

Deliverance From Fear

Deliverance

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This morning, I want to invite you to open your Bibles to the New Testament to two very particular passages, we're going to be in Mark 4 and in 2 Timothy 1. Now we're going to spend the majority of our time today in the gospel of Mark 4 but in just a few moments, there's a verse that we're going to allude to in 2 Timothy 1 that if you are able to, I think it might be beneficial to actually have your eyes upon it.

If you're a guest or visitor with us today, I want to welcome you as we continue to walk through the gospel of Mark not just for the sake of the chronology and the life and ministry of Jesus Christ but in particular seeing Jesus Christ as the one who is capable, able and sufficient to deliver us. Today, what you and I need more than anything else is deliverance and that's one of those words that for some reason in our culture just somewhat makes us shudder but by definition to be delivered is to be set free, to be delivered is to have whatever has you in shackles or in bonds or whatever is limiting you released from you, it means to be taken out of a detrimental situation and to be placed in a desirable situation. Today, as we turn to Mark 4, we're going to deal with one of the biggest issues in life that we need deliverance from and this is one of those days that you do not have the privilege of saying, "Well, that's for my neighbor." You don't have the privilege today of saying, "Well, that's for somebody else." In fact, this is one of those passages and one of those days that I know we're going to deal with the subject matter that every one of us struggles with at some level. Today, we're going to deal with deliverance from fear. What better passage than Mark 4, beginning in verse 35 where Jesus is going to calm the storm.

Now before we go to this passage, one thing I want to allude to is that even though it is shared in other gospel accounts, the gospel of Mark, which is by far the shortest of the gospel accounts, actually has some details in this story that are not in the other accounts that actually make the story for us today. In Mark 4, beginning in verse 35, it says,

35 And the same day, when the even was come, he saith unto them, Let us pass over unto the other side. 36 And when they had sent away the multitude, they took him even as he was in the ship. And there were also with him other little ships. 37 And there arose a great storm of wind, and the waves beat into the ship, so that it was now full. 38 And he was in the

hinder part of the ship, asleep on a pillow: and they awake him, and say unto him, Master, carest thou not that we perish? 39 And he arose, and rebuked the wind, and said unto the sea, Peace, be still. And the wind ceased, and there was a great calm. 40 And he said unto them, Why are ye so fearful? how is it that ye have no faith? 41 And they feared exceedingly, and said one to another, What manner of man is this, that even the wind and the sea obey him?

Notice that Jesus recognizes what's going on in their life, he categorizes their response is that they have experienced fear. Every one of us at some level and some aspect of our life would claim that we've had these proverbial storms in our life, we've had these things that have come up in our life that have caused us maybe not exactly like these individuals but to respond somewhat in the same manner, and so today I want to address three very specific issues when it comes to fear. 1. What is it? What is fear? 2. Why does it work so well in our lives? 3. How do we experience deliverance from it?

So let's begin with what is it, what is fear? Well, allow me to give you the dictionary definition. To someone who says, "I've experienced fear or it was fearful," by definition it is an emotional response to that which we feel threatened by, in danger of, or impending pain. I think we would all agree that when we find ourselves in a situation that we are threatened, that emotion of fear creeps in our lives. If we feel as if the environment is dangerous, fear will seep into our lives, and if there is pain, whether physical or emotional pain that could or possibly be involved, what happens? This thing known as fear, it creeps up into our lives and it does in our life what it did in these men's lives. But beyond the definition, I want to draw a very important distinction.

Go to 2 Timothy 1:7 because I know what the definition of fear is, we've all experienced it, we've experienced it in the workplace, we've experienced it in a test in school, in relationships with our family, whatever it may be, we've all had fear, but there's a distinction of what the Bible says when it comes to fear because Jesus told the men, "Why are you so fearful?" It's almost as if Jesus was saying, "You do not have the right to express yourself the way that you did. This is not how I've designed you." And the reason is found in 2 Timothy 1, notice what it says in verse 7, "For God has not given us the spirit of fear; but of power, and of love, and of a sound mind."

Now the definition of fear is those emotions of endangerment or being threatened or pain, but there's a very clear biblical distinction here. According to the Bible, and this is going to be very important when we get to the end of the message, according to what is in front of you, it says clearly, "For God has not given us the spirit of fear." So let's describe fear for a moment. What's its source? Well, if fear cannot come from God, then who does it come from? It comes from the enemy. Now God brings us conviction, God brings emotional response for us to desire righteousness but when we experience fear, when we feel threatened, when we feel endangerment, when we experience the thought of potential pain, according to your Bible that comes directly from the pit of hell. That's where it comes from. And so in a world today that propagates most of its message through the means of fear, we know where the source is, "For God has not given us the spirit of fear,"

so the source, when fear comes into our life, it's much like the enemy whispering in our ear, "Can you believe this is about to happen? Can you imagine that this is a potential in your life? What if it goes this way?" That is how the enemy operates in our life and so the substance of it, according to what you just read, God has not given us, what? The spirit of fear. Basically what that says is fear is a mechanism, it is a minion of the enemy, for lack of better terms. No, don't get me wrong, when we feel threatened, endangered or pain in our lives, there is a physical reality to that. These men were in a literal storm, on a literal boat, on literal water. There is a physical environment that is present but the response that they had was because they listened to a spirit of the enemy more than the word of God.

Fear has not been given to us by God which leads to the second question: then why does it work so well? You know, the enemy has been around for a very long time and he doesn't have to change his tactics much, does he? You know, the same thing that works on you worked on your parents, your grandparents, your great grandparents. Humanity at large has a natural propensity to never learn from the mistakes of the past and that which tripped up our forefathers, our ancestors, often is the same thing that we struggle with as well. This story chronologically is 2,000 years old and yet these men respond the same way that many times we do in everyday life situations.

So why does fear work? Why does the enemy use it with such frequency in your life, my life, humanity's life? Well, the first reason is this: because it is predatory, and here's what I mean by predatory, notice in the story in verse 36, "And when they had sent away the multitude, they took him even as he was in the ship. And there were also with him other little ships. And there arose a great storm of wind." The predatory nature of fear is this: there is no record in scripture that these men, professional fishermen, were expecting a storm to come up. There was no preparation. They could not have planned for this and that's exactly how the enemy uses fear in our life. He brings something we didn't plan for, didn't expect, and we had hoped would not occur, but here it is. These men made a living off of reading the skies, they made a living off of the temperature and the barometric pressure, they knew when to fish, when not to fish, they knew when to go out, when not to go out, so when Jesus says, "Let's go to the other side," there is no record of any of them going, "Well, I don't know, Jesus. This could be a stormy night." Nope. Everything was as it should be.

Now when I speak about the enemy as a predator, I want to use the analogy or the illustration of one who is hunting. I mean, after all, the Bible speaks about him as a roaring lion seeking whom he may devour, and I know that I can illustrate it in this manner, these are safe confines geographically, let's talk about being in a deer blind for a moment. If you've ever had the experience of being in a deer blind, you will wait out that big old buck for days, sometimes months. I know guys who have said, "I've been watching for years," and they'll sit and they'll have the opportunity to enact and they won't. Why? Because it's not the perfect window of opportunity. One who knows how to hunt properly knows that there is a very specific time based on distance and connections that will be more effective than any other. Is that not how the enemy works? The enemy causes things to happen in your life that you didn't plan for, you didn't expect, and you never had it on the radar. He's a predator. He sits "in the proverbial deer blind of your

life" and he waits for the sea to be calm, for Jesus to be on a pillow, and then he fires away.

He is predatory and not only is he predatory but we see here he's very particular. Now I want you to see verse 36 and 37. I mentioned earlier there was a passage in Mark that you don't see in the other gospels and I find this fascinating. Notice the end of verse 36, "And there were also with him other little ships." Now I'm not going to ask you to raise your hand or shout an amen, but I would be willing to say there are many of you who've never seen that before. We just thought it was one boat with Jesus and his disciples but according to verse 36, there were other boats that were on the sea. Here's what I want you to see in verse 37, it says, "And there arose a great storm of wind, and the waves beat into the ship." Now I want you to notice there is no reference to what happens to the other boats. Now I'm not saying that this storm was of such a particular nature that it only impacted this one boat, but it could have. When the Lord who created all that we know, he can do with the laws of physics as he so chooses. We are not told what has happened to these other ships, all we are told is there's a bunch of them that went out but only one of them that we're told specifically is experiencing water over the edge.

Now why is this important? Because fear is that particular. What causes an emotional response of fear in your life may not cause one in your spouse's life. What causes fear in your world may not cause fear in your best friend's world, your neighbor's world, your coworker's world. In other words, when fear creeps up in our lives, one of the great tactics of the enemy, why it works so well is because when you're experiencing danger or threat, those who you love and trust go, "What are you upset about? That's no big deal." In other words, it's almost this attitude of dismissing it and that's why it works.

I mean, you think about this predatory nature, think about Satan in the garden of Eden. Go back to Genesis 3. There's Adam and Eve going about their business and if you read that story carefully, that serpent, who according to verse 1 of chapter 3 of Genesis, was more subtle than any beast of the field, he waited to just the right moment. And you'll notice in chapter 3 of Genesis, he has a conversation with one of the two parties and not both. I promise you that he would have communicated it differently if both or the other had been there.

The particularness of fear is that the enemy will speak into your life words and situations and scenarios that he knows will be a storm in your life and it compounds it when it's not a storm in somebody else's life. Now do you see why fear is so effective, because it's predatory, it comes at times we wouldn't expect it, it comes at moments that we never planned for, and more often than not our emotional response may not be the same as others. But there's a third aspect. I want you to notice what it says in verse 38, "And he was in the hinder part of the ship, asleep on a pillow: and they awake him, and say unto him, Master, carest thou not that we perish?" You say, "Well, what's in that passage?" Let me tell you what fear does that, to me, may be the most frightening aspect of it is it paralyzes you. It makes you unable to think properly, respond properly and make good decisions. You see, the enemy knows that if he can get fear in your life you won't think right, you won't make proper decisions, and you'll go down the wrong path real quick,

and verse 38 proves it. Here were a group of professional fishermen, these men who for a living fished the Sea of Galilee. Now if you've never had the opportunity physically to be there, it is not a large body of water. On a clear day, you can see all of the coastline from the middle. Now don't get me wrong, it's a deep body of water, it is known for these storms that brew up, but they had grown up with it, they were used to it, and more than that, you're telling me that this storm is the worst storm that they've ever experienced? I mean, think about the response. I mean, they are in full-blown paralysis. Why? There's no mention of them doing anything to help the boat.

Now think about it, what would a fisherman do first? Probably get out a bucket and start dumping water, right? Do you realize there's a group of heathens in your Old Testament that actually show us how to respond to this story? It's found in the book of Jonah 1. You know the story well. We know the story of Jonah because of him being swallowed by the whale, about being spit up, going to Nineveh. We know the "ministry" side of Jonah but let's talk about the messy side. Here's a prophet of God known as Jonah, the only one in the Old Testament specifically told to go to the Gentile people, go to Nineveh and preach the truth. He doesn't want to go to Nineveh because he doesn't want them saved. He goes the exact opposite way. The Bible records he gets in a boat and a storm brews up. Where is Jonah in the story? The same place Jesus is, right? He's in the bottom asleep. What do the guys on deck do in the story of Jonah? The Bible lays it out. The first thing they did was they tried to get all the water out. Get all the water out, maybe we can keep this thing afloat. Do you know what the second thing they did? They took all the cargo and tossed it overboard. The last thing they did, they said, "Man, there is no hope for the vessel. Wake up that guy and see if he has an answer." In the book of Jonah, waking up the sleeping guy was the last option. In Mark 4, it was the first. Why? Because fear paralyzes you. When that thought of being threatened or endangered or pain comes in, when the enemy strikes at just that opportune moment, all of a sudden you can't think like you normally think, all of a sudden you can't respond the way, and you will catch yourself doing things you would never do "in your right mind," going places you never thought you would go, responding and making mention thereof. Why? Because the enemy has strategically preyed upon you in such a particular manner that he has paralyzed you. Now do you see why the world at large uses fear all the time? Because it paralyzes us. It keeps us from responding appropriately. It keeps us from doing things the right way.

So what have we discovered? That those emotions of fear, they don't come from God, they come from the enemy. Why does the enemy keep using them? Because they work. They've worked for years and they still work today. In fact, I might daresay that the greatest tactic the enemy has is fear because if he can get you to respond to fear, then he can get you so paralyzed you won't respond at all, and if you do it will be the wrong way. These men did everything backwards that they should have. So here's the question, last one: so how do you and I experience deliverance? How do you and I navigate a world that propagates fear every time we turn around? How do you and I work within a world and live within a world where almost every position, agenda and thought is propagated with fear? How do we reply? How do we not do it the way these guys did it?

Well, here's your how-to. 1. Look up. Now I know you expect me to say that, look up to the Lord. Psalm 121 says we look to the hills, that is where our hope comes from. But I want you to notice the last two or three verses in this passage. Verse 39, "he arose, and rebuked the wind, and said unto the sea, Peace, be still. And the wind ceased, and there was a great calm. And he said unto them, Why are ye so fearful? how is it that ye have no faith?" Now think about that for a moment. This same Jesus wakes up from the bottom part of the boat, speaks to the Sea of Galilee and says, "Be still," and it is. You realize this is the same person who according to your Bible spoke all of the creation into order? This is the same one, I love this verse, Genesis 1:14, it says he created the greater light for the day, the lesser light for the night, and the stars also, almost as if it's an afterthought. All those stars we see in the sky, "Eh, I created those also." The same voice that said "be still" according to Hebrews 1:3 is the same voice who keeps all of the creative order in check.

You say, "I understand that and I realize that but how does that help with my fear?" Go back up to verse 35. This is one of those parts of the story that I find so profound. It says, "And the same day, when the even was come, he saith unto them, Let us pass over unto the other side." Jesus didn't have to calm the storm because he already told them, "You're going to make it." Jesus didn't say, "Hey, boys, hold on, it's going to be a rough ride." He said, "Let's pass to the other side." The same voice that we're screaming, "God, please calm my storm!" is the same voice that said, "I'll never leave you and I'll never forsake you." You know, that's what Jesus told us in Matthew 28, he said, "I'll never leave you. I'll never forsake you. I will be with you to the end of the age." Yet the devil brings up these storms in our lives and we're like, "God, where are you?" He says, "I told you I would never leave you, I would never forsake you." The same voice in Philippians 1 that said he who began a work in you will continue it until the time of Christ Jesus. How many verses do we know of that we could quote, that we bring to remembrance, that much like verse 35 he says, "Pass to the other side"? Now do I believe Jesus knew a storm was coming? Absolutely. Does that change the power and the fact of what he said, "Go to the other side?"

You see, that's why we've got to look up because when the storms hit in life, what do we often do? We listen to all the verbiage and all the speech and all the opinions and all of the ideas. It doesn't matter if it's a storm that's just your storm or a storm that's all of our storms, our first thing we should do is look up to scripture and see what did God say about this because the same God who said peace, be still, is the same God who said pass on to the other side. The fact that he calmed the storm did not change the fact of what he had already said, just go to the other side. Our problem isn't that we don't believe Jesus can calm the storm, our problem is we question why he allowed the storm. That's our problem. Why? "You said you'd never leave me or forsake me. You said you'd be with me. Then why this?" Where did this come from? The enemy. The enemy creeps in, he preys upon us. We've got to look up. We've got to – hear me, this is going to be revolutionary for some of you – you've got to turn off your tv. Turn them off and you've got to start opening up a Bible because let me ask you a question: when's the last time the experts were right? They make a living on consistently being wrong because you keep coming back thinking maybe they'll get it right this time. You know, it's one of my

favorite stories in the Bible, Samson and the jawbone of a donkey. A thousand dead guys, 999 dead people and the last guy says, "I can take him." 999 news stories that don't come true and you say, "Well, maybe this morning they'll get it right."

You've got to look up. What does the Bible say about your life? What does the Bible say about our existence? And then you need to look out. You say, "Look out?" Go back up to verse 36, "And there were also with him other little ships." You know, it's interesting to me that the gospel of Mark puts this little nugget in there. At any point in the story, where do the disciples yell out across the Sea of Galilee, "Hey, what are y'all doing? Could y'all give us a little help?" You see, what happens is we get so focused on our storm in life we can't see the totality of the sea of which it takes place in, and that's exactly what was happening here. They never looked beyond the boat. All they could see was the boat and at some point whether the other boats are involved or not, I don't want to put that quote in concrete, a large majority of the Sea of Galilee obviously was very calm but not this place.

We know the story of Elijah coming off the mountain, defeated the Baal worshipers, crying out, "God, have you left me alone?" He says, "Oh, there are 7,000 others." But let's go to that one who put his foot in his mouth so many times, Simon Peter. We give him a hard time but, let's be honest, he's the one that preached the Pentecost sermon. Simon Peter is the one in Matthew 16 who says, "You're the Christ, the Son of the living God." Simon Peter is the same one who was willing to give his life for the Lord later in his life. Oh, we talk about him putting his foot in his mouth but he did stay faithful. He's one of the ones that ran to the empty tomb. Why is that important? Remember the night before Jesus' crucifixion? He's about to offer himself for the sins of the world and there he is, he's at Caiaphas' house, the high priest. He's been brought to a trial of blasphemy. You remember what happens, right? Peter is on the porch. He's out there on the porch and someone comes up to him and says, "You know that guy, right?" He says, "No, I don't know what you're talking about." They say, "Oh, your dialect, you're from Galilee. It gives you away." He goes, "No, no, no, you don't know..." In fact, the Bible says he denied even knowing who he was. That's a pretty rough spot, isn't it? It's a pretty bad storm. Do you think Peter expected that that night? Do you think he ever saw coming what happened? No, it's predatory.

Does that story happen to anybody but him? No. It's pretty particular but you know what happened? He got paralyzed. He froze up. He said, "I don't know him. No, no, that's not me. You're talking to the wrong guy. You've got to go and get somebody else." He's paralyzed, right? Do you know back in the gospel of John 18, it says that when they took Jesus into Caiaphas' house, it said one of the disciples, a disciple went in with him. Now here's one of the great theological questions: who was it? I don't know. A lot of people speculate it was the Apostle John, others speculate it might have been one of the 70. We don't know but here's what I want you to hear: the distance from the front porch to where Jesus and that disciple was about 20 feet. Why is that significant? Because Simon Peter allowed fear to send him sideways when somebody was six inches from Jesus and willing to ride through the storm with him. You see, sometimes we just need to look out and we need to find other believers who are not listening to the storm, we need to find other

believers who have not been subjected to fear because there's a disciple right next to Jesus who rides it out but Peter doesn't. Why? Because all he looked at was that burn barrel and those people coming to him saying, "Is this you?" All he focused on was the storm and he didn't look out.

You see, we need to look up to what scripture says, we need to look out to what faithful believers are saying and how they're responding and, finally, we need to look in. Notice what Jesus says in verse 40, "Why are you so fearful? How is it that you have no faith?" You know, James 1:8 says a double-minded man is unstable in all of his ways. Why do you have no faith? The same Jesus that would walk on water, the same Jesus that would multiply the food, the same Jesus that just healed the man with the withered hand is the same Jesus in the boat and they don't believe that he can calm that storm. Why? Because fear, the enemy used fear in their life. So let's turn the question on ourselves: in a world saturated with fear, with Jesus not in our boat but in our heart, why would we respond like they did? Why are we so lacking in faith?

Let's pray with our heads bowed and our eyes closed. Maybe this morning you're that individual who whether you have voiced it or verbalized it or not, you know that the enemy has used fear in your life on such a regular basis it has got you wrapped up, it's got you ripped, it's got you so tied up, but here's the good news: the Bible states that if we call upon Jesus he will save us, he will deliver us, he will release us from that. Whoever calls on the name of the Lord will be saved. Just like these disciples, in spite of their fear when they called unto Jesus, what happened? The storm was calm. Maybe you're that person today who for the first time needs to call on Jesus. It's not about taking a course, passing a test, jumping through a hoop, it's a simple heart cry and maybe your heart cry today will go something like this. "God, I've been distracted by all the wrong things. God, I confess the enemy has gotten me sideways on so many areas of life but today I believe, I believe that Jesus is the only answer to my sin problem. God, I'm the one who has messed up. I'm the one who has gone the wrong place. But I believe Jesus Christ loved me so much that he was willing to be born on my behalf. God, I believe he loved me so much he was willing to resist all temptation and live a sinless life for my behalf. God, I believe that when he was nailed to the cross on Mount Calvary he was actually paying the price, the punishment of my sin. And God, I believe that when he rose from the grave three days later, he actually made it possible for my sin to be forgiven, for my soul to be saved. God, today I'm calling out, I'm crying out, I don't even know the words to use, I just know I need Jesus to save me. God, I'm asking you to save me, to change me, and to give me a new direction in life."

If you're that person this morning who cried that prayer out for the very first time, in a moment I'm going to pray over us and we're going to stand and sing. We want to invite you just to step out and step forward. We'd love the privilege of just rejoicing, celebrating with you, praying with you and praying for you. But maybe today you'd say, "Do you know what, pastor? I had that conversation with the Lord years ago, decades ago," and you would admit today that according to the Bible you're seated in the heavenlies but your day-to-day life and existence is much the opposite, fear has gripped you like nothing else, maybe today all that fear that you brought with you to church needs to just be

dropped right here so that you can walk out in the freedom that you were designed to live in.

Lord Jesus, as we come to this time of decision, thank you that we do not have to live a life subjected to fear. Thank you that we do not have to have strongholds and bondages in our life. Thank you that you didn't just calm the storm in Mark 4, you calmed every storm in our life. Help us to look up, help us to look out, help us to look in. Lord Jesus, today may your voice be the one we hear and none other. It is in the name of Jesus Christ we pray. Amen.