

Intervention #3
It's All in the Mind
Mark 4:35-41
4/10/16

- I'm going to start this story with a disclaimer. You are about to hear a weird story about my family. We all have weird family stories, don't we? This one is weird and goofy and funny and kind of gross. It might explain some things about me!
 - o One of my mom's famous sayings when we were growing up was, "It's all in your head." If we felt nauseous at the thought of eating a vegetable, "It's all in your head." If we were scared about something, "It's all in your head."
 - o Now, it's wasn't always that gruff. But, basically what she was trying to communicate was that if we changed our thoughts, it would change our behavior and we would be able to overcome whatever we were facing.
- My youngest brother, Dennis, heard that from my mom probably more than any of us. See, Dennis had a huge gag reflex and a sensitive stomach. Anything that he saw as remotely gross would set him off and he would start gagging which often lead to him puking.
 - o It could happen anytime. If he was eating something and didn't like the texture of it or the taste, he would start gagging. If something on his plate looked gross to him, he would start gagging. When that happened, he might just throw up in his plate, giving us all something to gag about. The worst was when a missionary couple was at our house for dinner and we were eating lasagna. My brother got an onion in his mouth and it was all over – gag, puke in his plate, and complete embarrassment for my parents. I told you – weird and gross.
 - o Of course, as his older siblings, my brother, Allan and I, teased him about this and deliberately tried to get him to start gagging. So, when my parents weren't looking, we would chew up food and open our mouths to show it to him, causing the gag reaction.
- My mom kept telling him, "It's all in your head! Stop thinking about it being gross!" One day, she decided that to jerk his mind off the gag reflex, she would smack him in the mouth when he did it. Sure enough, he gagged, mom smacked while saying, "Stop thinking about it!", and he stopped.
 - o This became the gag treatment, which, honestly made us want to get Dennis to gag even more often! Why are we so bad as kids to want to torture our siblings?
 - o But, the gag treatment worked. In fact, it worked so well to jerk Dennis out of thinking about the gross thing that he actually started to smack himself and say to himself, "Stop thinking about it!"

- So, what in the world does that weird family story have to do with anything about the Bible? How is that a good story to open up a sermon? Never fear! I have a point!
 - o Here's the point – there are somethings that are all in our minds and sometimes, we need a good smack or to smack something else to get the things that are holding us back out of there and to think on the things that will move us forward! This is what we are going to talk about this morning.
- On Easter, we started a new series called Intervention. Today, we going to see how our mindset affects the intervention that God has for us.
 - o Let's review where we have been so far and what we know. On Easter, we learned that we need an intervention. Each of us was in need of an intervention. Humanity was in need of an intervention. God provided it through Jesus, through his perfect life, his death on the cross and his Easter resurrection that gave us victory of death and sin and provided a way for salvation and reconciliation with God.
 - o Even after that Easter intervention, we continue to be in need of intervention, though. Why? Because we live in a fallen, problem plagued, sin-filled, drama-loving world. Aren't you glad that God didn't just intervene once and leave us? Thank you God!
 - o Instead, he continues to intervene for us as we allow him and trust him to do so. In fact, last week we saw that God promises to not abandon us & to intervene. It's in his character, in his very nature to intervene for us. Even when he feels far away, he's not. He is working on our behalf.
- This morning, how we respond, then, determines if we live in the reality of God's intervention or if we hinder his intervention. See, we have to respond with the right mindset for God to intervene.
 - o Going through situations and problems in life are inevitable. We call these the storms of life, right? We understand storms. Living here, we understand the strong winds and driving rains of hurricanes and the strong winds and blinding snow of a Nor'easter blizzard. We've all experienced them.
 - o What makes the difference between suffering through a storm and surviving, even thriving through a storm is preparation. If you are prepared, no matter what comes – electricity outages, flooding, being snowed in – you can handle it.
- No one likes to go through storms. But, you can get through them if you are prepared mentally and physically.
 - o Sometimes the most damaging storms are those that cannot be measured by Doppler radar or the weather center. They are internal, emotional, spiritual battles. They are the storms of life.

- Just about every time I step into the pulpit, someone is in the midst of the storm. Maybe that's you this morning. We live in difficult times and no one is exempt.
 - But if you know Jesus Christ, you'll never face the storm alone!!! He will not only intervene, but he will prepare you for the storms that come in life.
- The biggest way that he prepares you is by preparing your mind. The battle you face in the middle of a storm of life might seem like it is outside of you with other people or circumstances or situations. But, how you deal with them, how you face them, how you get through them is found in your mind and mindset.
 - Your mindset plays a major role in determining whether or not you win or lose the battle of the storm. Your mindset can prepare you for the storm or keep you from being prepared. Your mindset strengthens you with hope through the storm or discourages you to hopelessness.
 - Most importantly, your mindset either opens you or closes you to Jesus' intervention. Having a wrong mindset will prevent intervention.
- Listen, Satan wants nothing more than to run all over your mind. He wants to plant thoughts in your head for you to dwell on. We know those thoughts are lies because Satan is the father of lies. The only thing he does is lie. There is no truth in him.
 - When life storms come and we are vulnerable, that is when Satan gets busy because he knows we are more open to his lies and thoughts. He is always busy looking for ways to get into our minds. He is great at it – a master of it.
 - He attacks our minds because he knows if he can control our thoughts and minds by us buying into what he is saying, he can control our actions. All sin starts right here – in the mind. We turn over the sin, we contemplate, we justify, we dwell on, we flirt with the sin in our mind way before we ever commit the sin.
 - If he can control our mindset, then our focus isn't on God, it's on his lies. And, if our focus isn't on God and we are believing lies, then we are not open to the intervention of Jesus in our lives. We can't even see it. All we see are the storms. All we see are circumstances that we don't like. Like, my brother, Dennis, all we taste is something bad in our mouths from what we are going through.
- And, so we have to smack Satan right out of our heads! We have to stop thinking about what he is saying and focus on Jesus! We have to change our mindset! If you want to experience the intervention of Jesus in your life and especially through the storms of life, you have to have the right mindset.
 - This disciples had to learn this lesson through an actual storm on the water. Let's read **Mark 4:35-41**.
- Here are the disciples in an actual storm. But, this storm can also serve as a symbol

of the storms of life that we go through, the internal, emotional, situational storms of life.

- Now, there is something that the disciples did right. There was one aspect of their mindset that was right. Let's look at the good news first.
- They showed a right mindset in that they called out to the right One who could do something.
 - That's a good thing. They went to Jesus before the ship started sinking, before it was too late. A fierce storm happened, the water started coming in and they found Jesus.
 - How many times have you known people to wait to call out for Jesus? They have allowed the storm to overtake them, to blow them up, down and all around, to slam them up against the rocks and they are about to drown before they let go of their prideful independence and finally cry out to Jesus.
 - So, going to Jesus immediately when a storm kicks up is a good thing. For truly, he is the One who can do something and do it better than we can.
- Yet, a better way to live and a better mindset to have is to cry out to Jesus all the time! We were created to live within the intervention of Jesus, at all times, not just during the storms.
 - We aren't supposed to amp up our prayer time when things are happening and we have exhausted all that we know to do, so then we call out to Jesus. We aren't supposed to get into God's Word only when there is a problem and we're out of answers, so we decide to see if his Word has some answers. We aren't supposed to start coming to church more faithfully when life turns sour and we are trying to manipulate God to do something for us.
 - Of course his Word has some answers. Of course prayer will help us see clearer and get heaven moving. Of course the fellowship of God's people will provide encouragement and support for us.
 - But, His Word and prayer work not just in storms, but all the time and the fact is if we would have been in his Word and in prayer and among the fellowship of believers faithfully, it would limit the number of storms we have to go through!
- We can see how our mindset makes a difference – even when we do the right things, our mindset can prevent us from doing those right things in the right time! While the disciples went to Jesus first, they showed a wrong mindset next in what they said and thought. There are three things that show their wrong mindset.
- First, they thought Jesus didn't care. Verse 38 says that they were shouting at him, "Don't you care that we're going to drown?"
 - Here they are in the middle of the storm and they find Jesus sleeping like a baby, with his head on a cushion in the back of the boat. It would be easy to

see why they would think he didn't care! He's acting like nothing is wrong, just snoozing away while they are trying to save their lives!

- How many of us have cried out in the same way? "Don't you care what is going on right now, Lord? What are you waiting for? Why are you not doing something? You must not love me!" It seems like God is taking a nap up in heaven while we are struggling through some tough stuff here on earth.
- It's understandable why they would think this, but it is also the most egregious mistake of all. It is absolutely the worst mindset that you can have because it will lead you in a downward spiral away from Jesus if you continue with this mindset. In fact, this is the first lie Satan always tells us.
 - It was the first lie that he told Eve. "Did God really say you couldn't eat from that tree?" He was planting a seed of doubt that God was withholding something good from her because he didn't really care. He didn't really have her full good in mind.
 - It is the lie that he plants the most in our heads and hearts. If God is good, why would he allow this? If this feels good, why doesn't God want it for me? If this will make me happy, why does God say no? Why is that person blessed and I'm suffering?
 - Oh how well I know of what I speak for when I walked away from God for a time in my life, this was the lie I first believed that started my walk on a path away from God.
- Nobody in this world cares for you more than Jesus. You're the apple of His eye. Scripture says that he sings love songs over you. The number of precious thoughts he thinks of you cannot be counted. You are the reason He went to Calvary.
 - Don't ever believe the lie of Satan that Jesus doesn't care. The depth of his care is more than you can even fathom. The little things that he has done that he may well have started to orchestrate years ago so that at the right moment it was in place for you often go unnoticed. Open your eyes to his care! Ask to feel his arms around you and rest in his care!
 - It might seem like he is taking a nap. He is not. He is planning for your intervention! Don't limit his intervention by thinking he doesn't care and walking away from him.
- He has made promises to you that no one else in this world can fulfill. As we said last week, God's greatest promise to you is that He is always there!
 - Hebrews 13:5b-6 says For God has said, "I will never fail you. I will never abandon you." So we can say with confidence, "The Lord is my helper, so I will have no fear. What can mere people do to me?"
 - Ps 23:4 promises that Even when I walk through the darkest valley, I will not be afraid, for you are close beside me.
 - God is love. He is the author of care and compassion. Compassion means that he cares for you with passion. Bank on those promises and that truth.

Think on those things and smack the lie out of your head that Jesus doesn't care.

- The second evidence of a wrong mindset is that the disciples lacked faith. See, the disciples wanted Jesus to do something. They wanted him to help them start bailing water and rowing toward safety. He wasn't supposed to be sleeping.
 - o Jesus was sleeping peacefully because he knew he held peace in his hands. So, he showed that he was the Prince of Peace by speaking peace to the storm. The NLT version says that he said, "Silence! Be still!" Other versions say that Jesus said, "Peace! Be still!" Either way, Jesus spoke peace and the storm immediately stopped.
 - o They believed Jesus didn't care because he wasn't helping them as they thought he should and they didn't have enough faith to see that he could help them in a way that surpassed what they could ever do or even think!
- So, Jesus called them out on their lack of faith issue. He said, "Why are you afraid? After seeing Jesus heal people and cast out demons, they couldn't see Jesus doing anything other than what they could think."
 - o We have to have a mindset of faith that can see beyond what we can think or do, but that is open to what God can see or do. Then, you don't have to be intimidated by the struggle or the storm.
 - o Your God is BIGGER than this! BELIEVE it and see with eyes of faith.
- Scripture says that Satan prowls like a lion, but he is not one. He's just a loud-mouthed liar. With his roar, he wants to paralyze you in faithlessness.
 - o There is one that Scripture says is a true lion. He is the Lion of Judah! He is Jesus. With his roar, he wants to empower you to have faith and believe that all things are possible through Christ!
- Lack of faith will always keep you paralyzed. When you are paralyzed and can't see beyond that faithless mindset, you will never see the intervention Jesus has planned for you. You will pass it right up. You will dismiss it. You will not listen to the wisdom that comes to you through someone else. You will not acknowledge the accountability God sends to you. Instead, you will stay paralyzed in your stormy situation.
 - o Don't limit your thinking to what is humanly possible, but, in faith, think about what God, the Lion of Judah can do. Smack that loud mouthed imposter lion out of your mind!
- The final indicator of a wrong mindset is that they disciples focused on the negative. This is evident not only during the storm, but even after Jesus calmed the storm. After Jesus calmed the storm, verse 41 tells us that the disciples were terrified that Jesus was powerful enough that the winds and waves listened to him.
 - o Negativity was their mind set before, after and during this interaction with

Jesus. That's because they didn't fully understand who Jesus was. Yes, they saw him heal. Yes, they saw him rebuke demons. Yes, they heard his teaching and watching the people flock to him. But, this was a new level of intervention.

- When you truly know who Jesus is, you will find that negative thinking is smacked out of your mind and replaced with hope and positive thinking.
- In fact, focusing on the negative is a mind not focused on Jesus. Did you get that? If you are plagued with negative thinking, your mind is not focused on Jesus. Your mind is focused on lies from the pit of hell.
 - Negative thinking is powerful. In fact, negative thinking leads to death while positive thinking leads to life. I shared a few weeks ago that I went to deathclock.com and found the predicted date of my death. It's in 2054, I believe. I will be 83 years old.
 - One of the things they ask you, in addition to your age, height, BMI, health factors is that they ask for your general outlook on life – pessimistic, sadistic, optimistic or normal. Do you know which factor most determined your death date? Your outlook on life!! It wasn't your weight or health factors, but your outlook on life!
 - Your outlook determines so much – your self-esteem, how you interact with people, how you handle problems, how much you look forward to the future, your sense of if you contribute anything to the world.
- When you focus on the negative, you are focusing on death. When you focus on Jesus and the positive hope you have in him, the intervention that he has promised, then you are in the right mindset to experience that intervention and the peace that comes with his intervention.
 - Isaiah 41:6 You will keep in perfect peace all who trust in you, all whose thoughts are fixed on you!
 - Philippians 4:8 And now, dear brothers and sisters, one final thing. Fix your thoughts on what is true, and honorable, and right, and pure, and lovely, and admirable. Think about things that are excellent and worthy of praise.
 - Fix your thought on Jesus and see how depression, anxiety, worry, tension, stress, anger, rage, malice, discouragement, negative self-esteem and host of other things begin to lose their grip in your life. Those things are not of God. They are of the evil one. Smack them out of your head! Don't think about them!
- Instead, focus on the opportunity for comeback rather than the present circumstances and problems. See, Jesus is the comeback God! He loves to take storm worn people and intervene. He loves to take faithless people and restore their faith. He loves to take sinful people and make them saints.
 - By his very nature, he says, "It's ain't over till I say it's over!" If he can use

- the lives of prostitutes and drunkards and murderers, he can intervene and use you. If he can calm an actual storm, he can calm your life storm.
- Sometimes when it looks like you're losing it all, God is setting you up for a double portion of restoration through his intervention!!!
- I read in a devotional how we should see every problem, every circumstance, every life storm as an opportunity. It is an opportunity to put our faith in Jesus, to renew our mind and to watch what he is going to do through his intervention.
- Now, that's hard for us to do, isn't it? When you're going through the ringer and the storm is battering against you and people are taking you through the mud, it's hard to see that as an opportunity.
 - Yet, it is. It is an opportunity to see who Jesus is and what he can do in, for and through you.
- Sometimes, his intervention is to work in us and in our hearts. In those times, his comeback and restoration gives us the opportunity for growth.
- That's why James 1:2-4 writes, "Dear brothers and sisters,¹ when troubles of any kind come your way, consider it an opportunity for great joy.² For you know that when your faith is tested, your endurance has a chance to grow. ³So let it grow, for when your endurance is fully developed, you will be perfect and complete, needing nothing."
 - We said last week that trust isn't really trust until it's tested. Likewise, your greatest growth, the times when you most develop things like faith, surpassing joy and endurance comes through the time when you were in the midst of a storm and Jesus intervened to bring you through and teach you some things.
 - So, are you going through something right now? Rejoice! This is your opportunity to grow! This is your opportunity for your faith to increase and your endurance to develop! This is your opportunity to change your mindset from negative Nelly into positive Polly as you allow the positive life transforming work of the Holy Spirit to grow you!
- And then, sometimes, his intervention is to work in the hearts of others. In those times, even in the storm, we have the opportunity for witness.
- Let's read **Luke 21:12-18** together.
 - Here are some verses we don't really want to experience – persecution and challenge to our beliefs. This is exactly why we don't like to witness at all.
 - But, what Jesus is saying is that it is through those times is when people are most likely to see our faith as real.
 - Why is the Christian home church movement in China one of the fastest growing movements in the world? Because persecution is a very great reality there. Why is Christianity booming in areas of Africa where people are most in danger for being Christians? Because what these verses tell us is true.

- When people see us going through the storms, especially persecution and challenge for our faith, and yet they see us stand strong because we know that Jesus is our Rock, Jesus is our Lion, Jesus is our Peace, Jesus is our Hope, Jesus is our Salvation, Jesus is our Strong Tower and Jesus is our Intervention – they want what we have.
 - People don't want something to be comfortable in. They can get a Lazy-boy recliner for that. People want something that is so valuable that they are willing to give their lives for it.
- Have you given your life for Jesus? Have you given your mindset to Jesus and renewed your mind and your thinking so that you think on the things of Christ rather than the lies of the devil?
- A man had bought a new gadget-unassembled, of course--and after reading and rereading the instructions he couldn't figure out how it went together. Finally, he sought the help of an old handyman who was working in the backyard.
 - The old fellow picked up the pieces, studied them, then began assembling the gadget. In a short time, he had it put together. "That's amazing," said the man. "And you did it without even looking at the instructions!"
 - "Fact is," said the old man, "I can't read, and when a fellow can't read, he's got to think."
- The fact is, we can't see as much as Jesus does. We can't see often beyond our own circumstances and situations and problems. We often can't see beyond our feelings. But, we can have faith and we can determine how we are going to think! We can determine what we are going to fill our mind with. Stop thinking on the lies and the negativity that Satan is feeding us and smack him out of our minds?! Think on Jesus!
 - I read a poignant little poem about the power of our thinking. It says, "Watch your thoughts; they become. Words. Watch your words; they become actions. Watch your actions; they become habits. Watch your habits; they become character. Watch your character; it becomes your destiny."
 - May our destiny be that we are people of God's intervention – every day.