

THE AUTHORITY OF JESUS OVER NATURE: REST AND PEACE

MARK 04:35–41

Introduction: Messiahship

What was the purpose of this experience? Why was a storm or squall allowed to arise on the sea with Jesus in the boat? The answer is given in v. 41. And what a marvellous purpose it was: to stir His people to ask, “Who is this?” Jesus proved again that He is the Messiah! Calming the storm would do three things.

1. It would demonstrate who He is: the Sovereign Lord who has all power — even power over nature.
2. It would strengthen the belief of His followers, belief in Him as the Messiah and in His personal care as their Saviour.
3. It would give to all generations a picture of His care and power to deliver through all the storms of life (trials and fearful experiences).

It does not matter what the storm or trial is nor how terrifying it may be — Jesus is able to deliver and bring about the most assuring calm. Few trials could be as terrifying as being caught in a life-threatening storm at sea. In this experience, God has demonstrated His wonderful care and power to deliver the believer through all the storms of life.

- I. Rest and peace are sought after a tiring day (vv. 35-36).
- II. Rest and peace can be experienced despite a great storm (vv. 37-38).
- III. Rest and peace are a concern to Jesus (vv. 38-39).
- IV. Rest and peace come through two sources (vv. 40-41).

I. *Mark 04:35–36 Rest and Peace*

Rest and peace are sought after a tiring day. Note it was evening of the same day when Jesus sought rest and peace. He had been teaching all day to a crowd of people. The crowd had been so massive and pressing that they had forced Him off the shore into a boat (Mk. 4:1). As anyone knows, just being in such a massive throng of people struggling for space is tiring. It strains and taxes the strongest nerves. Imagine the fatigue of Jesus, having been responsible for the crowd, controlling and teaching them all day long. The fatigue and exhaustion of His body were seen in the fact that He left immediately for the other shore. He made no preparations whatsoever. Note the words, “they took Him along just as He was” (v. 36). Provisions, a change of clothing, notifying His family that He would be gone a while — nothing mattered but rest and peace. He was so fatigued He even slept through the storm (v. 38). He just had to getaway.

An interesting note that is not commented on by the other gospel writers is the simple statement: “There were also other boats with Him” (v. 36). Mark mentions this to stress

His deity, His being the Son of God. There would be other witnesses to His great power and control over nature.

Thought 1. Jesus sets a dynamic example in labouring to the point of fatigue and exhaustion. How many of us labour to the point that we just collapse, being unable to shower or change clothes, being so tired that we even sleep through violent storms?

1 Cor 15:58 *Therefore, my dear brothers, stand firm. Let nothing move you. Always give yourselves fully to the work of the Lord, because you know that your labour in the Lord is not in vain.*

John 9:4 *“As long as it is day, we must do the work of him who sent me. Night is coming, when no one can work.”*

Rom 13:12 *The night is nearly over; the day is almost here. So let us put aside the deeds of darkness and put on the armour of light.*

2 Tim 4:2 *Preach the Word; be prepared in season and out of season; correct, rebuke and encourage — with great patience and careful instruction.*

Thought 2. There are times when rest and peace are desperately needed and nothing should be allowed to interfere.

Thought 3. Note those who followed in the “other boats.” Others had gone away, but these wanted more of His presence and teaching. They followed Him out of town, booking passage across the lake. Just think what they would have missed if they had turned away and not followed Him. A storm, yes!

But they would have also missed experiencing His salvation and power over the storm. They would also have missed the enormous opportunity for growth in learning to trust God more and more.

2 Cor 6:2 *For he says, “In the time of my favour I heard you, and in the day of salvation I helped you.” I tell you, now is the time of God’s favour, now is the day of salvation.*

Psa 32:6 *Therefore let everyone who is godly pray to you while you may be found; surely when the mighty waters rise, they will not reach him.*

II. **Mark 04:37–38** *Experience of Rest and Peace*

Rest and peace can be experienced despite a great storm. Note the words “a furious squall.” The idea is a severe storm with...

- rolling black clouds thundering and tumbling in upon one another.
- heavy drops of rain falling like pellets upon the earth.
- gusts of wind slamming into everything standing in the path of the wind’s force.

The idea in the Greek is something like the fury of a hurricane. Such violent storms were regular occurrences on the Sea of Galilee (See *Sea of Galilee*, Mk. 1:16).

Mat 8:24 *The waves swept over the boat.*

Luke 8:23 *The boat was being swamped, and they were in great danger.*

But note something: while all the turmoil was going on, Jesus was in the back of the ship sleeping. He was, so to speak, at rest — at peace with Himself and with others and with nature itself. He was completely without guilt or shame, completely at peace with God. He rested perfectly in the care of God. Therefore He was able to rest through the storm.

Thought 1. The storms or trials of life often come suddenly and violently. And too often Christ seems to be far away, asleep. What we need during the storms of life are the same rest and peace, trust and confidence in God, that Jesus had.

1 John 5:4-5 *For everyone born of God overcomes the world. This is the victory that has overcome the world, even our faith. Who is it that overcomes the world? Only he who believes that Jesus is the Son of God.*

Psa 34:18 *The Lord is close to the broken-hearted and saves those who are crushed in spirit.*

Psa 145:8 *The Lord is gracious and compassionate, slow to anger and rich in love.*

MARK 01:16

SEA OF GALILEE; LAKE GENNESARET; SEA OF TIBERIAS

A fresh water lake in northern Palestine. At its widest points, it was only about 13 miles north to south and 8 miles east to west. It would not be called a sea today because of its small size. There are several important facts to note about the Lake.

1. The Lake was known by several names: the Sea of Galilee (Mt. 4:18; 15:29; Mk. 1:16; 7:31); the Sea of Tiberias (Jn. 6:1; 21:1); the Lake of Gennesaret (Lk. 5:1); and simply the “lake” (Jn. 6:16-25) or “the water’s edge” (Lk. 5:2). In the Old Testament it was called the Sea of Kinnereth (meaning harp shaped) (Lk. 8:22; Jn. 6:16-25; Num. 34:11; Deu. 3:17; Jos. 13:27).
2. The Lake was surrounded by some of the richest and most heavily populated areas of Palestine. Large towns flourished along its shores, towns which play a prominent role in Scripture: Capernaum (Mt. 4:12-13), Bethsaida (Mk. 6:45), Khorazin (Lk. 10:13), Magadan (Mt. 15:39), the region of Gerasenes (Mk. 5:1).
3. The Lake was subject to violent storms. It sat 680 feet below sea level which gave the Lake a warm climate, but it was in a pocket-like basin surrounded by steep, fast-rising hills (2000 feet high) and funnel-like mountains. The funnels or deep ravines running down through the mountains have resulted from eons of erosion. When cold-fronts move in with their fierce winds, the cold whips through the funnel-like gorges and mixes with the warm temperatures of the Lake. Unpredictable and terrifying storms result (Mt. 8:23-27; Mk. 4:35-41; Lk. 8:22-25). □

III. *Mark 04:38–39 Jesus' Concern Over Rest and Peace*

Rest and peace are a concern to Jesus. Note something: the disciples were seasoned fishermen. No doubt they had been caught in storms before, but this storm was more violent. They feared that they were drowning. They had tried to handle the situation themselves, but the situation had gotten out of hand. They had thought Jesus would awaken on His own, as any man would; but they were wrong, and they could wait no longer.

1. Note the exact words of the disciples: “Teacher, don’t you care if we drown?” (v. 38). They confessed they were drowning. They were prideful men, well-built, and very capable in their profession. They had always handled every situation before; and they had started out handling this storm. But there they stood confessing their *human inability* and their *need* for His help, the help of God Himself.

A desperate approach — Lord, awake — save us. Why did the disciples call upon Jesus now? Why not earlier?

=> The situation was totally *out of control*, beyond their ability to handle.

=> They were about to perish and die.

=> They had waited and waited, tried and tried to handle the situation themselves. They were prideful men: big, sturdy, capable, seasoned and prideful in their profession. They had always handled every situation before; they could handle this one, or so they thought.

In the final analysis, the disciples confessed their need. They broke through their pride and came to Jesus. But note: they had almost waited too late, humanly speaking. Jesus *stirred Himself* and heard their confession.

Thought 1. Note these significant lessons.

- 1) Imminent danger can drive us to Christ, but we need to remember three critical things.
 - a) We can’t wait too long. We can die and slip into eternity before we know it.
 - b) We run a terrible risk in waiting. We overlook something: a person who decides to wait until the last minute is not all that sincere about Christ, and Christ knows it.
 - c) We waste a lifetime of *living* — *really living in all the fullness of life*. Abundant life comes only through Christ — the life that brings unbelievable confidence and assurance, security and self-worth, love and joy, peace and rest.

John 10:10 “The thief comes only to steal and kill and destroy; I have come that they may have life, and have it to the full.”

Gal 5:22-23 *But the fruit of the Spirit is love, joy, peace, patience, kindness, goodness, faithfulness, gentleness and self-control. Against such things there is no law.*

- 2) There is one ingredient so often missed in asking Christ to save us — one ingredient that determines whether we are heard or not: a true sense of need —

a desperate plea for help beyond ourselves — a crying out to the Lord Himself — a diligent seeking.

Heb 11:6 And without faith it is impossible to please God, because anyone who comes to him must believe that he exists and that he rewards those who earnestly seek him.

3) Their cry included the steps necessary for Christ to save them and us.

a) They believed He could save them: so they came to Him.

John 3:16 “For God so loved the world that he gave his one and only Son, that whoever believes in him shall not perish but have eternal life.”

b) They confessed their need to be saved, that they were perishing.

Rom 3:23 For all have sinned and fall short of the glory of God.

Rom 6:23 For the wages of sin is death, but the gift of God is eternal life in Christ Jesus our Lord.

c) They cried out in desperation for Christ to save them.

Rom 10:13 For, “Everyone who calls on the name of the Lord will be saved.”

Rom 10:9-10 That if you confess with your mouth, “Jesus is Lord,” and believe in your heart that God raised him from the dead, you will be saved. For it is with your heart that you believe and are justified, and it is with your mouth that you confess and are saved.

4) A desperate cry that will not quit will awaken the Lord to our need. No matter what it may be, persevering in prayer will awaken Him and bring the answer (see Mt. 7:7-11).

Mat 7:7-8 “Ask and it will be given to you; seek and you will find; knock and the door will be opened to you. For everyone who asks receives; he who seeks finds; and to him who knocks, the door will be opened.”

Acts 17:27 God did this so that men would seek him and perhaps reach out for him and find him, though he is not far from each one of us.

Deu 4:29 But if from there you seek the Lord your God, you will find him if you look for him with all your heart and with all your soul.

Psa 34:6 This poor man called, and the Lord heard him; he saved him out of all his troubles.

Psa 61:2 From the ends of the earth I call to you, I call as my heart grows faint; lead me to the rock that is higher than I.

Psa 105:4 Look to the Lord and his strength; seek his face always.

Isa 55:6 Seek the Lord while he may be found: call on him while he is near.

Jer 29:13 You will seek me and find me when you seek me with all your heart.

2. The response of Jesus to the plea of His disciples was dramatic. Note what Jesus did and what happened:

=> “He got up.”

=> “He rebuked the wind...and the wind died down.”

=> “He said to the waves...and it was completely calm.”

The words *quiet, be still* (*siopa pephimoso*) mean literally to *be muzzled*. The use of this word *muzzled* shows the fury and violence of the storm and stresses the dramatic act of Jesus.

Thought 1. The power of Jesus to control the sea and its storms, to control nature itself, demonstrates three facts (Mt. 8:26).

- 1) Christ is the Son of God, the Sovereign Lord over all nature and life. He not only possesses the authority of God; but, as Mark sets out to prove, He is the Son of God Himself.
- 2) Christ can calm any storm of life for us.

Rom 1:4 *And who through the Spirit of holiness was declared with power to be the Son of God by his resurrection from the dead: Jesus Christ our Lord.*

Mat 28:18 *Then Jesus came to them and said, “All authority in heaven and on earth has been given to me.”*

- 3) Christ can strengthen us to go through any trial.

1 Cor 10:13 *No temptation has seized you except what is common to man. And God is faithful; he will not let you be tempted beyond what you can bear. But when you are tempted, he will also provide a way out so that you can stand up under it.*

2 Cor 1:3-4 *Praise be to the God and Father of our Lord Jesus Christ, the Father of compassion and the God of all comfort, who comforts us in all our troubles, so that we can comfort those in any trouble with the comfort we ourselves have received from God.*

2 Cor 2:14 *But thanks be to God, who always leads us in triumphal procession in Christ and through us spreads everywhere the fragrance of the knowledge of him.*

2 Tim 4:18 *The Lord will rescue me from every evil attack and will bring me safely to his heavenly kingdom. To him be glory for ever and ever. Amen.*

Psa 91:3 *Surely he will save you from the fowler’s snare and from the deadly pestilence.*

IV. Mark 04:40–41 Sources Rest and Peace

Rest and peace come through two sources.

1. Through faith (See *Fear*, Mt. 8:26; *Faith vs. Works*, Gal. 2:15-16.)

Christ is the Sovereign Lord over all nature. He can do what He wills for any of us. He arose and rebuked the storm — then there was an instantaneous calm. But

note this: the disciples misread both the situation and Christ's presence. When they awoke Christ, Christ pointed out their fear immediately — even before He arose and answered their need.

This says something of critical importance: all the problems of the world are known by Christ and providentially overruled by Him. He does not have to rush to meet them. Problems are not a danger or threat to the child of God. This does not mean that we shall not suffer or die, nor that we do not have to bear terrible trials. The disciples had to experience this storm and they had to experience many other storms. But Christ was with them, and He is always with us. He will strengthen and carry us through all the storms of life. In fact, as with the disciples, God uses the storms of life to teach us more and more trust in Him. If there were no trials, there would be no need to trust Him.

How often we misread the presence of Christ, thinking He is out of reach. And how often we misread the storm, thinking it is out of His control. The problem is, we are not walking close enough to Him to be conscious of His presence and care. He will speak and calm the storm at the very best time, after everyone has learned what they are supposed to learn through the storms.

Mat 19:26 Jesus looked at them and said, “With man this is impossible, but with God all things are possible.”

Mat 28:18 Then Jesus came to them and said, “All authority in heaven and on earth has been given to me.”

Luke 1:37 “For nothing is impossible with God.”

Job 26:12 By his power he churned up the sea; by his wisdom he cut Rahab to pieces.

Psa 115:3 Our God is in heaven; he does whatever pleases him.

Isa 43:13 “Yes, and from ancient days I am he. No one can deliver out of my hand. When I act, who can reverse it?”

Thought 1. Note several lessons.

- 1) Christ was not disturbed with their calling and interrupting His sleep. He was disturbed with their fear and lack of trust. He is never disturbed with our crying out to Him.
- 2) There is no excuse for a disciple's fear. Of all people, believers are supposed to be the persons trusting Him, knowing that He is looking after their lives. Believers are to know His supernatural strength; they are supposed to walk through all things courageously, even death.
- 3) The disciples neglected Christ. They could have prevented much of their problem if they had gone to Christ earlier. As pointed out earlier, they were trying to handle the situation by themselves, confident of their own ability. How often we walk in self-confidence, not paying enough attention to the Lord and His care. We

always need to be calling upon Him, not waiting until the last moment, expecting Him to step in and meet our emergency (1 Pet. 5:7; Eph. 6:18).

4) Christ rebukes fear and unbelief. Fear and unbelief dishonour Him. It says to the world that Christ is not enough. He is not strong enough and does not care enough and does not love enough to look after us in our trouble and sin. How foolish we are (Jn. 3:16; 1 Pet. 5:7; Mt. 11:28-30)!

5) Faith is to be several things.

=> Faith is to be the foundation of our lives, not a beam for emergency support.

=> Faith is to be the flow of our behaviour, not the serum for emergencies.

=> Faith is to be the permeating thought of our mind, not the sporadic thought aroused by need. Faith is to be the constant plea of our heart, not the occasional cry of desperation.

6) Storms and trials can lead to terrible discouragement and fear...

- fear that one has gone too far for recovery.
- fear that no one really cares.
- fear that one is a stumbling block and a burden to others.
- fear that there is no real reason for living.

But there is hope — *in Christ*. He is *The Great Deliverer* from fear. In fact, He is The Great Deliverer from all trials and temptations.

Mat 28:20 *“And teaching them to obey everything I have commanded you. And surely I am with you always, to the very end of the age.”*

Heb 13:5 *Keep your lives free from the love of money and be content with what you have, because God has said, “Never will I leave you; never will I forsake you.”*

1 Cor 10:13 *No temptation has seized you except what is common to man. And God is faithful; he will not let you be tempted beyond what you can bear. But when you are tempted, he will also provide a way out so that you can stand up under it.*

Rev 2:10 *Do not be afraid of what you are about to suffer. I tell you, the devil will put some of you in prison to test you, and you will suffer persecution for ten days. Be faithful, even to the point of death, and I will give you the crown of life.*

Psa 23:4 *Even though I walk through the valley of the shadow of death, I will fear no evil, for you are with me; your rod and your staff, they comfort me.*

Psa 27:1 *The Lord is my light and my salvation — whom shall I fear? The Lord is the stronghold of my life — of whom shall I be afraid?*

Thought 2. Christ arises when He is called upon. When we really mean what we pray. He arises to His feet in our behalf. He stands and confronts the situation head-on, meeting our needs beyond what we ask, in the very best way possible.

Rom 8:26 *In the same way, the Spirit helps us in our weakness. We do not know what we ought to pray for, but the Spirit himself intercedes for us with groans that words cannot express.*

Eph 3:20 *Now to him who is able to do immeasurably more than all we ask or imagine, according to his power that is at work within us.*

Thought 3. Note two things.

- 1) Christ can calm any storm of life for us.
- 2) Christ can strengthen us to go through any storm of life.

2 Cor 1:3-4 *Praise be to the God and Father of our Lord Jesus Christ, the Father of compassion and the God of all comfort, who comforts us in all our troubles, so that we can comfort those in any trouble with the comfort we ourselves have received from God.*

Phil 1:29 *For it has been granted to you on behalf of Christ not only to believe on him, but also to suffer for him.*

1 Pet 4:12-13 *Dear friends, do not be surprised at the painful trial you are suffering, as though something strange were happening to you. But rejoice that you participate in the sufferings of Christ, so that you may be overjoyed when his glory is revealed.*

Mat 8:13 *Then Jesus said to the centurion, “Go! It will be done just as you believed it would.” And his servant was healed at that very hour.*

Mat 9:29-30 *Then he touched their eyes and said, “According to your faith will it be done to you”; and their sight was restored. Jesus warned them sternly, “See that no one knows about this.”*

Mat 21:22 *“If you believe, you will receive whatever you ask for in prayer.”*

Mark 9:23 *“If you can?” said Jesus. “Everything is possible for him who believes.”*

2. Through Jesus, His power and His Word. The disciples marvelled; they had never seen anything like it — even the winds and seas obeyed Him.
 - a. They now knew more about what it meant to call Him “Lord.” He was the sovereign Lord who possessed all power over nature — the same power that the prophets of old proclaimed for God.
 - b. They also knew more about what it meant to trust Him and His Word. He was able to control even the elements of nature. They could now depend upon His power to do whatever was needed. In Him, the power was available to control all things and to do all things.

John 14:12 *“I tell you the truth, anyone who has faith in me will do what I have been doing. He will do even greater things than these, because I am going to the Father.”*

Eph 3:20 *Now to him who is able to do immeasurably more than all we ask or imagine, according to his power that is at work within us.*

Phil 2:9-12 *Therefore God exalted him to the highest place and gave him the name that is above every name. That at the name of Jesus every knee should bow, in heaven and on earth and under the earth, and every tongue confess that Jesus Christ is Lord, to the glory of God the Father. Therefore, my dear friends, as you have always obeyed — not only in my presence, but now much more in my absence — continue to work out your salvation with fear and trembling.*

2 Tim 1:7 *For God did not give us a spirit of timidity, but a spirit of power, of love and of self-discipline.*

Mat 9:6 *“But so that you may know that the Son of Man has authority on earth to forgive sins...” Then he said to the paralytic, “Get up, take your mat and go home.”*

Mat 11:28 *“Come to me, all you who are weary and burdened, and I will give you rest.”*

John 14:27 *Peace I leave with you; my peace I give you. I do not give to you as the world gives. Do not let your hearts be troubled and do not be afraid.*

John 16:33 *“I have told you these things, so that in me you may have peace. In this world you will have trouble. But take heart! I have overcome the world.”*

Acts 10:38 *How God anointed Jesus of Nazareth with the Holy Spirit and power, and how he went around doing good and healing all who were under the power of the devil, because God was with him.*

Eph 1:19-22 *And his incomparably great power for us who believe. That power is like the working of his mighty strength, which he exerted in Christ when he raised him from the dead and seated him at his right hand in the heavenly realms, far above all rule and authority, power and dominion, and every title that can be given, not only in the present age but also in the one to come. And God placed all things under his feet and appointed him to be head over everything for the church.*

Eph 3:20 *Now to him who is able to do immeasurably more than all we ask or imagine, according to his power that is at work within us.*

Heb 2:17-18 *For this reason he had to be made like his brothers in every way, in order that he might become a merciful and faithful high priest in service to God, and that he might make atonement for the sins of the people. Because he himself suffered when he was tempted, he is able to help those who are being tempted.*

Heb 4:15-16 *For we do not have a high priest who is unable to sympathize with our weaknesses, but we have one who has been tempted in every way, just as we are — yet was without sin. Let us then approach the throne of grace with confidence, so that we may receive mercy and find grace to help us in our time of need. ■*

MATHEW 08:26 FEAR

He replied, "You of little faith, why are you so afraid?" Then he got up and rebuked the winds and the waves, and it was completely calm.

Mathew 08:26

Fear can be a good thing as well as a bad thing. Fear sometimes causes us to respond with more vigour and strength, intelligence and wisdom, well beyond ourselves. Fear can make us face three things.

1. Fear can make us face the reality about ourselves: what we really are; who we really are; why we are here.
2. Fear can make us face our desperate need: that we are not perfect nor completely self-sufficient, self-contained, or adequate for all things. We are not the summit of existence nor the epitome of what man should be. Humanism and humanistic philosophy (that man is all) are not the crowning glory of behaviour and thought. We desperately need to face the fact. No matter how well we behave or how high we think, we still have terrible storms that swoop down upon us, and they engulf us like waves of the ocean rolling in one upon another. And then the final wave that no man can handle, the great tidal wave of death, drowns the breath of life out of us. We must face the fact...
 - that there are desperate needs that must be handled.
 - that we are incapable of handling them ourselves.
3. Fear can make us face our need for help beyond ourselves.

In facing death we are as helpless as the disciples were. We cannot stop death. When it is time, we die. Note this fact as well: just like the disciples, we need help all the time. We may not confess our need, but the *need for Christ* is always hounding us whether we recognize it or not. We may walk day by day in our own strength and ability, but there would be a tremendous difference if we trusted Christ to save us.

1. Things would go much better.

Rom 8:28 *And we know that in all things God works for the good of those who love him, who have been called according to his purpose.*

2. Life would be so much more smooth and more peaceful.

John 10:10 *"The thief comes only to steal and kill and destroy; I have come that they may have life, and have it to the full."*

John 14:27 *"Peace I leave with you; my peace I give you. I do not give to you as the world gives. Do not let your hearts be troubled and do not be afraid."*

John 16:33 *“I have told you these things, so that in me you may have peace. In this world you will have trouble. But take heart! I have overcome the world.”*

3. Life would bear so much more fruit.

Gal 5:22-23 *But the fruit of the Spirit is love, joy, peace, patience, kindness, goodness, faithfulness, gentleness and self-control. Against such things there is no law.*

4. Assurance and confidence and hope would flood our hearts and minds so much more.

Rom 5:5 *And hope does not disappoint us, because God has poured out his love into our hearts by the Holy Spirit, whom he has given us. (see 5:1-5)*

2 Tim 4:6-8 *For I am already being poured out like a drink offering, and the time has come for my departure. I have fought the good fight, I have finished the race, I have kept the faith. Now there is in store for me the crown of righteousness, which the Lord, the righteous Judge, will award to me on that day — and not only to me, but also to all who have longed for his appearing.*

1 John 3:21 *Dear friends, if our hearts do not condemn us, we have confidence before God.*

1 John 2:28 *And now, dear children, continue in him, so that when he appears we may be confident and unashamed before him at his coming. □*

GALATIANS 02:16

FAITH VS. WORKS; SELF-RIGHTEOUSNESS, OBSERVING LAW

*“We know that a man is not justified by observing the law, but by faith in Jesus Christ. So we, too, have put our faith in Christ Jesus that we may be justified by faith in Christ and not by observing the law, because by observing the law no one will be justified.” **Galatians 02:16***

Why is it that a man can never be justified nor secure righteousness by works and law? Why is it that a man can never approach God by works and law?

1. There are two ways that a man can try to secure righteousness and approach God.
 - a. A man can try to work to secure righteousness; he can do all he can to keep the law of God and to please God. But note: a man can do this...
 - only if he can keep the law perfectly, never breaking it once and never violating it a single time
 - only if he can make sure that every single thing he ever does or thinks is perfectly good and righteous and pure

- only if he can please God in every act, word and thought, never displeasing God in anything

Only if a man can do this can he secure righteousness by works and law. But what man can be perfect and good and righteous and pure in every single act, word and thought? It is absolutely impossible to secure righteousness by works and law. A person may try to approach God through works and law, but he can never achieve perfection — not perfect righteousness and holiness without which no person will ever see God.

Heb 12:14 *Make every effort to live in peace with all men and to be holy; without holiness no one will see the Lord.*

Mat 7:22-23 *“Many will say to me on that day, ‘Lord, Lord, did we not prophesy in your name, and in your name drive out demons and perform many miracles?’ Then I will tell them plainly, ‘I never knew you. Away from me, you evildoers!’”*

Rom 3:20 *Therefore no one will be declared righteous in his sight by observing the law; rather, through the law we become conscious of sin.*

Gal 3:10 *All who rely on observing the law are under a curse, for it is written: “Cursed is everyone who does not continue to do everything written in the Book of the Law.”*

James 4:17 *Anyone, then, who knows the good he ought to do and doesn't do it, sins.*

- b. A man can believe that Jesus Christ is God's gift of righteousness to the world — that God so loved the world...

- that He gave His Son to live a perfect life upon earth in order to secure the Perfect and Ideal Righteousness for man.
- that He gave His Son to take the unrighteousness of man upon Himself and to die for man, that is, to bear the judgment of unrighteousness for man.
- that he gave His Son to arise from the dead for man in order to conquer death and to give man a new and perfect life that is eternal.

A man can believe that God loves him and takes his faith in Christ and counts it as righteousness.

A man can believe that God loves him and accepts him because he honours His Son Jesus Christ — honours Jesus Christ by believing and following Him.

A man can believe that God loves His Son so much that He will take any man who honours His Son and do anything for him. If the man believes in Jesus Christ for righteousness, then God will count the man righteous.

Eph 2:8-9 *For it is by grace you have been saved, through faith — and this not from yourselves, it is the gift of God — not by works, so that no one can boast.*

Titus 3:4-5 *But when the kindness and love of God our Saviour appeared, he saved us, not because of righteous things we had done, but because of his mercy. He saved us through the washing of rebirth and renewal by the Holy Spirit.*

2. Note another point: the two ways that men try to approach God are completely different from each other. Faith and works are incompatible. Faith is always the opposite of works.

=> If a man works to keep the law in order to be righteous, then he can offer to God only *self-righteousness*, only the righteousness of the works *he has done*.

=> If a man trusts the righteousness of Jesus Christ *for his righteousness*, then he can offer the righteousness of Christ to God. He can come to God in the righteousness of Christ.

God always accepts the righteousness of His Son, Jesus Christ. For any man who truly trusts the righteousness of Christ — who truly gives Christ all he is and has — God accepts that man's trust as righteousness. The man is not righteous, but God takes his trust in Christ and accepts it as righteousness.

3. Note still another fact: a man who *believes God for righteousness* approaches God entirely differently than the man who approaches God in his own self-righteousness.

a. The man who approaches God in his own righteousness...

- presents his self-righteousness to God *by himself*.
- depends upon his own righteousness.
- trust his own righteousness.
- believes in his own righteousness.
- declares that he has the strength and power to make himself righteous and acceptable to God.

b. The man who approaches God in the righteousness of Jesus Christ...

- presents his love and trust in the righteousness of Jesus Christ as his righteousness. (God could never turn down a person who loved and trusted His Son with all his heart.)
- rejects dependence upon himself and depends upon the righteousness of Jesus Christ.
- gives up trusting his own righteousness and trusts the righteousness of Christ.
- no longer believes in his own righteousness, but believes in Christ for righteousness.
- declares that he does not have the power to make himself righteous and acceptable to God; he trusts the power of God to make him righteous and acceptable.

Note what this is saying: a man either believes he has the power to save himself and to keep himself from dying or else he believes that God has the power to save him. A man either trusts his own power for salvation and life or else he trusts God's power. If he believes that he has the power to save himself, then he works to make himself righteous and to live forever. If he believes that God alone has the power to save him, then he trusts God for righteousness and life.

In conclusion, no one is ever justified by works or by law. We may try to secure righteousness by works and law, but it is always self-righteousness, and self-righteousness always ends up with self: in the grave — dead, having passed the way of all flesh — short of God's glory, perfection, and disqualified from ever living with God. Self-righteousness is never acceptable to God; works and law can never justify a man and make him perfect.

However, we can secure righteousness by faith. We can trust God as a child trusts his father. We can trust that God loves us enough to count our love and trust for His Son as righteousness.

FAITH IN CHRIST IS GOD'S RIGHTEOUSNESS,
THE ONLY RIGHTEOUSNESS
THAT MAKES A PERSON ACCEPTABLE TO GOD.

Rom 3:21-22 *But now a righteousness from God, apart from law, has been made known, to which the Law and the Prophets testify. This righteousness from God comes through faith in Jesus Christ to all who believe. There is no difference.*

Rom 10:4 *Christ is the end of the law so that there may be righteousness for everyone who believes.*

Phil 3:9 *Christ — the righteousness that comes from God and is by faith.*

1 Cor 1:30 *It is because of him [God] that you are in Christ Jesus, who has become for us wisdom from God — that is, our righteousness, holiness and redemption.*

2 Cor 5:21 *God made him who had no sin to be sin for us, so that in him we might become the righteousness of God.*

Col 3:3 *For you died, and your life is now hidden with Christ in God.*

4. Note one other fact: righteousness by works honours and makes man supreme and pre-eminent, the centre and core of life. Righteousness by faith honours God and makes God supreme and pre-eminent, the centre and core of life. God is the One to be obeyed out of a heart of love, adoration, and appreciation for what He has done (Rom 2:29). □