

## Trust the One Who Controls the Storm

### Mark 4:35-41

**Introduction:** 1) Psalm 107 is a wonderful song that celebrates the goodness of God and His great works of deliverance. In light of the story of Jesus calming the storm, vs. 23-32 are especially powerful and relevant, “Some went down to the sea in ships, doing business on the great waters; they saw the deeds of the LORD, his wondrous works in the deep. For he commanded and raised the stormy wind, which lifted up the waves of the sea. They mounted up to heaven; they went down to the depths; their courage melted away in their evil plight; they reeled and staggered like drunken men and were at their wits' end. Then they cried to the LORD in their trouble, and he delivered them from their distress. He made the storm be still, and the waves of the sea were hushed. Then they were glad that the waters were quiet, and he brought them to their desired haven. Let them thank the LORD for his steadfast love, for his wondrous works to the children of man! Let them extol him in the congregation of the people, and praise him in the assembly of the elders.”

2) These verses are almost prophetic in light of what happened to the 12 disciples of Jesus one evening on the Sea of Galilee. They also point to the inescapable truth for those who have ears to hear and eyes to see (4:1-34): Jesus is the God of Psalm 107 who “calms the storm, so that its waves are still” (v. 29).

3) This is the first of a series of stories that bear witness to Jesus power as a miracle worker. They begin here and run to the end of chapter 5.

→ He has authority over nature (4:35-41).

→ He has authority over demons (5:1-20).

→ He has authority over sickness (5:25-34).

→ He has authority over death (5:21-24, 35-43).

4) In Mark 4:35-41 we have a historical story marked by careful accuracy and detail. No doubt we have the reminiscences of Peter, the eyewitness authority behind Mark's gospel. He remembered the time of day ("evening", 4:35), the cushion in the boat (4:38), the place where Jesus slept ("in the stern", 4:38), the fact there were other boats (4:36). Further, the less than flattering picture of the disciples is not the kind of thing one makes up about themselves. Their embarrassing fear and lack of faith (v. 40) was something they could not forget.

5) God orchestrates an event in the lives of the disciples to increase their faith in the One they should already trust. Why? Because He is God and "with God nothing will be impossible" (Luke 1:37).

6) Few stories have been more poorly interpreted and applied than this one. It is not about Jesus getting you thru the storms of life. That of course is true, but it is not the point of this story. It is about the One who is the sovereign and all powerful Lord whom demons rightly recognize as God (5:7) and we should fully trust.

**Transition:** Six biblical truths stand out for our consideration and edification in this fascinating story.

**I. God is working in the everyday circumstances of our lives                      4:35-37**

- Jesus has had a full day of teaching ("on the same day," v. 35). It is now evening and like everyone else, He and the twelve need to get away and get some rest. There is nothing unusual or extraordinary about this.
- He tells them, "Let us go across to the other side" (v. 35). He says "goodbye" to the crowd on the seashore (v. 36). He heads east toward "the country of the Gerasenes" (5:1) with a flotilla. "Other boats were with Him" (v. 36). Even now He cannot get away

completely from those who are following Him. Once in the boat, Jesus immediately falls into a very deep sleep.

- Then in verse 37, suddenly everything turns upside/down. Note: 1) a great windstorm arose. The word speaks of hurricane type winds! 2) “The waves were breaking into the boat.” 3) “The boat was already filling.”
- The words, and many aspects of this story, echo the story of Jonah on the ship in chapter 1 of the book that bears His name. Seasoned sailors and fishermen suddenly find themselves in a storm unlike anything they had ever experienced.
- Now, there is a crucial point that must be noted at this point: it was Jesus who led them into the storm! On a normal evening taking a normal boat ride normal men suddenly find themselves in an abnormal storm and a severe crisis. This was not accidental. This was not a surprise to God that caught Him off guard.
- We should not be surprised by surprises in our lives. They are divinely ordained moments whereby God is working in the everyday circumstances of our lives to reveal who He is, who we are, and who we need! Trials and tribulation, difficulties and desperate moments are often the times when God does His greatest work in our lives. By bringing us to the end of ourselves we are driven to Him and Him alone as Savior and rescuer. If He does not act we will not be saved. Would you really want it any other way? Faith says a resounding no!

## **II. Jesus is human apart from sin**

**4:38**

- The Bible affirms and the Church has always believed that Jesus is both fully God and fully man, two natures united in one person. He is 100% divine and 100% human in the one person, the God-man.

- The only qualification that needs to be made related to His humanity is that He is without sin. He had no sin nature (but one like Adam and Eve prior to the fall) and He never sinned a single sin, not one. Two text, in particular, make this clear:

2 Corinthians 5:21, “For our sake he made him to be sin who knew no sin, so that in him we might become the righteousness of God.”

Hebrews 4:15, “For we do not have a high priest who is unable to sympathize with our weaknesses, but one who in every respect has been tempted as we are, yet without sin.”

- Both His humanity and deity are put on display in this story, and it is humanity that appears so clearly in v. 38. Amazingly, even astonishing, He is in stern of the boat, fast asleep on a cushion.

- The Bible repeatedly teaches our Lord’s full and true humanity.

→ He got hungry (Matt 4:2, “And after fasting forty days and forty nights, he was hungry”).

→ He got angry (Mark 3:5)

→ He cried (John 11:35)

→ He died (The cross)

Now we see He slept. He had had such an exhausting day he quickly fell asleep and kept on sleeping right thru the storm. Interestingly, this is the only time in the gospels that we read of Jesus sleeping. Jesus had His “sound machine” set on waves!

- Yes, He is human. But there is something else. He has a complete confidence and trust in the providential care of His Father. The veteran seaman may be terrified and in a panic, but the carpenter from Nazareth sleeps soundly thru it all! What faith. What trust.

**Illustration:** Lottie Moon said, “We are immortal until our work on earth is finished.”

Jesus knew He had a work to complete on the cross. He was confident in His Father’s promise to see Him finish His work.

### **III. Humans panic when they lose faith in the one they should trust**

**4:38**

- Verse 38b records the normal human reaction to something we cannot control. It does not record the spiritual response one would expect from those who have been with Jesus.
- The disciples, in a panic, wake Jesus up. Just as the captain of Jonah’s ship chewed him out for sleeping while they were perishing, so the disciples jump on Jesus as well. Mark says they called him “Teacher.” Matt 8:25 says “Lord.” Luke 8:24 records them saying “Master, Master.” I have no doubt they said all of this and more! These are terms of respect and honor. The question they fire in His direction is not.
- “Do you not care that we are perishing?” They question His love and concern for them, something none of us would do, right? Frustrated by what appears to be His indifference to their plight (and ignoring the fact He was asleep) and facing a desperate situation they have no hope of handling themselves, they lash out in a rude outburst rather than exhibit faith in the one who has proven Himself trustworthy again and again.
- It pains me greatly to see myself in the disciples. Jesus has proven Himself faithful to me over and over and yet when caught by surprise and put into a vice of difficulty and trouble, I fume rather than show faith.
- Spurgeon, the great Baptist preacher said, “God is too wise to err, too good to be unkind; leave off doubting Him, and begin to trust Him, for in so doing, you will put a crown on His head” (Vol. 3:1857, #156, “Fear Not”).
- Let’s crown Him in faith, not doubt Him in unbelief.

**IV. Jesus has authority over nature because He is God 4:39**

- The Bible teaches that God and only God is thrice “omni.”
  - Omniscient: He know all things (actual and potential)
  - Omnipresent: He is everywhere present
  - Omnipotent: He is all powerful
- Jesus awakes from His sleep having been disturbed by His disciples. His gracious humility is immediately on display as He does not rebuke or chasten the disciples for their less than charitable summons. In a simple, non-elaborate, non-magical statement He 1) rebukes the wind and 2) says to the sea “Peace! Be still!”
  - The word “rebuke” can mean censure. It is the same word used in Mark 1:25; 3:12 when Jesus rebukes the demons! Could this storm have been demonically instigated?
  - “Be still” carries the idea of “muzzle.” It is a perf. imp. The idea is “be still and stay still.”
- The response of both wind and wave is immediate because its Master has spoken: “the wind ceased, and there was a great calm.”
- Here is our Lord’s deity on full and glorious display!
  - Hurricane force winds are stopped with a single word.
  - There is no struggle, no difficulty.
  - Suddenly, a mega calm is present.
  - Only God could do this. Jesus must be God.
- This is the direction in which Jesus seeks to drive the disciples. What He says in v. 40 makes this clear.

**V. Trials and difficulties come for the benefit of our faith 4:40**

- Jesus now turns from speaking to the storm to speaking to the disciples. His 2 questions contain a mild but obvious rebuke:
  - 1) Why are you so afraid?
  - 2) Have you still no faith?
- It is time for another lesson in discipleship. Jesus has again revealed Himself to His inner circle, His closest followers. His goal is to increase their ability to hear and see thru their trial and difficulty. What they should have by now is greater comprehension and increased faith in His person. This was a golden teaching moment but they came up short.
- It is interesting to note the entire story is told from disciples perspective. They take Jesus with them (v. 36), raise Him from His sleep (v. 38), they are afraid and lacking in faith (v. 40), and they are perplexed about who this person Jesus is (v. 41).
- In the eye of the storm, the disciples accuse Jesus of forsaking them (v. 38) rather than trusting Him. Unfortunately this will not be the last time Jesus questions their lack of faith (7:18; 8:17; 21; 33; 9:9). Until they see the resurrected Christ, and fully understand what He did for them on the cross they are going to struggle.
- We, in contrast, have no excuse.
  - We know He is God.
  - We know He is all-powerful and all-knowing.
  - We know He has taken care of all our sin.
  - We know He rose from the dead.
  - We know He can be trusted no matter what!

**Transition:** Trials and difficulties are divine appointments to increase and strengthen our faith.

So: 1) Why are we still afraid? 2) Do we still have no faith?

## **VI. The identity of Jesus is an issue we all must settle                      4:41**

- This story ends with the disciples asking a question every one of us must ask and answer. It is unavoidable and allows for no neutrality. You cannot “sit this one out.”
- Verse 41 reveals that the storm is now in the boat! It is one thing to be terrified by a storm on the sea. It is another thing to be terrified by God in your boat!
- The text says they were “filled with great fear.” Amazing! The fear of the disciples at what Jesus has done and who He might be exceeds the fear they had over the storm. At this point, I commend them.
- The presence of God is far more fearful and frightening than the most destructive forces of nature. One can take your life. The other can claim your soul.
- Our text concludes then with this question on the lips of the disciples, “Who then is this, that even the wind and the sea obey him?” Amazing again. Despite their recent experiences and their past association with Jesus as He taught and performed miracles, they still aren’t sure just who He is.
- Interestingly, this is the first of 3 boat scenes in Mark’s gospel. The other 2 are in 6:45-52 and 8:14-21.
  - Each is associated with a miracle.
  - Each is a challenge to understand and settle the identity of Jesus.
  - Each is adequate for them to draw the conclusion we must draw as well, “You are the Christ, the Son of God.”
- The famous atheist Bertrand Russell (1872-1970) was asked what he would say to God if He discovered upon his death that God existed and he was wrong. His response was I will say, “Not enough evidence, God, not enough evidence.” That excuse will not fly.



That answer will not save him. The evidence is in and it is overwhelming. The time to settle the issue is now.

### **Conclusion**

- 1) We have noted a number of interesting parallels with Jesus stilling the storm and the story of Jonah. This should not surprise us. Jesus called Himself the true Jonah in Matthew 12:40. And He is! He is the true Jonah who was consumed by the stormy sea of God's wrath as He hung on the cross. He endured the storm so that we could find peace and calm and be saved. Jesus calmed the only storm that could truly sink and drown us, the storm of God's wrath and judgment. He went down in the storm only to emerge 3 days later as the one who stilled the just and righteous wrath of God against sinners. If He took care of that storm, this divine-man can certainly be trusted to handle any other storm we may encounter.
- 2) "Who then is this, that even the wind and the sea obey him? (4:41). Ask the demons (5:7)! They know Him. And...we can know Him and trust Him no matter what may come our way!