

Jesus Sleeps

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[0 : 00] We're going to look at the miracle that Jesus performs here in Mark 4 this morning that we just read about. It's a very short passage. It's a great passage.

It's famous. It's one of the famous miracles. And it's very important. And one of the reasons it's very important is because this is where a very explicit question comes out that becomes the question of the whole gospel of Mark.

And it's at the very end, it's when the disciples look at each other at the end of this, and they're afraid because of what Jesus did. And they say, who then is this?

You know, as Matthew puts it, they say, what kind of a man is this? Who is this and what kind of a man is this? Now this is the question of the gospels. It's the most important question a human being can ask.

And even if you come today really only interested in something like, why was Christianity so important for a place like Scotland over so many centuries? Well, in order to answer that question, to understand even what this nation has been historically, you have to ask this question, who is this man?

[1 : 07] And what kind of a man can do something like this? And that's the question that comes to us right here. Now the answer Mark gives in this passage is, it's the kind of man that sleeps in the midst of a deadly storm.

That's the kind of man he is. And that says a lot about who he is. And let's think about that together. Let's do that by looking at three characters. The three big characters in the story are first, the sea that rages.

And then secondly, the man who's sleeping. And then finally, we'll look at the Little Faith Club, which is exactly what Jesus calls them in Matthew, the Little Faith Club. All right, first, the sea that rages.

Let's look at the sea briefly. What I mean by that is let's look at the context and try to get our minds into the minds of the first century here. In verse 35, Jesus says at the end of the day, the evening comes, he says, let's go across to the other side.

Now what he's talking about there is traveling across the Sea of Galilee. The Sea of Galilee is a big lock, a huge lake. It's at the tip top of Israel.

[2 : 14] It's 13 miles from top to bottom. It's eight miles at its width. And they're crossing a large stretch of that width. They're moving here from Capernaum to the Decapolis.

The Decapolis is a region of 10 cities on the eastern side. And when you're on the western side, it's Jewish territory. It's part of ancient Israel. So it's a largely Jewish population.

But when you get to the Decapolis side, it's a Greco-Roman hodgepodge. It's incredibly cosmopolitan. There's all sorts of people there, Greeks, Romans, Jews, Arameans, Samaritans, and many, many, many subgroups, all sorts of people groups.

And the Sea of Galilee is a hotbed of trade. So every day people are fishing and then traveling across back and forth, trading all sorts of things. And so this is a very diverse and pluralist area in the midst of Israel.

Now verse 36, Mark tells us something that the other gospels, Matthew and Luke, don't say about this story. And that's that whenever Jesus and the disciples get into this boat to cross, they didn't go by themselves.

[3 : 22] And so you can see there in verse 36, it says that there were other boats with him. Okay, so a lot of times when we read stories like this, and this story in particular, we have an image where you've got Jesus and the 12 disciples in a boat all by themselves out on the ocean, out on the lake.

But that's not the case at all, actually. It says that there were many boats. There was a whole fleet of boats that went with them. And so people are following him. Now the archeologists tell us that an average fishing boat that was used on the Sea of Galilee in the first century was 30 feet long, typically, which meant you could comfortably fit 12, 13 people in it, 10 to 13 people in it.

And so it's probably the case that you've got, who knows how many, dozens of boats with 10, 12, 13, 15, maybe they're packed in, 20 people, and they're all following Jesus as a fleet.

They're wanting to go wherever he goes. And there are very possibly hundreds of people on this little trip in the evening across the Sea of Galilee. And then here it comes, the storm.

The storm comes and it rages down, a great windstorm, verse 37, and the waves were crashing into the boat that Jesus was in, and the boat was filling up with water.

[4 : 40] And it gets to a point where the disciples come to him and say, Lord, we are dead. That's what they say. It's elegantly translated here as Lord, we're perishing. They just say, Lord, we're dead.

They're dying. Why? Well, it's eight miles across and they've left at night and they're out. And when you're miles away from shore and you're in a 30-foot fishing boat and it's filling up with water, you're dead.

There's no survival. You're not getting out of it. You can't reach the shoreline. And it's not just Jesus and the disciples. It's hundreds, probably, of people that are all experiencing this. Now, there's two things to learn here.

One is that we are in the exact same situation as these people in the first century. You know, when you face a point in life where you're out in the middle of the sea and the boat is filling up with water, you know, when you face a crisis in your life, the storm comes and everything's going down, you're forced to do the exact same thing no matter if you're a modern person or a first-century person.

You have to say it. You have to say, Lord, we're dead. We're dying. We're vulnerable. We're mortal. You know, it doesn't matter what age you live in or whether you're a Greek, Roman, American, Scottish, English, Welsh, Northern Irish, Irish, Aramean, Jew, it doesn't matter.

[6 : 04] We all see there's a sameness about this. No matter how many different types of people we're crossing the sea that day, everybody faced the storm and everybody was dying.

And what was exposed in the midst of this moment was the radicality of human vulnerability. And that's that death is certain that we will face it, that we have to pass through it and that when the storm comes and the boat starts to fill up with water, there's nothing we can say.

There's no power, in other words. We're incredibly vulnerable people, human beings. Now, but at the same time, there's also difference. There's a sameness in the midst of the storm and that's vulnerability, but there's a difference in the midst of the storm.

And that's that when you look across these hundreds of people in the boat, Jews, Greeks, Arameans, Samaritans, Greco-Romans, the difference is that they all asked the question, well, what is really happening here?

Why is it that we're facing the storm? What exactly are we facing and why? And the difference you see in human beings is not that we face it, the difference is in religion.

[7 : 12] The difference is worldview. And so if every single one of these people groups that are crossing the sea that day have a moment just to step back and think for a minute, what is really happening in the midst of this storm?

They're all going to say something different. We see just a little glimpse of it when the disciples turn to Jesus and say, Lord, do you not care? And they're processing their theology.

They're saying, what exactly is happening in the moment where I'm facing death? Why is this, in other words, they're saying, why is this happening to me and what does it mean? And so if you're a Roman person or a Greek person in this situation, you're following Jesus's boat, what are you saying?

You're saying, well, the gods are angry with us. Neptune and Poseidon are upset, the God of the sea, they're upset with us. We haven't done enough.

We haven't sacrificed properly. We didn't offer the correct grain. We didn't say the right incantation. We haven't been good enough. And so the gods are angry with us. We have to offer a sacrifice into the sea or we're going to die.

[8 : 14] If you're a Greek and you're philosophically minded, you're one of the Epicureans or the Stoics at the time, you're crossing the ship and you're saying what? You're saying, look, this is fate. There's no way to get out from underneath the storm.

It's our time to die. This is our card. We've been dealt. And so the only thing you can do is be calm. Don't get emotional. Everybody's got to die.

Somebody's got to feed the grass. That's part of the cycle of nature. And it's got to be you at some point. And so don't be emotional. Stay calm. Be sober. This is just our lot. That's the Greeks.

But the Jews, the Jewish believers understood something very different. Whenever you're a Jewish believer in the God of the Old Testament and you're crossing a body of water, you're thinking about so many different things, but you remember the Old Testament and you remember that Israel crossed the Red Sea and Israel crossed the Jordan River twice and God sent the flood down the waters of Noah.

And every single time, it's because human rebellion brought the curse of the storm on the world. And then every single time, the only way that there was going to be any hope is if God chose to deliver the people.

[9 : 33] That was the only way. And so if you're a Jewish believer that day crossing the Sea of Galilee and the storm comes down, the storm comes down, you're thinking, the only way we're going to get out of this is if we see the God of Psalm 89 come down.

Psalm 89, do you remember Psalm 89? It's where we learn that the Lord God is the God of the storm. It says that He calms the seas. He splits the waters.

He settles down the storm. He's the Lord. He's the God of the storm. And the Jewish believers there understood that if there's any hope today, we need the God of the storm. We need the God who brought Israel across the waters of the Red Sea, who carried Israel across the River Jordan, who brought Noah in the ark through the floodwaters at the beginning of history.

Now, look, we're going to move on. Modern people, we're no different, we're no different, not at all. We have the exact same vulnerability that first century people had, no matter how good our hospitals get, no matter how many places we put toilets with running water that have never had them.

When the storm comes into your life, you've got to say, I'm a dead man. I'm a dead woman. This is what you came to church for today, to remember that, right? To know that you're radically vulnerable, you're human.

[10 : 53] You don't have power in the face of death. And at the same time, the question then becomes, what do you do with that problem? And whether you're a Greek, Roman, Scottish, American, Jewish, whatever, that's the question.

It's religion and worldview that brings you the answer of what is happening here and what am I going to do with it? What am I going to believe about this moment? What is happening to me? Now today, secular humanism, the modern secular culture we live in, what does it do? There's nothing new under the sun. It says, look, you're going to face death, but you need to be calm about it.

You need to be stoic about it. Everybody's got to die. Nature is red in tooth and claw. This is the way of the world. If you don't die, nobody else can live.

And so death is just part of the natural process. And so you need to be calm. You need to not be emotional. They were just like the Greeks. The world is just like the Greeks.

[11 : 48] And the world religions come just like the history of old. And they say, what's the problem with death? The problem with death is that you've done something wrong before one of the gods. You've not pleased the gods.

And whatever's happening to you in your life right now and what you're suffering is punishment. You've not sacrificed enough. You've not given enough. That's what the world religions tells us. And then Christianity comes in the middle of history and says no to both of those things.

And it says that the only way that you can have a satisfying answer to the storm, whatever it may be, is that you need to look at the man who's sleeping. So let's do that.

Secondly, the man who's sleeping. Verse 38 is where Mark starts to add a little bit of comedy. There's a couple of moments, I think, in here that are actually meant to be funny.

Verse 38 is one of them. It says that in 37, the boat is filling up with water. They say, Lord, we are dead people. Verse 38, but he was in the stern asleep.

[12 : 51] And he adds the little phrase on the cushion. So Jesus, he's not only, the boat has water in it. He's probably soaking wet, but he's asleep and he's laying on the cushion.

And that's the man who sleeps. That's the God of the storm here. The boat's filling with water. Everybody's dying. He's the only one of hundreds that's asleep. Now that means that Mark wants us to focus on his sleeping.

You can ask a question like, why is Jesus asleep during the storm? The first reason is that he's tired. We learned at the beginning of the passage that it was evening when they had left to cross the Sea of Galilee.

And if you read backwards just a little bit, you find out he had been teaching all day long. And he had actually, in order to teach, he had been going up mountainsides and teaching from high places and yelling, projecting his voice.

And I can attest that if you teach a lot, if you teach all day, you get really tired. And Jesus is sleeping here because he's really tired. He got in the boat, he wanted to leave.

[13:57] He was so tired he couldn't teach anymore. And that's why he's asleep. Now, in the 300s, the emperor of Rome called a great council of the church, the council of Nicaea, to try to say, what language are we going to use to talk about this man, Jesus Christ, correctly?

What language should the church use when we read the gospels? And they looked at all sorts of passages. This was one of the ones they looked at. And when you come to a passage like this, it's not difficult to understand what Nicaea came up with.

You know, the first thing they said about him? They said, Jesus Christ is fully human. He's asleep in the boat. He won't wake up even in the midst of the storm because he's so sleepy.

And that means that Jesus Christ is like you. You're tired this morning. And you know what it's like to be exhausted at the end of the day. And Jesus Christ does too.

He knows now, as a human being, what it means to be tired. He knows. He remembers. And that means that the Lord, your Lord, has such ability to have empathy and compassion with you because he knows what it's like to be you.

[15:05] He was incredibly vulnerable. He could die. He knows what it's like to be human because he is one. But the other reason that he's sleeping, on the one hand, Jesus is sleeping.

And on the other hand, he's sleeping. What's the second thing? It's that the storm is raging. The boat is filling with water. And all of us know that there's no chance that if we were there, we would have been asleep.

On the one hand, he's incredibly tired. On the other hand, Jesus Christ is sleeping through this. Why? And again, back to the Council of Nicaea. You know, they said it in the 300s.

They said, he's fully human, but that's not it. That's not all. He's got two natures. He's fully human and he's fully God. And you know, the reason that he's sleeping is because he's fully human.

And the reason that he's sleeping is because he's fully God. He can sleep through a deadly storm because he has the power to stand up in just a moment and say, peace, be still and command the waves.

[16:07] And so he can sleep because he's both. He's fully human. He's fully God. And you know, you see what that means. What that means is that Jesus Christ knows what it's like to be you.

He knows what it's like to be incredibly vulnerable and to be tired. He knows what it's like to face death even. He's got all the compassion that any human could possibly have because he is human.

And yet at the same time, while he shares your vulnerability, he doesn't share your helplessness. You see, he's unlike every other human. He's got vulnerability.

He can die, but he's not helpless. When the storm comes into your life, you've got to say, I cannot defeat death. It's the conflict that I will never win.

And yet Jesus Christ came into the world fully human, yet with the power to deal with it. He's vulnerable, but he's not helpless. He has the power to know what it's like to be you and yet to deal with all of your fears at the same time.

[17:08] And that's what Mark wants to see about his sleeping. Now, the real point, the real point is, I think, slightly hidden. And that's that when you read this story in Mark, Matthew, and Luke, you start to get a picture and image.

You read it in light of the chapters before it and after it, especially in Matthew, and it starts to come out. And that's that I think Mark here with the other gospel writers wants you to make a connection as we close and move to our final point.

What's the connection he wants you to make? Do you remember a story like this from the Old Testament? If you're a Bible reader, if you've grown up in the church, maybe you do. Every

commentator points out that what's happening here sounds an awful lot like the story of Jonah. Do you remember in the story of Jonah, Jonah is in a boat. He's crossing the sea. He's with all these people, many of whom are pagans. And a great storm arises on the sea. And what's Jonah doing? He's asleep. Jonah is in the stern, it says, asleep. And what did the men on the boat come to Jonah and say? We are perishing.

[18:08] It's an exact quote. Actually, the Greek translation of the Old Testament uses the same exact language as we get here in Mark chapter four. And Jonah gets up, he awakes like Jesus wakes up here.

And Jonah says to the people, to the men on the ship, if you want to be saved, you're going to cast me down into the waters. Jonah says it five times. He says, I have to go down, down, down, down, down into the waters.

I have to go all the way down into the water if the judgment is going to be quelled. Now Mark, Luke, Matthew, they want you to think of that because they want you to ask a question.

Is Jesus the new Jonah? And the answer that you've got to give is yes, but no. He's just like Jonah here, but there's something different, and what's different?

Jesus Christ does not stand up and say, if we're going to be saved, you guys are going to have to throw me down into the bottom of the lake. You know, Jonah said, if you want to be saved, I've got to get out of this ship, but Jesus doesn't do that.

[19:10] Jesus stands up and he says something very different. Instead, he looks out at the sea. Did you see it in verse 39? And he says, peace, be still.

Peace, the word, the verb that gets used to your peace, it's actually be quiet and put a muzzle on it. That's the language he uses.

Jesus is like Jonah, but he's not like Jonah because when he wakes up, he stands up and says to the waves into the storm, be quiet, put a muzzle over your mouth. That's the language.

Meaning that he treats the storm like it's his pet. He's talking to it like you would talk to an animal.

And immediately, everybody's got to look and say, he's like Jonah, but there's a difference.

And the difference is that this man has the power of the God of Genesis one who said, see, this is how far you're allowed to go and no further.

[20:10] The land will be here. The seas will be here. This is where you belong. He's like the God of Psalm 89 who said, this one has the power to calm the waves.

And every single Jewish believer there and every single Greek and Roman and Aramean and Samaritan, and you are being asked to say, don't you realize this is the Lord of the storm? You know, he's not the God that causes the storm because he's angry at you.

This is something more than that. This is the Lord of the storm. This is the commander and creator of the waters and the land.

He's the one that's standing in the boat. He's like Jonah, but he's not like Jonah. He's vulnerable yet he's so powerful at the same time. He's got a power that's immeasurable, that's amidst, and that's what you're being asked to see here.

You say, if Jesus is like that, you tell me, I said to you earlier, Mark's saying to us, he's fully human. He knows what it is to be like you.

[21:14] He knows what it is to be desperately tired and to be vulnerable. He knows what it is to face death, but you say, but he could sleep. He could sleep through this.

He's the creator. He can command the waves. Of course, he's not afraid. How does he really know what it is to be like me? And that's when, if you're reading this story in one of the other passages, the very next chapter, Jesus gets asked one more time.

He says, Lord, will you show us another sign? And he tells them, look for the sign of Jonah.

You see, Jonah had to go down into the grave for three days in order to save the people. The storm wasn't going to stop unless Jonah died.

And Jesus says, I'm like him, but not like him, but I'm also like him again. You see, I'm like Jonah, but I've got power that Jonah never had. But at the same time, well, he says, look for the sign of Jonah.

[22:17] What is the sign of Jonah? Jesus explains it outright. He says, Jonah went down into the grave into the belly of the fish for three days, and he came back up again. He says, look for that. If you want to sign, look for the Son of Man, go down into the grave, down into the deep, deep, deep waters, and take his life back again.

That's the sign I want to give you. You want to know that I'm the God of the storm. I'm going to, you see the difference? What's the difference in him and Jonah? Jonah had to, Jesus chose to.

Jonah had to go down, Jesus wanted to. Jesus in love for you. He wanted to go down to the bottom of the waters. He wanted to do it. He chose to do it. He chose to give himself to the ultimate storm, the storm of God's judgment, because the wages of sin is death.

And in him, the gift of God is eternal life, because he wanted to. He becomes better. He becomes something Jonah never could have been, and he does it in love for you. Now, what that means today is the Lord of the storm will not leave you in the midst of your wounds, in the midst of your trials, in the midst of you facing the storm, in the midst of you facing death.

Some of you today are lonely. And you need to remember that Jesus Christ said, my hometown doesn't even like me. He was incredibly lonely.

[23 : 33] He was alone. He was the man who's been most alone in all of history when he hung on the cross for you. And some of you today are facing uncertainty of all sorts in your life, economic uncertainty, perhaps.

And you need to remember that Jesus said in the same chapter as this story in Matthew, foxes have holes to live in, birds have nests. I don't have a pillow.

He was homeless. He was homeless. He knows what it's like to be lonely. He knows what it's like to be poor. He knows what it's like to face death. And he knows what it's like to face a death that you've never faced, the judgment of God.

And that means that he's not going to leave you in the midst of the storms of life. Now let me close with this, the application, which is to lastly look at the third character of the story.

And that's the Little Faith Club. In Matthew's Gospel, that's what he calls this group. You know, here in Mark, he says to them in verse 40, why are you so afraid?

[24 : 33] They're still afraid after the storm. Why are you so afraid? Have you still no faith? Well, in Matthew's Gospel, he says, you remember the way the King James does it? Oh ye of Little Faith?

Well, it's just a few little words there. He actually says, oh, you Little Faith Lot. Oh, you Little Faith Gang. Oh, you Little Faith Club.

You are the Little Faith Club, he says to the disciples. Why are you still afraid? You see, they were afraid of the storm. They were afraid of the storm, but they're even more afraid afterwards.

That's part of the comedy. They're still afraid. They don't know what to do with this man. They're desperately afraid of him. And he says to them, you're a Little Faith Club. Now let me just give you a few things that we learn from the way he speaks to them and the way they speak to him.

The first thing is that they come to him during the storm and they say, Lord, do you not care? Now, no matter where you are in life right now, there's only one of three possibilities in terms of how you are currently relating to suffering.

[25 : 37] Either you're presently not suffering in any obvious, acute way. You have suffered immensely already, or you're going to. So those are one of the three positions.

Either you are, you have, or you will. That's it. And this is the question of every sufferer. Every sufferer in life comes and says, Lord, do you not care?

We're dying down here. We're dead. Where are you? Do you not care? And that's exactly what they bring. That's the question they bring to him. Now next Saturday is International Tolkien Reading Day.

I don't know if you have that yet in your calendar, but you need to get it. Pull out your phones now and get that. Next week is International Tolkien Reading Day, March 25th. Why is it March 25th?

Because March 25th is the day that Sauron was defeated in the Return of the King.

In the first book of Tolkien's trilogy, The Lord of the Rings, The Fellowship of the Ring, he says, Frodo says to Gandalf exactly what the disciples say to Jesus.

[26 : 45] Frodo says, I wish the ring had never come to me. I wish none of this had ever happened. You know, Frodo is carrying this great burden, this life, this long journey, trying to defeat evil, and he says, why did I have to live during this season of life?

I wish this wouldn't have been given to me. That's the question of every sufferer, the idea of every sufferer. Why, oh Lord, do you not care? I'm down here. I'm dying.

We're suffering. What are you doing? Now, we can't spend any time on this. We could talk right now for a while about the problem of evil. We can't do that today. But I just want to give you the answer that the Gospels give to this.

The Gospels come to this. Lord, do you not care that we're down here and we're dying? And there's two things the Gospel says to this. One, this passage tells you that if Jesus Christ really is the Lord of the Storm, you know, if he really is that powerful, if he is the Lord of the Storm to such an extent that he can lay down his life and take it back up again, then we've got to get ourselves in a place where we can say, I'm okay with not knowing all that God might be doing in my suffering. You know, if Jesus Christ really is this powerful, then I've got to be willing to admit that God can have reasons for my suffering that I can't yet understand.

[28 : 10] That he really can be that big and that great to do something like that. And then the second thing that the Gospels tell you is this, while the world religions, while the Greeks, while the Romans, they want to work out a philosophy, really all the Gospels want to do is say, in the midst of, Lord, do you care?

And God says, look at the God of the Storm. Look at the Lord of the Storm. Look at this man. You see, the Gospels give you a person, not a philosophy. They say, look at the person. Look at what he's come to do for you. Look at this man hanging on the cross and the ultimate storm for you. This is the solution to the problem of all evil. It's not a philosophy.

It's a person. It's God. It's one that is both fully human and fully God at the same time. Come to die for you. Now, second of three applications here.

Then second of three, Jesus comes at the end of the passage and we realize that the disciples can't yet see that. They can't see what God's doing. They don't understand it. They don't understand this man. And they're afraid at the end and he comes to them and says, you're just a bunch of little faith people.

[29 : 15] Did you see what happened? He says, the diagnosis, he says, you human being, no matter where you are in the Christian life, you're part of the little faith club.

If you're a Christian today, Jesus says, you guys have no faith. Your faith is just a tiny spark. It's very weak. It's immature.

It's not very grown up. He knows that about them and yet he turns and he says, now peace be still to the storm. You see? He says, you have little faith in me.

You don't believe all the things I've told you and now I'm going to save you. And it's been said many times before, but faith does not save you.

Jesus Christ saves you. Your faith is all over the place. Today, right now, it's probably a little better than it'll be tomorrow, but you're not saved by the power and quality of your faith.

[30 : 13] You're saved only by its object, Jesus Christ. And that's why in the midst of the storm, he can turn out to people and say, you're a bunch of little faith people and peace be still.

He can let people who say, who shout from the crowd, crucify him and he says, and I'm coming to save you. You know, where the little faith?

Do you have faith? We receive this salvation by faith as an instrument and the question is only, do you have any? Because it's not the faith that saves you. It's him that saves you.

It's the object. Do you have a spark? And if you do, then you can be sure that he is the Lord of the storm for you. Now, thirdly, finally, I'll close with this.

I just want to end with a little warning and maybe a warning against the temptation. There's a temptation here in this passage. And we have to be careful. And it's because in this passage, I think there's a real temptation after hearing on this to say, Jesus has come into my life to be useful.

[31 : 15] And I think Mark's trying to tell us finally that Jesus Christ did not come into the world to be useful, but to be something much more than that. You see, so far in Mark, we've seen Jesus take blind men and make them see.

We've seen him heal lepers. We've seen him cast out evil spirits. We've seen him stop storms.

We're going to see him raise the dead. We're going to see him do all sorts of things. And when you come to a passage like this and you hear, all I need is just a little faith.

If I just have a little bit of faith, then Jesus Christ will come into my life and he will stop all my storms. And that's not what Mark is teaching us here, because you've got to remember something.

Every single one of the people in those boats, however many there were that day, they all died.

They were all going to go from here. They didn't die this day, but they died.

They did have to face death. Every single one of them did. They did have to walk through cancer.

They did have to walk through immense suffering later. He stopped the storm that day.

[32 : 21] And so that's why we have to, you see, Jesus Christ did not come to be useful. Today, He came to be the King of the cosmos.

He came not necessarily to end your problem today. He came to heal the whole land. He came to be the King of the universe. He came to dismiss disease, death, disaster and storm forever.

And He said, I will do it, but not yet. And so we can come in our lives and we can say, Lord, would you free me from the storm I'm walking through today?

And He has the power to do it. He may do it, and He might not, because we have to face death in order to see life until He comes again.

John Piper preached the American preacher from Minnesota. He preached a famous sermon in 2009, not very far from my hometown. I grew up in a little town, Natchez, Mississippi, right on the Louisiana, Mississippi border.

[33 : 23] And not far from there is probably the most, or second most famous prison in the United States, Angola. Angola is infamous for its, it's a tough place, let me just say.

And lots of prisoners there. Most of the people that go to Angola are in prison for life. They also have a death row. And in 2009, John Piper was invited to preach at Angola.

And he preached to 800 men who were in prison for life, and many were allowed to come that are on death row there in Louisiana.

And this is what he says. This is kind of the famous line that came from it. He said, Jesus Christ is here now, and He's come already. Not first to give you bread, but to be the bread of life.

Now what he meant by that was, Jesus Christ, he was saying to the prisoner, the prisoner who's been condemned for life, who's going to die at Angola. Jesus Christ, the message of the gospel is not that Jesus Christ has come today, and He's necessarily going to get you out of prison right now.

[34 : 26] He came to be the bread of life that will end all prisons. As Oliver O'Donovan next door at New College once put it, the message of Christianity is that you can go to the prison and say to the prisoner, you are a prisoner today, but you need not be forever.

You can go to the hospital patients and say, you are in the hospital today, and I don't know what's going to happen, but you need not be sick forever. Jesus Christ came to be the king.

He came to be the bread of life. He came to heal everything, and that means that you can say to him today, Lord, will you release me from this plight? And he may, he may not, but he will.

And that's the message of Christianity. You see, it's eternal hope, even when you have to walk through the fires and the storms of life in the prison. And that means that this passage, and I'll leave you with this, this passage invites every one of us to say and to ask the question, when I come to Jesus for help, is it Jesus that is my treasure?

Is He the one that I want in the midst of the storm? More than just getting out of it. And you can say, Lord, help me. He might, He can, and He will.

[35 : 49] Let's pray together. Father, we ask now that you would be the God and Lord of the storm for us, that we would know that you've come to heal all diseases, to end all disasters, and to stop all death, and that you will do it, and you've done it, and that you'll do it when you return, oh, Lord.

Give us today patience in suffering, give us today hearts that treasure the deep, deep love of Christ for us for eternity, that we may eagerly await the adoption of the sons and daughters of the king.

And so we pray this now in Christ's name. Amen.