

Be Still!

Mark 4:35-41

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³⁵ On that day, when evening had come, he said to them, “Let us go across to the other side.” ³⁶ And leaving the crowd, they took him with them in the boat, just as he was. And other boats were with him. ³⁷ And a great windstorm arose, and the waves were breaking into the boat, so that the boat was already filling. ³⁸ But he was in the stern, asleep on the cushion. And they woke him and said to him, “Teacher, do you not care that we are perishing?” ³⁹ And he awoke and rebuked the wind and said to the sea, “*Peace! Be still!*” And the wind ceased, and there was a great calm. ⁴⁰ He said to them, “*Why are you so afraid? Have you still no faith?*” ⁴¹ And they were filled with great fear and said to one another, “Who then is this, that even the wind and the sea obey him?”

The disciples are with Jesus on a boat trip crossing the Sea of Galilee from Capernaum to the Decapolis. And a storm hits them. The Sea of Galilee was known to be susceptible to extreme storms which come without warning. Here is why.

The surface of the sea is about 700 feet below sea level. The Jordan river flows in the Sea of the Galilee. Even though it's called a sea, it's more of a large lake - 13 miles long and 7 miles wide. Its deepest point is about 150 feet. The tranquility of this lake can quickly change into a turbulent storm because of the winds that come from the east and the west. The winds that come from the east are said to be more intense and can be deadly to fishermen. For example, a storm in March 1992 sent waves 10 feet high causing damage to the nearby town of Tiberias.

This storm was more fierce than normal because seasoned fishermen like Peter, Andrew, James and John were unsettled and afraid.

Now this passage is juxtaposed between Jesus *teaching* large crowds beside the sea and Jesus *reaching* a man on the other side of the sea. That is why Jesus is on this boat trip. We'll cover that passage next week but when we began Mark chapter four, we saw Jesus teaching beside the sea. That was Mark chapter four verse one. “..he began to teach beside the sea. And a very large crowd gathered about him, so that he got into a boat and sat in it on the sea, and the whole crowd was beside the sea on the land”. Now at the beginning of this passage, in verse 35, we see Jesus telling his disciples to go to the other side of the sea.

What do the disciples do?

Look at verse 36.

³⁶ And leaving the crowd, they took him with them in the boat, just as he was. And other

boats were with him.

The disciples do what our Lord tells them to do. But notice what it says they take him “*just as he was*”. Jesus was already in a boat and had been teaching and proclaiming the kingdom of God. He taught the parable of the soils, the parable of the lamp and measures, the parable of the growing seed and mustard seed. Jesus explained to his disciples the meaning of parables.

So after a full day of ministry, Jesus is exhausted. Jesus gets into the boat and moves into the back of the boat – the stern. **Why?** To get some rest.

And those who saw Jesus was leaving them got into their own boats and began to follow him.

And as they cross the Sea of Galilee, their journey turns into a near-catastrophe.

But when Jesus is in your life, you can be assured that he will be with you through every trial. Nowhere does the Bible teach that your life will be free of troubles or trials as believers.

Jesus taught disciples “*In this world, you will have tribulation, but take heart I have overcome the world*” John 16:33. God knows how to rescue you from trials (2 Peter 2:9). So trials are a way to increase your faith and dependence on the Lord.

I have divided the rest of the passage into three parts or three observations:

First observation:

A Great Trial:

Verses 36 and 38.

³⁷ And a great windstorm arose, and the waves were breaking into the boat, so that the boat was already filling. ³⁸ But he was in the stern, asleep on the cushion.

The timing of the storm is unusual. Strong winds blow during the day time not in the evening time. The fishermen went out during the evening time. Notice this storm is described as a great windstorm. The word used is for great is mega. This was one massive windstorm. And the disciples are in quite a predicament. Because, on one hand you have an enormous windstorm. The waves are breaking in. Water is filling the boat. The boat is being rocked. But what do they find Jesus doing? Sleeping in the back of the boat. The disciples are no doubt confused.

Jesus is not pretending to be asleep. He is spent and tired and therefore taking rest. Jesus is fully human and the storm does not seem to bother him or how the disciples feel about the storm.

Have you ever noticed that just when you think you have everything going well, you have a trial or temptation hits your life?

- You go to the doctor for a general check up and you receive a grim diagnosis.
 - Or you hear about a son or daughter that has gone off into this world and you don't know whether he or she will do well.
 - Or your marriage is being rocked as a boat on the sea.
- And you wonder, does God notice anything about your trial, does God care?

Do your trials and troubles drive you to despair or hope in God?

You see when a trial comes, it may be that God allows some hardship because God desires to do something great in you. Let trials drive to Jesus. Because, when you depend on Jesus Christ, there is a great peace that awaits you.

Second observation:

[A Great Peace:](#)

Verses 38 and 39.

And they woke him and said to him, “Teacher, do you not care that we are perishing?”³⁹ And he awoke and rebuked the wind and said to the sea, “*Peace! Be still!*” And the wind ceased, and there was a great calm.⁴⁰ He said to them, “*Why are you so afraid? Have you still no faith?*”

Notice their despair when they come to Jesus – “Teacher, do you not care that we are perishing?” The disciples go into panic mode because of the nature of the storm.

These disciples had seen Jesus' authority over demons and sickness. They had traveled with Jesus and had seen hundreds of oppressed and sick people delivered by Jesus. They had seen Jesus heal a man so paralyzed that four men had to carry him. That man is healed, and he simply picks up his bed and walks. But now Jesus appears to be not bothered by the storm. Maybe this storm was above Jesus' pay grade. It's possible they thought this way because when they tell Jesus that “we are perishing” I wonder if they mean they were all going to sink together including Jesus? That would be disdainful of Jesus.

To their credit, notice, Jesus is all there is. And Jesus is all they have. And they go to Jesus in their troubles.

What does Jesus do after they wake him up?

Jesus rises up and rebukes the wind. Jesus tells the sea “Be silent!” And notice what happened as a result? A great calm. A great peace. Not even a whisper. Not a wave. Absolutely silence. The word used again for great calm is mega calm. You see Jesus speaks to the sea and the sea obeys. It's not just the sea the obeys our Lord but the whole

creation is subject to him.

Job 26:11 tells us “The pillars of heaven tremble and are astounded at his rebuke. “ Just as Jesus rose up and rebuked the sea, Jesus rose up from the grave, and rebuked death.

This same Jesus is able to speak into any situation in your life and give your great peace and calm.

Psalms 119:165 reminds us “Great peace have those who love your law, nothing can make them stumble”.

Is Jesus all you have?

Jesus must be all you have and Jesus is who you must go to. Because Jesus has never left your life or your “boat”. And without Jesus your life will sink. So go to Christ alone in all your troubles. Jesus will hear you and promises to never leave you nor forsake you.

These disciples were stumbling when a trial came. So, Jesus has a rebuke for them after rebuking the sea. Verse 40 “*Why are you so afraid? Have you still no faith?*”

The word used for *afraid* is *cowardice* not the usual word for fear which is phobia. Jesus calls out their cowardliness. Why are you so faint hearted? What a great privilege it would have been traveling with Jesus in the boat. Jesus just taught them about having the faith of a mustard seed. And yet they panic and despair and act like cowards. Jesus was rebuking their lack of faith in Christ. All they needed to do what was to “*be still and know that Jesus is Lord*”.

So a great storm is superseded by a great calm.

And you would think the disciples are so relieved and pat Jesus on his back?

Not really!

Third observation:

[A Great Fear:](#)

Verses 41.

⁴¹ And they were filled with great fear and said to one another, “Who then is this, that even the wind and the sea obey him?”

There was a great storm. Jesus rebuked the sea and there was a great calm. And now the disciples react in great fear. This is the word phobia.

The disciples are terrified. If the storm made them panic, what Jesus did made them really afraid. They were astounded and amazed at what Jesus did for sure. But they are in terror of who calmed the sea. What do they say? “Who then is this, that even the wind

and the sea obey him?”

They had come face to face with God himself.

Who do you think Jesus is?

In the book of revelation, chapter 1, we see a picture of the glorify Jesus, giving a revelation to his apostle John. John sees a man “The hairs of his head were white, like white wool, like snow. His eyes were like a flame of fire, ¹⁵ his feet were like burnished bronze, refined in a furnace, and his voice was like the roar of many waters. ¹⁶ In his right hand he held seven stars, from his mouth came a sharp two-edged sword, and his face was like the sun shining in full strength. ¹⁷ When I saw him, I fell at his feet as though dead.

Christ delivers you so can fear God and worship Christ.

Psalm 96:9 “worship the Lord in the splendor of his holiness; tremble before him, all the earth.”

I want to conclude with John Newton’s conversion.

It’s likely that you know the song, “Amazing Grace”, and even know John Newton, the song writer, but I wonder if you know what led him to write this song.

Here is what Newton wrote.

“That 10th of March (in 1748) is a day much to be remembered by me; and I have never allowed it to pass unnoticed since the year 1748. For on that day the Lord came from on high and delivered me out of deep waters.”

Newton was traveling in a ship and the ship was caught in a great storm. Few on board expected they would survive as the ship was rapidly filling with water. In response to his condition, Newton’s own words startled him when he said “Mercy!” in astonishment to himself, “Mercy! mercy! What mercy can there be for me?” The ship did not sink and Newton survived. He said he became a Christian by the Gospel. “In the Gospel (of Jesus Christ), I saw at least a chance of hope but on every other side I was surrounded with black, unfathomable despair”.

Later he wrote the song, “Amazing grace! How sweet the sound, that saved a wretch like me”.

Call to Christ and be saved!

----- Discipleship Questions-----

MESSAGE SUMMARY: Be Still! Mark 4:35-41

HEAD: These questions help you examine the truth of God's Word.

1. What are at least three major observations you see in this passage?

HEART: These questions help you wrestle with what you believe.

2. Do you believe trials help build your faith? How? Go around and share.

3. What is God convicting you of and to believe in light of this message?

HANDS/HABITS: These questions help you bring the truth into your everyday life and develop behaviors that change your habits.

4. For personal reflection: Has God delivered you from a recent trial? What was your response? What did the trial show you about the nature of God?