

TRIUMPH IN THE TEMPEST

Text: Mark 11:33-41

This is one of my favorite famous stories of the Bible. There are really no “bad guys” in the picture that we may deem infamous, unless we categorize the storm a bad influence and even then, God uses this to bring glory to Himself. Proverbs 16:4 reminds us, “The LORD hath made all things for Himself: yea, even the wicked for the day of evil.” God can take a storm and through the potential evil that may come, we find that God has the ability to bring even the most harrowing tempest under His control.

The Sea of Galilee is 700 feet below sea level, making it the lowest fresh water lake on the face of the earth. Just 30 miles to the north is Mount Hermon, 9,200 feet high. There is a constant contrasting of weather; the cool air from the mountains and the warm air from the Sea of Galilee makes this the bull’s-eye for a perfect storm. And in this perfect storm that arises in our narrative we see the perfect power of the perfect Savior. Research has revealed that a sudden storm can come to this body of water carrying winds up to 70 miles per hour (hurricane force) that could pound down on this inland lake. I bring to your attention:

1. The Delay of Information

Mark 4:30-33, 23-25

When the Lord spoke to the mixed multitudes, He gave as much information as He knew they could handle. Even to His disciples our Lord said in John 16:12, “I have yet many things to say unto you, but ye cannot bear them now.”

2. The Design of Aloneness

Mark 4:34

It is when the Lord gets us to Himself great truths are revealed. Psalm 91:1: “He that dwelleth in the secret place of the most High shall abide under the shadow of the Almighty.” Psalm 25:14: “The secret of the LORD is with them that fear him; and he will shew them his covenant.” The Psalmist even tells us that God has a secret to reveal to us in the midst of a tempest: “Thou calledst in trouble, and I delivered thee; I answered thee in the secret place of thunder: I proved thee at the waters of Meribah. Selah” (Psalm 81:7).

3. The Decree of Destination

Mark 4:35

Because our Lord said, "...Let us pass over unto the other side" (Mark 4:35b). He had every right to ask in our story at Mark 4:40b, "...Why are ye so fearful? how is it that ye have no faith?"

Ezekiel 12:25a promises, "For I am the LORD: I will speak, and the Word that I shall speak shall come to pass..." and again in Isaiah 55:11, "So shall my Word be that goeth forth out of my mouth: it shall not return unto me void, but it shall accomplish that which I please, and it shall prosper in the thing whereto I sent it."

If the Lord said to go to the other side, you may rest assured you shall make it to the other side. Has the Lord asked you to follow Him by faith? The old time Evangelist Sam Small tells of a time in his youth when he and his friends had planned to cross the Atlantic Ocean in a ship and take a European holiday. Just before leaving, his mother told him she felt very uneasy about his going and asked him outright not to go. Although a grown young man, he honored his elderly mother. To condense the story, the ship went down taking the lives of all his boyhood friends. He left the town in which he was living and journeyed back to his boyhood home. He hugged his precious mother's neck and said, "Mother, I never miss it when I take your advice." The truth is, no matter how godly our counselors may be, we are human and we may not always get it right, but God's Word will never fail.

4. The Diversity of Message

Mark 4:36

We see in this verse of Scripture, "...and there were also with Him other little ships" (Mark 4:36b). The word "little" is an adjective describing the other ships. It is a blessing that little things matter to God. Zechariah inquired, "For who hath despised the day of small things?..." (Zechariah 4:10a). There were other ships affected by the storm and as we shall shortly see, there were other ships saved by the Savior. We have a tendency to think of our boat as the only one in the water. We need to always remember the kingdom of God and what God is up to is almost always bigger than our limited vision. Jesus said in Matthew 12:30, "He that is not with me is against me; and he that gathereth not with me scattereth abroad." In John 10:16 our Lord prophesies, "And other sheep I have, which are not of this fold: them also I must bring, and they shall hear my voice; and there shall be one fold, and one shepherd." We need to always keep in mind the kingdom of God is greater than our field of ministry. God loves all His children. Our decisions, actions and prayers affect other people.

5. The Desperate Situation

Mark 4:37

The dramatic description of this tempest is given in three Gospels. Mark says it was a “great storm of wind, and the waves beat into the ship, so that it was now full” (Mark 4:37b). Matthew 8:24a tells us, “And, behold, there arose a great tempest in the sea, insomuch that the ship was covered with the waves....” Luke 8:23b records, “...and there came down a storm of wind on the lake; and they were filled with water, and were in jeopardy.” The ship was covered and beaten by the waves so fiercely that the ship soon filled with water and they were about to sink.

6. The Discombobulated Disciples

Mark 4:38

The disciples mistook the sleeping Lord as evidence of His not caring. It speaks to the fact of His absence of worry. The God who makes the seas and the wind and the rain is not worried about their effects. We know the Lord most certainly did care for His disciples. I wonder if Peter had this in mind when years later the Holy Spirit had him write, “Casting all your care upon him; for he careth for you” (I Peter 5:7).

7. The Demarcation Declared

Mark 4:39-41

This passage of Scripture enlightens us to the truth that God controls the elements, and these verses speak in reference to the mighty seas:

Psalm 89:8, 9; Job 38:2, 8-11; Proverbs 8:29. I like the way Job said, “...Hitherto shalt thou come, but no further” (Job 38:11a). Psalm 107:29 tells us what God is able to do: “He maketh the storm a calm, so that the waves thereof are still.”

Conclusion:

The Lord is giving each one of us a message in this text: Jesus is Lord over all. He is in control before the storm, during the storm and after the storm. There is one more verse I would like for you to meditate upon: Psalm 65:7, “Which stilleth the noise of the seas, the noise of their waves, and the tumult of the people.” From this verse we see that God equates the control of the elements to control in our lives.

And the Lord Jesus cares for us during every episode of our lives. Psalm 37:23:
“The steps of a good man are ordered by the LORD: and he delighteth in his way.”

A handwritten signature in black ink that reads "Johnny Pope". The signature is written in a cursive style with a long horizontal flourish extending to the right.