

Mark 4:35 – 5:43

Point: Jesus words can defeat all the enemies we can't defeat, so we should listen/trust in them.

Call: to listen (have faith) in Jesus as he is the only trustworthy one

Jurgen Klopp – listen to the people who know what they are talking about.

Listening carefully to what you hear

Good things happen when you listen to Jesus

#### **Four foes**

Made pretty big claims about listening to his words. Said listening to them, by which he means taking his words in so that they change your life – more important than what anyone else thinks – worth listening to even if listening to him brings you trouble, much more important to be listening to him, trusting Jesus and what he says.

Big claim, because you probably have got into all sorts of awkward situations by trusting his words if you have been.

Probably, like me, have let other things that seem important, like me-time and career progression, relationship success eclipse what Jesus says, probably doesn't feel like that is such a big deal. Is he right, do his words matter that much?

Mark writer of this book about Jesus – four situations where you can do nothing, Jesus words, authoritatively, without concern sort them out. No matter the cost, he is worth listening to.

Storm. Strangely appropriate given all the weather we have had recently, all the ways we are unable to control, even with our best efforts the impact of storms.

Jesus is asleep in the boat when a storm blows up on the lake, and the disciples, teacher do you not care that we are perishing. Jesus rebukes, tells off the wind and the waves – stop immediately. [Navy friend] Instead of taking a round of applause turns to them and says “what were you scared about?” Is it that difficult to trust my words?

Irony, more scared, in a boat with someone who controls the weather, hadn't really trusted his words about himself.

Frankly terrifying story of a man with a legion, two thousand, demons. Aside, explain away demon possession stories as people with mental health problems. Stigmatising to people with mental health problems, not face up to the reality – spiritual forces of evil in the world.

May not believe that. Other cultures would often see that manifested in someone's body being actually taken over by an evil force. Here, not that.

Evil at work in the world:

But I think many of us look at the things that have happened to us, things people have done to us – person did a bad thing and need to take responsibility but system much more evil around that person working that it happened to.

Illustrate [wrecked book]

Picture of this man tortured by evil. Lives in a place of death. Nobody could even bind him stop him harming himself. Crying out and cutting himself. Evil eating him alive, torturing him. Demon terrified of Jesus – Son of the Most high God. Leave the man, terrified of Jesus, go into the pigs – 2000 of them who kill themselves.

Beautiful picture when the people come to see, the demon possessed man clothed and in his right mind. What's more, longs to be with Jesus – Jesus tells him to go and tell everyone how much the Lord has done for him (Jesus has done for him)

First non-Jewish area, meets a man infested with thousands of demons, with his words the demons are gone and the man is not only restored to true humanity but transformed into the very first person who tells others about how great Jesus is.

Someone needs to hear that today. Evil of what has been done to you, you have participated in is inhuman, goes beyond sin to spiritually dark, entrust your life to Jesus, listen and take in his words, hear but entrust your life to him – he can transform you, dehumanised, self hating, beyond help into the person you were meant to be, speaking out his truth to people around you. Not only restored but useful. Mark saying – if his words can do that, worth listening to.

Sandwich story. Sick woman and a dying girl.

Sick woman first, horrible problem of continual menstrual bleeding – difficult enough for someone to deal with today, hot climate no sanitary products. Biggest problem. Old Testament law was someone bleeding like that was regarded as ceremonially unclean – couldn't approach God. Never met with her people to approach God. Again, no one could help her.

Understood about Jesus and touched his robe power flows out from him to her.

So many things I love about Jesus – love this picture. If someone unclean touched you, it was supposed to make you unclean. Other way round. Power goes out from him, just by a touch and she is made clean. She couldn't do herself, and no one else could do for her.

All sorts of things that either really do make you unfit to approach God, or make you feel like you are. People who have done really terrible things. Abused others, twisted and terrible patterns of thinking or behaviour; it is trusting Jesus words, extending faith in him, makes you clean to approach God. People who things have happened, feel soiled. Feel messed up. Feel like you are so broken in some way that God wouldn't want you on his team. Listen to Jesus, trust in him you become clean enough for God; like that. Listen you can't do it without Jesus and his words to trust in, no one else can do it for you, but he can.

Story on either side is of Jairus, totally other end of the spectrum of this woman, he is the synagogue leader, religious leader who would be in the meeting house helping others meet God all the time. He too has a problem that he cannot solve, clean as he is – his daughter is dying.

Notice what Jesus says about her, he arrives and she has died: “the child is not dead but asleep” speaks these powerful words to someone who is dead, and they wake up and walk around.

Death is still a fearful enemy, and faith in Jesus rarely, as far as I can tell leads to that type of instant resurrection today – source of great pain to lots of people. But Jesus is the only person, the only person to whom death is just sleep. One day he will wake the dead who have trusted in him. His words will be what bring you to real spiritual life now – people we love who have gone to sleep trusting him, they are just asleep, much as we miss them.

Guarantee of exactly how Jesus works now – calm every storm in your life, flush out every evil influence straight away, end diseases or bring people back to life.

Call here is for you to listen, in all seriousness now to Jesus’ words because this is the power that they have. Measure you use it will be measured to you – difference you’ll see in your life, work of God’s kingdom, defeat of evil will be in proportion to your listening, really listening with trust, with faith in Jesus words.

Worried about living in this world today – coronavirus or anything else. Right thing to do is to listen to Jesus. Overwhelmed by evil in the world, done to you, the right thing to do is to listen to Jesus. Carrying heavy weight, separated and distant to God – look at Jesus’ words and do them. Know we all face death, nothing to do about it, trust Jesus to whom death is only sleep, listen to him. Expert who has proved it.

Repent and believe the gospel.

Turn away from old life without Jesus, and come and trust in him to put you right with God. Crazy command, turn away from independence, self realisation, believe in Jesus instead. Proved he is worth listening to.

Christians – the same. You know there is some way you are living ignoring Jesus words. Never read it, listen to it. Open the Bible. Know what it would be to obey Jesus, money, job, family is more important. Background buzz, seeking to share your faith or serve the poor, love the church, put up with irritating person is the Jesus-like thing to do, don’t want to do it. Relationship you are in which isn’t right, one you have that needs making right. Bad consequences of ignoring Jesus, next week, say to you is this.

Jesus is so big, so compassionate, so able, so brilliant, so amazing. Listening his words will guide you through any storm the best way. Trusting him will be the way presence of evil got out of your life. Submitting your life to his words is the way you are clean enough to get all the strength and help from God that you need. He is the one to whom to entrust your life so that death becomes sleeping, listening to his words. Repent, turn round from storms, evil, unclean-ness and death to face him, compassionate, beautiful, powerful, for us, why not repent? You know some way you should be listening to him, turn round do it, best person to entrust your life to.

Illustrate

**Feeble faith**

I admire people with strong faith. Heroes of the faith. Someone who seemed totally immovable, committed, able to do things because of their personal strength.

People are heroes, not necessarily what Jesus means by faith in his words.

Love this story of this woman. Here she is an unclean person, she's not supposed to touch anyone, spread her unclean-ness.

Creeps up, and touches Jesus, without permission. Obviously hiding – Jesus can't see who it is who has touched him and the disciples basically laugh saying – how are we supposed to know that, who touched you?

But Jesus insists, eventually, the woman, trembling comes to him falls at his feet.

Patriarchal society – men were in charge. Hierarchical society, some people were considered much more important than others. She was low, woman, unimportant, unclean, touched this teacher. Someone who bleeding and stank touched chairman of the bank of England – how dare you? Forced out into the open, blood stained clothes, unclean hidden state, trembling, confessing.

Might expect Jesus to say – how dare you touch me without asking. But he hasn't pulled her into the middle of everyone to tell her off, make her a model for everyone around, for every Christian since, for us 2000 years later, she this poor desperate woman is the model of what faith is. Not just made clean, held up in history. Heroes of the faith, Jesus' hero of the faith is this trembling, unsure woman who doesn't even speak to him.

What is it? Weak reaching out to the one who can help. Great faith in the Saviour, faith in a great Saviour.

Response of listening to Jesus requires considering, taking in, going over. Only, I think, because we don't know our need. I'm not sure I need to repent and believe in Jesus.

If you know your need, some great act of faith you need, weak faltering, desperate faith in the one who can do it.

I love this about Jesus. Woman, rejected, excluded her whole life, nature of the kingdom, the rule Jesus is bringing to this earth is that she is cleansed but also honoured. Used to teach ruling mean around her – including Jairus, important synagogue leader, love that about him.

All it takes, faith, is the weak touch of desperation. Move to cleaned, also weakest, least are honoured to us all.

Missionary women. Out there not respected, that's true – here in the place Jesus rules, sitting at their feet. They didn't think that, weak faltering reaching out to Jesus.

I love that's the kingdom Jesus creates – if you will just take in what his word says, trusting him is easy, weak reaching out for help. World where trust in him matters, outcasts are lifted up made the leaders.

If that's true about Jesus, why am I not listening to him? Attending this, reading this, talking to this person, not doing it? Scrolling through opinions of people who don't love me, don't honour the

weakest, not creating that kingdom, have no power over the things that face me, why am I doing that instead of listening to him.

Consider carefully what you hear. Whoever has will be given more – little bit of understanding leads to simple faith opens floodgates of what Jesus can do into our lives.

### **Flat field**

If I told you I was going to tell you 4 stories about people who heard Jesus words, put them in order of who is likely to listen and trust, Synagogue leader, Disciple of Jesus, a demon, and an unclean woman. Who is going to listen in trust. Disciple first, synagogue leader next, Unclean woman next, demon last.

Trick question – in fact all of the synagogue leader, unclean woman, and the demon obey Jesus words, trust in them, disciples who get told off for not doing that.

Demons rather be destroyed than in a world where Jesus in charge. Disciples, all the way through Mark are very slow to believe, get there in the end.

2 people in this story who both believe, sandwiched together. Story of Jairus the synagogue leader, pillar of the community worshipping God every week. Woman whose not allowed to worship with everyone else, weak, suffering and bankrupt. Both get reward of trusting in Jesus words, both only get it by humbly coming to Jesus, asking, taking him seriously.

May have been coming here for years. New to here, consider yourself a good person. Upright. Moral. Work hard, help your neighbours. In the nicest possible way, Jesus doesn't care. Cares, because he loves you, but he doesn't care about all that – says the only way to be right with God, have God's presence and power and life giving help in you is by coming to him and asking.

Worst of sinners. Most excluded, like Legion a victim of evil and visiting evil on others. Extreme ways, I don't know. In the nicest possible way, Jesus doesn't care. Cares about you because he loves you – only way to be right with God, have God's presence, power and life giving help in you is by coming to him and asking.

Community Jesus creates only truly equal community. Listen to Jesus, measure you use it will be measured back to you. Easy to enter.

Why don't we – why fighting. Fear. Scared what will happen. Jesus calms storms, casts out demons, shows his power over illness and death, in the end defeats our mess totally by dying for us, and he says – why are you so afraid? Do you still have no faith?

Not becoming a Christian because you are scared. Not speaking about Jesus because you are scared. Not obeying Jesus in some way because scared of consequences. Do you still have no faith? Can't you see handing your life to Jesus to look after is the best person to hand it to? Heart of compassion and care and honouring of the least people means you want him to rule your life? Do you still have no faith?