

## Jesus, the Calmer of Storms

Mark 4:35-41

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Summary of the texts:

In Mark 3 we read that Jesus continued to **heal** people. He became very **popular** among those who were poor and sick and who desperately needed His help. On the other hand, the Pharisees and the Herodians began to plot **ways of killing Him** because he healed people on the Sabbath. His popularity grew so much that he began to **teach down at the lake** (Sea of Galilee) instead of people's homes or the even the synagogue. There were simply too many people who wanted to hear him and to be touched by Him to meet inside of a building.

Jesus was so busy he forgot to eat and that **upset His family**. They must have considered him to be a **fanatical workaholic**. The Pharisees refused to believe He had the power of God. The only option was that his powers were demonic. So, they tried to accuse Him of being against God & using **demonic powers**.

In response to word that his family wanted him, he said, “My **brothers and sisters are those who do the will of God.**”

### Mark 4

Chapter four opens with **Jesus at the lake** (Sea of Galilee) with a large crowd around him and He is teaching in parables.

He gave the **parable of the sower** and about seed that that falls into various kinds of ground. It doesn't all sprout because not all the ground that **seed falls on is good fertile ground**. So it is with the Kingdom of God.

The Word of Christ that is being sown is so awesome that it is like a **light**. You **have to let the light shine** and not cover it up.

Furthermore, the Kingdom of Christ is like a **mustard seed** that, though it is small in the beginning, is really going to grow huge. Even so, not everyone who receives the word is going to let it flourish, because their

own **personal soil is too hard** for it to penetrate. Don't worry. **The Kingdom of Christ is going to flourish.**

**He frequently spoke in parables, says the text.**

Mark 4 ends with a story. It was a real-life situation that continued to teach disciples. It was **not unlike a parable in its teaching effect.**

Vs. 35 describes Jesus asking his disciples to go over to the other side of the lake (Sea of Galilee). That was not a problem, several of the disciples were fishermen who had **access to boats**, and crossing back and forth across the lake was something they did quite often.

It was **toward evening** when Jesus made the suggestion that they cross the lake. That was not a problem either. Even if it was getting quite **dark**, fishermen preferred going out at night. You see, they fished with a net and at night there was usually less wind. In the daytime the lake became very choppy. When you were bobbing up and down, it was more difficult to handle the nets. But, at night the sea became very calm and the wind was gentle. So, they **preferred fishing at night.**

The only **problem** was that sometimes a cold air front would come down out of the surrounding mountains and, without warning, a strong wind would hit the lake. When that happened, it was a problem. With very little light and **very strong winds**, when the small fishing boats began to blow around like a cork in the water things became difficult.

If the winds became really strong, the boat might begin to take on water. When that happened, the fishermen needed to grab buckets and start **bailing out water**, lest they sink – in the pitch **dark**. It was **frightful, dangerous, and life-threatening.**

On this night they weren't alone. Our text says that other boats were with them. But, other boats would have been a similar size and were in the same danger. They wouldn't be of much help to one another. They were all bailing out water in hopes of saving their own lives. It was so bad, that our text says, "Their boat was nearly swamped". They were scared.

Now they weren't as scared as I would have been! I'm not very secure in the water. I **didn't learn to swim** until I was in my 30s, and I didn't learn to swim much. **When it's dark and stormy, I would much rather be on**

**land.** So, I can identify with these disciples when somebody called out, “Jesus, where are you?” When somebody said he must still be asleep in the bottom of the boat, it was nearly unbelievable. This was not a good time to be asleep.

Someone once said, “If you can be at peace when everyone around you is going nuts, you probably don’t understand the severity of the situation.” As far as the disciples were concerned, Jesus didn’t understand the severity of the situation.”

So, they went to him and said, “**Jesus, don’t you care that we are drowning, here? Jesus, don’t you care that we are drowning, here? Teacher, don’t you care if we drown?**”

**Did you ever feel like that?** Did you ever go through a storm, a difficult situation, a really, really hard time, and **feel like God either didn’t “get it”** – that He didn’t understand just **how bad things really were, or else, He simply didn’t care?** Sometimes there are financial storms we go through. It is really hard for people right now who got themselves into nice homes at lower rates. But, when the interest rate doubled, it was way beyond what they could afford, and they are now losing their homes because of the economy and because of interest rates.

There are parts of the country where there have been **massive lay offs and people have had to try to sell their homes** and move out of the region to get other jobs, but their home hasn’t sold because there are hundreds just like it. I’m guessing that if they are praying people they are saying something like, “**God, don’t you understand how bad this is? God, I’ve tried everything I know to do, but I can’t change my situation. God, I have prayed and nothing has changed. God, do you care that we are perishing here?**”

There are lots of similar situations. **Health** problems, problems with our kids, problems in our **marriages**, problems at **work**, or problems at **school**. We have prayed, but nothing has happened. Nothing has changed and you wonder, “*God do you understand how bad it is here? Do you care?*”

**Other people might be getting some help**, but you are not. Lord, do you care? It’s nice that you are helping them, but I’m still struggling here. “Lord do you care?”

**I almost never say to people what Jesus said to these disciples. “What’s the matter with you guys? Don’t you have any faith? Why are you afraid? You don’t have much faith in God, do you?”**

When the **wind** is blowing, when **water** is crashing over the hull of the boat, when people are **bailing** water, when the **stress** is so bad that people are afraid of going under, **I never tell them they don’t have enough faith.**

**So, what’s going on here with Jesus?** What was he trying to teach them? What did he really want them to learn? **Why was He so confrontational** about the issue of faith? Why didn’t he say, “Oh, I’m sorry guys, I was getting a little shut eye, here, and I didn’t realize things were so bad. **I’ll tell you what I’ll do. I’ll just say a little prayer here and see if things get better.**”

The text:

39He got up, rebuked the wind and said to the waves, "Quiet! Be still!" Then the wind died down and it was completely calm. 40He said to his disciples, "**Why are you so afraid? Do you still have no faith?**" 41They were **terrified** and asked each other, "**Who is this? Even the wind and the waves obey him!**"

What was this “living parable” trying to teach the disciples? I think it is this: **“With Jesus in your boat, you cannot sink”**.

That’s what these disciples needed to learn, and they needed to learn it fast. Jesus would be facing crucifixion. The Pharisees and Herodians were already plotting against him. There were some people with hardened hearts. The pressure was mounting. Furthermore, Jesus would soon be saying, “If anyone wants to come after me, take up your cross and follow.” What was in store for the followers of Jesus? Death, crucifixion, persecution, imprisonment. It wasn’t going to be easy. The storms would come. But they needed to know one thing: **“With Christ in your boat, you cannot sink”**. With Christ in your life, you cannot go under. Jesus would soon say to them, “I am with you always, even unto the end of the age.” Jesus would be facing crucifixion. He would be facing the cross. He would die and be crucified, and after being with them for 40 days he would ascend into the heavens. But He would send them the Holy Spirit. In that way, Jesus would be with them even to the end of the world. Paul, the apostle would say, **“Christ in you, the hope of glory.”**

With Jesus in you, you will not sink. With His Spirit in you, you cannot go under. Even if the winds continue to blow, even if Jesus does not stand up in the boat and immediately speak a word of silence to the storms that are blowing against you, you need

to know this: With Jesus in your boat you cannot sink. Just because God seems to be asleep, just because He isn't immediately jumping up for your rescue, it doesn't mean He doesn't care. If you are thinking that God doesn't care when you are going through the storms of life, you have to have more faith than that, or you will sink.

No matter what you face, you must know this: "With Christ in your boat, you cannot sink."

That doesn't mean you won't suffer. Christians have always suffered. It doesn't mean you won't die. Christians have always died – some have died precisely because they are Christians doing the will of God. The symbol Christians used in the early church was the symbol of the fish: The word for fish in Greek was "Ichthus". The Letters of that word were like an acronym. I – Jesus; CH – Christ; Th – God's; S – Son". The word Ichthus meant: "Jesus Christ, God's Son" - it was a quiet declaration of faith. When they saw the word "Ichthus", what they saw was a porpoise. A porpoise is a fish that does indeed go under, but he always pops back up. You might die, you might go under for a moment, but the Christian then pops back up, through the power of the resurrected Christ who is with us always, even to the end of the age.

Know this: With Christ in your boat, you will not sink.

Come now to the communion table and drink in His life-giving blood, given for the remission of sins and for life eternal. Come to the table and eat. This body was broken for you. Trust in Him who was broken, who suffered and who died, and who has sent His Spirit to live in you and to give you hope. With Christ in your life, you cannot sink.

Amen.