

In the Storm with Jesus

by Mack Tomilson

This sermon focuses on the story from Mark's Gospel where Jesus calms the storm, highlighting the disciples' fear, lack of faith, and Jesus' power over creation. It emphasizes that followers of Christ will face storms, Jesus' humanity and deity, the flawed nature of believers, Jesus' control over creation, his patient teaching, and the disciples' increased view of who Jesus truly is.

Scripture: Mark 4:35, Matthew 8:26, Hebrews 4:15, Psalm 107:29, 2 Corinthians 12:9, Psalm 46:10, Isaiah 41:10, Hebrews 13:8, Romans 8:28, Philippians 4:6

Topics: "Faith in the Storm", "Jesus' Authority over Nature"

Description

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Transcript

Those of you who are at home today, we miss you and we're thinking about you as you tune in. It's great to see everyone here. I would like for us to turn to Mark's Gospel, chapter 4, Mark chapter 4. We'll go to the end of the chapter, beginning in verse 35.

Mark 4, 35. On the same day when evening had come, he said to them, that is the disciples, let us cross over to the other side. Then when they had left the multitude, they took him along in the boat as he was.

And other little boats were also with him. And a great wind storm arose. And the waves beat into the boat so that it was already filling.

But he was in the stern, that is the rear part of the boat, asleep on a pillow. He is different than us, isn't he? And they awoke him and said to him, and the language is, it was a stern rebuke almost. Teacher, do you not care that we're perishing? Then he arose and rebuked the wind and said to the sea, peace, be still.

And the wind stopped and there was a great calm. But he said to them, why are you so fearful? How is it that you have no faith? And they feared exceedingly. Now think, the sea's calm, perfect weather, but they're exceedingly afraid because of what he had done.

And said to one another, who can this be? The messianic secret is progressively being revealed. He's displaying in his teaching, in his miracles, in his presence, who he is progressively. Who can this man be that even the wind and the sea obey him? I want to speak this morning on the subject in the storm with Jesus.

Because every storm the disciples were ever in, this wasn't the last one, they were in it with him. And every storm you and I face, we're in it with him. In the storm with the Lord Jesus Christ.

A storm has suddenly arisen. Remember the context of the first four chapters of Mark's gospel. He begins in a magnificent, busy way, progressively, to teach widely, many healings, many casting out of demons, crowds gather.

He heals many when they come to the door of Peter's mother-in-law's house. He heals many, cast out many demons. The choosing of the twelve men, he prays all night and chooses the twelve and begins to have them be with him.

So he's pouring out his wisdom, he's pouring out his energy and his strength. He's cleansing leprosy, the mighty works, mighty works that Israel had not seen up to this point. They had heard of miracles through the Old Testament era, mighty miracles, but 400 years have passed since the closing of the Old Covenant era.

And here comes this carpenter, this ordinary man, unimpressive, and he begins to do mighty, amazing works that are astonishing. And it goes viral. And many begin to come when they hear he's going to be somewhere.

They're wanting help, they're wanting healing, they're desperate because of their children or their needs, or the blind, the lame are carried to him. And he heals them all in many situations. So here you come to chapter 4, he begins teaching to a multitude, Luke and Mark say, and he's teaching parables here.

He starts unfolding the mysteries of the kingdom. Some will have ears to hear, some are blinded by the parables. The truth is close to them.

And that was the purpose of the parables. Mark says with many parables, he spoke the word to them as they were able to hear him. So the day ends, evening has come, and he says, fellas, let's get in the boat and go to the other side.

Let's go over to the other side. So that's our text today from verse 35 through 41. So it's 13 men in a boat.

They're escaping the crowd. They were probably already all glad. Time for rest, relaxation.

The lake's calm. We can lay back. Peter gunning his snacks up there in the bag.

It's down time. And they're looking forward to it, I'm sure. Quiet now and relaxed.

Sailing about 12, 13 miles south to the to the other end from the north end. The Sea of Galilee was about 13 miles long and seven and a half miles wide. And it's a good sail.

I've sailed across it back in 76 when I was there. And it's a beautiful setting. I was glad no storm came up that day, but it's cool to be there.

And well, so they're in the boat. All's well. And it's quiet.

They're relaxed. And Jesus is in the back of the boat. And Luke says, as they sailed, he fell asleep.

Why? We'll get to that shortly. You know why already. So the break they wanted, the quiet they desired, the relaxation they needed is all interrupted by a sudden unexpected storm.

They hadn't pulled up their phones to check the weather out. They didn't know this was coming. Now, I was flying from Denver one one day to to Wyoming.

And if you've ever been in the Denver Airport, it's out in the plane on the east side of Denver and Denver set up against the Rockies. And then so when you take off from the Denver Airport, you take off from the east end to the west and then you start rising and then you get up even with above the Rockies. And if you're in a small plane like I was that day, suddenly it's smooth.

And then, boom, the plane starts rocking, falling and bumping in. And it was scary. It was the worst turbulence I'd ever felt.

And this was in a 20 seater plane. So the wind was wreaking havoc with that plane and the wind suddenly hit and it was it was strong. And finally, the pilot leveled it on up above the air, the wind, and it was calm again.

That's what happens a lot of times on the Sea of Galilee. It's set basically in a plane and with hills around and the winds would come up, start gaining strength, and then they would sweep down on the lake and create violent storms that even made the most experienced fishermen afraid. And the boats were not, they weren't tall sides on those fishing boats.

They were shallow sides, mainly because it would help them get the nets in. They had a lesser distance to pull them up. So they were it was easy when the waves severely began to hit the boats for water just to be gushing in.

And that's what's happening here. So that big lake, of course, is the is the Sea of Galilee, where unexpected storms at times would come. So that's the that's the context.

That's the setting. 13 men in a boat and unexpectedly a storm comes and they're all very frightened and upset because their master, the teacher, this guy's back there asleep. Really? So what what does this teach us? What does this passage? What's the point of Mark recording this miracle? What do we see here? Well, we see here these elements, the unexpected storm.

We see the disciples responses and there were more more than one response. And we see Jesus, as always, in absolute peace and in control when we're with him in the storm. So I want to point out six realities, none of them long for you just to see this morning as we look at this experience again of Christ in the storm with his disciples.

What do we learn in the storm with Jesus? Reality number one, we see that followers of Christ will always face storms. This past year has been a storm in various ways. We feel like we're in storm conditions and we're going into the next year when we feel what's ahead.

I don't know, but I dread it. Get ready for the worst. We're in for a ride.

Whatever words you've chosen to describe it or you've heard from others, we feel like we're in stormy conditions in our lives, around us, in our state, in our country. And we see here that us, like the disciples, we are always going to face storms. We don't know when they're coming.

We don't know what there'll be, but they are coming. Not all the time. I don't mean continuously, though sometimes you go through periods, you feel like that's all that's happening to you.

This is so hard. Storms. Where's the daylight? Where's the calm? Where's the peace? And it doesn't come.

So it's not that we're always facing storms because we know, and you experience times of blessing, don't you, Nick? When things are calm, when the winds aren't against you, when the family's doing well, your job's secure, family times are great, you're getting a lot out of the scriptures, you're encouraged, you love being with the brethren, times of calm. We have those. Then, unexpectedly, bad news.

Alan, bad news comes. We get a text, we get a call, we get an email, we get news, problems, hard things, and we progressively learn as we are followers of the Lord Jesus Christ that the God of the Bible does not insulate us from storms. He brings them and allows them.

Because contrary to popular religious opinion, Christianity is a stormy faith. It's not always easy. The problems aren't always from the devil.

Confess them away, and you'll have good weather. No. The God of the Bible brings them and allows them for hidden purposes and for sanctifying, Christ-revealing experience.

So why are we surprised? Just answer that question in your mind. Why am I surprised when something hard comes? Why am I shocked? Because we're frail creatures, and it takes us by surprise. But we should learn to be not surprised.

It doesn't mean we're not hit by it, but we should learn more and more these things are going to come. But Jesus is in the boat. Be still, my soul.

We ought to take from that hymn today, every hard thing we go through, the first thing we say to ourselves is, be still, my soul. He who's still the waves is still stealing the waves. But we're stressed, we're grieved, we feel overwhelmed, and the longer a storm blows, the more we're under it.

We're troubled on every side. We feel like Paul. Outwardly conflicts, inwardly fears.

We're pressed out of measure, heavy in spirit, not joyful. And we must put on this mindset as a good soldier of Jesus Christ that we will be at times called into, led into, brought to us storms, physical sickness, extended family stresses, broken relationships, misunderstanding, the death of those we love. We must have this mindset as a good soldier of Christ that we're going to be in storms at times as we go to the other side.

We're not sinking in the lake. By any storm, we're going to the other side because he has said so. So as followers, the first reality is, as followers of Jesus, we do and will face storms.

So the next time one calls on you, call me on the phone. Mac, would you remind me? I'll say, be still, your soul. As I say to myself, be still my soul.

So second reality here, Mark is showing us the man, Jesus, the human. That is, he's showing us a first real glimpse of the true humanity of the Lord Jesus Christ. Wonderfully displayed how storms raging, boats filling, he's snoring.

He probably snored. Children, you ever heard your dad snore? Some people snore loud. Alan's nodding yes.

He's fast asleep, sound asleep, back on that cushion. And by the way, it wasn't a comfort foam \$200 pillow. It was, it was a cushion, maybe made out of leather, some kind of cushion that was always at the back for people who might be on there to recline if they weren't sailing the boat.

So he's back there fully asleep, fast asleep as the storm is raging. Verse 38 says, but here's the contrast. They're scared out of their wits, but he was in the rear of the boat asleep on a pillow.

Was he dreaming? Was he snoring? Was his, was his spirit as the God man within him perfectly at rest? Was he communing with his father? We don't know. He's just fast asleep. But this remarkable reality that this horrible storm is raging and filling the boat, it doesn't wake him up.

How is that Tom? Let's just think, how did it not wake him up? We don't know. But in his perfect humanity, he's sleeping and in his perfect deity, he is at rest. Behold the man.

Dean, it's awesome, isn't it? I'm telling you, Mark is unfolding, unveiling now with glimpses, the glory and the humanity of the Lord Jesus Christ here. Simply by this statement, this recorded fact that he's asleep on a pillow. And Luke said it this way, as they sailed, he fell asleep.

Why did he sleep? The busyness of the days he had poured himself out. He was tired, probably tired to the bone. He felt exhausted and he probably wanted to rest.

But in his deity, did he already know that on the other end of the lake, who's he going to meet? Somebody tell me, huh? The Gadarene demoniacs waiting over there in the, in the tombs, the Lord may have known the disciples don't. And so they needed rest. He needed sleep.

They would have been tired and needing a break. And he was like them in all ways as a human being, as a true man, he was sleeping so soundly and it was their yelling, their loud screaming, yelling at him that finally woke him up. Wouldn't it have been amazing to see a video of that? We have it in the Bible read between the lines and let the reality, let the humanity, let the, the drama of it soak into us.

We ought to, we ought to live in these stories when we read them and see what they're, what's really happening there. They woke him. By the way, that's the only real and meaning and true meaning of the word woke.

They woke him. That's, that's the only meaning to the word. Forget the new meaning.

They woke him from sound sleep, him needing sleep. So we see the glory of our savior. He's like us.

He's one of us in the midst of the beginning of his ministry. When we read that account and many others, we need to see him, what he was really like. We should see in that one verse, but he was in the stern asleep on a cushion.

We should see the humanity and the glory of his person coming out just by reading it and stopping and beholding him. So that's reality number two. Number three, we see from this that all followers of Jesus are still flawed.

Are you flawed, Joel? Linda, am I flawed? A loud amen is in order. She's being kind. These guys were still flawed.

They were in the process of being changed. Him revealing himself to them, him teaching them. They're, they're being clueless at times, not getting it.

And he would say at times, you know, I have many things to say to you. You can't handle it yet. So we see their flawedness here, verse 38.

And they woke him and said to him, and it was with harsh tone, almost teacher, do you not care that we are perishing? It wasn't a general request. Now they were scared and understandably so, but this was a strong stinging reproof and accusation. Don't you care? Have you ever been so hurting and afraid and fearful that you've said that to the Lord? You've thought it about him sometimes.

Even if you didn't have the courage to utter the words, we sometimes feel like what I'm going through, the Lord doesn't seem to be doing anything. He seems to be absent. I don't know what he's doing.

I don't feel like I can trust him. Lord, do you really care? They thought they were going to drown. Therefore they knew somehow his care and his love and his compassion had stopped.

He's sleeping. So he doesn't care. He'd be waking up and he would be rising to the occasion.

They had to rouse him. Don't you care? The pressure of the moment was caused what was in them to come out. Does that ever happen with you? The pressure of the moment causes flesh to just come out, anger to come out, harsh, unwise words to come out, impatience to come out, and doubt said sin.

And you're showing your flawedness is coming out. It always does. And Jesus' words nailed them about it.

He said two things that was at the root of this. Fear and unbelief. Why are you so afraid? Fear and unbelief.

Well, we're all flawed and we know it. I mean, the world and everybody in it's flawed. The universe is flawed.

Flawed by sin, flawed by the fall. They panicked here in a way, understandably so. But it's not excusable.

Now hear me on this. It's understandable that we struggle. It's understandable that we feel stress and pressure.

And it's understandable at times that we're driven to panic. But it is not excusable that we do. Had they not seen his power, had they not been seeing daily his amazing miracles and demons being cast out and cripples being healed and blind people seeing, had they not seen his life and heard his truth and observed his compassion and power? They saw it.

They'd been eating and drinking it. They saw it, heard it, witnessed it, who he was, what he could do, the power of God, his sovereign control over every event, every demon, every disease, every situation. They

had been equipped with some experience and knowledge enough to trust him when the harder things come.

Had he not just said to them, let's go over to the other side. If he says that, is it a proper presupposition that you're going to get to the other side? I mean, doesn't that make sense? Jesus says we're going. So they were going to get there.

But suddenly they forgot that. They should have gained confidence in his presence, his power, his promises, and his loving care. They had begun to know him.

But in the storm, they default to unbelief. We would have too. Let's admit it.

We would have. And they just ask a stupid question. Do you not care? You know, believers can still ask stupid questions.

Someone calls you. You say hello. They say, oh, you're there.

No, this is a recording. I'm not here. Or church.

Everybody's left and you're still there sitting and talking. And somebody walks around the corner. Oh, you're still here.

No, I left an hour ago. Stupid questions sometimes deserve stupid answers. And I have to mortify.

I ask them sometimes it too. But I have to mortify my sarcasm a lot. My grandchildren, my husband, I'm sitting at the table eating a bowl of cereal and they walk in.

Papa, what are you doing? I'm playing tennis. Can't you see? Well, here was theirs. Teacher, do you not care? Dumb and dumber.

They were believing in the storm that apparently he didn't care. Or he would have already gotten up and done something. At least they weren't turning to Peter and said, Peter, save us.

They at least turned to him. They knew the source. They they knew that much.

They had that much faith that he was the go to in the storm to get some help. Do we know that really? When you're hurting, do you first call a friend or do you call on the Lord? That's a big test. Faith and trust and knowing how he really is always the issue in the storm.

Always. He is the one in the storm with you and faith and trust and knowing what he's really like is always the issue. Can Jesus fail? Thank you.

No. Can he forget? Nicholas, can he forget? Can Jesus forget? No, he can't. Can he lack compassion in the storm? Can he lack knowledge? Jonathan, he can't.

Can he make mistakes? Can he lack anything that we ever need regardless of how raging the storm is? John, what do you think? No, he cannot fail. Will he get him to the other side? Yes. Will he not keep his word? Every one of the things he promised? Is he different in the storm that on Sunday morning inhabiting the praises of his people? No.

When he's healing and mastering demons and controlling the crowds, what has changed in the storm? Nothing except our faith and our trust. That's what's wavering. The storm reveals the flaw in our faith and doubts take over.

All right. Reality number four. I like this.

We see the Lord of creation here at work. The storm teaches us that we see the Lord of creation at work in the storm. Verse 39 says, then he arose and rebuked the wind and spoke to the sea.

Literally, he stood up. Maybe he wiped the sleep out of his eye. I don't know.

But he was awake. He stood up and he spoke. Stop.

Be still. Stop. Be quiet.

It was as if he was speaking to a person. The language is that it had taken on almost a personality in the raging. I don't know if demonic powers were involved.

The Lord was ruling over it. But he rose and he spoke to simple war rebukes, commands the tired man. Jesus rises up as the Lord of creation.

Glory. There's glory there. You see him rise and rebuke the winds in the sea.

He's being revealed earlier as the human man. Jesus tired, exhausted. Here is the Lord of creation mastering.

The sea that he had created, the master of all created things with the word stops at all. They couldn't have drowned because they were destined to be on the other side because there was an appointment with a needy man. So Jesus has said, boys, we're going to the other side.

His humanity and his deity as Lord of creation unveil more. He who created wind as part of creation, he who created water and fire stands up as the God man and puts it to rest. Now, just picture it.

The wind's violent, the waves are huge, the boat's filling. When he speaks, the wind's gone, the water's still, and the gospel says there was a great calm. Wouldn't you have been in awe? Would it have put a little of the fear of God in you to suddenly see your master do what he had never done before in his earthly ministry? This is beyond healing a lame leg.

This is controlling the elements. Peace, be still. And it was calm.

A friend of mine in Chicago has two handicapped children, and the son, I think it was probably in teenage years, was real difficult at times to get him to go to bed. He had to be put to bed, and he was very picky about how everything had to be perfect. The covers had to be perfect.

The pillow had to be perfect. He had to be tucked in, and if he didn't get his way, he would start groping. So my friend, his wife was gone, and it was dad's time.

She usually did it, but he begins to put him to bed, and the son argues for an hour, gropes for an hour. Nothing is satisfactory. He can't please him.

And so the dad walks out of the room and says, Lord, what do I do? What did you do in such situations? And it came to him, I still the storm. So the friend said, I'm going to stop trying. I'm asking you to still the storm now.

And as he neared the son's bedroom, he heard the son talking, saying, I don't know why I'm this way. This is wrong. I don't need to act like this.

This is wrong. And he was quiet. The dad went in.

He was already tucked in, at peace, going to sleep. You know, that's what Christ will do for us in every storm. Because you see, sometimes there's storms, but Christ ultimately will bring great calm if we will trust him.

Reality number five. We see Jesus' patient teaching. Look at verse 40.

But he said to them, why are you so fearful? How is it you have no faith? Fear and faith. This was a masterful, teachable moment. He had their attention.

They were filled with awe and the fear of God about this man who had just done this. This was a new thing they had never seen. And they were in a teachable moment.

So he taught them patiently. He had rebuked the winds and the sea, but he didn't rebuke them. He begins to teach them in the moment.

Because the issue, the root issue, was their lack of faith, their flawed faith, and their unbelief. And it always is, isn't it? Our storms make us doubt, and we drift, we slide into unbelief, and fear takes hold. That's the go-to.

And so that's what he wanted to change in the disciples, and that's what he wants to change in me, the next storm I'm going through. Will I let him? Will I learn? Will I get the lesson? Will I change? Will I hear his words and apply them? He taught them patiently in this teachable moment. Does he do that with you ever? You mess up.

You're worried. You're fearful. You're hurting.

You draw away. You don't draw near to him. And he doesn't come with a hammer of the law beating you up.

He comes with his presence and his fragrant, sometimes clear, firm words to your heart of loving correction and drawing you on to see what you need to see. He patiently taught the disciples, and he does that with us. Reality number six, finally.

What do we see here? I've alluded to it a little bit. We see here a true and increased view of the Lord Jesus Christ. They saw him in this experience in ways they had never seen him before.

They had never seen his power displayed on this wide of a scale. They had never seen him deal with something this massive that had to do with the weather or storms. So their view of him was enlarged.

Their awe of him was increased. Their proper fear of him. They were exceedingly afraid in the moment after the storm was calm.

Why? Because they were put in awe of this man, and they were dumbstruck. They said, Who is this? Who is this? We don't know our Savior fully yet. We don't trust him perfectly yet.

We don't look to him in the storm. We're frustrated or worried or in unbelief about why he's not doing something, and we panic, and our faith fails us. But that's what storms do.

That's where we're led to, to have a greater glimpse, a deeper understanding, a greater revelation, and a deeper experience with the Son of Man and the Son of God, the Lord Jesus Christ. May we see him in the storm because he's with us in it. He's leading us into them to get to the other side.

You're not going to drown. You're going to make it. In every storm, make it your motto.

Be still, my soul. Here's a storm, but Jesus is with me, so I'm going to the other side. Let's pray, and then we're going to sing a hymn.

Father, teach us the truth that we sang earlier to tell our souls to be still and help us to learn to bear patiently the grief and pain, to leave to our God to order and provide, because in every change, in every storm, he faithful will remain. Lord, cause us to know and be confident in the fact that the waves and winds still know his voice who rule them here below. Lord Jesus, we're thankful that you do rule the storms, every one of our lives, in every situation.

You are with us. You're compassionate. You're sovereign, and you're taking us all the way to the other side.

Lord, apply this record, this brief narrative in Mark's gospel to us today. Let it change our minds and our hearts. Let it fill us with faith and strength as we see Jesus.

Increase our view of you, Lord. Increase our vision. Be real to us more and more.

Cause us to rest absolutely, whether in calm or whether in storm, to rest in our great God and Savior, Jesus Christ. We pray in his name. Amen.

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