

Mark 4:35-41

“Finding Rest During Restless Times”

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I. **Introduction**

Mark now moves to two situations where the popularity of Jesus effected people’s perception of Him which led them to fear instead of faith. We will look at the first one this morning in verses 35-41 in chapter fourth and tackle the second next week in the first 20 verses of chapter 5. The cause of the fear was indirectly related to His increasing popularity as the pressing multitudes gave Him no time for rest or to secure the proper provisions. And in the eyes of those around Him this limited their ability to trust Him. I find that this is not uncommon as the immediate problems that we face cause us to believe that our Lord is unable to deal with what we are facing and fear becomes our only option. Before we look at this story we need to realize that we do no service to our own souls if we only take it in the literal sense in which it happened. If we do so we limit this miracle to only an event that happen on that day over 2000 years ago when a storm was stilled at the word of Jesus. I believe the value of the application is that our Lord is the same today as He was yesterday and He will be so tomorrow. **That ought to still our anxiety and calm our hearts as we realize that the storms of our situations and circumstances today should discipline us but they must not ever be allowed to dominate us!**

II. Vs. 35-36 As He was

Vs. 35-36 Mark gives us the background of the story as it directly relates to the choice of fear over faith. We are told that the event took place “on the same day, when evening had come”. What a day it had been, the blasphemous accusations, the visit from His mother and brothers trying to take Him home by force, the teaching from the sea shore and pushing and shoving from the crowds. They were on the Western shore of the lake and at Jesus suggestion though it was evening they would cross over to the Eastern shore. A decision to cross over some 5 miles across the Sea of Galilee. Mark describes Jesus condition in a twofold manor:

1. They “took” Jesus in the boat “as He was”: The word “took” is the same word used to describe what Joseph was told to do in taking Mary and Jesus to Egypt as it expresses the idea of protection. Combined these two phrases describe a condition whereby Jesus needed to be taken as He was in such poor physical condition to be able physically to make it Himself.
2. According to verse 38 Jesus was in short order “*in the stern, asleep on a pillow*”:

This further clarifies the point above that Jesus fell fast asleep to such a deep level that not even the turbulent Sea while he was in the stern stirred His slumber. This meant that they had no time to make provisions for the day as they left in the evening. Mark also offers a detail to assure the reader that there were other eyewitness to the event as he informs his readers that “*there were also other little boats with Him.*”

The point Mark wants to make is that what took place on that lake that day was not a “*Jedi mind trick*” to a bunch of exhausted fearful disciples. What took place on the lake that evening affected not just Jesus and His disciples but the other little boats that were out on the lake following after Him. There are those that suggest that this event has nothing to do with Jesus calming the Seas and everything to do with Him calming the hearts of over tired men in the boat with Him. While I wouldn’t argue that the **RESULTS** of Jesus’ actions calmed the hearts of frightened men, I would argue that the result was

caused by the authority of His word over His creation. Those in these little boats who were tagging along are the testimony Mark offers as they experienced the calm Seas and yet they would have never been able to hear Jesus' calming words.

III. Vs. 37-38 Confidence or carelessness?

Vs. 37-38 The phrase a “*great windstorm*” in the Greek describe a hurricane with steady gusts that cause violent crashing waves and a steady rain. The Sea of Galilee is at 682 feet below sea level and is prone to this type of storm due to its geographical location: 20 miles between the Mediterranean Sea and Mount Hermon which is over 9,000 feet high with the Jordan Valley running between these two, channeling the winds onto the lake. They must have been around midpoint in their crossing and waves were beating against the boat so violently that the boat was filling quicker than they could bail. The past careers of ***four of these men being fishermen on this very lake*** causes us to realize that they had firsthand experience with these storms on this lake. That information must be added into the story as they came to Jesus and awoke Him. **This indicates three things:**

- a. *The extreme conditions they were facing was beyond even their experience.*
- b. *They were willing to admit defeat to their Master.*
- c. *They believed in Jesus' ability to do what they, in all their knowledge and experience, were unable to do.*

There is one other observation we can gain and it is based upon their indictment of Jesus in verse 38 as they said, “Teacher, **DO YOU NOT CARE** that we are perishing?” The charge against Jesus is **indifference**. This indicates that ***the storm began before Jesus went to sleep***. They could not have made this accusation to him ***of not caring*** if He had already been asleep before the storm as He would have been unaware of their condition.

From their perspective:

- **Jesus knew of the situation**
- **Had the power to change it**

- *But didn't care enough to do something about it*

Now before we are too harsh on these disciples I suggest that we evaluate our time in this boat with our Lord. How many times have we made the same indictment? *We are quick to acknowledge His omniscience and omnipotence while indicting Him for His lack of compassion!* I believe that what appeared to be indifference to them was a greater storm than the crashing surf pounding their boat to oblivion. *Their faith was being sunk by fear not of the impromptu storm but what they perceived to be the calculated indifference of the one person that they knew, who was completely aware of the situation, had the power to reverse it but didn't care to do so.* They had never doubted His love or concern for them before, but had consistently been surprised at what He knew and His power. *Their blindness seen in their indictment of indifference indicates that they clearly understood that Jesus himself was facing the same common peril but what bothered them isn't that He was **OUTSIDE** the situation but that He didn't seem to care for **THEM!*** *They fail to realize that He is not separated from the same outcome. His perceived lack of compassion would have doomed Him as well, yet they still make the charge.* Our Lord is not outside our circumstances and if our fears were correct He would be far from who we believe Him to be. Saints, our Lord is IN OUR BOAT! *We must remember that what wouldn't awaken Jesus in the situation seen in the cold rain, ruckus wind and filling boat was quickly brought to action at the complaining indictment of those who doubted His love.*

IV. Vs. 39-41 The only fear

Vs. 39 The first thing I notice is that Jesus' first response isn't to them, instead it went directly towards the elements of the situation. To the wind, Jesus rebuked it saying, "Peace" and to the sea Jesus said, "Be still" or be muzzled. And there was an immediate

change in the circumstances that based upon verse 41 astonished them. They had just in essence said to Him, “*Don’t just lie there, do something!*” and when he does they fear exceedingly at what He has just done. ***There was a greater fear caused by the CALM then there was by the STORM***, all be it a fear of awe. **The greater difficulty from our Lord’s perspective was not the calming elements of the wind and seas but the calming of His disciples hearts!**

It needs to be also noted that Jesus was not addressing the natural elements as they passed by. He wasn’t speaking to the wind and water but rather to the supernatural elements that lie behind the disturbance. Paul acknowledged the same in Ephesians 6:12 as he said, “*We do not wrestle against flesh and blood, but against principalities, against powers, against rulers of darkness of this age, against spiritual hosts of wickedness in heavenly places.*” Jesus rebuked not the wind and the waves but rather the one who stirred them to destruction.

Vs. 40 On the surface Jesus words seem strange as He says, “*Why is it you are so fearful?*”. He was addressing men who were in danger of losing their lives. But the problem of their fear didn’t lie in what they were facing but rather in what they failed to appropriate, namely faith! It had been only a few days since Jesus had taken them up on the hill side and in what we commonly call the “**Sermon on the Mount**” where He said “*Do not worry about your life.....look at the birds of the air, for they neither sow or reap nor gather into barns; yet your heavenly Father feeds them. Are you not of more value than they?*” This is why Jesus said to them, “*How is it you have no faith?*” **If only we would start with what we know to be true about God and use that to interpret our situations and circumstances!** When Jesus first spoke to them that evening His words

were “*Let us **CROSS OVER** to the other side*” He didn’t say, “*Let us **GO DOWN UNDER the sea and be drown***”.

Vs. 41 “*Who can this be...*” are words of discovery and examination as they were saying, “*We must find out more about this Jesus whom resides in our boat!*” There ought to be no fear or panic in the person who has Christ in their heart! ***His confidence is such that He can rest in the hours that cause us anxiety! His slumber is not in uncaring apathy but rather in uncompromising security! We are far safer in the middle of the sea in a storm with Jesus than any port of paradise without Him!*** Saints remember, the one who calmed the storm is the same one that allowed the storm to teach His followers to trust him at His word! Now we know ***WHY*** the Lord lays asleep in the stern of our boat during a storm: ***It is so that we will discover a new precious reality that whatever destructive wind and crashing sea we are facing all we need to do is trust Him. Our greatest test is never whether the elements will obey Him but whether we will!*** Oh to be sure we are going to flunk the exams from time to time but that failure is what will lead us to a greater experience and encounter with our Lord.