

MARK: OUR PREACHING MANUAL

THIRD DIVISION

III. 4:35-7:23 *WHERE* DOES THE MESSIAH DESIRE TO ESTABLISH HIS KINGDOM?

FIRST SECTION: *IN THE UNIVERSE?*

Mark 4:35-5:43

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III. 4:35-7:23 WHERE DOES THE MESSIAH ESTABLISH HIS KINGDOM?

THE UNIVERSE	SOCIETY	THE HEART
<p>4:35-41 The storm</p> <p>Power over the elements of wind and sea</p>	<p>6:1-6 Jesus in Nazareth</p> <p>Jesus “rejected” in home town and amongst relatives</p>	<p>6:30-56 Apostles and crowds</p> <p>The “<u>hard</u> hearts” of the apostles</p>
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THIRD DIVISION

III. 4:35-7:23 *WHERE DOES THE MESSIAH DESIRE TO ESTABLISH HIS KINGDOM?*

FIRST SECTION: *IN THE UNIVERSE?*

Mark 4:35-5:43

Corresponding PowerPoint® presentation:

081_Mark_PREACHERS_Universe_3rd_division_1st_section_presentation

The outline:

Do I count for anything in a world of seven billion?
Demotion and other painful memories
In their “element”

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Twister!
Weary and tired
Is God asleep?
Another kind of fear
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II. The battle with “Legion”: power over thousands of demons 5:1-20

Tomb raiding
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He won’t steal your work

Questions to aid in the study of this section, Mark 4:35-5:43

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Do I count for anything in a world of seven billion?

How many of us feel very small in a world of 7 billion people? Does what I am or do count? Who cares? Do I have meaning or don't I have meaning?

And what about the really big storms of life? Will I survive when the big storms of life hit me? Will I ever suffer a nervous breakdown, bankruptcy, or cancer?

On one occasion I was making telephone calls around the country to various friends. I began to realize as I listened to them how many people were facing difficult challenges and decisions in their businesses and working lives. Enormous storms pass over us that rob us of all sense of security. We feel small, weak, trampled, and threatened by attacks on our persons, values and even our most cherished beliefs.

Demotion and other painful memories

I had a friend who was a detective on the police force of his city. My detective friend discovered that a lawyer friend of his was implicated in a case of embezzlement. Because they were close friends the detective did not want to turn the lawyer in. But he had a terrible battle with his conscience and eventually decided he must inform the authorities. The lawyer happened to be a good friend of the mayor of the city. So what happened?

My detective friend was demoted in rank, from detective to uniformed policeman. He had to return to uniform and they put him on the desk at reception. His salary was reduced. He only had two years before retirement so this reduced his pension. It was obviously a revenge organized by the mayor. The mayor was angry that my friend the detective had turned in his lawyer friend. However, my respect for my detective friend grew immensely!

I had another friend whose boss would not pay him. He would only give him paychecks when he wanted to. You can't feed a family under those conditions. Fortunately he found another job and a job which used his specialty.

Another friend had worked 29 years in a school as a teacher and the school retired her before she reached the 30 years, knowing she would get a higher paying pension if she did.

I have a friend in Detroit who owns an industrial cleaning business. He keeps the business small because it is hard to find reliable people. Some workers are not honest and others do a sloppy job because they don't like cleaning. My friend has two cleaning teams. He leads one and his wife

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the other. This way they can supervise directly and make sure no one steals equipment from the offices they clean. A mutual friend expanded his cleaning business and it has grown very large. Most of his workers don't steal but there are exceptions. It does not cost much to ruin the reputation of a business so my friend maintains a small honest business.

Others have lost their jobs because the business was sold or because someone in the business was envious of them.

We have been talking about the business world but there are trying situations in other areas of life that rattle our cages and leave us flattened with fear and exhaustion.

Maybe some of my readers have suffered terrible physical pain. Some may have passed whole nights pleading with the Lord to take their lives because of the pain that racks their bodies.

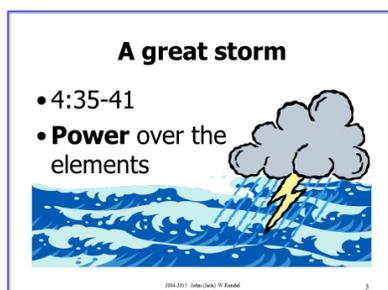
Mark: Preaching manual Where?		
The Universe?		
Power Over Storm		
Power Over Demons		
Power Over Sickness & Death		

In their “element”

But why emphasize the problems and storms of the business world? Stop and think about where the disciples found themselves that day after Jesus had preached the gospel through the parables of the sower and seeds. In chapter 4 verse 35 Jesus told the disciples to get into the boat and sail for the other side. Now in the boat on the sea they were in their element because some of them were fishermen. In this context so familiar to them a storm blew up!

We have already said that the Gospel of Mark divides cleanly into 7 divisions. The division we are looking at now is the third, where the author is answering the question, "Where does the Messiah want to establish his kingdom?" In the first three scenes we see the Lord Jesus demonstrating his unlimited power over enormous destructive elements in the universe.

I. The storm struggle: Power over the elements of wind and sea 4:35-41



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Twister!

In this story on the Sea of Galilee we have Mark's version of "Twister"! These fishermen, experienced seamen, are terrified by the violence of the storm on Galilee! They are afraid they are going to drown.

It wasn't a hurricane we experienced one day in northern Nigeria when I was 12 years old, but it was a powerful storm! There were lightening bolts, thunderclaps and torrents of water! I was playing with my brother in our room. He had a metal toy in his hand and was barefoot so when the lightening struck it threw him on the floor. The lightening touched down at the top of a tree next to the house. We saw the burnt branches and bare top of the tree the next day. An African friend was with us, leaning against the wall, and he didn't have his sandals on. He said he felt like a huge bag full of bricks had been dumped on him, when the lightening bolt struck. The force of the storm frightened all of us. The following day we not only saw the burnt branches at the top, but a dead bird at the foot of the tree.

Weary and tired

But in that storm on the sea, Jesus was asleep. He was exhausted after days of work, ministering to people and teaching them. Now we know that God does not tire. Listen to the words of Isaiah 40:28, *Have you not known? Have you not heard? The LORD is the everlasting God, the Creator of the ends of the earth. He does not faint or grow weary; his understanding is unsearchable (ESV).*

But the Son of God became man, was made like us and submitted to human experiences such as weariness and tiredness. Hebrews 2:14-17 says, *14 Since therefore the children share in flesh and blood, he himself likewise partook of the same things, that through death he might destroy the one who has the power of death, that is, the devil, 15 and deliver all those who through fear of death were subject to lifelong slavery. 16 For surely it is not angels that he helps, but he helps the offspring of Abraham. 17 Therefore he had to be made like his brothers in every respect, so that he might become a merciful and faithful high priest in the service of God, to make propitiation for the sins of the people (ESV).*

Is God asleep?

But someone may have gotten the impression that God was asleep. It seems that our lives are going from bad to worse, and God isn't doing anything about it! What can we do? We can pray just like they did in the boat. Maybe you just want to scream, "Listen, God, don't you care about me? I am drowning in my problems!" Those men prayed to Jesus asking him to save them.

Another kind of fear

Jesus rose and calmed the winds and the sea. Then there was a great calm. Now another emotion overcame the disciples. It was reverential fear. Terrified by what they had just seen Jesus do, they said, "Who is this that even the winds and the waves obey him?" Now they gazed at him with increased respect. He not only healed the sick but showed an even greater power over the storms at sea.

When the Lord calms life's storms for us will we respond in the same way? Will we feel the same respect and fear, worshipping him for his great power? The Lord seems to do it so easily,

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with just a word. But this should not surprise us. He made the heavens and the earth by the word of his mouth. Genesis 1:1, 3, 11, 14 and 15 say,

1 ¶ In the beginning God created the heaven and the earth. 3 ¶ And God said, Let there be light: and there was light. 11 And God said, Let the earth bring forth grass, the herb yielding seed, and the fruit tree yielding fruit after his kind, whose seed is in itself, upon the earth: and it was so. 14 ¶ And God said, Let there be lights in the firmament of the heaven to divide the day from the night; and let them be for signs, and for seasons, and for days, and years: And let them be for lights in the firmament of the heaven to give light upon the earth: and it was so (KJV).

Paul teaches us about the person of Jesus Christ in *Colossians 1:13-16*,

13 He has delivered us from the domain of darkness and transferred us to the kingdom of his beloved Son, 14 in whom we have redemption, the forgiveness of sins. 15 He is the image of the invisible God, the firstborn of all creation. 16 For by him all things were created, in heaven and on earth, visible and invisible, whether thrones or dominions or rulers or authorities—all things were created through him and for him (ESV).

The Lord controls all things just as the psalmist said in Psalm 135: 5-6, *5 For I know that the LORD is great, and that our Lord is above all gods. 6 Whatever the LORD pleases, he does, in heaven and on earth, in the seas and all deeps (ESV).*

It became very clear to the disciples that they were in the presence of not just a prophet but someone greater than a prophet.

In fact the answer to their question, "Who is this that even the winds and the waves obey him?" is given by someone we meet in the following story. What is surprising is that the one who answers is not a theologian. It was not Pharisees or doctors of the law from Jerusalem who answered. This question was answered by a demon-possessed man in the next story in Mark.

The last hours of the ship Logos

But let's stop and think about other cases of shipwreck. Here the Lord calmed the tempest. The apostle Paul suffered several shipwrecks and was rescued from them, but he had to suffer through them, with all that a shipwreck could imply.

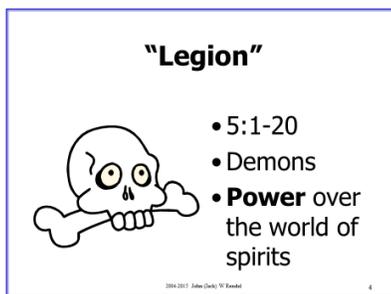
The gospel ship Logos also suffered shipwreck. It remains in view, above water, its belly pierced in three places by a rock in the Beagle channel, at the southern most tip of South America. The ship left port at night in stormy weather and the pilot requested transfer to his boat earlier than regulations called for. The launch that was carrying the pilot was bulky and not so easy to maneuver and the skipper was putting pressure on the pilot to get off the Logos. The captain of the Logos finally gave him permission because the sea was rough and the gale was increasing. The pilot showed the captain of Logos where to go down the channel but there was a strong current in the channel which the captain of Logos knew nothing about. But after finally getting the pilot into the launch, after three attempts, the ship drifted onto a submerged rock, part of one

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of the two islands they were trying to go between. As the Logos captain tried to make head way the current prevented any advance, so drifted on to the rocks and remained there all night.

The crew waited till morning hoping an increase in the tide would raise the ship enough to free it from the rock and allow them to limp into port. But it was not to be. The movement of the ship against the rocks, with the tide, was like a can opener, which put three holes in the bottom, into the two holds at the bow, and into the engine room. They had to abandon ship but all the crew were rescued. The fact that they held regular safety drills on Logos stood them in good stead when the need finally arrived to use them. The Lord was good and saved them from death. *The Logos Story* by Elaine Rhoton unfolds the gripping story of God's help and mercy to the crew and staff. (*The Logos Story*, Elaine Rhoton, OM Literature and Gabriel Publishing, 170-185)

II. The battle with "Legion": Power over thousands of demons 5:1-20



Tomb raiding

When Jesus and his band of disciples reached Gadara a specter of a man out of the tombs met them. He was unusually powerful. People had bound him with chains and fetters but he broke them to pieces. He screamed out and raked himself with sharp stones. But when he saw Jesus he ran to him, fell down before him and cried out, *"What have I to do with thee, Jesus, thou Son of the most high God? I adjure thee by God, that thou torment me not (Mark 5:7 KJV).*

This wretched man had answered the question which spilled from the mouths of the disciples back in the boat after Jesus had calmed the wind and the sea, "Who is this that even the wind and the waves obey him?" This wretch was not a theologian but he knew who Jesus was. The voice was his but the knowledge was that of Legion, the demons who were in control of his body. Those demons revealed the identity of Jesus. They called him the Son of the most high God, and added that they knew he could do them terrible damage.

Where and which information desk?

We need to emphasize that neither Jesus nor his disciples sought information from these demons. These revelations about Jesus blazed out of the mouth of the demon possessed, but this is neither example nor permission to search for revelations from demons and familiar spirits, whether they seem innocent or not. God has revealed to us in the Bible all we need to know about Jesus, God, angels and demons. We are not to depend on revelations via angels or spirits because even the devil himself disguises himself as an angel of light. He looks good and can easily confuse us little by little with his lies, usually mixed with a healthy portion of "truth".

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No, they did not seek information from demons, it spilled out as they went about the ministry and met those possessed face to face. Without doubt these demonic angels were terrified by Jesus. They also knew that the life of this one man was more important to Jesus than the thousands of pigs grazing nearby, so they asked Jesus to send them into the swine. When the demons reached the pigs they rushed over a cliff and into the sea.

The townspeople ran out and found Jesus and the demon possessed sitting there in his right mind. They learned about the herd of pigs and asked Jesus to leave their region.

Power, possession and pork

Jesus had done a great favor to that man who was trapped in a hopeless situation. But the people of the area were more concerned about their pork than about the possessed. The Gadarenes had never seen such power as that shown by Jesus. They did not stop to think about all the sick, other demon possessed, and those with great needs whom Jesus could help. As Dr. David Gooding commented on one occasion, "Some of them (people of the district), as we have noticed, had been willing to help the man when it was a matter of chaining him up; but if a man's deliverance was going to cost a whole herd of pigs, that was a different matter altogether. A herd of pigs represented an enormous amount of food and money! They decided they must ask Christ to depart before, perhaps, he started saving any further demoniacs." (*According to Luke*, David Gooding, IVP and Eerdmans, 146) They were thinking about other demon possessed out of whom he might cast more demons, and the unbearable possibility that they might lose more pigs! In other words, forget the people; save the pigs!

A snap shot of herdsmen in the Sahel

There are people in the world who have lost their cattle if not their pigs, but this situation is very different from the Gadarenes. The Sahara Desert of West Africa is creeping south turning the area called the Sahel into a desert. The Fulani, who are the "cowboys" of West Africa, are finding it harder all the time to find pasture for their flocks and herds. With the droughts some have lost their entire herd. Some have taken to farming the land, almost unheard of amongst them! Missionaries, trained in agriculture, are helping some of them to till the ground in order to support their families. This has been a testimony to the Fulani and allowed missionaries to live with them and share the good news about Jesus with them. Before this time very little was done amongst the Fulani because they were nomads, living in huts, staying six months in the highlands and six months in the "fadama", a Hausa word for the lowlands near rivers, always keenly conscious of the need to find pasture for the cattle.

The answer is, "no"!

The disciples had prayed to Jesus out in the storm on the lake and now this man, delivered of demons, also prayed. He asked Jesus to allow him to join him and his disciples. But Jesus told him he may not follow him from place to place. Has this happened to you? God answers you with a, no. The Lord had other plans for him who had been Legion.

Then Jesus explained to him that he wanted him to stay in Gadara to testify to the people of that region what great things and what great mercy the Lord had shown him. Who better than this

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man to remind the people of his former life as the "living dead" amongst the tombs! Who better than he to remind them of his terrible power that broke chains with bare hands! Who better than he to remind them that it was Jesus' mercy and power that overcame Legion and released him from death.

Different strokes for different folks

There is something else here. Whom did the people of Gadara fear more, Jesus or the man called Legion? It is a curious fact that they feared Jesus more than the man who had been possessed. They had not asked the man released from demons to leave their land, but rather they asked Jesus! Think about this next time you witness. If Jesus were to come to your town the people might fear him more than they fear you. Just as that man could be a more useful witness in his area than Jesus, so might we. The people may fear more the great and mysterious power that controlled demons than someone who comes simply speaking about mercy. In any case we know that the Lord is dealing with different people groups around the world in different ways, and if it were not the case, then the world would be completely uniform, and it is not. In the final judgment the Lord may say to the peoples of the world, "I have treated you in different ways, at different times, to see whether you would turn to me and be converted; but with all that, even then, it was difficult that you should turn to me to be saved."

But there is another element here which is not known for sure. Was it Jesus' fault that the herd of pigs ran into the sea and drowned? Was it the fault of the demons? Did the demons do it in order to destroy the property and give Jesus a bad name in that region? Do we really know?

A terrible ignorance

What about the mercies of God to all of us? Even though the apostle Paul was not demon possessed before his conversion, he was in another "prison", in the grip of other powers. Let's listen to his words in his letter to Timothy.

12 And I thank Christ Jesus our Lord, who hath enabled me, for that he counted me faithful, putting me into the ministry; 13 Who was before a blasphemer, and a persecutor, and injurious: but I obtained mercy, because I did it ignorantly in unbelief. 14 And the grace of our Lord was exceeding abundant with faith and love which is in Christ Jesus. 15 This is a faithful saying, and worthy of all acceptation, that Christ Jesus came into the world to save sinners; of whom I am chief. 16 Howbeit for this cause I obtained mercy, that in me first Jesus Christ might shew forth all longsuffering, for a pattern to them which should hereafter believe on him to life everlasting. 17 Now unto the King eternal, immortal, invisible, the only wise God, be honour and glory for ever and ever. Amen (1Timothy 1:12-17 AV/KJV1769).

Just as the Gadarene had lived in ignorance, so did Paul. We have all lived in our ignorance until Jesus had mercy on us. Paul ends with praises to the God who reveals himself, the King of the ages, immortal, invisible, the only wise God. To him be the glory for ever and ever. Amen.

But the rejection Jesus and his band suffered here will grow three scenes later. So Jesus and his followers left the region.

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III. Hemorrhaging and sleeping: Power over sickness and death 5:21-43

Sickness and death

- 5:21-43
- A woman and a daughter
- **Power** over:
 - sickness
 - death



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Things got worse before they got better!

Now Jairus came kneeling to Jesus and begged him to come to his home for his daughter was so sick, she was about to die. The prayer of this man was answered but not right away! Another person interrupted and made him wait. A woman "jumped the queue" as they say in Britain and made the Master delay. In fact before Jairus' prayer to heal his daughter was answered she died.

When Jairus made his petition, things actually got worse before they got better. Has this ever happened to you? The Master says, "Yes", to your prayer, but he does not act right away. You had to wait!

Have you had your prayers answered like this? You are in desperate need and you ask God for help. He starts helping you but then you notice that someone else seems to be getting help faster than you do. It looks like they are receiving more help than you are. In fact your situation gets so bad you lose all hope. Your hope dies! Things get worse before they get better.

Do you remember when Moses went to Egypt and challenged Pharaoh to let God's people go? Instead of letting the people go he put more pressure on them! God allowed Pharaoh to make his slaves work harder. Before that time they made bricks with straw and the straw was provided. Now the Pharaoh decreed that they had to go out and find the straw themselves and come up with as many bricks in the same time period. The Israelites complained to Moses that things were now worse. They thought Moses would wind up killing them if he fought any longer for their liberty.

God was doing two things at once. He was preparing Pharaoh to finally and completely let them go, and he was preparing the Israelites to finally and completely want to go! Until that point was reached neither group was ready.

Your burden may be reaching a point at which you feel desperate. It seems the Lord is helping another more than you. He may allow the situation to get quite out of your control. Allow him the privilege of being God!

On the one hand the Lord wants us to be sensitive to the wounds of others. On the other hand he may want you to see him as the God who raises the dead, not just the God who heals! He wants to be more glorious in our eyes than we can imagine. He doesn't want to be your tiny Savior. He

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wants to be your great and glorious Savior. JB Philips wrote a book on this issue and entitled it, "Your God is Too Small!" That title says it all!

In the world of business where the rule is that you may not talk about religion in a positive way and Jesus is taboo, you will need a great Savior who can open big doors of witness for you. Ask him to do it! The Lord may allow a crisis in your office or business that will force people to reach out to God. They will see how great God is.

"Get on the bus!"

The paragraph above was written long before the attack on the World Trade Center on September 11, 2001. I wouldn't wish such a crisis on anyone. But our world is an evil world and yet in the midst of the destruction at the World Trade Towers the Lord had his people ministering to others. In 2002, I heard on cassette tape, explained by the pastor of the Brooklyn Tabernacle, the testimony of one young lady who was witnessing to a colleague and her code for receiving Jesus was "getting on the bus." Then the day arrived when the plane struck their tower and they had to try to escape. They reached the ground and got disorientated but hung on to each other. Finally the pair made it into a bus where others were gathering to escape the dust that hanging in the air was suffocating them. The Christian heard her colleague say to her the words she had longed to hear, "I guess it's time for me to get on the bus." They bowed their heads and the woman received Christ that day.

If you are the only believer in your family and they seem to "care less" about your testimony, remember how great God is and hang on to God in prayer. The Lord may be preparing the ideal circumstances in which he can present himself to them. He can do it through you and lead many to Christ. Remember too that this may not happen during you lifetime.

Maybe you are someone who has virtually no non-Christian friends. In fact there is no one you know who is not a Christian. But look, the Lord can give you a friend who does not know him yet, someone to whom you can witness.

The missionary, who carries a burden for a particular people group, can persevere in prayer for the group. He must remember that there may be response in other groups before he sees a response in the group where he works. In fact things could even get worse in his chosen people group before they get better.

Changes in a country of the Middle East

People had prayed for years for a spiritual response in that land. I remember praying with the OM team in 1967 for the country. I spent nine months there learning the language and evangelizing. It was a country dominated by the majority religion of the Middle East, but there was relative freedom to evangelize. Then a revolution came and so much changed! Things got worse with much confusion and persecution of believers. Pastors were martyred.

But this all led to the growth of the church. There was a response on the part of people of the majority religion who were seeking answers and responding to salvation in Christ. They even attended Christian churches, even churches of the Christian minorities. One pastor said he had

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baptized approximately 4,000 persons in the last few years. (From a devotional report by H. Norrish)

Again we would never desire the persecution of others but the Lord allowed, in his wisdom, certain things to take place in that land. Many other countries have known the gospel and it has been preached widely, but not so in this case. Then when blessing was what was really needed, it seemed as though a dark period of bondage came upon the country. But in the midst of the bondage God brought blessing and delivered many from their spiritual darkness and bondage.

Waking up the dead

The Lord eventually reached the house of Jairus and raised his daughter from the dead. He had everyone ushered out and said the girl was only sleeping. Those present probably thought that was a bad joke at the wrong time! But is not death like sleep and sleep like death? The little girl's death was like sleep to Jesus, because he could do something we can't do; he could wake the child up. I can wake you up if you are sleeping and I may have a shoe thrown at me! But I can't wake you up if you are dead! Jesus can wake the dead so he called it sleep.

He won't steal your work

Praise God! Jesus "woke up" that child! But then he turned the work back over to those who could do it. He asked that she be fed! Jesus is not going to take things away from you that you can do. Isn't that wonderful? And isn't it wonderful that he does the enormously great things he can do in our universe?

But Jesus desires to go deeper. He will go deep into the problems and needs of society in the next three stories.

Questions to aid in the study of this section, Mark 4:35-5:43

1. What were the 3 major areas in which Jesus demonstrated his power?
2. What physical dangers have you faced? What did you do in response? Did you pray? What happened then?
3. Whom did the Gadarenes fear more, "Legion" or Jesus? Why?
4. Why did Jesus send the man delivered from demons back into his own society to tell them about the great things and mercy God had shown him, rather than allow him to join the band of disciples?
5. What are some of your worst fears? Those of your Bible class or congregation?
6. Describe those occasions when you saw things get worse before they got better, as you prayed.
7. What has the Lord done for you that you could not do for yourself?
8. Find another Bible event where the Lord did marvelous things for those who prayed to him. Use it as a sermon or Bible study illustration.
9. What verses of the Bible about prayer are your favorites? Check out the following passages:

Matthew 7:7-11

7 Ask, and it shall be given you; seek, and ye shall find; knock, and it shall be opened unto you: 8 For every one that asketh receiveth; and he that seeketh findeth; and to him that knocketh it shall

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be opened. 9 Or what man is there of you, whom if his son ask bread, will he give him a stone? 10 Or if he ask a fish, will he give him a serpent? 11 If ye then, being evil, know how to give good gifts unto your children, how much more shall your Father which is in heaven give good things to them that ask him (AV/KJV1769)?

John 14:1-14

13 And whatsoever ye shall ask in my name, that will I do, that the Father may be glorified in the Son. 14 If ye shall ask any thing in my name, I will do it (AV/KJV1769).

John 16:23b-24

23b Verily, verily, I say unto you, Whatsoever ye shall ask the Father in my name, he will give it you. 24 Hitherto have ye asked nothing in my name: ask, and ye shall receive, that your joy may be full (AV/KJV1769).

Philippians 4:6-7

6 Be careful for nothing; but in every thing by prayer and supplication with thanksgiving let your requests be made known unto God. 7 And the peace of God, which passeth all understanding, shall keep your hearts and minds through Christ Jesus (AV/KJV1769).