

**West Valley Presbyterian Church**  
**MARK – WHO IS JESUS?**  
**Rev. Dr. Kim Engelmann**

We launched our Mark study last week and it was a great turn-out! We did an overview of the book of Mark and so many of you came to hear more, and learn after worship.

Today we continue with that series asking the question WHO IS JESUS? and showing you how Mark lets us know Jesus' identity through a series of events

Heres a snippet of the DVD that you will hear after worship this morning and I'm telling you...Its worth coming back to the sanctuary just to listen to Rico's British accent, but the message he has is much better even than his accent...of course.

So let's start with a story about a time when RICO didn't recognize someone very important....

**(DVD clip)**

That same thing happened to me just recently.

I was sitting next to someone at a table in a banquet hall for a fund raiser.

And I didn't know the person on my right but he seemed like a really nice guy...He kept nodding at me and smiling and I think he would have talked to me if I had initiated, but I was kind of in one of my introverted moods that day and I didn't bother...

Well come to find out he was the keynote speaker for this very distinguished crowd...Its Robert Sapolsky who is a professor at Stanford who graduated summa cum laude from Harvard and who received the Macarthur Fellowship Genius Award Grant.

I had read some of his books and he isn't a religious man. But I wanted to ask him some very important theological questions that related to science, and would have given anything to pick his brain...I was in the presence of greatness and did not know it...

Just like Rico was in the presence of his future King and didn't know that either.

And in the same way the people in the gospel of Mark were the presence of God, of the Messiah, of the anointed King and didn't get it.

Today in our own lives, Jesus is right here. We are in the presence of greatness. Do we realize this? Do we use this knowledge? Do we get it.

Mark wants us to get it.

He lets us in on the secret of –who Jesus is. He is tries to show us through many events...that Jesus is not just some guy – that he is different than any other man who ever lived – He is telling us that Jesus is unique, and ultimately he is God in the flesh.

- a concept that was so foreign to the Jews - to even begin to believe that God would become a person was blasphemous...it put God down. But Mark insists this is who Jesus is and he shows us this by telling us about

1. **His authority to teach**
2. **His authority over sickness**
3. **His authority over nature**
4. **His authority over death**
5. **His authority to forgive sins**

**The DVD goes through all of this...but**

I am going to focus on

the story of Jesus in the boat with his disciples in the midst of the storm – this story outlines Jesus' authority over nature.

I am choosing this because I am aware that there are many storms going on peoples lives right now.

In preaching about this story of a boat, swamped by waves and kicked by the surf... I want you to know that I am almost getting woozy...*I am not a boat person*

I get seasick every time I get into a boat.

The last time I was in a boat, we went deep sea fishing as a family early in the morning out of Half Moon Bay. It was years ago...shows how anti-boat I am

The kids were young...they had their little zippered lunch boxes with their Disney figures stamped on them, and if I'd been awake at five in the morning when we left I would noticed that there were no other families standing there in line waiting to get their deep sea fishing tickets.

Everyone else looked like a seasoned fisherman, (they were all large men) and many were wearing muscle shirts with tattoos on their arms.

This wasn't exactly a Happy Hollow moment.

We get in the boat, and the captain tells us the weather is bad. Of course he tells us after we're already five minutes from shore. He said to expect ten foot swells...and that's what we got...ten foot swells.

The kids managed just fine being tossed about. My oldest son and my husband actually were out on the deck fishing  
But...

I was sure we were all going to die out there;

I was panicked and really sick.

There is something about being in a boat, in a storm that gives you a feeling of desperation...at least for me... because where are you going to go?

There's no escape...you are going to die and that's it! They actually had to turn around that day and take me back to the dock after we'd been out for an hour...I was so sick and I went right to the ER...and was there all day taking fluids

In the scripture we read about an even worst storm that threatened the disciples lives... ...The word here is whirlwind in the Greek

This was a sudden storm and it was fierce– The sea of Galillee was known for these kinds of storms that would come out of nowhere – and whip you around

But this must have been an extremely vicious storm because even the disciples who were seasoned fishermen were afraid!  
They are so afraid that they think they are going to die...

And they wake Jesus up...who by the way was asleep  
Asleep in the storm...on a cushion!

Have you ever felt like God was asleep when you are going through something very difficult – when you are in the midst of a whirlwind?  
Have you ever felt like you are on the brink, and that God doesn't care

That God isn't listening when you cry out?

And you pray "God are you asleep? Aren't you listening? Don't you care about all that is going on here?"

We all have storms

And in the midst of the storm its very hard to trust God

To trust that God is who he says he is

Or even to recognize his presence with us

We tend to look around at the circumstances and the issues flying around us and wonder whether God is even noticing us.

Or whether there is a God

But there is a good thing about storms too....so if you are in a storm right now...take heart because

### **Storms get us to pray, and pray hard**

God never wastes a storm to draw you to himself

Its because there was a storm that day that the disciples ask for Jesus' help; and because they asked, they had a chance to see his power at work.

Had everything been peaceful and calm they would not have asked for his help.

They would have rowed themselves, and it would have been all about them making headway.

Its when the storm comes and we know we cant, that God can and will if we ask.

Its sometimes the prayers of the desperate that are the most honest. Storms can make you desperate.

You figure you might as well pray because there is nothing else you can do. Storms force us to look up and say "HELP".

And in praying that simple prayer we are often astounded and shocked as God's presence rushes in.

It doesn't always happen immediately, but God come to the desperate because they are honest...and raw...and know they can't....and when he shows up we realize so often that He was there all along.

We just didn't recognize him...

Our own sense of self sufficiency blinded our eyes from him.

In the storms you don't feel so self sufficient; you know you need help

And when we cry out in desperation – that is what we ought to be doing all the time, every day. We all need God every day, all the time, desperately...we just don't realize it as much until the storms come.

When I think of storms I always think of my friend Allen.

ALLEN USED TO BE AN ATHEIST, A PERSON WHO LIVED ON THE EDGE, LOOSE, WILD AND PLEASURE SEEKING. VERY SMART IVY LEAGUE GUY...AND ALLEN WAS ALSO AN ACCOMPLISHED SKIIER

ALLEN, BECAUSE HE WENT FAST AND LOVE TRIPLE BLACK DIAMOND SLOPES WITH MOGLES AND ROCKS USED TO BUSHWACK DOWN THE MOUNTAIN IN AREAS WHERE NO ONE ELSE EVER WENT YOU KNOW THOSE SIGNS THAT SAY "DO NOT LEAVE MARKED TRAILS" WELL, ALLEN...PRETENDED NOT TO NOTICE

AND ONE DAY HE FOUND HIMSELF SOMEWHERE, ON THE SIDE OF THE MOUNTAIN ALONE...WITH THE SUN SETTING... AND NO IDEA WHERE HE WAS HE HAD LOST A SKI COMING OFF AN OVERHANG

HAD SPRAINED HIS ANKLE  
AND REALIZED IN A PANIC THAT HE HAD TOLD NO ONE WHERE  
HE WAS GOING  
THE SNOW WAS DEEP AND HEAVY AND ALLEN KNEW, AS HE  
SAT THERE IN THE SNOW, BECOMING MORE AND MORE  
LETHARGIC THAT IF HE DIDN'T GET UP AND START MOVING,  
HE WOULD SOON FREEZE TO DEATH

STRUGGLING TO HIS FEET HE STARTED HALF LIMPING, HALF  
WALKING THROUGH THE HEAVY SNOW, CLAPPING HIS HANDS,  
SHOUTING TO GET ANYONES ATTENTION, HOPPING UP AND  
DOWN ON HIS ONE GOOD LEG WHEN HE COULD....

HE WAS VERY THIRSTY BUT KNEW THAT IF HE ATE THE SNOW  
HIS CHANCES OF FREEZING WERE THAT MUCH MORE  
PROBABLE  
NO ONE CAME...(3x)AND DARKNESS BEGAN TO CLOSE IN...  
THE WIND STARTED TO BLOW, AND THEN IT BEGAN RAINING  
ICE PELLETS  
HE HAD HEARD THAT A STORM FRONT WAS COMING IN THAT  
NIGHT...AND IT WAS RIGHT ON TIME  
STRUGGLING FORWARD, HE MANAGED GET TO A TREE AND  
LEANING UP AGAINST IT  
HE BEGAN TO TRY TO DIG A HOLE IN THE SNOW  
BUILDING A HOLE UP AGAINST A TREE MADE THE HOLE  
WARMER ...

IT WAS PITCH BLACK BEFORE HE GOT IT DEEP ENOUGH SO  
THAT HE COULD LOWER HIMSELF DOWN INTO IT  
AND AS HE SAT THERE WITH HIS BACK UP AGAINST THE TREE  
WITH THE WIND HOWLING UP ABOVE HIM  
AS HE FELT HIS ENERGY DRAINING FROM HIM

HE PRAYED

ALLEN, THE ATHEIST, PRAYED

HE SAID, "GOD... .. IF YOU ARE THERE AND YOU ARE WHO  
YOU SAY YOU ARE, THEN HELP ME TO LIVE THROUGH THIS. IF  
I LIVE THROUGH THIS, I WILL STOP LIVING FOR MYSELF. I WILL  
GIVE MY LIFE TO YOU...I PROMISE. HELP ME GOD. PLEASE  
HELP ME."

STORMS DO THAT TO YOU

THEY MAKE YOU PRAY

ALLEN TOLD ME THAT IN THAT HOLE – IN THE MIDST OF THE STORM

A PRESENCE CAME TO HIM  
HE COULDN'T EXACTLY EXPLAIN IT

EXCEPT HE TOLD ME THAT IT WAS THEN, AS HOVERED BETWEEN LIFE AND DEATH THAT HE KNEW THERE WAS A GOD AND HE RECOGNIZED THAT PRESENCE for the first time AS ALL POWERFUL AND ALL KNOWING AND EXTREMELY AWARE OF HIM IN PARTICULAR

ALL THAT NIGHT AS THE STORM RAGED, AND THE WIND BLEW. AND IT SEEMED TO GET COLDER AND COLDER....  
HE WAS SUSTAINED BY THIS VERY POWERFUL LIFE GIVING PRESENCE WHICH HE NOW WOULD TELL YOU WAS THE PRESENCE OF JESUS

FINALLY, AS SUDDENLY AS IT HAD COME, THE STORM WAS GONE  
THE MORNING LIGHT CAME FILTERING IN TO GREET HIM AND ALLEN, BARELY ABLE TO MOVE AT THIS POINT, MANAGED TO CLIMB UP AND OUT INTO THE OPEN WHERE HE COULD BE SEEN

ABOUT TWO HOURS LATER HE WAS SPOTTED BY RESCUE HELICOPTERS  
WHO TRANSPORTED HIM TO A LOCAL HOSPITAL  
HIS HEARTBEAT WAS VERY WEAK, BUT HE WAS ALIVE AND MADE A FULL RECOVERY  
TODAY HE IS A PHILANTHROPIST, AN ACTIVE CHURCH MEMBER, A HUMBLE LEADER AND SOMEONE WHO ALWAYS TALKS ABOUT THE LOVE OF JESUS.

ALLEN, I ASKED HIM. BACK THEN...IN THAT HOLE...YOU WERE AN ATHEIST. WHY DID YOU BOTHER PRAYING?  
HE SHRUGGED AND SAID TO ME, "THERE ISN'T MUCH ELSE YOU CAN DO WHEN YOU ARE DOWN IN A HOLE IN A STORM now is there?"

The disciples in the storm on the Sea of Galilee that day had no other recourse either

Lord they cry out...we are perishing! Don't you care? Do something!  
They had no idea how they were going to live through that storm either.

The waves were crashing up and over the side of their little vessel  
The wind was howling  
They were baling...And Jesus is asleep

And yet Mark, by telling us this story, in his very cryptic journalistic style is telling us more than just this story...he is referencing another story from the Old Testament that all of his Jewish readers would have recognized

Can anyone think of an Old Testament story where there is a storm and a boat and a guy who is asleep?

It's the story of Jonah. There's a whole book in scripture called the book of Jonah.

You can read it in about 20 minutes. There are many other parallels between Jesus and Jonah all through scripture...

But, if you remember, Jonah was asleep in the boat when a terrible storm came.

The parallel to Jonah asleep in the boat that Mark is making to Jesus asleep in the boat... is unmistakable

But in the case of Jonah, Jonah was running away from God  
He didn't want to do what God was asking him to do – go to Ninevah – the most evil city, pagan city - and prophesy against them...  
because he knew God would forgive them and not follow through on any kind of punishment he would predict

And he thought he could hide from God by taking a trip in a boat in the total opposite direction

And the storm came because of Jonah's sin – trying to escape from God



They wake Jonah up – and Jonah knows its his disobedience that is causing the storm and he tells them so...and tells them to throw him overboard..

Finally, after trying everything else...

They do, and immediately the storm subsides. And that is how it came to be that Jonah was swallowed by a big fish...

But, what happens in Mark, when Jesus' boat is being swamped by waves and he is asleep.

They wake Jesus up too...just like they did with Jonah but

There is no admission of sin on Jesus' part

There is no throwing Jesus overboard

Jesus simply had to stand up and command the storm to be quiet, and everything became calm

“Peace be still” he says...by his word everything goes calm

Mark is saying, #1 Jonah was a prophet. Jesus is more than a prophet

#2 Jonah had sinned. Jesus is without sin #3 Jesus commands nature and nature obeys

Jesus is more than an ordinary guy, or even an ordinary prophet sent by God

Mark is showing us in a profound and subtle way...that in that small little boat

Asleep on the cushion

Swamped by the waves lies the ruler of all creation

Do you recognize him? Do you see it?

Mark wants us to get it...Its

Stunning! Absolutely unheard of in Jewish thought! But completely true...

Mark is incredibly subtle, and very cryptic in his writing style but at the same time there is a whole lot going on in Mark that we might not get at first glance

This whole account of Jesus in the boat is a statement of his Divinity and Mark does it by showing us the difference between Jesus and Jonah...

Now what does this mean for you and me when we are swamped?  
When we find ourselves in stormy waters?  
When our lives are about to capsize, or when we are so tired of  
baling out the boat that we just want to collapse?  
When God seems far away, and it seems like he doesn't care.

There's something we've been told to do in a crisis, in a situation  
where and our lives are threatened...and its STOP, DROP and  
ROLL...When you are in a storm...

**STOP:** Recognize that Jesus is real and present. The Lord of all  
Creation does care about you and he is there for you and will deliver  
you at the right time. If you stop and recognize that Jesus is with you  
in the moment, and that you are not alone, you open up your heart to  
his intervention. Become aware that the one who gave you life and  
breath is closer to you than you have any idea. Rest in that reality

**DROP:** Drop to your knees (in other words pray), and as you do also  
drop any remnant of self sufficiency while you are at it...that is left in  
you and pray HELP. If you are Lord show me! Let me recognize you.  
If you are God make yourself known.

Be specific in your prayer and be persistent. The more specific we  
are, the more sure we will be sure when God answers. The more  
persistent we are the more we are following scriptures mandate to  
pray without ceasing. Remember that sometimes the ones the Lord  
loves best are asked to take a seat in his waiting room. Sometimes  
waiting through a storm is part of the process. But if we recognize  
Jesus as Lord in the process it makes the waiting easier.

**ROLL:** When God shows up, go somewhere with this. Like my  
friend Allen who experienced God and then became an avid active  
Christian giving his life to things of the faith...one of the most  
generous men I've ever met.

We aren't in crisis all the time. But God never wastes a crisis to draw  
you close to him. Once we pray HELP and God shows up, endeavor  
to grow in your faith. Endeavor to work on your relationship with  
Jesus.

(Beckah story)

If you are in a storm right now, and at the end of your rope... ..  
recognize that Jesus is with you even if you don't feel it

Maybe you just want to cry out "Lord I Need You. I can't do it on my own anymore. Help me know that you are with me. I can't bale out this boat any longer. You are Lord of my life and I need you today"

Maybe you aren't in a storm but you've been distracted, and worried about many things

I want to remind you that Jesus is here...Maybe you just need to get still and recognize that simple truth all over again

Yes...its true...The one we read about, & worship, is here...  
Your life is being sustained right now by the God of all creation who knows your name, and loves you and is a friend of us sinners  
That's an amazing truth – it was for Mark and for all those who read his gospel- and its still hard for us to grasp today, but its so true

We've heard it before

But listen again and know it in your heart and recognize it once more time...Jesus is here...

If you really believed that...really took that in...really recognized him as here

The Lord of all Creation

The King of Kings here...right now

If you just paused and recognized the truth that as you sit here in church on this Sunday morning... You are in the presence of greatness and power and eternal love. How would you live? How would you pray?

Remember this: **As amazing as it was, It cost Jesus nothing to be the Lord of Creation that day in the boat. It cost him everything to be your Savior.**

Mark grabs at this point as he right now is setting up the journey to the cross that Jesus will take. The contrast between the cross and

this all powerful God-man Jesus who has authority over nature and as we will see over sickness, and death, sin is striking.

Because there was another storm...There was a storm at the cross  
As darkness covered the whole earth  
And earthquakes happened, and rain pelted,  
Jesus calmed that storm too with the words "Father forgive them for they know not what they do."

WE missed him then as he hung abandoned on the cross, let's not miss him now...

He gave everything so you could recognize him, be in relationship with him

So that he could be approached by you easily and with your sins forgiven

So that in the midst of the storm you could DROP and say HELP ME GOD...and know and experience that he is there

Lets not miss the reality of his presence this morning but reach out, and recognize him and trust him...the who has never let us down and who never will

The one who rescues from every storm, and promises that he will never leave us or forsake us... Let us pray...