



**IN THE PRESENCE OF JESUS  
(Sermon)**

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Scripture: Mark 4:35 - 41

When the storms of life are raging in our lives, and the rushing winds and violent waves seem to overtake us, when all hope seems to vanish, where do we turn?

No matter the difficulty, no matter the circumstance, it is in the presence of Jesus that we find peace, direction, and calm assurance.

In today's scripture, we find the disciples in the midst of a violent storm. They are not alarmed. Initially, they believe they can use their knowledge and experience to get them through; they depend on their own prowess and strength. Except for the intervention of Christ, their lives could be lost. We read the account in Mark 4.

Jesus has been healing and teaching parables all day and desires some rest.

**Mark 4:35 - 41**

<sup>35</sup> On the same day, when evening had come, He [Jesus] said to them [the disciples], 'Let us cross over to the other side.'

<sup>36</sup> Now when they had left the multitude, they took Him along in the boat, as He was. And other little boats were also with Him.

<sup>37</sup> And a great windstorm arose, and the waves beat into the boat, so that it was already filling.

<sup>38</sup> But He was in the stern, asleep on a pillow. And they awoke Him and said to Him, 'Teacher, do You not care that we are perishing?'

<sup>39</sup> Then He arose 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> But He said to them, 'Why are you so fearful? How is it that you have no faith?'

<sup>41</sup> And they feared exceedingly, and said to one another, 'Who can this be, that even the wind and the sea obey Him?'

"Absorbed in their efforts to save themselves, they had forgotten that Jesus was on board," Ellen G. White, *The Desire of Ages*, pg. 334).

How often we struggle through a storm, forgetting that Jesus is just a whisper away. Just as the disciples, we depend on our own feeble strength, and often it is in hopelessness, fear, and despair that we turn to Him. Jesus will answer when we call on Him to help us, to save us, and to give us peace. It's a call He is waiting to hear from us. And in response we hear His words, "Peace be still," because the raging storms that may suddenly enshroud us in darkness with all its fury and might are still subject to the command of God.

Paul, having been through the storms of life, first being the persecutor and now facing the dark clouds of persecution that he had once authored, leaves for us this testimony and assurance:

### **Philippians 4:6 - 7, 19**

<sup>6</sup>"Be anxious for nothing, but in everything by prayer and supplication, with thanksgiving, let your requests be made known to God;

<sup>7</sup>And the peace of God, which surpasses all understanding, will guard your hearts and minds through Christ Jesus.

<sup>19</sup>And my God shall supply all your need according to His riches in glory by Christ Jesus."

What made the difference? In the presence of Jesus, Saul was transformed to Paul and his life was forever transformed.

Paul could not keep to himself the difference that was made in his life; he shared the good news to the world, and Paul continues to be a witness down through the ages, that Jesus saves.

The waters on the Sea of Galilee are peaceful again, and the disciples are filled with awe and wonderment as they continue with Jesus to the "other side."

If the disciples thought they were going to land on the beach and enjoy some sun and relaxation, they were about to be surprised. They were nearing a storm more fierce, yet of a different kind.

### **Mark 5:1-13**

<sup>1</sup>Then they came to the other side of the sea, to the country of the Gadarenes.

<sup>2</sup> And when He had come out of the boat, immediately there met Him out of the tombs a man with an unclean spirit,

<sup>3</sup> who had his dwelling among the tombs; and no one could bind him, not even with chains,

<sup>4</sup> because he had often been bound with shackles and chains. And the chains had been pulled apart by him, and the shackles broken in pieces; neither could anyone tame him.

<sup>5</sup> And always, night and day, he was in the mountains and in the tombs, crying out and cutting himself with stones.

<sup>6</sup> When he saw Jesus from afar, he ran and worshipped Him.

<sup>7</sup> And he cried out with a loud voice and said, 'What have I to do with You, Jesus, Son of the Most High God? I implore You by God that You do not torment me.'

<sup>8</sup> For He said to him, "Come out of the man, unclean spirit!"

<sup>9</sup> Then He asked him, 'What is your name?' And he answered, saying, 'My name is Legion; for we are many.'

<sup>10</sup> Also he begged Him earnestly that He would not send them out of the country.

<sup>11</sup> Now a large herd of swine was feeding there near the mountains.

<sup>12</sup> So all the demons begged Him, saying, ‘Send us to the swine, that we may enter them.’

<sup>13</sup> And at once Jesus gave them permission. Then the unclean spirits went out and entered the swine (there were about two thousand); and the herd ran violently down the steep place into the sea, and drowned in the sea.”

### **What Happens Next?**

Mark 5:14-16 tells us the rest of the story.

When the towns folk arrived, the afflicted men were clothed and in their right mind and their intelligence and reasoning restored.

The townsfolk were not impressed. Their commerce was floating in the sea, and they beg Jesus to leave.

“In causing the destruction of the swine, it was Satan’s purpose to turn the people away from the Saviour, and prevent the preaching of the gospel in that region. But this very occurrence roused the whole country as nothing else could have done, and directed attention to Christ. Though the Saviour Himself departed, the men whom He had healed remained as witnesses to His power. Those who had been mediums of the prince of darkness became channels of light, messengers of the Son of God” (Ellen G. White, *The Desire of Ages*, pg. 340).

Satan meant it for evil, especially since most of the townsmen were Gentiles, but God still rearranges circumstances for His honor and glory.

The new converts want to go with Jesus.

### **Mark 5:19, 20**

<sup>19</sup> However, Jesus did not permit him, but said to him, ‘Go home to your friends, and tell them what great things the LORD has done for you, and how He has had compassion on you.’

<sup>20</sup> And he departed and began to proclaim in Decapolis all that Jesus had done for him; and all marveled.”

I submit to you this morning that each of us has a story to share about God’s mercy toward us. His power in our lives, how He made a way out of no way and brought peace to us in the midst of the storm, calmed our spirits, and transformed our distorted countenance into one of praise and thanksgiving. We have a story to tell about how He has turned our crying and pain into joy and peace.

Jesus speaks to us today, as we work with the community; “tell them what great things the LORD has done for you” and how He has shown great love and compassion toward us.

“Our confession of His faithfulness is Heaven’s chosen agency for revealing Christ to the world. We are to acknowledge His grace as made known through the holy men of old; but that which will be most effectual is the testimony of our own experience. We are witnesses for God as we reveal in ourselves the working of a power that is divine. Every individual has a life distinct from all others, and an experience differing essentially from theirs. God desires that our praise shall

ascend to Him, marked with our own individuality” (Ellen G. White, *The Ministry of Healing* pg.100).

“The encounter with the demoniacs ... showed the depths of degradation to which Satan is seeking to drag the whole human race, and the mission of Christ to set men free from his power” (Ellen G. White, *The Desire of Ages*, pg. 341).

Every day the television and newspapers scream with evidence that Satan has taken hold of one more mind and dragged another child of God down the stairway to mass destruction.

Who will go and rescue them?

Who will go tell the good news ... through your love, your attitude, your action, your prayers, your visits, *and your story* about His mercy and grace?

If not you then who; if not now, then when

Jesus got in a boat and sailed to where the demoniacs were. Today, our neighbors, our community await our arrival.

Go, He says, as I have done. “... and lo, I am with you always, even to the end of the age” (Matthew 28:18-20).

Though Jesus left the Gadarenes, as He was asked to do, He left a witness who loved to tell the story of Jesus, His compassion, and His love.

Closing –

“When Jesus returned to Decapolis (Mark 7:31), the people flocked about him, and for three days, not merely the inhabitants of one town, but thousands from all the surrounding region, heard the message of salvation” Ellen G. White, *The Desire of Ages*, pg. 340 – 341.

### **Mark 8:1-9**

<sup>1</sup>In those days, the multitude being very great and having nothing to eat, Jesus called His disciples to Him and said to them,

<sup>2</sup>I have compassion on the multitude, because they have now continued with Me three days and have nothing to eat.

<sup>3</sup>And if I send them away hungry to their own houses, they will faint on the way; for some of them have come from afar.’

<sup>4</sup>Then His disciples answered Him, ‘How can one satisfy these people with bread here in the wilderness?’

<sup>5</sup>He asked them, ‘How many loaves do you have?’ And they said, ‘Seven.’

<sup>6</sup>So He commanded the multitude to sit down on the ground, and He took the seven loaves and gave thanks, broke them and gave them to His disciples to set before them; and they set them before the multitude.

<sup>7</sup>They also had a few small fish; and having blessed them, He said to set them also before them.

<sup>8</sup>So they ate and were filled, and they took up seven large baskets of leftover fragments.

<sup>9</sup>Now those who had eaten were about four thousand. And He sent them away.”

Down through the centuries, we read about this miracle because demon possessed men, enshrouded in darkness and terror, were released by Jesus from the grips of Satan. As Jesus had commanded the winds and the waves of the sea and had declared, “Peace be still,” so had He brought peace to the tormented minds of the demoniacs.

The demoniacs could not keep to themselves and proclaimed far and wide their story of God’s compassion and love toward them.

The demoniacs had never heard a sermon; they could not preach and teach like the disciples. “But they bore in their own persons the evidence that Jesus was the Messiah. They could tell what they knew; what they themselves had seen, and heard, and felt of the power of Christ” (Ellen G. White, *The Desire of Ages*, pg. 340).

In the presence of Jesus, lives are forever changed for God’s glory and honor.

“Everyone who accepts Christ as his personal Saviour will long for the privilege of serving God. Contemplating what Heaven has done for him, his heart is moved with boundless love and adoring gratitude” (Ellen G. White, *The Ministry of Healing*, pg. 502).

### **Appeal**

No matter the difficulty, no matter the circumstance, it is in the presence of Jesus that we find peace, direction, and calm assurance.

Who will go and tell what God has done for you? When all hope is lost, who will tell of God’s love and compassion?

“All who receive the gospel message into the heart will long to proclaim it. The heaven-born love of Christ must find expression” (Ellen G. White, *Christ Object Lessons*, pg. 125).

(Speaker may add own words for comments before/ after each scripture reference and appeal)

\*All Bible texts are New King James Version (NKJV), unless otherwise noted.