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Sermon Transcript: Fully Divine, Fully Human

One of my favorite songs from being a camp counselor is "My God is So Big." And since I spent two summers singing that song, I can do it with emotions, too. And you're in luck because I'm going to sing it for you today. It goes like this:

"My God is so big, so strong, and so mighty. There's nothing my God cannot do for you. My God is so big, so strong, and so mighty. There's nothing my God cannot do for you. The rivers are his. The mountains are his. The stars are his handiwork, too. My God is so big, so strong, and so mighty. There's nothing my God can do for you."

I love that song. Thank you. Thank you. I had to really commit. I used to stand on a milk crate. We would get milk crates out for leading songs. I did not bring that today. But I love that song. It's so simple. And I think one of the reasons it's my favorite and it has stuck with me all these years later is that I like to think of God as strong and mighty. I like to think of God as all-powerful. It's comforting. It's comforting to know that the God who created the whole world and everything in it loves me. It's comforting to know that the God who created the world and spoke the earth into creation cares about me and that we—I have this like all-powerful God on my side, right? That feels good and that—that is true. That is true.

Fully Human and Fully Divine

But the author of the Gospel of Mark wanted us to know about Christ's humanity as well. Jesus was fully human and fully divine. And the Gospel of Mark, more than any of the other gospels, leans into that humanity, showing us Christ's humanity as well as his divinity. Because don't get me wrong, in chapter 1, Mark tells us that Jesus is baptized and the Spirit descends like a dove and there is a voice from heaven that comes and says, "You are my son, my beloved. With you I am well pleased." So there's plenty of divinity going on in the Gospel of Mark. But also Mark wants us to know the humanity of Jesus.

And I've been doing a lot of funerals lately. Seems to be the season that we are in as a church. And I wondered what would Mark say if he were to speak at the funeral of Jesus? Now I know this is a thought exercise, right? This is an "I wonder" because we know that the author of the Gospel of Mark was—after Jesus' death and resurrection and all of this was most likely based on firsthand accounts from Peter. But I wonder—I wonder what Mark would want us to know about the person of Jesus. And when you look at the Gospel of Mark, I think we can see that Mark would want us to know that not only was Jesus fully

divine, but fully human. And Mark would tell us about the human moments in the life of Jesus.

Mark would tell us that Jesus was a carpenter, that he sighed deeply in his spirit, that he was moved with compassion, that he was amazed at the people's unbelief. He had righteous anger. He loved. He even felt hunger pangs—he got hungry, he might have even gotten hangry—and he got tired and wanted to rest. Jesus experienced so many very human feelings and emotions. And then Mark gives us this description of the death of Jesus on the cross where Jesus cries, "My God, my God, why have you forsaken me?" A very human feeling indeed. Yeah. Scholars think that this may be Jesus finally experiencing the ramifications of sin. That is, feeling separated from God. One last experience of humanity for Jesus. An experience of suffering and pain that Jesus enters into and overcomes for us.

Attention to Suffering

One biblical commentary put it this way: "Attention to suffering is the first step in God's mission of human wholeness." Attention to suffering is the first step in God's mission of human wholeness. God cares enough and is powerful enough to come to earth in human form, to step into our human brokenness, to be with us and to heal us. That is comforting in a very sacred way.

There is something sacred, divine that happens when we walk alongside someone who is suffering. Perhaps—perhaps because that is what God does for us. I don't know about you, but—while I am grateful for the clearly positive blessings in my life where I feel a connection to God, you know, the chirping of the birds, dog cuddles, a wonderful husband, those clearly positive things—when I journey with folks who are suffering, who are grieving the loss of a loved one, who are going through a really hard time, there is something sacred. There is something—an even deeper, stronger, different connection with the divine when we come alongside human suffering. And I think perhaps it is because that is what God does for us. Attention to suffering is the first step in God's mission of human wholeness.

Indeed, God is strong and God is mighty—and so strong and mighty that God came to the earth in Jesus and experienced the struggles of humanity, the struggles that we go through. And the good news that I want you to remember this morning and this week—besides the fact that this is not the last chapter of the Gospel of Mark, there is a resurrection—besides that, I want you to remember that God is with you in the difficult times, in the suffering. In fact, Jesus Christ, God, experienced all sorts of the things that we go through. Being tired and wanting to rest, sighing deep in his spirit—I know you all have done that, right?—having righteous anger. God has experienced that.

And so while God created the world and everything in it and is powerful, God cares enough about you and will enter into suffering with us. I think that I wanted to share with you today Christ's humanity because sometimes we struggle to pray to an all-powerful God that is so strong and mighty. We can get it in our heads that God doesn't understand, that God is so mighty, God is so far away from our struggles over here, God won't get it. We shouldn't bother God with our hurts and fears. But the Gospel of Mark reminds us that Jesus sighed in his spirit, that he got tired, and he felt forsaken by God. So the good news is that you do not have to hesitate or be afraid to come to God in prayer and call out to God in your distress and when you are suffering, because God has been there and will be there with you through it.

Amen.