

Mark 4: 35-41 // Peace in the storm

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[0:00] If you turn with me or tap and swipe in your phone, however you get there, to Mark 4, verses 35-41.

! Where are you?

You're so silent. I used to hear you and now I can't. And you go through this like shopping list. Where's my sin? What can I confess? Is there disharmony between myself and others that I can try and fix, to rectify, to do something better?

And you go through this panicked list of what can I do? And you realize that at the end of the day, it's what he has done. And it's leaning in that space and leaning on his trust.

And we're about to go through just a few short verses here, which kind of brings us into focus. And as I've been going through the fruit of the Spirit the last few weeks, just taking a break from the book of Acts, which we are going through chapter by chapter, verse by verse, this, I feel, is an incredible story that we need to camp on, just for today.

[1:23] About where the disciples, I think, couldn't decide whether they were more afraid of the storm or more afraid of Jesus. Let's dive in. I'm going to read verses 35 to 41, and then we'll break it down verse by verse.

On that day, when evening had come, he said to them, Let us go across to the other side. And leaving the crowd, they took him with him. Sorry, they took him with them in the boat, just as he was.

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

And they woke him, and they said to him, Teacher, do you not care that we are perishing? 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.

He said to them, Why are you so afraid? Have you still no faith? 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?

[2:28] Jesus did not say to the disciples, Come on boys, let's go capsize and die in the middle of the sea. He said, Let us go to the other side. And this reminds me of the story of Jonah, in a way, where Jonah actually went to the sea to avoid the will of God in his life.

He went to the sea and into a boat out of disobedience. The disciples went into a boat out of obedience. They were following Jesus into this moment, which kind of brings into their lack of faith a little bit more of a view.

And sometimes we've been given advice that you've got storms in your life for the decisions that you've made. That isn't always true. Because the disciples went in out of obedience.

And sometimes we're going to have storms in our life because of obedience. They're times of testing. And as we're also going to see is that others may be carried along.

And the Lord may be doing a work in other people other than yourself through the storm that you now face. That's a difficult one to deal with at times.

[3:36] But they got in the boat. And people followed Jesus. He had already been teaching all day. He was a little tired. I love these moments because it shows us that Jesus is fully God and he is fully man.

I'm sure he had a moment where he just rested and wanted it. So what happened? Verse 37. And a great windstorm arose and the waves were breaking into the boat so that the boat was already filling.

The geography of the Galilee, if you aren't already aware, it's like a bowl. Okay? There's some fairly steep hillsides that go into the Galilee with the exception of a couple of places.

And at that place, the wind can move in and kick up a storm pretty quick. It's not a big sea. We tend to hear that word and we think ocean or near ocean.

It's not. It's a big lake. It's about 13 miles long, 8 miles wide at its widest point. And the place where Jesus is going right now would actually be 5 miles from shore to shore. So we're not talking about an enormous area.

[4:44] But there was a respect given to the sea by those people because it was a place where you could easily die if you're not careful. There was a respect there.

Be careful when you're out on the sea. Be mindful when you're out on the sea. Don't play around with it. So the storm kicking up would mean something. And they weren't alone, of course, because all of these other ships came out.

All these little boats would come out. People were hungry for the truth. They weren't ready to stop hearing the truth from Jesus himself. It's an interesting picture that we start to see here, but I'll get to that in a minute.

I could see this boat being rocked in the lake. What is Jesus doing? He's chilling out. He's sleeping. Verse 38.

But he was in the stern, asleep on the cushion. I just want to stop there for a second. This is one of these little verses where, if we're not careful, we can miss it. But it's proof that the Bible was written by eyewitnesses.

[5:40] I'm sure Peter told Mark, you know, and he was just asleep on a pillow. I can't believe it. Right? That's the kind of detail where someone who's just writing about it years and years away who is never even here, they wouldn't bother with that.

They'd just say he was asleep in a boat. But to say that his head was on a cushion is an extra level of detail, but it's completely unnecessary. And it just shows me that the Bible is worth reading.

It is true, and it was written by eyewitnesses to this kind of thing. That is encouraging. Deeply encouraging. So, anyway, sorry, I'll go on. But he was in the stern, asleep on a cushion.

And they woke him and said to him, Teacher, do you not care that we are perishing? Jesus is God. He's also fully man.

The man slept. There was times where he felt worn out. I understand that. Sometimes he was able to catch a bit of sleep where he could manage it. This was one of them.

[6:39] Funny time, but it was one of them. He had a lot of things pressing around him. If I were to make a list, which I did hear a little bit, at this time, religious and political leaders were plotting to murder him.

Most of us, that alone would keep us up at night. People wanted us dead. That's disturbing. But that didn't bother him. He could have been worried about the overwhelming crowds.

They just kept growing. People kept on coming with more deeds and things like that that would have been pressing on him, taxing his strength, in a way. That didn't bother him at all. Jesus could have looked around at the disciples and had a bit of worry.

Really? These guys? These guys? But he wasn't worried about that. Jesus could have worried about this future because the cross was only a few months away from this point.

And he knew that was coming, but that didn't keep him up at night. He was able to sleep, even as the storm rocked it back and forth. This was a rest of faith.

[7:44] The boat filling with water, the disciples arguing, and Jesus was at complete peace. Verse 38. But he was in the stern, asleep on the cushion, and they awoke and said to him, Teacher, do you not care that we are perishing?

See, the water didn't wake him up. The wind didn't wake him up. The storm itself, all that was going on, didn't wake him up. It was the voice of his disciples that woke him up.

So when we're in a place where we think, Lord, are you sleeping on us? Where are you? Your voice captures his attention. Not the storm in our life. Not the storm in our nation.

Not the storm in our world. No, no, no. Your voice stirs him. Because he loves you. He loves us. He loved the disciples. He knew who these men were about to become.

He knew them. Their voice woke them up. Not the storms. And that should put into context how worried God is about our storms. Whenever I raise anybody up in leadership, I usually tell them this one thing.

[8:51] For sure. Be the one person in the room that isn't running around with their hair on fire. Because sometimes things happen and people freak out and everybody's just, you know, all over the place. Be the one person that's remaining calm.

Have the peace of God in your life to that extent. Jesus had this peace. They had been panicking. Thinking how to fix things on their own.

At least half of these guys would have been seasoned fishermen. Six or seven of them or something like that. So they would have been used to the storms. They're thinking, okay, bail. We got to do this. We got to do this. Why is Jesus not working?

Right? Why is he not helping? That would have been kind of the vibe. And the other half would have been thinking, we're going to die. They said, of course, they wouldn't have been seasoned fishermen. They would have been worried and scared. They would have been fearful.

And you may be in the middle of a storm right now. And it may seem like Jesus is sleeping. And you're trying desperately on your own steam to bail the boat. Rest in his graces.

[9:52] Learn to trust in him through those storms. Because he sees the other side that we do not. Hey, we're working here, Jesus. And you're sleeping.

Do you know if this boat goes down, you're going to go down too? Do you know if you'll help me right now, Jesus, in my plans, it's going to look bad on you? What a terrible thing to say. Because we don't have perspective that he has. We don't see the other side. Don't you care about what we are freaking out about, Lord?

Don't you care about the issues that we see are important, Lord? We so often think that we know what to do. We just want Jesus to come along for the ride and help us out.

That's not the way it works. And you can learn that the hard way. I have far too many times. I haven't learned that lesson quite yet. I'm still working on it. Yeah.

[10:55] Help me with my plan, Jesus. When we come to him that way, we're only relying on ourselves. We're not relying on him. It should be more, Lord, okay, the storm is scary.

Because, you know, fear is okay. Right? It's like anger. It's an emotion. And it can be healthy. But it's what you do with it that can turn to sin. Being afraid of, you know, a dinosaur walking through this building.

Yeah, I'd be afraid. Sure. Who wouldn't? For so many reasons. That was a rabbit trail. I'm sorry. But anyways, the point that I'm trying to make is that, you know, if you're afraid of something, it's okay. But surrender that fear. We have to remember and learn a few things from the disciples here.

Because a great secret of having peace is to have our faith in Jesus and not ourselves.

To trust in what he can do and not what we can do. Verse 39. And he woke and rebuked the wind and said to the sea, peace, be still.

[11:56] And the wind ceased and there was a great calm. So the disciples, what are you doing? Can't you see we're dying? He gets up, he looks around, peace, be still.

I think it's funny in a way. Because in a more literal translation, be still also means be muzzled. It's the same words that he is about to use in the next chapter to get rid of a bunch of demons out of a guy.

The same word. And do you know what our modern vernacular is for it? Shut up. So, the next time someone comes to you and says, peace, be still. They're telling you to shut up.

Maybe you want to use that for yourself. Don't blame me for it. But it's an interesting thing that this is exactly how Jesus approached this. Stop. That's enough. You know, there was a commercial years ago for Subway sandwiches.

Okay? And it was like a karate dojo. And they're all doing this like, you know, back off, get your own sandwich. Trying to defend the sandwich that they just bought.

[13:02] And the commercial itself was absolutely stupid. But the heart that kept on coming back is that, what if it's that simple with our storms that are spiritual in our lives? Where the enemy is just trying to make a mess.

The enemy is trying to distract, pull us away, push us down. And what if it's as simple as saying, shut up. Because it is that easy.

The devil has no authority in our lives. He has no authority in this church or in your homes. None whatsoever. He has no authority. So, shut up, man. You know? Not you.

If I'm looking at you right now and said that, I'm not meeting you. You know it's... Be muzzled. There may be a spiritual aspect of this.

And this is where I was leading to as well. Because, you see, if you read the next chapter, there's something actually kind of amazing about to go on. Jesus and his disciples, they get to the other side, of course.

[14:02] And he casts demons out of the sky. Pigs go into the water. You know, there's this big kind of affair. All this kind of stuff from the standpoint of that Jesus casts them out.

They beg for mercy. It's this weird kind of encounter. But we ask the wrong questions if we start to wonder, okay, how did this happen? Where did it happen? What was the geography right?

The right question to ask is, what happened to the guy afterwards? You see, that man begged to follow Jesus. And you know what Jesus said?

No. You and I may read that and think, well, that's kind of mean. I mean, the guy just got delivered. He's a whole new human being. He doesn't know which way is up. He needs some discipleship. He needs to be able to take care of.

Right? You know, that's what our minds might think. Until you read what ended up happening to him in the other books. This man went to go and preach the gospel in an area known as the Decapolis.

[14:58] And when you stand on Mount Carmel, you can only see two of the towns apart of the Decapolis, which was an area of 10. Deca being, right? 10 towns. That is an enormous area spanning multiple countries now.

That's what that man went on to do. So Jesus said no, not because he didn't care for the guy, but he's thinking, I got way bigger plans for you. It is possible when you think about what just happened there in chapter 5 to rewind back to the end of chapter 4, that this storm may not have been just simply weather.

This storm might have been something that the enemy threw at the disciples to make them afraid, to help them to have lack of faith in Jesus.

Right? That storm in your life may be spiritual. Tell it to shut up. Because the Lord might be moving you onto something as big as the Decapolis.

The Lord may have plans for you that you can't see right now because of the tornado that's just whirling around your heart. Tell it to shut up. The Lord has plans for each of us.

[16:13] There's no accident we are here today. It's no accident we're in this town today. There's no accident we're all in this church here right now. The Lord has plans. And our storms and our tornadoes may make it feel like, Lord, I don't hear you.

I don't see you. Why? Why am I going through this? Well, we've got to learn some stuff from the disciples. As I said, Peace, be still.

In verse 40, it says, He said to them, Why are you so afraid? Have you still no faith? See, something that Jesus had already also done here is that, remember, there was a whole bunch of little boats that came out to follow Him.

What the disciples wanted help with only would have helped their boat. Jesus' plan helped everybody. And we can get so stuck in our situation, so stuck in our storm, that we just forget anybody else.

When you study psychology, one of the things that you learn with counseling is that, you know, common, very common, when someone's in a pit, they're scraping their way out, trying to get out.

[17:26] And anybody who tries to reach their hand in and help will often get scraped. Okay? Even if it's unintentional, people get hurt sometimes when someone is not ready for their healing.

So the Lord knew all of these people are going to get saved, not just you guys. All these people are going to be at peace, not just you guys. So whatever you're going through, it is possible that the Lord has in store other lessons for other people that you cannot see.

And maybe he's using you right now and building you to be a vessel for his good word and his good message into people's lives that you may never even meet. So why are you so afraid?

Have you still no faith? See, Jesus contrasts fear and faith here. Because I'm sure you've heard before, fear and faith cannot live in the same heart. It's not possible.

You can't have kind of, well, I'm half fearful and I'm half faithful. No, actually they contradict one another. You can't have fear and faith. They don't get along well.

[18:31] At all. Jesus was with the disciples. He had been with them for a while now. It was six months to the cross.

You'd think they would have learned who he was by now. But they didn't. The storm couldn't bother Jesus. Not one bit. What bothered him was the unbelief in his guise.

The storms we go through, Jesus isn't bothered by them. He cares about them because he cares about us. Don't get me wrong. But he's not worried about them.

He sees the other side. I think he just wants to know that we believe in him and we trust him. Because he's got this. He's going to take us through the storm. He's going to take us through to the other side. He will. Maybe he's doing that right now. Maybe the storm is just starting for you. Remember he said, let us go to the other side.

[19:28] He didn't say, let us go and drown. It's what they chose to do with that fear that made all the difference. When we have fear, how do we respond?

Do we run around like our hair is on fire? Do we freak out? Do we bring other people down with us because we're so afraid? Or do we trust? I think there's three reasons here why Jesus had words with his disciples.

One, they didn't believe his word. Verse 35, on that day when evening had come, he said to them, let us go across to the other side. Plainst day. He didn't say, let's give it a shot.

Jesus didn't say, well, we're going to go and give us our best college try. No. So let's go to the other side. He promised a safe arrival. They didn't factor that in. They didn't consider that.

We can choose to trust the promise of God. Romans 8 verse 28 says, and we know that for those who love God, all things work together for good. For those who are called according to his purpose, God is in control.

[20:35] It's like we were studying on Tuesday. You know, when we're going through the book of Revelation with the women's study, it's like there is a throne in heaven and it is occupied. That means something to you and me.

There is a king on his throne that is in control of all things, including you and me and our troubles. Number two, well, they accused Jesus of a lack of care toward them.

We don't think Jesus cares for us sometimes when we're on our storms and he's silent and we can't quite hear him. That's the first go-to for me is like, why don't you love me anymore?

It's a stupid thing to say. And I repent from it. But I'll freely admit I wrestle with that. You know, you used to talk to me all the time. What's going on? Why not?

Why not now? Why do I feel abandoned by you? But he still cares. And it takes faith to trust in Jesus when we think he's sleeping. He's not.

[21:34] We know from the word that he's praying for you and me right now. There's no sleeping going on. But we can feel that sense that he's distanced at times. Where is your faith?

And number three, you had forgotten the big picture. And if you're like me, that happens in your heart as well. The unbelief of the disciples, it's pretty silly.

Like I said, they'd already been hanging around with him for a little over two years at this point.

They should know who he is. They should know exactly who he is. Did they think that God in heaven was going to take his Messiah and just drown him out in the middle of the sea?

No. They forgot who Jesus was. And sometimes we forget who he is. We think, well, he's just somebody that we go to church and we hear about his good stories, right? There are good stories. He's just such a loving guy. He's all about these nice things to say. That's all true. But he's also the one that calms the storms. He's also the one that the winds and waves obeys.

[22:35] He's also the one that the demons run in fear from. This is our Jesus. This is the Jesus we come to worship here today, right now. Our king. The one on the throne occupied is God.

God. The best thing we can do is trust in God, believe in him, receive his peace, even in the middle of the storms, especially in the middle of the storms.

We know what he's done in our lives. We have stories upon stories. You know, I bet if we did a time of testimony and people were brave enough, you'd come up here and we would spend all afternoon of hearing stories and it would just scratch the surface.

We all have stories. We all have stories where God has done something amazing that we can remember saying, yeah, he's real. He helped me there and there and there. He showed me how to be this and this and this.

So when the storms hit, why are we like, why are we dying? Where are you? He's been where he has always been, right by our side, guiding us, saving us.

[23:41] Where's our excuse for our lack of peace? Because God has shown his goodness over and over and over. I'll say, I'll say something I said a couple of weeks ago because I think it's worth repeating.

Recently, I've had the blessing and opportunity to read the history of this church going right back to, I think to 1915. And you know, it's incredible to read stories after stories, even if they're just like

little, like a one sentence thing of something that happened.

Of what God has done in this community and what God has done in this church. And not all of them are happy stories. And yet here we are. The Lord is so faithful to the very end.

And he says to you and me, let us go to the other side. That's a promise and a promise he will keep. It's our time now to trust in him more than ever.

In verse 41, and I'll close after this. 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? I think they were more afraid of Jesus than the storm.

[24 : 50] Because suddenly this nice teacher became God. This nice teacher who worked miracles, which, you know, that's pretty cool.

Suddenly the wind and the waves and the sea, which we respect and fear so much, is glassed out at his command. You've been on a lake, maybe, you know, where it's just, it's so calm, it looks like a mirror.

That's what I think this was like. Beautiful, peaceful. And I've been on the Galilee, and I can tell you early in the morning, it is like that. It's like a mirror. It's glassed out. And other times, later in the day, the waves are choppy.

And you can see it. He had complete peace, complete command, doing things that no other man could do. Peace, be still.

In all the storms that you and I are facing right now, tell them to shut up. Let's pray.