

Sermon: Mighty God  
Psalm 103:1-5, Mark 4:35-41

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**Psalm 103:1-5**

Bless the Lord, O my soul, and all that is within me, bless his holy name. Bless the Lord, O my soul, and do not forget all his benefits - who forgives all your iniquity, who heals all your diseases, who redeems your life from the Pit, who crowns you with steadfast love and mercy, who satisfies you with good as long as you live so that your youth is renewed like the eagle's.

**Mark 4:35-41**

On that day, when evening had come, he said to them, "Let us go across to the other side." And leaving the crowd behind, they took him with them in the boat, just as he was. Other boats were with him. A great windstorm arose, and the waves beat the boat, so that the boat was already being swamped. But he was in the stern, asleep on the cushion; and they woke him and said to him, "Teacher, do you not care that we are perishing?" He woke up and rebuked the wind, and said to the sea, "Peace! Be still!" Then the wind ceased, and there was a dead calm. He said to them, "Why are you afraid? Have you still no faith?" And they were filled with great awe and said to one another, "Who then is this, that even the wind and the sea obey him?"

## Sermon

Most weeks I prepare all the words for the bulletin first, the prayers and scripture readings and hymns. Then I finish by locating a suitable cover for the bulletin. This week, I went online and searched, "Mighty God" in google images, and I was amazed at some of what I found. One of the first images was that of a suit of armor, sword and all. Another was a Vacation Bible School image of a castles and shield with the words "Mighty God" written upon it. A third image that stood out to me was that of a stormy cloud formed in the shape of a hand, with lightening, and a small man running away below. And the last image that stood out was that of an Old Testament curriculum for kids, this one happened to be of Moses and the burning bush. But what caught my eye was the title, which was "Mighty God" except in the middle of the O in God was a fist with the comic book action marks to give it emphasis.

The might of Mighty God often gets depicted in these ways, as strength of force and power and even fear. In many ways we depict what we want our mighty God to be, a lion on the battlefield who overcomes the enemies. C.S. Lewis took this concept of a lion to represent our Mighty God and created the character Aslan, the lion within the Chronicle of Narnia series. In the first book, *The Lion, the Witch, and the Wardrobe*, Susan, a child from our world who is now in Narnia, hears about Aslan and asks about him. "Aslan is a lion- the Lion, the great Lion." "Ooh" said Susan. "I'd thought he was a man. Is he- quite safe? I shall feel rather nervous about meeting a lion"... "Safe?" said Mr Beaver ... "Who said anything about safe? 'Course he isn't safe. But he's good. He's the King, I tell you." This is the first depiction of Aslan who is the great Lion.

Later in the book we encounter a poem, one could say a Psalm about Aslan.

"Wrong will be right, when Aslan comes in sight,  
At the sound of his roar, sorrows will be no more,  
When he bares his teeth, winter meets its death,  
And when he shakes his mane, we shall have spring again."

Lewis depicts a very different image of Mighty God, one that's might is not based on death, but the resistance of death. Lewis was depicting an image of his understanding of Jesus.

So how does the title of Mighty God fit what we know about Jesus? In our gospel reading today we see the mighty power of Jesus, the power to calm the seas and the wind with simply the words, "Peace" and "Be still". And everyone on the boats wondered, who is this that even the wind and waves listen to him? Why does the title, Mighty God, fit Jesus? Because what Jesus did was superhuman, supernatural, was mighty and of God. Healing the sick, casting out unclean spirits, feeding five thousand with a few loaves and fish. If you were there, you would have said, here is a Mighty God.

But Jesus did not just do supernatural things just to do them. Jesus performed mighty acts because he was resisting chaos, because he was resisting evil, because he was resisting death.

Healing the sick, was bringing fullness of life. Removing the unclean spirits, was taking out the evil and allowing good to flourish. And standing before the wind and waves was Jesus bring order out of the chaos. Is he safe? No one said Jesus was safe, but he is good. Jesus' mission is to resist death at every level. And he calls his disciples to follow in his footsteps.

The mighty power of death is still strong in our world today. We worship tanks and guns and bombs in a hope that they will bring peace or at least protect our lives. We glorify the killing of the enemy instead of giving thanks for the protection of life. And we belittle peace as weak and costly and foolish, it is us or them!

The power of death is overwhelming, and we feel so small in its presence. What can we do?

We can calm storms. With words, with silent presence, with the embrace of a hand or a hug we can bring peace, even if the chaos is in us, we can take time to be still with the Lord.

We can heal the sick. With a card of hope, with a friendly visit of care, by listening and by praying.

We can call out the unclean spirits. By speaking truth in love, standing for life in the midst of those who would call for death, mourning death of every kind but working for life in every part of our lives - in our families, at our places of work, on our social media pages and in our conversations - speak life, not death.

Feed that which gives life, don't feed the powers of death. For Jesus is the Mighty God who resists death, and we are called to be his disciples.