



Speaker:
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What Kind of Man is This?

Series: The Gospel of Mark · 14 of 14

8/8/2020 (SAT) | Bible: Mark 4:35-41, Isaiah 54:6-8

Our scripture today can be found in Mark's gospel, Chapter 4 and verses 35 to 41.

Today we want to think about the question the disciples asked about Jesus: *What kind of person is this?* The answer to that question is two-fold: **he is human; and he is divine.**

This short account shows both these aspects of his nature. This is really useful. We won't be solving the mystery of the incarnation today. The makeup of the person that we know as Jesus Christ, being both human and divine, transcends human understanding. It's beyond us, and always will be. We'll accept precisely what the Bible tells us.

In the first place then, **Jesus Christ is shown to be fully human.**

We catch up with him here after he's had an exhausting day. The crowd on the shore is dismissed, and he instructs the disciples to set sail for the other side of the sea. No sooner have they launched than Jesus decides to have a sleep.

There's no reason to think that this was anything other than normal sleep. As a human being, he needed sleep just like we do. He needed sleep in order to live just as he needed food and drink. Because of who Jesus is, we might be tempted to think that his sleeping, eating and drinking were unnecessary. We might for example think his sleep was a pretence in order to be as near human as possible. But that would be wrong. He was a real human.

As another example, consider what it says in John 4:6. "Now Jacob's well was there. Jesus, therefore, being wearied with his journey, sat thus on the well..." He was shattered. He needed a sit down, just like us when we've been walking for ages.

As I say, the incarnation is a fathomless mystery. Jesus' claims about who he was are recorded for us in his word. And it's clear that he has these two natures. Throughout church history, heresies have arisen because of faulty understandings of who Jesus was. Even though the incarnation is a mystery, there's enough clarity in the scriptures to show those two natures of humanity and divinity.

On the one hand we've had the beliefs of, for example, Unitarians, Mormons and Russelites (or "Jehovah's Witnesses", so called). These would strip Jesus Christ of his divinity, reducing him to a mere created being. At the other extreme, we have those like the Docetists. Believing the material world to be evil and the world of spirits to be good, they couldn't accept that someone as good as Jesus would defile himself by becoming a man. These days,

Docetism is found mostly in the beliefs of New Age religions, although the Gnostic ideas associated with it can be found in the church also.

Bible believing Christians reject those two erroneous views. We affirm that Jesus Christ is man and God. Having said that, there'll always be elements in the church of God who drift from this Biblical position. We've already mentioned those who have a low view of Jesus and their view that he was a good man but not God himself.

I suspect that the problem in evangelicalism is more likely to be a drift in the opposite direction. Perhaps subconsciously, Evangelicals seem to be more likely to err on the side of Jesus' divinity rather than his humanity. It makes sense, in a way. After all, if we put too much emphasis on Jesus's divinity at the expense of the doctrine of his humanity, we might imagine God looking more sympathetically on that view. We might imagine him saying, *You've spoken a little too highly of my Son, but that's okay. It's better than thinking too low of him.*

If, with the intention of glorifying Jesus Christ, you claim that on earth he had no need to eat or drink or sleep or even breathe, because he was God, you harm the image of Christ. If you take away from his humanity in any way, you rob Jesus Christ of glory. Let me be clear about this: **in the purpose of God, the humanity of Jesus Christ is equally important to his deity.** That's where I am in my understanding of this person of Jesus Christ. He was, and is, a man. And we should exercise as much caution in avoiding denying his humanity as denying his divinity. Because that's who he is now.

There's no benefit at all in going into too much detail in outlining all the ways in which Jesus Christ was like us. But friends, you can be confident in declaring that Jesus was human.

- He felt hunger pangs, both before and after his resurrection
- He felt thirst as he hung on the cross
- He felt tiredness on this boat
- He felt sorrow about sin in the world
- He felt stress as he prayed in the garden
- And he felt pain when he was tortured and crucified for our sins.

The son of God could never have felt these things had he not been born as a man. But because he was so born, he became a fit representative for his people. Hebrews 2:17 says, "Wherefore, in all things it behoved him to be made like unto his brethren, that he might be a merciful and faithful high priest in things pertaining to God, to make reconciliation for the sins of the people." And because he suffered from the assaults of Satan, he can genuinely sympathize with us.

We've looked at Jesus' humanity.

But let us secondly see that **Jesus Christ is shown to be fully divine.**

After his boat had set sail, a storm arose. This type of storm is not uncommon on the Sea of Galilee. It was not one of the more extreme storms that this planet experiences, but it was bad enough. A few of his disciples were experienced fisherman, and they were scared. They

realised that this storm was bad enough to sink both their ship and the flotilla of other boats that were following Jesus.

They went to Jesus and roused him from his sleep. Immediately, Jesus goes up on deck and speaks to the storm. He orders it to stop! It's a similar rebuke that he used to exorcise a demon. *Be quiet!* he tells it, addressing the storm as if it were some sort of conscious force. This time, the verbal rebuke **was** for show. Through this bit of theatre, he was showing that his Lordship extended beyond creatures.

If I had certain characteristics, I could spend my whole life telling people what to do and seeing them do it. Whether through charm, logic or threats, I could earn that reputation. If Jesus' enemies wanted to explain away his demonstrations of power, they might argue that it was through some manipulation that even the demons obeyed him. But here, he exercises his power in controlling the very elements of this world. By the same hand that created everything, we see the very molecules of air and water being moved, all according to his will. The consistent laws of physics were manipulated by a sheer act of his will. The storm was stilled.

This incident injects some interest into Psalm 107. Verses 23-31 read, "They that go down to the sea in ships, that do business in great waters; these see the works of the LORD, and his wonders in the deep. For he commandeth and raiseth the stormy wind, which lifteth up the waves thereof. They mount up to the heaven, they go down again to the depths: their soul is melted because of trouble. They reel to and fro, and stagger like a drunken man, and are at their wits' end. Then they cry unto the LORD in their trouble, and he bringeth them out of their distresses. He maketh the storm a calm, so that the waves thereof are still. Then are they glad because they be quiet; so he bringeth them unto their desired haven. Oh that men would praise the LORD for his goodness, and for his wonderful works to the children of men!"

I wonder how well the disciples knew their scriptures. Could it be that one or two were reminded of this Psalm? Regardless, this incident shocked them to the core. They had seen Jesus do a lot. But this was on a whole new level. *What kind of man is this?* they cry. What kind of man **is** this? **He is a man who is also divine.** He commands beings, both in this realm and in the angelic one. He defied gravity and created food out of nothing. He restored missing human tissue and even raised dead people back to life. ONLY GOD could achieve this depth and breadth of miracle working. Jesus Christ was God manifested to us in the flesh.

The disciples, as it were, turn and look to the reader from the pages of the Bible. They ask me and they ask you, *What kind of man is this?* And with all the greater light that we enjoy, we answer them that he is a man who is also God.

I want to spend the remainder of our time looking at the issue of faith. **We can learn a few things about faith** from this incident.

Think about the disciples. They did right in leaving Jesus to sleep while they got on with sailing the boat. It was considerate of them to let him have some much-needed rest. And

when the storm got so bad that they feared for the lives of all on-board, they did right again in going to Jesus. They believed that he could save them! They had no idea what he was about to do, but they knew him well enough to know he had the power to deliver.

This is what we want the world to understand. We who have experienced the life-changing power of God in Christ want more than anything to share our experience with others. We do it in the hope that they might follow us on the narrow path that leads to eternal life.

Wherever God's elect are hidden in this world, we know that one day God will convert them. Through the operation of the lovely Holy Spirit, the hearts of these people become troubled. They are like Pilgrim in Bunyan's tale, who was filled with anguish about the coming destruction of his country. All around him were people who dismissed his fears.

The sinner who God would save has a troubled soul. It is like a Galilean storm within their soul. And when that joyful day arrives when God gives them the gifts of repentance and faith, Jesus speaks into their hearts, *Peace, be still*. And in this way the church throughout all ages is described in the Book of Revelation as having no more troubled seas. Every member of it experiences the peace of God.

Getting back to the disciples, we can't ignore Jesus' rebuke of them. He admonishes them for their lack of faith, even if they did the right thing in going to Jesus for help.

Now I know it's easy for me to say this with such clear hindsight, but if we're to consider why Jesus rebuked these men, we'll benefit from describing their shortcomings in order that we might not make the same mistakes. So what should they have realised?

- They should have realised that **Jesus had a purpose in mind and that all things would occur in line with that purpose**. Jesus had an appointment with a man on the other side of the sea. He determined that they would sail across the sea and that a storm would arise. The whole thing was predetermined, in order that Jesus' power might be shown and that the disciples would be taught a hard lesson.
- They should have realised that **Jesus cared for them**. They didn't only ask Jesus to save them: they implied that he didn't care whether they lived or died! Jesus had chosen these most unlikely candidates to hold the privileged position of apostles. He had spent time teaching them. He had befriended them. Yet in their hasty accusation, they despised all this.
- Also, they should have realised that **the storm was of God anyway**. We read in Jonah 1:4, "But the LORD sent out a great wind into the sea, and there was a mighty tempest in the sea, so that the ship was like to be broken." God is the author of all hurricanes, tornadoes, floods, avalanches, droughts, famines, forest fires, earthquakes, volcanic eruptions, and all other natural disasters. No matter how carefully we trace the origins of the Coronavirus pandemic, the outbreak was ultimately of God.

But what of us? *We sail with Christ*. We're on his boat! And even as his followers, we're told to expect troubles; the "storms of life" as they're commonly known. Christians might suffer from despondency, despair and depression. They might experience stress, sadness and sorrow. They might go through pain, poverty and persecution. But as they ride the storms,

they know that Jesus is in the boat with them! They know he will preserve their lives until the appointed day comes when he removes them from this wilderness. They understand that he knows their future. More than this: he has **ordained** it.

It's important we understand that Jesus never promises to quell all the storms that we encounter. Now I don't mean that he won't deliver us from evil. But he will allow us to suffer. The Apostle Paul says in Acts 27 that he was shipwrecked three times. In other words, God allowed the storms to do their work and wreck the ships Paul was on.

No suffering is pleasant, but by God's grace we shall be able to experience a kind of *joy* in our suffering. Encouragingly, when we suffer FOR Christ, we are said to suffer WITH him. It's as if he is bearing the suffering with us.

God asks us to have faith in him. He wants us to go to him for help, but not despairing that he no longer cares for us. Although I said that Jesus genuinely needed to go to sleep that day, the timing of his sleep was no accident. Its purpose was also to test the faith of the disciples. In going asleep for this short time, he was in a way *hiding himself* from them, albeit temporarily. Here are some interesting verses from Isaiah. Isaiah 54:6-8, "For the LORD hath called thee as a woman forsaken and grieved in spirit, and a wife of youth, when thou wast refused, saith thy God. **For a small moment have I forsaken thee; but with great mercies will I gather thee. In a little wrath I hid my face from thee for a moment; but with everlasting kindness will I have mercy on thee,** saith the LORD thy Redeemer."

In his all-wise dealings with us, God might for a brief moment hide himself from us. His motive is love! He means only to extract more heartfelt pleas from us. He wants us to **work** at prayer. He wants us to be so determined that, when he at the first seems to ignore us, we *persevere*.

It's very likely that you will have experienced such times. Have you ever prayed and felt a complete lack of connection with God? Have you ever felt, like saints throughout the ages, that there seems to be an invisible barrier between you and God's throne? Then recall God's counsel. Rouse him from his sleep like you would Jesus the man! Request answers from him like you would expect from Jesus the Almighty God! Job is advised, "If thou wert pure and upright; surely now he would awake for thee..."

WAKE GOD UP, friends and brethren. DISTURB THE HEAVENS with prayer. Do it all in the name of the God and man Jesus Christ, but do it with all confidence that he loves you immeasurably.

"Casting all your care upon him, for he cares for you."

Amen.