created: things in heaven and on earth, visible and invisible, whether thrones or powers or rulers or authorities; all things have been created through Him and for Him. Jesus is before all things, and in Him all things hold together.”

“All things hold together ...” Creation does what it is told.

## Story 2: Jesus’ Encounter with the Underworld

Well, in the story, they finish and they get to the other side. And now they’re in Gentile country. This is hostile territory. Or, as Jesus would say, it’s an away game. And in this one, Jesus has an encounter with the underworld. It’s a man who is absolutely possessed by thousands of demons. This is Mark’s longest and most vivid story that he describes in all of his gospel. And it is also the single-most detailed description of any account in all of the Bible of a demonic exorcism. And so, we’re not going to show a video of this, so that we can all sleep tonight. (Some of you are thinking, *Play the video!* No, I’m not playing the video.)

Let me tell you what this man is like. This is where Mark uses all his descriptive terms in his longest story in his narrative of the life of Jesus. Here’s a man who is an un-man. He is consumed with evil spirits. He lived among the tombs, where he’s most comfortable, with carcasses and the smell of death. He is inhuman. He has torn off all his clothes, he runs around naked, he flops around in the campfires that men build for him. He’s getting progressively stronger, it says, because the passage says that they were no longer able to bind him and hold him. They started off and they could, because they chained him, legs and hands. Then he grew in

strength, and he was tearing the chains, it says—tearing the chains loose. All day, all night, he would groan and scream and howl like a beast. He'd find sharp rocks and gash and gnash himself. That is the opposition.

**Mark 5:6-7**

**When he saw Jesus from a distance, he ran and fell on his knees in front of Him. <sup>7</sup> He shouted at the top of his voice, “What do you want with me, Jesus, Son of the Most High God?”**

Here's what happens. “When this man saw Jesus from a distance, he ran and fell on his knees in front of Him. He shouted at the top of his voice, ‘What do you want with me, Jesus, Son of the Most High God? In God's name, don't torture me!’ Who's doing the incantations now? Who's calling on God for help? Demons are calling on God for help.

**Mark 5:9**

**Then Jesus asked him, “What is your name?”  
“My name is Legion,” he replied, “for we are many.”**

“Then Jesus asked him, ‘What is your name?’

“ ‘My name is Legion, for we are many.’”

This man is the boogeyman's boogeyman. A legion is the largest long-term deployment in the military army. It's when they went somewhere and they were planning on staying—they're setting up a base. It would be made up of an infantry of five to six thousand alone. It's no wonder they can't hold him down any longer and he's tearing through the chains.

You want to know the strength of a hero? Look at his opponent. When we look at this combat, listen for this word, because it's used multiple times. Here's the word of the day: it's “beg.”



**Mark 5:10**

**And he begged Jesus again and again not to send them out of the area.**

And in verse 10, it says, “And he begged Jesus again and again not to send him out of the area.” The demon man sees a large herd of pigs, and it says he begged again, “ ‘Send us. Just tell us what to do. Order us and we’ll follow your orders. Allow us, permit us, give us permission, and we’ll do whatever You tell us.’ ”

Mark says they were given permission. I think Matthew uses the exact word. He says, “Go. Just go.” And those demons found that large herd of pigs, two thousand in number. Those pigs ran as fast as they could off a jagged-edged cliff into the Sea of Galilee and they drowned. Anybody else?

The herdsman ran into town and told them what had happened. And this is where it gets super creepy. The mayor and all the people come running. And that’s when they see the demon man.

**Mark 5:15**

**When they came to Jesus, they saw the man who had been possessed by the legion of demons, sitting, there, dressed, and in his right mind; and they were afraid.**

Look what it says in verse 15. Cover the ears of the kids. “When they came to Jesus, they saw the man who had been possessed by the legion of demons ...” Look what they saw. He was “sitting there, dressed, and in his right mind; and they were afraid.” That’s when the townspeople became terrorized. They see him there: he’s sitting there, he has all his clothes on. He’s even in his right mind. He’s got one of these little Stanley cups that are pink, and he says, *Hey, what’s up?*

**Mark 5:17**

**Then the people began to beg with Jesus to leave their region.**

And here's what they did. Look what the people did. "And then the people begged"—now look who's begging—"Jesus to leave their region." *We need help controlling this demon-possessed man—well, not that much help. We were thinking bigger chains or something—not this "Go!" We didn't expect you to say "Go!"* They're saying, *You know, when this guy was running around naked, howling like a wolf, cutting himself, flopping in the fires, living amongst the carcasses—we miss that guy. Because then we were only afraid, and now we don't know what to do with you.*

### **Colossians 1:15-17**

**The Son is the image of the invisible God, the firstborn over all creation. <sup>16</sup> For in Jesus all things were created: things in heaven and on earth, visible and invisible, whether thrones or powers or rulers or authorities; all things have been created through Him and for Him. <sup>17</sup> Jesus is before all things, and in Him all things hold together.**

This is the Jesus who is King over all of creation. Here's what Paul said in a different way: "The Son is the image of the invisible God, the firstborn of all creation. For in Jesus all things were created: things in heaven"—spiritual things—"and on earth, the visible and the invisible ..." These are all ranks of the spirit world: "...whether thrones or powers or rulers or authorities; all things have been created through Him and for Him. Jesus is before all things, and in Him all things hold together."

### **Story 3: Jesus' Encounter with the Grim Reaper**

Boom, boom, boom! These stories are coming at us so fast we're having a hard time catching our breath. And for the third opponent, Jesus encounters the Grim Reaper, the banshee, death; the second law of thermodynamics, the undisputed, undefeated killer of all things that have ever lived. Here we go. They take the boat back from that last miracle and they end up back at base camp on the northwest side of the Sea of Galilee. They're getting off the boat, and Jairus, who is a leader and godly man (he's a leader in the Jewish community there, in the synagogue),

has a daughter who is ill. So, he runs to Jesus, falls face down, and begs Jesus, “Please, come and heal my daughter. She’s sick unto death.” *Any moment now it’s hospice time for her. Please, just come.*

And Jesus sees that and sees he’s a man of faith. He’s on His way there, and then one of Jairus’ friends that had been tending his twelve-year-old daughter races to his side and says, “She’s gone. It’s too late. Don’t bother the teacher.”

**Mark 5:36**

**Overhearing what they said, Jesus told him, “Don’t be afraid; just believe.”**

Jesus overhears that and says in verse 36: “Overhearing what they said, Jesus told him, ‘Don’t be afraid; just believe.’” They continue on to Jairus’s house, and Mark notes that there was loud screaming and crying. People are crying and wailing loudly. Of course—this beautiful child has passed away.

**Mark 5:41**

**Jesus took her by the hand and said to her, “Little girl, I say to you, Rise!”**

Jesus dismisses everyone except the mother and the father and Peter, James, and John, so they can be witnesses. And this is what He does. “He took her by the hand and said to her, ‘Little girl, I say to you, rise!’” No incantation, no call for a superpower, because Jesus is the power.

And here’s one of the forty-one times that Mark uses the word “immediately”—“Immediately she stood up and began walking around.”

**Mark 5:42b**

**At this they were completely astonished.**

And here’s the response. “At this they were completely astonished (overcome with amazement).” Death obeys right away, all the way. He says one word, “rise,” and death releases

his grip and says, *Sorry ... sorry*. The Grim Reaper here is begging to be let go, like that legion of demons: *Don't judge us now*.

*Hey, hey, Jesus, can I hold onto my sting? This sting of death is all I have. And Jesus says, Sure, but not for much longer. We should do breakfast ... early ... resurrection Sunday. Bring your sting. No one will fear you again.*

He conquers death. Do you understand the meaning of what Mark's trying to show us here, not just with the facts that are being portrayed, but with the way he's telling this message? He's lining up the most powerful, fearful things that we can imagine. And then in a single syllable, soft words, Jesus conquers them by ordering them. *Sit. Stay. Go. Rise.*

And the response? People are terrified. They're frightened. They are overcome with amazement. That's what happens when Jesus shows up.

#### **Story 4: Jesus' Encounter with His Homies**

Here's the fourth story, and it's the most frightening for me. This is Jesus encountering His homies. This is His playground friends. This is the village where He grew up and everyone knew Him as a kid. And He goes to that village, and as it turns out, it's going to be on the Sabbath, so they ask Him to teach. Hey, he's back.

#### **Mark 6:2**

**When the Sabbath came, He began to teach in the synagogue, and many who heard Him were amazed. "Where did this man get these things?" they asked. "What's this wisdom that has been given him? What are these remarkable miracles he is performing?"**

And in verse two, it says, "When the Sabbath came, He began to teach in the synagogue where He grew up, and many who heard Him were amazed." (There's that word again.) And then they say, "Where did this man get these things? What is this wisdom that has been given him? What are these remarkable miracles he is performing?"

Now don't think too highly of their responses, like *Hey, that's a great sermon*. It's more like, *Hmmm ... I though we knew you when ...* And I'm not making this up—verse 3: "Isn't this

the carpenter” *Hey, honey, don't we have a dining room set from this guy?* And then it says, “ ‘Hey, isn't this Mary's son and aren't his brothers right here? There's James and Joseph and Judas and Simon. ” *We were on a soccer team with him. He was pretty good as a goalie. “ ‘Aren't his sisters here with us?’* And they took offense at Him.

### **Mark 6:3-5**

**Isn't this the carpenter? Isn't this Mary's son and the brother of James, Joseph, Judas and Simon? Aren't his sisters here with us?" And they took offense at Him.**

**<sup>4</sup> Jesus said to them, “A prophet is not without honor except in his own town, among his relatives and in this own home.” <sup>5</sup> He could not do any miracles there, except lay His hands on a few sick people and heal them.**

“And Jesus said to them, ‘A prophet is not without honor except in his own town, among his relatives and in his own home.’” And look what happened. “He could not do any miracles there, except lay hands on a few sick people and heal them.”

### **Mark 6:6**

**Jesus was amazed at their lack of faith.**

Wow. But look at who's amazed now. Verse 6: “Jesus was amazed at their lack of faith.” Three dominating victories over the most fearsome enemies, and then this. What happened? Here's what happened. Familiarity breeds contempt. That's why this scares me, because I can be overly familiar with Jesus. I think I've figured Him out, and so did these townspeople. *I remember when ... I know who you are.*

Familiarity has Jesus not being able to do ministry and moving on to the next town. I think He does that in people's lives as well. It's scary because I can say, *Well, this far and no farther, Jesus.* And Jesus says, *Okay. I'll just go on somewhere else.*

This is why what you think about Jesus is the most important attribute about the health of your soul. Because you could be a witness to those first three miraculous events and have Jesus,

or you could be part of this last one. There are two responses. You're overwhelmed, or you're bored.

### **Application #1: Do You Know This Jesus?**

So, obviously, the first application here is, Do you know this Jesus that's in this Bible? This Jesus who attracts us and terrifies us? This Jesus who we are drawn to because it's our soul's greatest longing, and then the closer we get, the more intimidating He truly becomes, and we're backing up?

When we read the passages about Jesus, we should be overcome with amazement, because He is bigger than our storms, He can pacify our fears of the future, He can quell our fears and is greater than the fears that we have of the pain of just growing old. We should go towards Jesus, even if it means being scared by who Jesus truly is. That's this dilemma. If you're really pursuing who Jesus truly is, you go past your level of intimidation.

Again, the brilliance of C. S. Lewis is that he's trying to help us understand this dilemma we're in with an easier way to understand it, in a book called *The Silver Chair*. It's part of his *Chronicles of Narnia* series. It's for children, but not. And the person of Jesus Christ is played by Aslan. And Aslan is a lion's lion. He's the size of a Clydesdale. He's very intimidating. And in this story, Jill has just finished some combat, and she's on her way. She's famished, she's going to literally die of dehydration. And she has found herself this beautiful brook. You can just tell the water is cold and clean. But between that brook and where she is standing is Aslan. And she has to get by him to get to that brook.

This is her introduction to him. She hears his voice for the very first time, and here's what it says in that book. "The voice was not like a man's. It was deeper, wilder, and stronger; a sort of heavy, golden voice. It did not make her any less frightened than she had been before, but it made her frightened in rather a different way." This is what Lewis was talking about in the space trilogy. What happens when the thing that you're afraid of is goodness and purity, and it's more fearful?

So, Aslan says to her, "Are you thirsty?"

And she says, “Unto death.”

And he said, “Well then, drink.”

And then she says, “Would you mind going away while I do?”

And then the lion answers her only by looking at her and growling. And as Jill gazed at its motionless bulk, she realized that she might as well ask an entire mountain to move for her own convenience.

Then Jill said, “Will you promise not to eat me?”

And he said, “I will make no promises.”

And then she said—and now she’s seeing the brook and realizing she must get to that and that it’s calling her thirst—it’s spiritual. And she says, “Do you eat girls?”

And Aslan says, “I have swallowed up girls and boys, women and men, kings and emperors, cities and entire realms.” It didn’t say this as if it were boasting, nor as if it were sorry, nor as if it were angry. It just said it.

“I daren’t come to drink,” said Jill.

“Well, then you will die of thirst.”

“Oh dear! I suppose I must go and find another brook.”

“There is no other source of water.”

So, it says, “It was the worst thing she had ever had to do, but she went forward to the stream, knelt down, and began scooping up water in her hand. It was the coldest, most refreshing water she had ever tasted. She didn’t need to drink much, for it quenched her thirst all at once.”

That’s her salvation. That’s the picture that we’re to see. We have to go closer, but we’re afraid, because that’s who Jesus is. It’s an attraction, it’s amazement, it’s accompanied by terror and fright. That kind of power—that’s who Jesus really is. If you’re comfortable with Jesus, it’s not the Jesus of the Bible. If He’s predictable, He’s not the Jesus of the Bible. Somehow in your mind you have declawed Him, defanged Him, house-trained Him, and He is a lap cat. He is not Aslan. If you’re sure of who He is and confident about what He would do next, it’s not the Jesus in the Bible. If you feel like you could correct Him, advise Him, then that’s not Him.

So, how do you do that? Do you want to know this Jesus? Here’s what my invitation would be: join us. We’re all on this journey together. And we need each other to get there. Be part of something besides just a big church service. Get involved in other people as we’re all

becoming like Christ in all of life. We're all trying to guide each other to become like this Jesus in all aspects of our life. Join us as we try to go farther up and farther in.

## Application #2: Everything Obeys Him

The first application—and you look at these stories just like they are—is to know Him. And the second one is to obey Him. Everything in these stories does what it is told. Everything obeys Him—except, of course, those who took Him for granted. And in this series of four stories, what Mark is saying is what Paul declared: that Jesus is the second person in the godhead; that He is the maker and the Creator of all things, visible and invisible; that He holds all things together. They all belong to Him.

And so, the wind and the waves just do what they're told. *Quiet. Still.* Even demons, the invisible, do what they're told. *Go.* Death itself, the banshee, the Grim Reaper, obeys. *Rise.*

What about you? Will you obey Him? Because in the Bible, there are at least five great reasons to obey God. You know, He designed you—just follow the owner's manual. He loves you—do what He says, He loves you. It's good for you. It's practical. Let's go to pragmatism—we're Americans. It works. This section, these stories, the way that Mark is telling them, it's because He's the King of all creation. This set of passages says *Because He said so.* Just do it because He said so. Serve others. It works. It does. It will be good for you. You'll be rewarded—there's another one. You'll be rewarded in heaven. That's all true. This says, *Just obey. He's the King of the universe. Serve others.*

Desire to become self-forgetful. Marcus Aurelius says that's a good thing.

*Who cares? I never heard of him.*

In this section, it says, *Because Jesus says so.*

I think King Jesus of all creation would probably say, *Stop playing games with commands.* We work this will to power—that's from Nietzsche. And we bring will to power in our relationships, just making sure we have the upper hand, that we're going to win somehow. And it ruins relationships. And we bring it into our marriages. And the King says, *Stop it. Serve. Love. Turn out, not in.* He says, *Deny yourself. Take up your cross.* And that means, *Put your ego on a chunk of lumber and nail it unto death and follow me.* And when He says that, He



doesn't say that because it's good for you. He doesn't say it because you'll get rewards in heaven. He doesn't say it because He loves you. He just says it. "Deny yourself, take up your cross, and follow me."

Parting the Red Sea? The sea will always do what it's told.

Hey, I think it would be a great idea if you would pray for five minutes four times a week with your significant other. *Well, do you know how busy I am?* The ocean will part, but we won't pray with somebody that we love just a few times a week. Because He says so ...

This Jesus, these stories, should have us pleading to be holy. This Jesus, these stories, the King of all creation, should have us begging for us to become like Christ in all of life.

And so, if you want to not just know, but learn to obey this King, here's the invitation again. How about joining us? You need somebody who's over you, who's mentoring you. You need a brother and sister on each side of you to help you go through the journey together. You need to be mentoring someone beneath you and pulling them along. How about we all guide and become guides with other people, to become like Christ in all of life? We cannot do it alone. We need to study the Bible together and hear from other people different stories about how King Jesus showed up in their life, and it was beautiful and it was frightening. It was wonderful, it was terrorizing. I want that too.

We read biographies together, we enjoy each other, we fall and we pick each other up. That's the nature of doing life together. And the most important thing about you is how you view Jesus in your soul. That's the Jesus that you hope and pray for, worship—the Jesus that we heard about today.

And my fear is that I have become complacent and contemptuous toward Jesus because I know Him so well. Is He safe? Of course He's not safe! Who said anything about safe? But He's kind. He's the King. Let's know and obey this Aslan, this Jesus, together, okay? Let's do that.

*Lord, we lift up these remarkable works of art from Mark to help us understand the grasp of Your power and Your authority. And I acknowledge and confess and repent that I find myself as one of the villagers who think they have figured You out over the years. And You've moved on, in many ways.*

*Lord, I'd ask that Grace as a church would find themselves drawn toward your brilliance and repulsed by it, but willing to fearfully step closer to You, that we would do whatever the next*

*step is to become like Christ in all of life; that we would pursue You for who You truly are and enjoy that, the wonder and the splendor. We are so temporal and You are eternal. And we're so finite and You are infinite. So, we long to go farther up and farther in in this life and in the next life, with never a moment of boredom, but with fascination and sometimes fear.*

*Lord, we long for You calling us to that. And we want to respond as a church and as a single soul. We pray this in Jesus' holy name. And all the people said, Amen.*