

What Manner of Man is This?

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[0 : 0 0] I'd like us now to turn to the passages that we've already read in the Gospel by Mark and to look at several parts of the passages which we've read but to centre our thoughts on Mark chapter 4 and verse number 41. Mark 4 verse 41 we read there they were, that is the disciples who were in the boat with Jesus, they were terrified and asked each other who is this implication being who is this person even the wind and the waves obey him or to use the language of the authorised version, the King James version, what manner of man is this?

I think we're all familiar with the expression being thrown in at the deep end when we have to tackle some problem or other without any warning or preparation and when we come to the Gospel of Mark he throws us in at the deep end as it were for he immediately after he says the beginning of the Gospel of Jesus Christ the Son of God right away he tells us about the ministry of the Lord Jesus Christ and the action goes on a pace right up to the cross and to the resurrection. Along the way Mark gathers into little groups here and there sayings of Jesus like if we had read the earlier part of chapter 4 a group of the parables which Jesus taught and then like in the passages that we have read together in the second part of chapter 4 and through into chapter 5 a group of the miracles of Jesus and it's the miracles that I'm concerned with this morning the ones that we've read about each one of which not only amazed the people who experienced what Jesus had done but they didn't just show the the power of Jesus as it were they certainly showed all of that but they were part of

God revealing to us the very nature of Jesus Christ himself and when we look at these various miracles of Jesus I think at least I it's my prayer that we will I think we will see in Jesus the what the late Dr. John Stott called in the title of one of his books about Jesus the incomparable Christ. Our Lord Jesus is described in John's gospel as the eternal word the one who came into the world he was the word made flesh so that through him we can hear the word of God what God wants to say to us but in this gospel through these miracles and John calls them signs to something much deeper than they just what was happening on the surface through these miracles we see Christ in an even greater light he is the one by whom the world was made and by whose power it continues to be the great wonder and it's a wonder that should thrill our hearts to see in Christ the very God himself. If you read in Colossians in chapter 1 there at verse 15 to 17 we read he is the image of the invisible God the firstborn over all creation for by him all things were created things in heaven and on earth visible and invisible whether thrones or powers or rulers or authorities all things were created by him and for him and then if you just look back to the previous two verses it tells us why he came this man who is God for he has rescued us from the dominion of darkness and brought us into the kingdom of the son he loves in whom we have redemption the forgiveness of sins one of the abiding memories I have of a visit to Nazareth many years ago now was a glimpse

I took a photograph of it so I remember it very well a glimpse of a little boy running down a narrow alleyway in the old part of the city it happened that there was a workshop in that alleyway too and my thoughts went to Jesus he was a little boy running about the streets and alleyways of old Nazareth but then here in chapter 4 of Mark that little boy has grown up into a man and we see him in a boat in the sea of Galilee we see him on the far side of the lake of Galilee among the pagan people who lived there we see him in the busy streets of Capernaum and Jerusalem and we find the people amazed at his words and at the things he did and they asked what manner of man is this let's look a little first of all at the miracle on the lake in Mark chapter 4 and verses 35 to 41 Mark is usually considered to have got his information from the apostle Peter in fact they in the ancient world he was called the interpreter of Peter and certainly the incident described here is fairly obviously an eyewitness account of what literally happened the little touches of intimate details bears that out and certainly if you had been in that boat at that place on that night you wouldn't have forgotten it in a hurry nor would I the storm was real the danger was real after all it was an experienced fishermen's crew that were on board the disciples were genuinely afraid for their lives and there were several other boats in the same danger as well and Jesus no doubt thoroughly exhausted after an extremely busy day was asleep and the disciples roused him and chided him indeed for his apparent lack of concern and when he did arouse himself he rebuked the wind and he said to the waves quiet still and there was a complete calm perhaps even more terrifying than the storm itself why were you so afraid he asked them have you no faith was Christ in the vessel they were safe and then in that great revelation of his power his divine power over nature Jesus showed that to be with him is the safest place to be where it

is in the seas of life rough or smooth one of the writer says we do not judge his care of us nor the state of our discipleship by the roughness of the seas over which we sail we rejoice in the Lord not in our current circumstances you remember the words that I read from Habakkuk at the beginning of our service although the fig tree will not blossom and so on although all these things may fail yet I will rejoice in the Lord that is faith not in ourselves or in any human things in the Lord Jesus the mighty Savior and then we cross over from the lake to the far side and the scene changes to a graveyard as we read in chapter 5 verses 1 to 20 in the previous miracle on the lake Jesus said to the sea be still the language means literally be muzzled it was as if the sea was some kind of terrible monster some terrible demonic monster in this scene in chapter 5 Jesus is confronted by demonic powers legion which tells us not only that there was a lot of these evil spirits but that they were powerful many attempts have been made to rationalize away the supernatural from this story where as Mark tells the story of what happened in an unadorned but in a careful way which bears all the hallmarks again of an eyewitnesses account and without going into the details and there are many very significant details in the story I just want to underline the following first of all the terrible plight that this man of whom we read was in one can only feel unbounded pity for a person in that condition I'm sure if this man had run to you as he ran to

[14 : 23] Jesus you would have been scared to death as I would because he was an uncontrollable person violent deranged and tailable then we see also the reality of the evil forces which had possessed him people often laugh at the thought of demons or evil powers we shouldn't laugh at them they're real we often see coming up the lawn market there in the summertime notices for people who are clear violence fortune tellers tarot readers and so on and our age is full of people who claim to be wizards or witches or shamans and so on they're conscious of spirits and spirits that are evil the man in our story was possessed by them and these spirits were set against God the principalities and powers of which the apostle Paul spoke that he was wrestling against and the significant thing is that it was these evil spirits that recognize Jesus for who he really was they knew his true nature they were powerful but Jesus had a greater power and this story which tells us about the interplay between the evil spirits and Jesus and it was there for a purpose it showed how Christ mastered this evil crew and sent them away and in doing so and this is the wonderful thing in the story we see his restoring grace given to the man who had been deranged but was now rid of their possession and in his right mind it's a just a story I don't think so it's much more here is good news gospel for even the most lost sinner Christ breaks the power of sin and sets the captive free he can recreate your life and bring you to your right mind and again the scene has changed we're in a crowded street as we read chapter 5 from verse 22 to 35 where Jesus surprised his disciples by saying in the busy street who touched me who touched my clothes now there's great poignancy in this story a woman who was not only ill and had been for 12 years she was poverty-stricken but also religiously

unclean because of the type of illness that she had but she saw in Jesus her last hope for healing and restoration to normality but if you look there at verse number 30 at once Jesus realized that power had gone out from him he turned around in the crowd and asked who touched my clothes Jesus recognized that power had gone out from him it's quite difficult coming up high street when the fringe is in progress people are jostling about and you get bumped by one or another as you bump them to to get through the crowd and that was the kind of street that Jesus was in but isn't it quite amazing that Jesus who previously by his divine power over nature had still the storm on Galilee by his power over evil had brought a man to his right mind now in the midst of that crowd of people recognized that there was one person in particular who touched his clothes saying if I might only touch by the hem of his garment I will be made whole I'll be saved that's how her word can read here and so it was that she truly was not only healed but saved as we read here in verse number 34 Jesus said to her daughter your faith has healed you go in peace and be freed from your suffering and I think friends if ever there was an encouragement for even the most timid office to come to Christ it's here Jesus knows the seeking soul he knows the person who may be afraid to to come up front about their need he knows and he's willing to welcome that person to himself and briefly there's one more miracle here at the end of chapter 5 the bringing back to life of a 12 year old girl because of all that happened in the town's busy street with the healing of the woman Jesus seemed to be too late to help the youngster whose father had asked him to come and make her well if her illness she was dead when

Jesus arrived at their house at verses 41 to 43 we find that Jesus brought her back to life and the words recorded here the words of Jesus recorded for us are so very homely and comforting little girl I say to you get up the English sounds so stilted compared with what it would have been heard in the house of Jairus it was a phrase used by the little girl's mother every morning probably when she told her daughter it's time to get out of bed get up but notice again we see here the power of Jesus we saw the power over nature the power over evil the power over sickness and here is the power over death itself and if all of these miracles tell us anything they tell us this that there is no one and I would repeat no one who is beyond the power of Jesus to save and there is no one like Jesus he is God very God and he is the saving God that's why he came what manner of man is this he's the savior of everyone who puts their trust in him have you let us pray dear Lord we do thank you for the gospel for the way that it records for us the wonderful deeds as well as the wonderful words of Jesus Christ may we not just think of these things as good stories nice stories may we recognize that this is the word of God the last word that you give to us to show us who

Christ is and his power to save may we never take it lightly but may we take it to heart believing Lord we pray for each of us today encourage those who already know Christ as their savior confirm us in the faith and in the love of Christ and may it be a day when those who have yet do not know Christ as their savior that they will come to him knowing that for all the needs we have he is in truth the answer we ask it in his name and for his sake