

Jesus Stills Storms

Disclaimer: this is an automatically generated machine transcription - there may be small errors or mistranscriptions. Please refer to the original audio if you are in any doubt.

Date: 07 November 2010

Preacher: Alex Cowie

[0 : 00] Well let's turn back to the second passage we read in Mark and chapter 4 and we'll look together at verses 35 to 41 and simply entitle it as is obvious from the passage Jesus stills storms.

We read there that when they woke him up in the midst of a furious storm he arose and rebuked the wind and said to the sea peace be still and the wind ceased and there was a great calm.

Jesus stills storms. I suppose you might say there are many negatives about what we have to endure on the television screen but we are able to flick off channels that are not suitable or programs that are not suitable.

But sometimes we find very interesting and illuminating programs and one of the things that is useful in this context is we can look at for example those who sail the oceans.

Whether they're trying to break a record going round the world in a yacht whether it's a male or female. Whether it's a team and we are allowed because they have cameras on board to see some of the seas that they have to contend with.

[1 : 36] And if you've noticed anything in these programs sometimes they face terrifying storms and terrifying seas. I think that maybe one or two of us have watched bits of the series Trawler Men which has to do mainly with fishing in the North Sea which is a sea that is fraught with danger too.

Some of the storms are furious storms and the seas are pretty terrifying gigantic swell and so on. And so we get an impression easily about storms on the sea.

I think it's worth saying at this point that although God is sovereign in all these operations of the weather it's not just haphazard. We have to bear in mind that the result of the fall of man into sin affected the whole creation.

It affected everything including the weather. It is out of joint so to speak. It is against man. Man struggles.

Not only does he struggle with the storms literally but he struggles with the metaphorical storms. He struggles with the impact of psychological illnesses, of depression and things like that.

[3 : 04] He struggles with the impact of physical disease too. And these things create for us metaphorical storms so to speak. Emotional distress and physical pain and so on.

And the scripture is true. Man is born into trouble just as the sparks fly upward. There is no escape from the storms of life.

Whether they are literally storms or whether they are storms in our experience. It is part of the course. But again and again Jesus emphasized to his disciples.

That since he was for them. He was actively for their good. They didn't need to fear what was against them. And this miracle of stilling the storm on Galilee impressed the disciples in an unforgettable way.

That Jesus was really for them. That he was almighty in power. And that there was no need for them to be panicking as they were.

[4 : 14] We will come to it eventually in the exposition. But look at verse 40. He says to them when he had calmed the storm. Why are you so fearful?

How is it that you have no faith? Now there is a thought. We were thinking earlier on today on the great faith of the centurion based in Capernaum.

At the other extreme we have the disciples. In a crisis. And Jesus says to them. How is it you have no faith?

He demonstrates in that context. His love and grace. And his power. His ability to act on their behalf.

And to secure them safe. And so I want us to think about Jesus still storms. And I want to think about four things. First of all. The crossing itself.

[5 : 16] We find in verse 35. On the same day. When evening had come. Jesus said to them. Let us cross over to the other side. Now.

New Testament scholars call this day. In question. The busy day. And if you go back a wee bit. Even beyond what we earlier read. It's a day that was crammed.

With the things that Jesus did. For people. And how he taught people. It was an extremely busy day. And that itself accounts for.

Why Jesus. When he got into the boat. To go across. Got onto a pillow. On the stern of the boat. And fell asleep. The day was a busy day.

An extremely busy day. And when evening had come. Unexpectedly. Jesus said. Let's go across. The lake.

[6 : 16] Now you're talking about. Seven and a half miles. Across. From the west. To the east. Of the Galilee. In the evening. Darkness would soon come down.

Gets dark about. Five o'clock. Half past five. Almost all the year round. So. Off they set. From. The west bank.

To. The east side. It was unexpected. And in a sense. They were unprepared. And all the more. When Jesus. Fell asleep.

Sound asleep. Exhausted. No doubt. From his busy day. But. Soon. A problem.

Came up. Jesus. Was. In. Stern. Of the boat. Asleep. Verse 38. On a pillow. And verse 37.

[7 : 13] Tells us. A grave wind storm. Arose. And the waves. Beat into the boat. So that it was filling. It wasn't an open boat. Like a cobalt. But it was a. An open decked boat.

Just the same. With a partial deck on it. So. It could fill. And it could sink. And that was the problem. But you see.

Just in the crossing itself. Two things rise up. From the crossing. Before we come to the storm. We see. First of all. That. The disciples.

Had to be prepared. For the unexpected. What the Lord would do. They weren't anticipating. Not at all. They had a busy day. Time to clock off. That's it. For another day.

No. Let's go across. To the other side. And they had no better to do. Than. Obey. His voice. And do. What he asked them to do.

[8 : 09] And you know. This is something. That happens. In the life. Of God's people. Sometimes we're asked. It's not just for. It's not just.

Because. The unbeliever. Needs our witness. We're asked to go the extra mile. Sometimes we're asked. To go the extra mile. In church life. Because. The Lord. Puts it in our way.

We don't anticipate it. We get it. It's there. Something's going to be done. We're in the way. And we do it. And. And we. Do it simply.

Or we ought to do it simply. For the Lord. Because the Lord said. Here it is. Get on with it. And that's exactly. See what happened to them. It was.

Unexpected. Surprising. Even. At the end. Of such a busy day. Witnessed to. By the fact. That the Savior himself.

[9 : 06] Fell sound asleep. That's. The second thing. Rises up. In that. Point. The crossing itself. The Savior's. Human nature.

His real manhood. Comes through. You'll not. Know a lot about it. Probably. But. At a certain point. In history. In the early church history.

There's a lot of. Argument. Among. Scholars. Of the scriptures. About. Whether. Jesus. Human nature. Was real. Or it was just.

A sort of shell. That he put on. And. In other words. He just. He just. Seemed to be human. And that was. A heresy.

That was a false teaching. And. There are many. Areas. Of evidence. To show us. That although he was. And continued. To be the eternal. Son of God. When he became man.

[10 : 04] His manhood. Was real. And true. It was perfect. In every respect. And. It could. Get. Tired. And weary. And he knew.

Himself. The benefits. Of a good sleep. And we ought not. To forget that. And pity. One another. When we're not getting. Our sleep. As.

Quite a few of us here. Have that problem. We can say with Paul. In sleeplessness. Often. Jesus himself.

In the busyness of life. Needed. The benefits. For his manhood. Of a good. Restoring. And refreshing.

Sleep. So these are two things. That rise up. Remember. Be prepared. For the unexpected. That the Lord may lay in your way.

[11 : 00] And call you. To do. Second thing. The furious storm. What else can we call it? Verse 37. A great wind storm.

Arose. And the waves beat into the boat. So that it was already filling. And I think it's useful here. Just to remind ourselves.

You can get information. You know. In Bible. Bible land background. Studies. It's pretty well accepted. That Galilee.

To this very day. Is still. Plagued. As it were. With these. With these storms. That comes. Sweeping across the lake. It can be. Calm as can be.

And then all of a sudden. You get. You get. The cold wind coming. The cold air. I should say. Airstream. Jetting down. Hits the warm basin.

[11 : 56] And causes a swirl. And suddenly. You have a. Almost like a whirlwind. Storm. In fact. The word that's used. For it. Is a whirlwind.

Type storm. It whips up the sea. Into a bubbling cauldron. In no time at all. And. The waves. Can be as high. So.

We're led to believe. As 20 feet. Which. On the lake of Galilee. Is quite. A significant. Higher than that bit of the wall. There beside us. So.

It can be. Something. Pretty scary. And not something. You wanted to be caught. Out in. Different. We mentioned. In the introduction.

These. The great. Ocean. Swells. You know. They can be. A hundred feet high. Or 70 feet high. Huge. Walls. Of sea. But.

[12 : 50] A boat will. Rise on that. But. The kind of storm. You have in Galilee. It's going. All over the place. It's unpredictable. Because the wind. Is swirling. And the sea.

Is being whipped. And that's what makes it more dangerous. And to a. An openish. Or a semi-open boat. The stuff. Simply gets into the boat.

And it begins to sink. And that's exactly. What they were afraid of. Verse 37. And the waves beat. Into the boat. So that it was already filling.

In other words. They couldn't bail it out. As fast. As the water was coming in. And they began to sink. So this was something. That. That really caused.

A terrific. Anxiety. To. The disciples. The danger. Was real. The boat. Could sink. And they were caught. Somewhere around. Halfway across.

[13 : 46] The lake. And they couldn't. It's not like they had an outboard motor. They could. Pull the cord. And get away. End out of it. They had to use. Sail. And oar.

And in a storm. The sail would be useless. And in. When it was reduced to oars. Well. If you know anything about rowing.

On a choppy day. You'll know that's difficult. Try to row. With. 10. 15. Or 20 feet. Waves. Slamming at the boat. From all directions.

Rowing. Is pretty impossible. And. I think the language. Of. The passage. Both the. Mark's passage. And also the.

The one. We read in Matthew. There's. There's. This is more than the ordinary. It's not just the usual storm. That hit. But it's a.

[14 : 41] A storm. Of. Of more. Severe. Dimensions. They. Were. Alarmed. At it. And the boat. Was beginning to sink.

On account of it. And that's why they. They speak to Jesus. The way. They do. Enough. To be caught out.

Having to go across the lake. After a busy day. And then to be caught out. In a terrific storm. That was like to swamp the boat.

And overwhelm them. And even kill them. Don't you care. They say. We're perishing. So you. You get the whole picture. Built up. Very. Vividly. For us.

Now. I think we have to. In. In talking about this. Remember what we said. At the beginning. There are metaphorical storms. To. It's not just the actual.

[15 : 35] Literal storm. On the. On the lake. But. In the Christian life. Things come at us. Like that. Unexpectedly. And. Sometimes they're severe. Sometimes they catch us.

Completely by surprise. And they frighten us. They. They. They take away. Our composure. They.

They really shake us. And the disciples themselves. Were. Clearly here. Almost despairing. Of life itself. Don't you care.

We're perishing. We'll come. To that more fully. But I'm just highlighting it there. They were. At what's end. Because of the.

Severity. Of the storm. And you see. It became a trial. In their experience. And there are things. That happen to us. In life.

[16 : 31] That are like that. We're not prepared. For them. We don't think. They're going to happen. And all of a sudden. Zap. Within it. It's caught us out.

And. And we're wondering. What the Lord is doing. We're wondering. Why he's doing. This or that. Because the storm. Has hit us. And whether it is.

Sicknesses. Or losses. Or. Disappointments. Or whatever. We're sometimes caught. In the fury. Of the storm. Because it hits us.

The way it does. When we're least. Expecting it. But you see. The point here is. And. And. Songwriters. Hymn writers.

Have been. Quick to notice this. And. The lines. Come through my mind. Just now. With Christ. In the vessel. We smile. At the storm. Because.

[17 : 28] That. The believer. Is indwelt. By Christ. And he's in. He's on board. If you like. And because he's on board. We are to.

We are to. Be rebuked. When we. Feel despairing. When we feel. We're overwhelmed. We remind ourselves.

That he is on board. That he lives in us. By his Holy Spirit. If we believe in him. That's our privilege. And therefore. We're not to let.

These trials. That hit us. Depress us. And throw us. Away. And turn us away. From Christ. And make us. Moan and groan. As clearly.

Happened. To the disciples. On this occasion. The furious storm. Really took them. By surprise. And. And terrified them. And left them.

[18 : 22] Thinking. They were going to die. Let's recognize. The importance. Of fixing. Our. Our minds. On Jesus. Because he tells us.

We will have storms. We will have tribulations. They will be unexpected. They will knock us. Off. As it were. But he's there.

That brings us. Actually. To the complaint. And I'm going to simply call it. The frantic. Complaint. Because so it was. Verse 38. The second part.

And they awoke Jesus. And said to him. Teacher. Do you not care. That we're perishing. We're going to die. Now gospel writers.

The three of them. Supply us. Different. Explanations. Of the actual. Cry.

[19 : 19] Mark has it here. As you've just read it. Look. Master. Master. We're perishing. And. Matthew. Again. He emphasizes.

Don't you care. That we're perishing. And this reference. In Mark 2. Is worth dwelling on. Because. This. Is the focus.

Don't you care. That we're perishing. It's a revealing. A revealing. Question. They put to him.

Teacher. Don't you care. It shows. An irritation. An irritation. With him. It shows. Fear. Of course. It shows fear. They feared.

But. But. They're irritated. That he doesn't seem to be. Caring. He's not. Involved. Now. We think about this. That's the way.

[20 : 15] The Lord operates. In the life of faith. There are times. We are on the same line. As the disciples. We think. The Lord. Somehow. Doesn't seem to. Be. Doing anything.

To help us. He's not acting for us. And doesn't he care. You see. We're no different. Than them. But you see.

The good thing. To know is. They were no different. Than us. They're there. With their weaknesses.

With their shortcomings. Yes. Holy apostles. Yes. Chosen by Christ. After a whole night. In prayer. Before they were finally.

Committed. To be his. Chosen twelve. And. Yet. Here they are. In a way.

[21 : 11] That he can say. Have you no faith. Daring to say. Don't you care. That we're perishing. Somebody has said.

It was a. A stinging expression. Well nigh close. To blasphemy. And yet. It shows us. How these. Bold. Fishermen.

And. Disciples of Jesus. Were terrified. Of death. It shows us. What they were really like.

We read. Of Elijah. That he was a man. Of the same nature. As us. A great man of faith. But he had his weaknesses too. Didn't he? He ran for his life.

When Jezebel. Threatened to take it. The storm. Threatened to take their lives. And their faith. Seemed to.

[22 : 08] Vanish like the morning mist. When the sun comes up. How could they say. Don't you care. That we're perishing.

You might say. Well. Look at the scenario. The boat is filling with water. Rapidly. This boat is sinking. What's going to happen? Jesus is sleeping. Why is he not paying any attention?

Why is he not concerned? And so they were. We might say. In a measure justified. It was time to act. Time to ask him. Time to plead with him. But was it right to plead.

With a question. Do you not care? Of course he cared. Of course he cared.

But he didn't. Move on this. Until they were in such a state. As they cried. Do you not care?

[23 : 08] That we are perishing. Where was this steady mindedness. Of the faith. Of these apostles. Where was the application.

Of doctrine. Where was faith operating. By a loving trust. In the Savior. Didn't he assure them.

That he would take care of them. Of course he did. Why then are they. In such a state. Has he ceased to care. Has he ceased.

To have compassion upon. Doesn't scripture itself say. Again and again. Actually Colin was praying it. Before we started. This evening.

He has said. I will never leave you. Nor forsake you. When you pass through the waters. Isaiah 43. I will be with you. And through the floods. They shall not overflow you.

[24 : 06] But it's so easy. You see. You see. To quote the thing. And not to apply it.

When we need to apply it. And this is what they were caught out in. They had failed to put into action.

And application. The truth of the Lord. In a place of crisis. They dare to say.

Don't you care. The fourth thing then. We want to look at. Is the amazing miracle itself. Jesus stood up. We're told. Verse 39.

He arose. And rebuked. The wind. And said to the sea. Peace. Peace still. Some.

[25 : 06] Interpreters think that. That this storm. And its ferocity. Was that way. Because Satan was allowed. To exert. His power. Into the bargain.

And that it was. A storm. Which he had liberty. Albeit God given liberty. To use. In order to strike at the disciples.

And Jesus himself. You remember. Back in the book of Job. In chapter 1. God sovereignly. Allowed.

Allowed. Satan. To. Have a go at Job's family. And he took. His family away. Through. The means of others. Difficult to understand.

Almost baffling. To understand. But that's the way. God operates. In ways that are other than we think. In order that we might. Rely on him.

[26 : 05] Satan has certain freedom. Him. But only within the purpose of God. And only. Thus far. And no further. Banyan. Likened him to the lion chained.

Didn't he? In Pilgrim's Progress. Yes he's a roaring lion. Yes he's seeking. Whom he may devour. And the more godly the life.

The more aggressive he is. And there were the disciples. He was seeking to devour them. By the sea itself. But he was a lion chained.

Thus far and no further. And actually what he meant for evil. God meant for good. God would work in this storm.

In this furious storm. In this potentially death dealing storm. He would work to strengthen the disciples. To bring them on in the faith.

[27 : 05] And so it is that Jesus with a word. Stills the storm. And teaches his disciples. By a loving rebuke.

Why is it. That you are so fearful. Why is it. That you have no faith. I wonder what they thought.

When he said to them. How is it. That you have no faith. I wonder what they thought. About themselves. Well if you think about yourself.

You are probably think to yourself. Well. It wasn't a case of. Having no faith at all. But I didn't act by faith.

Here. That's what it was about. It was about not acting. By faith. In that given situation. But succumbing.

[28 : 12] To fear. And unbelief. He can't do it this time. It's not going to happen. And of course.

That's what he rebukes. We are to live by faith. We are to live. By our trust in him. In every situation. But you see.

Jesus designed this trial. To. Shake them. And make them see what it was.

To rely. On him. We are told. And they feared exceedingly. And said to one another. Who can this be.

That even the wind and the sea. Obey him. That is a very. Useful insight for us. Because it lets us know. What exactly.

[29 : 11] The saviour was doing with them. He had given them. And unmistakable evidence. Of his power to act for them. To save them. With a word.

Peace be still. The wind he rebuked. And it was. It was. Calmed. The sea he rebuked. And it was. Flat calm.

With a word. But they weren't flat calm. They were in the middle of a storm. In their own hearts.

And the result of all they saw. Was who is this man. Who can this be. That even the wind and the sea.

Obey him. You see. See what's happening here. The Lord's taking them. On. In the way. And he's taking them. At pass it where. A stage higher.

[30 : 12] In their experience. He's showing them. More of what he can do. And more of who he is. And we all need that. What we learned yesterday.

Or. Last year. Or two years ago. Or three. Or four. Or five. Or ten. Or twenty. Will not do us for today. We need to be going on.

With the Lord. The old preacher would say. How is it with you now? Not just about your story.

In the past. I'm letting you into something here. I always like to ask our visiting preacher. Not only to tell us about. His conversion. How he came to Christ.

But how he went on. And where he is now. That's because. It's important. It's important. For us. And for ministers too.

[31 : 08] To be going on. To be going on. In the way. To be developing. In the Lord. To be discovering. More of him. And more of his power. To help us.

In the way. And often. It is. That the way. He enables us. To see. What he can do. Is he brings us low.

And he brings us into distress. And he brings us to the place. That we are so fearful. How is it. That you have no faith.

And I'm certain. I'm not wrong in this. That he has been bringing us. As a congregation. In this very way. These last few years.

And we are obliged. If we are wise. To learn from him. What he is about. Just to realize.

[32 : 04] That he is in control. As much as he was in control. Of the elements. On Galilee. To speak a word to the wind. And that was it.

To speak a word to the raging sea. And that was it. The voice of the Lord. Is on the many waters. The Lord's voice.

Is mightier. We were singing. Than the noise. Of the great ocean swell. It is only. At his word.

The storm. Is changed. Into a calm. Whether it's in you. Or me. Or out there. It's only. In him.

Is changed. Into a calm. It's only when he says. Peace be still. That there is a great calm. And so.

[32 : 58] Whatever. Is. Troubling us. Where we are tonight. Let's hear him saying to us. In his own word. Peace be still.

Be quiet. Be silent. Peace. Be still. And how. Unfounded.

Was their frantic. Complaint. Teacher. Don't you care. That we are perishing. It was unfounded. Of course he cared. His compassions.

Fail not. He is committed. He will not fail us. Or forsake us. People. Can do lots of things.

To repair storm damage. Waiting a bit of time. We are seeing it. In different parts of the world. Today. But we are praying for the people. So affected.

[33 : 54] We can do. Things. By way of giving. To disaster relief. And we can see. The improvements made. But these things.

Are not to be compared. With what the Lord Jesus Christ. Can do. With a word. And in this age.

We are living in. With all the advances. We mustn't lose sight. Of what he can do. Those who faced.

The fury of the. The wind and the sea. That night on Galilee. Were given a word. To calm themselves. But they were given. A probing question too.

Why are you so fearful? How is it. That you have no faith? What's gone wrong here? And they were brought.

[34 : 54] To marvel. At Jesus. At this revelation. Of his capacity. For doing. Something. To help them.

We sometimes. Read in the Psalms. The songs. Of the soul. Of God's people. Real soul. Songs. They are. And we read.

Of even great. And godly people. Who were. Not cast down. A little bit. But. Down to the lowest. Ends. And the lord himself. Took them up.

Using the image. Of the sailor. On the deck. Of the boat. In the storm. They reel. And stagger. Like one drunk. At their wits. End they be. We've got to turn that over.

Into our own experience. And think about. How we react. To the. Difficulties. And trials. That hit us. Individually. And in families.

[35 : 54] And in congregation. And so on. When these storms. Are raging. They're sent. By him. The enemy. Doesn't have the last word.

On it. The enemy. Doesn't have his will. Fulfilled. He's the lion. Chained. Our lord.

Is in charge. In control. His voice. Is above. The noise. Of the great. Ocean's web. And his word.

Can fly. Into our hearts. In a moment. Peace. Be still. It's only a small thing. But I remember.

When I was a young Christian. And. I began to go. On. In the way. And. Desire to know more. Of the saviour.

[36 : 49] And more. Of what it was. To follow him. And I. I got into a fearful problem. With the unpardonable sin. And had become convinced.

That I had committed it. And of course. That was a. That was a real gift. To the enemy. Because then. He just worked on that.

And on that. But I was helped. I was helped greatly. By the minister at home. Ken Stone. To discover that. This is a problem. That. People who had actually.

Come to faith in Jesus. Had. They began to think about. Why they were not really. Following Jesus at all. They had not really. Put their trust in his death.

As a means of removing their sin. And bringing them right with God. He showed me that. This was the. This was the. Actually.

[37 : 43] Quite a common experience. Of. Of Christians. Who were. Seeking to serve the Lord. With. With. Honesty and zeal. And.

He helped me to see. That. Actually. The. True follower of Christ. Is the person. Who really. Worries.

That he or she. Has. Committed. The unpardonable. The enemy. Has no need. To cause. Trouble. To those. Who are not. Following Jesus.

Because they're. Indifferent. To these things. But those. Who are genuine. In me. Seeking to follow. Christ. My grace. Can come into. Storms. Like this. And be battered.

And near to despair. And feel they're going to sink. Beneath the flood. But his word. Flies forth. In an instant.

[38 : 43] In a very instant. Of time. The word. Goes forth. The miracle occurs. The storm. Is changed. Into a camp.

We're told. Of Mary Magdalene. That with a word. Jesus. Cast out. Seven. Devils. From it. We're told. About legion. Poor legion. Who was possessed.

Of. Of. Of. More than a thousand. Of. A thousand. Demons. That when. They were cast out. He was found.

In his right mind. The storm. Was changed. Into a camp. God. And that's.

Something. That's writ large. In church history. And church. By a Christian. Biography.
How. The Lord. Brought peace. To his people. And how the Lord. Brought them back.

[39 : 40] To peace. When trials. Distressed them. And it's important. For you and me. That we
know. In our experience. The power.

Of his word. To heal. And to restore. And to give peace. Then he arose.

And rebuked the wind. And said to the sea. Peace be still. And the wind ceased. And
there was a great. Calm.

Well may that be our experience. In him. Amen.