

DARING GREATLY - Part 4
May 3, 2015
Ryan Kramer

I want to start today by telling two stories that seem disconnected, but one leads into the other. The first car I ever owned was an Oldsmobile Cutlass Supreme. It was bright red, and I called it "Big Red". I loved that car.

So I was disappointed and very upset at one point when I high-sided it on a curb. Have you ever had a moment when you're in a crash, and you exhale, and it almost seems like a sigh of relief, but your heart is beating very quickly because you're afraid of what you don't know. You don't know how bad the damage is, things like that.

I looked on the passenger side, and there was a huge dent. I drive home, told my parents. My dad said, "Well, I guess if you're reckless enough to crash it, you're responsible enough to fix it." I got an estimate, and it would've cost \$600-800. I couldn't even imagine this. I started to have all these fears about it. When you're afraid, you get kind of irrational. I did two things. First, I thought I could just ignore it. The second thing is, I hoped that someone might crash into me, and they can get my car fixed. That didn't happen, but it almost did, and it leads into the second story.

I was on my first date with the woman who would become my wife. I drove to her house. Walked to the front door, pushed the doorbell. And I was a little nervous and I -- passed gas. I was waiting for the door to open, and it did, and her mother was there, and you know when you open a door, there's this bit of air that rushes in, and --

Anyway, Amber and I went out on our date, heading to a movie, driving along. And there was a Honda Civic in another lane, and it looked like it was going to change lanes right into us. I lined up my car right alongside this Civic, and I exclaimed, with joy, "Oh my gosh, we're going to get hit!" Amber said the same thing with fear. I slammed on the brakes, and the Civic missed us. I was angry. She asked what was wrong with me. I said, "You just cost me six to eight hundred dollars!"

The reason I share that story is that when fear takes over us, crazy things happen. When we get lost in our fears, we lose sight of what's really true. I think that's why sometimes in this life, one of the most daring things you can do is to dare to see what's really true.

We all have fears. We all have times when we react badly and then step back and can't believe what we said or did. We live in the reaction of our fears.

As we head for our Scripture for today, I want you to imagine that you're a fisherman in the 1st century. You'd be one because your father and his father were fishermen, and this is how you lived and what you did. It wasn't just an occupation, it was part of who you were. It was part of your family and your identity.

And one day you're on a boat in the Sea of Galilee and you hear a voice calling to you. You see a man who looks -- just a little different. You head over, and he says, "Come, and follow me, and I will make you fishers of men." This has been your life, but the words ring true, so you drop your nets, and you get out of the boat, and you follow him.

This man is Jesus, and as you follow him, you start to see many new things. You see all that Jesus does. You see a man healed of demon-possession. You learn a lot from all this as Jesus heals so many people. The blind see, the lame walk. And then one time, he actually forgives a man's sin and heals him from being a paralytic! Only God can forgive sins, but he has done so! You're blown away by all this. Who is this Jesus?

Then later, you're back by the Sea of Galilee, but everything has changed. That's where we find

ourselves now.

MARK 4:35-39 - That day when evening came, he said to his disciples, "Let us go down to the others side." Leaving the crowd behind, they took him along, just as he was, in the boat. A furious storm came up, and the waves broke over the boat, so that it was nearly swamped. Jesus was in the stern, sleeping on a cushion. The disciples woke him and said to him, "Teacher, don't you care if we drown?" He got up, rebuked the wind and said to the storm. "Peace! Be still!" Then the wind died down and it was completely calm.

Now, this was a decent-sized boat. There were at least thirteen people on it. It went out at night, got caught in a storm, heavy wind, taking on water. What you see creates fear, and it overtakes you. You're bailing water because when fear overtakes you, you lose sight of what's true and you're just trying to survive.

You wonder where Jesus is, and he's in the stern of the boat on a cushion, asleep. You get angry. "We're fighting for our lives! Don't you care that we're going to die?"

Of course he cares. You've seen what he does. But you're living in the reaction of fear. He wakes up, looks around, and says, "Peace! Be still!" - And the storm is completely gone. It's a crazy story.

I think I know why Jesus addressed the storm first. If you're a parent, you've been there. I have two girls who sometimes fight. They start crying. And you go to the playroom, and they both run up to you and start talking. What do you say? "Quiet!" When everything is like that, you can't see what's really going on. Jesus calms the storm first, and then asks the disciples a question.

Maybe for this morning this room can be like that, and we can leave all of the storms of life outside, and find calm in this room. Leave the fear out there, and be still and calm in here. Because I'm going to ask us to do the same thing Jesus asked the disciples to do - that we have to dare greatly.

Because the truth is we're used to living in the reaction. We're just used to reacting and trying to survive. On the job, in our marriage, whatever. And we have this fear that this is all there is. So we don't face it and we become frustrated and miserable -- not just out there but in here. It can even happen in our Christianity, when we're confronted by people with other beliefs.

This isn't what happens with Jesus, and that's what I want to spend the rest of the morning on. Jesus illustrates four truths here -- two to remember, and two to dare to.

First - JESUS IS POWERFUL.

If we embrace this, it will help us stop living in reaction to our fears, and our eyes will be open to what is really true.

We hear "Jesus is powerful", and we think, well, yeah, that's obvious. We can figure that out. But when stuff starts happening, we lose sight of that. But look at all that Jesus did. All the miracles, and he really did die on the cross and rose from the grave. He was present at the moment of creation! It doesn't get more powerful than that.

Second - JESUS IS NOT THREATENED OR SCARED BY OUR STORMS.

The disciples are bailing water, freaking out, and they're sure they're going to die. They find Jesus napping. What does this mean? Our storms are like background noise to him. Just ambient sound. That seems cold-hearted, right? No. It's not that he's ignoring it, or doesn't care.

As disciples of Christ, where is your rabbi, the example you have sworn to follow? He's asleep.

What does that tell you? That he doesn't care? No. It tells you that he's an all-powerful being who's not threatened by the storms of our lives, and he looks at us and says, "It's okay. All it well. I'm here and I'm not threatened by that."

That's hard, and that's not to minimize what happens in our lives. But the reality is that there's no storm in our lives that Jesus is threatened by.

Third - JESUS ASKS THIS OF US - WE MUST DARE TO SEE OURSELVES.

Once he's calmed the storm, Jesus asks, "Why are you so afraid?" Well, there was this storm, right?

What he's asking them is - why did that storm create that response in you?

Sometimes the biggest storms aren't outside the boat, but inside of us. Why are we afraid? Will you dare greatly to see yourself and why you're afraid? We're afraid we're not good enough or our faith isn't strong enough, and we get afraid, and we yell, or hide, or run.

If you ask the question, you will face your fear.

Fourth, and most importantly - WE MUST DARE TO SEE JESUS.

If we get hijacked by our fears, we lose sight of what's true. We'll be afraid.

I want to tell you how to deal with monsters. My oldest daughter thinks there are monsters in her room as soon as we turn out the lights. I tried to solve this rationally. Took her to her room, showed her around, that there were no monsters. She said they were in the closet. So I stepped in her closet, and asked her to come over to the closet, and she wouldn't. She was standing there, shaking and crying.

I knew I needed a different solution. So I asked her, "Have you ever seen mom really mad?" She said she had. How had that made her feel? "Scared." "Yeah, me too. And there are no monsters in your room or in your closet, because even the monsters are scared of your mom."

"Okay, Dad -- good night!" And she got into bed and went to sleep. She realized there was something with her that scared the monsters - that scared her fear away.

The passage in Mark ends in VERSE 41 - They were filled with great fear and asked each other, "Who is this? Even the wind and the waves obey him!"

Should you dare so greatly as to stare in the face of what which scares you, and you know Jesus is powerful and not threatened, and you know Jesus is with you, what will enable you to stare fear in the face and actually do something is that with you and in you is He that even fear is scared of. And the only thing that changed is who you remembered Him to be.

May you dare to see and be courageous.