



The Reverend Dr. David V. Silvernail, Jr.
Mark 4:35-41

November 17, 2019
English Standard Version

“Wind, Calm, and Fear”

The 11th Sermon in a series on The Gospel of Mark entitled
“The King and His Cross”

Mark 4:35-41

“On that day, when evening had come, He [Jesus] said to them, “Let us go across to the other side.”³⁶ And leaving the crowd, they took Him with them in the boat, just as He was. And other boats were with Him.³⁷ And a great windstorm arose, and the waves were breaking into the boat, so that the boat was already filling.³⁸ But He was in the stern, asleep on the cushion. And they woke Him and said to Him, “Teacher, do you not care that we are perishing?”³⁹ 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.⁴⁰ He said to them, “Why are you so afraid? Have you still no faith?”⁴¹ 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?””

Heavenly Father, this is Your Word and we need it. Thank You for giving us the Scriptures and making us Your people. You have brought us once again to this amazing Gospel to learn more about your Son, Jesus. We ask You this morning to give us the grace to understand this miracle, that we may see Jesus in His humanity and His divinity, in His glory and grace, in His compassion and love, in His authority and power, so that we may trust Him more and more. And in this passage You challenge us to have faith, to show faith, to exercise

faith, to demonstrate faith, and to apply our faith. And we think we can do that ... but we're not real sure. So help us to consider what it means to have real faith ... so much so that it changes our lives. Thank You that today we're learning once again from Mark, a follower of Jesus, as he brings us the earliest account of the life of Christ. Help us to hear it, understand it, believe it, and obey it. And so we pray, speak through the Gospel of Mark this morning, and by the power of the Holy Spirit, help us see Jesus, for in His name we pray, amen and amen.

INTRODUCTION: “The Scare of My Life”¹

Well, we're talking about being in a storm on the sea this morning, and I don't think that all of you are aware of this, but one of my most frightening experiences came since I've been the Pastor here at Potomac Hills.

Now you're probably thinking that it had something to do with a message I gave that wasn't going so well, and I felt like I wanted to crawl away and die. That's not it. I'm so used to that that it doesn't even **faze** me anymore. Some of you may be thinking that perhaps I said something controversial and people were upset and offended. That's not it either. After 28 years of preaching I've offended enough people that it doesn't bother me anymore either.

Actually it didn't happen in one of our worship services, but while we were on vacation about **20 years ago**. Now most of you know our children as adults (some younger than others), but this was back when they were in the 5 to 15 range. One summer we went up to Massachusetts to visit Joanne's family, and one day, her brother John (who's now with the Lord) invited us to go sailing with him. Now John was **a very accomplished sailor**. Back then, he had a 29-foot sailboat named the Toucan Too. And he sailed it from New England to Florida and back. So he was a very good sailor and besides the boat was kept in this nice, calm harbor, and we were just going to sail a few miles out to this nice, little island.

Well, the water was calm ... **in the harbor**. The problem came when we got out of the harbor. The water there was ... **not so calm**. In fact it was pretty choppy. And the first thing that happened was everybody got sick. There was this wonderful image of my family, most of whom were hanging off the back of the boat, backsides sticking up in the air, while they decorated the back of the boat with the contents of their stomachs. It would have looked really funny, except nobody could laugh without throwing up. Well, we finally got to the island and had a chance to go swimming and relax. John, being wise and thoughtful, was gracious enough to cook up a bunch of really greasy hamburgers just so we'd all have something in our stomachs for the return trip.

Now, I had thought getting out to the island was rough, but compared to the trip back **it was nothing**. While we were on the island the wind picked up quite a bit. And those three-foot waves had turned into six to nine-foot waves. And that 29-foot sailboat that looked so big in the harbor felt about the size of a postage stamp now. These waves were big ... they crashed into the boat and carried the boat up on the wave like it was **a bath toy**.

Joanne's sister, Marie, lost her hat to the wind and it disappeared almost instantly. It blew off and landed in the water and a wave swamped it and it was gone. **Just like that**. And

¹ I originally told this story in the sermon “Overcoming Fear” here at Potomac Hills on 9/6/98 and again on 5/19/13. I've made it sound better this time! Information on the 1st Century fishing boat comes from the article “The Galilee Boat – 2,000-Year-Old Hull Recovered Intact,” *Biblical Archaeology Review* 14.5 (1988).

then John said that if **one of us** went overboard we would disappear ... pretty much **just like that**. In fact, he had this flotation pole with a flag on it that you would throw into the water to try and mark the spot where someone fell overboard. But he also said it's really not all that accurate and if you go over then the odds are really against you. I was NOT reassured.

John had started the motor to help stabilize the boat but we were still getting knocked around pretty hard. One wave crashed into us, tipping the boat sort of sideways and Sam went flying into the corner. Marie and I were closest to him and dove for him at the same time. We caught him in the corner ... he was crying, Marie banged her head, and I gashed my leg. Everybody else was sick and scared ... and this boat trip wasn't much fun anymore.

And I began to wonder if we were going to make it back.

The boat began to tip more and more as we went. I'm sitting in the back of the boat ... trying to hold on to as many kids as I can. And you know how everyone gets **real quiet** when they're scared? Well, it was **deathly silent**. The kid's eyes were wide with fright ... and I could tell now **everyone** was wondering if we were going to make it back.

At one point, now I'm sitting in the back left of the boat, the boat was leaning way over on the left side, and when I looked down, I saw water. I was looking straight down, hanging on with all my might, and I was staring at water. The boat was literally up on its side. And I thought we were going over.

And I was petrified.

I truly thought that my entire family was going to die out in the ocean that day. And I was helpless to do anything about it.

Now I've been in scary situations before ...

I spent a number of years in the Army,

I've crawled under live machine gun fire,

I've had a 60-ton tank roll over my foxhole,

I've had a stun grenade go off between my feet.

But with all the stupid things I've done ... they only endangered **me**.

I've never done anything before that endangered my family more than this. The fear of losing my family was far greater than the fear of dying myself. I looked at those scared eyes and I was **paralyzed** by fear. And I started **praying** for all I was worth.

Now you might think that someone who's known the Lord (then for 25 years, now for 45 years), who's been to seminary – twice, who's been a minister for seven years at the time, now 28 years ... would know **all the right words** to use in a crisis situation like that. Well ... not true. I looked down into that water, it was so close I could reach down and touch it, and I swear, the only words that came out of my mouth were ... *“Oh God, Oh God, Oh God, Oh God, Oh God.”*

So much for a seminary education. What happened? I was overcome **by fear**. I was **scared, frightened, terrified**. I truly thought we weren't going to make it. Fear gripped so tight it was almost suffocating.

There's an older version of the Bible where it describes someone who is gripped by fear. It says in **Daniel 5:6**, *“Then the king's countenance was changed, and his thoughts troubled him, so that the joints of his loins were loosed, and his knees smote one against another.”* That's real fear.

Well, obviously we lived and made it through that day. The boat didn't tip over ... probably due to John's sailing skills ... and we made it back to the calm, safe waters of the harbor. And I haven't been out on a sailboat since. And hopefully I'll never put my family in that kind of dangerous situation again. The sea is a dangerous place.

And it was no different in Jesus' day. One summer day, Jesus invited the disciples to go sailing with Him. Now some of the disciples were **very accomplished sailors!** **Mark 1** specifically mentions Peter and Andrew, James and John, who were not only fishermen, but were fishermen **on the Sea of Galilee**, where they were now. Back then, Jesus had access to a 29-foot sailboat named the I Can Too. Just in case the disciples said, "You can't ..." He just had to point to the name on the boat. "I Can Too!" Actually, I made all that stuff up about the boat. But, other than the name, it's not far off. In 1986, archaeologists discovered a fishing boat from Jesus day. You can go there and see it. It's 26.5 feet long and 7.5 feet wide and carried ten men with a crew of five. That part's true.

We're back to looking at and learning from the parables and miracles of Jesus. In the Gospel of John, the Apostle John writes, near the end of the gospel, **John 21:25**, "*And there are also many other things which Jesus did, the which, if they should be written every one, I suppose that even the world itself could not contain the books that should be written. Amen.*" Therefore, whenever Matthew, Mark, Luke, or John records an incident, when they preserve an incident out of the life of Jesus, **it's not just because it happened.** Lots of other things happened they never wrote down. It was also because **it teaches us something.**

The miracles of Christ were never just magic tricks. They were always both redemptive and revelatory, which means they both redeemed and saved and taught people. They saved and they demonstrated. They saved and they taught. If we study a miracle, even though we're not there, we will find it will change us and teach us. Now, what would **this miracle teach us?** If it teaches us anything at all, it'll change us. If you really grasp the teaching here, it changes you. If you really grasp the revelation, it'll be redemptive. **What is it that it teaches?** It shows Jesus **testing** the disciples ... and each of these **tests** teaches us something. So turn with me to **Mark 4:35-41** and let's look at each one. And we'll start with ...

v. 34-38: THE TEST OF A GREAT WIND ²

"On that day, when evening had come, He [Jesus] said to them, "Let us go across to the other side."³⁶ And leaving the crowd, they took Him with them in the boat, just as He was. And other boats were with Him.³⁷ And a great windstorm arose, and the waves were breaking into the boat, so that the boat was already filling.³⁸ But He was in the stern, asleep on the cushion. And they woke Him and said to Him, "Teacher, do you not care that we are perishing?"

2 The Exposition of the text is largely adapted from my sermon, "The Power of the Kingdom" preached here at Potomac Hills on 5/19/13 **and the sermon, "Peace, Be Still"** by Dr. Tim Keller, Redeemer Presbyterian Church, New York, NY, 1/8/95, *The Tim Keller Sermon Archive*, [Logos Bible Software 8.9](#). **And the sermons, "A Tale of Two Fears"** 3/24/19, by Dr. David Strain and *"The Miracles of the Kingdom (2): Jesus Controls the Physical Universe"* 11/2/97, by Dr. J. Ligon Duncan, First Presbyterian Church, Jackson, MS, www.fpcjackson.org. **And the books, The Wonder-Working God: Seeing the Glory of Jesus in His Miracles** by Dr. Jared Wilson, pages 61-77; *The Reformed Expository Commentary: Matthew, Volume 1* by Dr. Dan Doriani, pages 344-354; *When Jesus Confronts the World: An Exposition of Matthew 8-10* by Dr. D.A. Carson, pages 46-50; and *The Miracles: Exploring the Mystery of Jesus's Divine Works* by Dr. Simon Kistemaker, pages 19-23.

In this passage, we see evidence of the incarnation. Within these verses, Jesus is both **sleeping** from human weariness and **speaking** from divine authority. The former we can certainly understand. We know tiredness. But pastors who preach for long feel the weariness in this text with extra resonance. I don't know how some of my friends do it, juggling multiple services on a weekend, giving it all they've got each time. I preach once, and when I do it honorably, it's surprisingly draining. It may not look like much to stand up and yell at you for 42 minutes. But there is something I can only describe as a "psychic weight" to preaching by a preacher who is conscious of taking into the pulpit the mantle of the gospel, the eternal stakes of spiritual power, to deliver faithfully the Word of God.

But Jesus blows all of us out of the water. He preaches for long periods of time, in the heat of the outdoors, usually accompanied by thoughtless and incompetent assistants, without the benefit of bottled water, followed frequently by personal engagements with countless needy people, many of whom He heals, restores, or delivers, and usually has to follow it up with tiresome debriefings with the disciples, ending up having to re-teach and re-explain most of the day's events to make sure they understand. And then, to top it all off, Matthew 8 says that He has no bed of his own to return to at night! So it's no wonder that at the end of another grueling day of up-close-and-personal ministry, Jesus is tired.

And so we find Jesus **asleep** in the midst of the storm. Finding Jesus asleep in the storm tells us, very often, that God seems to **take His time** about storms. He lets them come. He lets them rage. He lets the waters come up. He lets the boat start to sink before He does anything. God **often** seems to be asleep. We see that several times in the Psalms. **Psalm 44:17-18, 23, 26** says, "*All this has come upon us, though we have not forgotten You, and we have not been false to Your covenant. ¹⁸ Our heart has not turned back, nor have our steps departed from Your way; ... Awake! Why are You sleeping, O Lord? Rouse Yourself! Do not reject us forever! ... ²⁶ Rise up; come to our help! Redeem us for the sake of Your steadfast love!*" That's **Psalm 44**. In other words, it often seems that when the storms of life come ... We're being battered, it looks like we're sinking, and we ask for God's help. The psalmist is saying, "*We have been true to You, and yet You've forgotten us. We haven't done anything wrong, and yet this is happening to us. Awake! Why are You sleeping, Lord?*"

What this is teaching is that God **will often seem asleep**, because God **will let** things come. He **will let** storms come. He **will let** the waters rage. He **will let** it go on longer than we think it should. **He won't be hurried**. Now, **that's** not good news, is it? But let me tell you something. **First of all**, let's apply this to ourselves. The Bible is telling us in the test of the great wind that although God has complete power over storms, He usually doesn't act the way we want Him to act. He **often** seems asleep. He **often** lets them go on.

If you're a Christian, or if you're coming to Christianity, and you're under the delusion that once you give your life to Christ everything in your life is going to go well, that once you give your life to Christ things will fall into place ... everything will be fine. That's a delusion. The Bible nowhere says anything like that. As a matter of fact, you have places like James, where it says, **James 1:2-3**, "*Count it all joy, my brothers, when you meet trials of various kinds, ³ for you know that the testing of your faith produces steadfastness.*" Prayed for **steadfastness** lately? Well, if you would like that, it comes through the **testing** of your faith, and the **testing** of your faith comes through meeting **trials** of various kinds. Want steadfastness? Jesus says, "**Get in the boat.**"

Two Lessons. First, you've been warned. God lets waves come. God lets boats look like they're about to sink. God lets things look pretty bad. God lets the winds come and the storms rage. **You've been warned.** What does that mean? I believe that much of the distress we experience in our trials and tribulations is simply ... **shock and surprise.** There's the pain of the trial, and that'll never go away. Then there's the **surprise** that the trial even happened. When you're sitting around saying, "How could God let this happen to me? I thought I've been doing a very good job. What kind of God would let this happen?" That's the part of your distress that's your fault. You can't help the pain of living, but you should be able to do something about the **surprise** that comes from the pain of living.

If you're surprised, quite frankly, you're being naïve. God **has told you it's coming.** You're not being wise here. You've been warned. **God lets these things happen. John 16:33, "In the world you will have tribulation."** That's your fault if you're shocked. Okay? That's the first thing. **You shouldn't be surprised.** Don't be shocked at the testing of your faith. Don't be shocked at storms.

Second lesson, God will not be hurried.

Look again at verses 37-38, "*And a great windstorm arose, and the waves were breaking into the boat, so that the boat was already filling.*"³⁸ *But He was in the stern, asleep on the cushion. And they woke Him and said to Him, "Teacher, do you not care that we are perishing?"* **Luke 8:24** says, "*Master, Master, we are perishing!*" And **Matthew 8:25** says, "*Save us, Lord; we are perishing.*"

It's easy to ridicule the disciples at this point, to see them in some sense as being overly dramatic. But the text does not tell us the ride is bumpy. It tells us that "*the waves were breaking into the boat, so that the boat was already filling.*" If you or I were in that boat, even if Jesus was with us, nine times out of ten **fear trumps theology.** In a situation like this one, **terror is instinctual.** In the middle of a violent storm, with the boat taking on water, "**We're all gonna die!**" is not a punch line ... it's a prediction. But then Jesus gets up ... looks around ... maybe He stretches. God will not be hurried, and if you really think about it, **who wants to hurry God?** Do you know that much about what the storm is about? Do you know that much about your own heart? Do you know that much about life?

Nowadays every football team puts coaches way up high in the stadium. They have their little mics, and they're talking to the guys down on the sidelines. They're telling the coaches what's going on. You know why? Because the people who are closest to the action **have the worst perspective.** The people who are closest to the action often **have the poorest understanding** of what's going on. **They can't see the big picture.** In other words, down on the sidelines the coach is saying, "Why are they moving the ball on us? Why are they running on us?" But he can't see it. Up in the booth the other coach says, "The linebackers are lining up way too deep." From up high you can see it. Very often, the people closest to the action are the ones who have the poorest view. **God has the big picture.** God will not be hurried, and who in their right mind wants to be hurrying God?

If God created the universe, it's only logical that His timing would often seem illogical to us. Can I say that again? It is only **logical** to assume that God will sometimes appear **illogical.** It is only **reasonable** to assume that God would sometimes appear **unreasonable.** It's **unreasonable** to think He would always appear reasonable, because He's so high above us. He's way up at the top of the stadium. He sees things we don't. And He sees things we can't.

The wise person prays and says, “O, Lord God, I’m asking for this thing, but please give me what I would have asked for if I could see what You see and know what You know.”

God will not be hurried. God will let the storm come, even though it doesn’t seem like its fair. God will let it rage a lot longer than you think it should. Finding Jesus asleep in the storm tells us He doesn’t deal with storms the way we like, but He deals with them in His own good time ... and we’re not so sure about that. But Mark tells us that there’s yet another test ... and this is ...

v. 39: THE TEST OF A GREAT CALM

Jesus gets up and rebukes the storm. Only Mark records Him speaking, **verse 39**, “*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.*” What does that teach us? The reason that Mark (and Matthew and Luke) preserves this incident is because ancient people saw no greater symbol of death, of destruction, of chaos than the storm, the typhoon, the hurricane. Even we modern types have only come up with things like nuclear weapons. Most of us know that just one old-fashioned hurricane is far more powerful than most nuclear warheads. There is no greater symbol of destructive chaos than the storm. But Jesus is Lord of the storm. He rebukes it with a word “and there was a great calm.”

In the Psalms there’s a tremendous place where it says, **Psalm 29:3-5, 7-9**, “*The voice of the Lord is over the waters; the God of glory thunders ... ⁴The voice of the Lord is powerful; the voice of the Lord is full of majesty. ⁵The voice of the Lord breaks the cedars; the Lord breaks the cedars of Lebanon. ... ⁷The voice of the Lord flashes forth flames of fire. ⁸The voice of the Lord shakes the wilderness; the Lord shakes the wilderness of Kadesh. ⁹The voice of the Lord makes the oaks to shake and strips the forests bare, and in His temple all cry, “Glory!”*”

The physical storm is also a metaphor for the insecurity of life and how tremendously small and insecure we are in this life. But Jesus is the Lord of the storm. This miracle shows that Jesus is God Himself. Do you know what its saying? The Bible is **not just saying** God’s power is greater than the power of nature. It’s saying the very power of nature **is derived** from God’s power. Nature only has power that’s on **loan** from God. All power is from God, which means that when it thunders it’s actually, in a sense, **God’s thunder**. It’s God thundering.

When Jesus says, “*Peace! Be still!*” and it all goes away, He’s saying, “I Am that Lord. Storms only have power on loan from Me. I Am the Lord of the storm. I Am the King enthroned over the flood. Therefore, if you take refuge in Me, there’s not a force on the face of the earth that will wipe you away. There’s not a thing on the face of the earth that will strip you bare, make you shake, and whisk you away. In Me ... **and only in Me** ... are you safe.” That’s what He’s saying. The great calm Jesus shows us while facing down the great wind demonstrates that Jesus is Lord of all storms. Here’s where the rub comes in. I mean, the great calm is good news, isn’t it? It makes you feel good. “Wow!” you’re impressed. But here’s the third and last test we get ... and it’s ...

v. 40-41: THE TEST OF A GREAT FEAR

⁴⁰ *He said to them, “Why are you so afraid? Have you still no faith?”* ⁴¹ *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?”*

At this point, the disciples are likely **shocked** and **awed**. They are shocked **by** their awe. The dozing master has hushed the storm. Do you hear the eerie quiet? Picture the previously

churning waters now smooth like a plane of glass. Not a wave can be seen across the flat surface of the deep, save the soft ripple from the boat itself. The wind has stopped. The clouds have cleared. The scene ought to be cheerful, but it's not. The disciples are stunned. It says, **verse 41**, "*And they were filled with great fear.*" Matthew says, **Matthew 8:27**, "*And the men marveled, saying, 'What sort of man is this, that even winds and sea obey Him?'*" And Luke says both, **Luke 8:25**, "*And they were afraid, and they marveled.*"

Now these disciples have seen Jesus give strength to lame legs, sight to blind eyes, health to a centurion's servant. They've seen leprosy cured and the dead come to life. But they've never seen Him do anything like this. It is **the greatest unleashing of raw power they've ever witnessed**.

The leaders among the disciples are men who've lived their lives on the sea, and most likely know those Old Testament verses that teach that God alone controls the seas. Verses like **Psalm 107:24-30**, which says, "*They saw the deeds of the Lord, His wondrous works in the deep. ²⁵ For He commanded and raised the stormy wind, which lifted up the waves of the sea. ²⁶ They mounted up to heaven; they went down to the depths; their courage melted away in their evil plight; ²⁷ they reeled and staggered like drunken men and were at their wits' end. ²⁸ Then they cried to the Lord in their trouble, and He delivered them from their distress. ²⁹ He made the storm be still, and the waves of the sea were hushed. ³⁰ Then they were glad that the waters were quiet, and He brought them to their desired haven.*"

And so there they stood, **in awe of His signs**. With the storm calmed and the danger of drowning past, they are more **stunned** than ever before. Because now they find themselves facing **greater power** than a life-threatening storm. Power that arrived just as turbulently, and just as suddenly, as the one they just survived. And so they said, "*Who then is this, that even the wind and the sea obey Him?*" And then their eyes see.

They were scared in the presence of the storm's power, but now **they know** they're in the presence of someone from **another world**, someone from **another place**. **They know** they're in the presence of a greater power. **They know** they're in the presence of the holy, and as **Moses** hit the deck when the glory of God was revealed in **the fury of the fire**, and as **Job** hit the deck when the glory of the Lord was revealed in **the fury of the wind**, so now **they know** they're in the presence of the holy because, in **the fury of the water**, the glory of God has been manifested to them. **This is God!** They experienced the presence of God, and they're far more terrified now than they were in the storm.

He who stands before them is no mere teacher or prophet or faith healer. In front of them stands One who holds the power of nature in the grip of His hand. And in the wet, shivering presence of such power, the disciples stand in awe and fear and marveled, knowing that the man who slept in the stern rose from a sound sleep to do **what only God Himself can do**.

The tests of wind, calm, and fear remind us that we worship the God of Abraham, Isaac, and Jacob. We're subject to the God who set the galaxies in motion, spun the planets on their axis, poured the ancient seas, summons thunder with His fists, makes the mountains His footstool, commands the fires and the rains. We serve the God who is everlasting and all-seeing, a strong fortress and a mighty warrior. We worship this God who tabernacles with His people, who ultimately has done so by inhabiting flesh. This God will never leave us hanging — not even on a cross — because the cross revealed the death of death in the death of Christ ... and He did not stay dead.

CONCLUSION: No-Nonsense Christianity

You see how no-nonsense Christianity is? Perhaps in younger days some of you got rid of Christianity because you decided it was intellectually untenable. Maybe in college. Maybe some other time. You said, “Who knows if there’s a God? Who knows what God’s Word is, and who’s to say who Jesus was? Maybe he was a magician. Maybe he was a prophet. Who knows what he was.”

Jesus Christ and Christianity became intellectually untenable to you, so you moved on to live your life as you wanted. But as time goes on, you’ve come to see you need spiritual strength **you don’t have**. You’ve come to feel an **emptiness** inside. You’ve come to see life isn’t something you manage all that well. So now you’re nibbling around the edges of Christianity. Maybe you go to Bible study, or you’re reading a book about Jesus, or somebody brought you here, or you’ve been coming here for a while, and you’d like that spiritual strength. There’s no shortcut, friends. You can’t get strength by having some kind of general vague faith. The Bible is very no-nonsense. The Bible says faith is applying what you’ve been **convinced** of, what you’re **persuaded** of, what you’ve **seen**, what you **know**.

Let me put it this way. **Do you believe** Jesus Christ is actually the Son of God incarnate, born in a manger? **Do you believe** He died on a tree, died on Calvary’s hill, died on a cross for you? **Do you believe** He was physically raised from the dead? **Do you believe** He passed through the heavens and He’s seated at the right hand of God the Father Almighty and that He will come someday to judge both the living and the dead? Including you?

If you believe that, there’s all the hope in the world. You can face anything if you take **that faith** out and apply it. But if it’s not true, if there is no God who has created the world, if when you die you just rot, if there isn’t any way to deal with guilt in an objective way, **then there’s nothing to hope for**. You can’t do an end run around these intellectual ideas. You have to go back. You have to study. You have to reflect. You have to say, “Is it true? Is Jesus who He said He is? Did Jesus really do these miracles? Did He do these amazing things?” That’s what faith is. **It’s applying what you know**.

When we apply what we know about Christ, we wind up with a strong faith in God. Real, genuine, self-forgetful, self-abandoned faith in God. **The kind of faith** that says, **Job 13:15**, “*Though He slay me, I will hope in Him.*” **The kind of faith** that believes that God, in life and in death, will deliver us, **Daniel 3:17-18**, “*If this be so, our God whom we serve is able to deliver us from the burning fiery furnace, and He will deliver us out of your hand, O king.*”¹⁸ **But if not**, be it known to you, *O king, that we will not serve your gods or worship the golden image that you have set up.*” **The kind of faith** that says, **2 Chronicles 20:12**, “*We do not know what to do, but our eyes are on You.*”

Do you see where these tests are leading us? “Where is your faith? Get it out.” It’s unsentimental. It’s hard-nosed. What’s the evidence for the resurrection? How do you know Jesus is the Son of God? Were there real historical witnesses who saw it? You have to know these things. How do you know there’s a God or maybe when you die you just rot? And you can’t just have faith in faith. That’s not Biblical ... Biblical faith is having faith **in Jesus**. When the disciples confront Jesus in the boat, “*Teacher, do You not care that we are perishing?*” ... they were questioning Jesus’ love. Jesus was telling them they should have known enough about His love for them that they should have been able to handle that storm.

Do you know what we have? We have something they didn't have. We have something far greater. We have greater evidence that we can get out and use. Do you know what it is? *"The voice of the Lord is over the waters; the God of glory thunders ... The voice of the Lord is powerful ... The voice of the Lord breaks the cedars ... The voice of the Lord flashes forth flames of fire. The voice of the Lord shakes the wilderness ... The voice of the Lord makes the oaks to shake and strips the forests bare!"* There was a storm greater than any storm you will ever go through. When Christ was stretched out on the cross at the top of Mount Calvary, the voice of the Lord thundered in a way it never had before. God forsake His Son for our sake. We don't know what Jesus heard, but we know God's voice **thundered**. That was a storm unlike any other storm. Jesus Christ bowed His head, and He was shaken, stripped bare, and wiped away for you and me.

A Christian is somebody who gets out what you know when the storms come. You say, "If Jesus Christ was faithful to me by staying true to me during that storm, I can stay true to Him during my storm." Can you get that out? Where is it? You know it. If you get it out, you'll be able to face anything ... **anything**.

The most encouraging thing about this miracle is that the storm goes away because they go to Him, even though they go to Him so badly. Do you notice how badly they go? They say, "Jesus, wake up! Are you going to let us drown?" That's a bad way to approach the Lord. Let me put it this way. That's a poor prayer. That prayer doesn't get an "A." That prayer doesn't even get a "B." That's sort of a "D-minus prayer." But do you know why I don't fail it? Because Jesus didn't fail it. Because it's still a prayer!

Here's the most encouraging thing about this. They go to Him so badly, they go to Him so weakly, they go to Him so fearfully ... **but they go to Him, and He responds**. Just go to Him. It doesn't matter the quality of your faith. **If you go ... its faith**. You're not saved by the **quality** of your faith; you're saved by the **object** of your faith; you're saved because He died for you. Don't you see? Jesus says, **John 6:37**, *"All that the Father gives Me will come to Me, and whoever comes to Me I will never cast out."* It's not the perfection of your faith. It's not the amount of your faith. It's just faith. Whatever you got. Just go to Him.

Think about that. You need to pray.

Take a moment to do that, and then I'll close.

Our Lord and our God, thank You that You have spoken to us by Your Son. Open our eyes that we might see our sin and then see our Savior. Thank You that You have given us a King, who rules over everything ... including our storms and our lives. We know that we have little faith and we don't use it near enough. So Lord, increase our faith, strengthen our faith, give us faith. Father, forgive us for our lack of faith, and so build our faith this year as we live with Mark, a follower of Jesus, as we hear what he hears, given to him by eyewitnesses of Christ. Thank You for this story of amazing grace, for this miracle of the Kingdom. Give us, we pray, the faith to believe that Jesus is who He said He is. And so, O Lord, if there is anyone among us this day, who comes here not trusting in Christ, we would ask that by Your Spirit that You would draw that person to Jesus — giving them the faith to know Christ. And teach us all to respond with a greater trust in You, and in Your Word, and in this Gospel, to draw us ever closer to Your Son, our Savior, the Lord Jesus Christ, who lives and reigns with You and the Holy Spirit, One God, now and forever. Amen.

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From our responsive reading this morning,

Psalm 65:5-8

*“By awesome deeds You answer us with righteousness, O God of our salvation, the hope of all the ends of the earth and of the farthest seas; the One who by His strength established the mountains, being girded with might; **who stills the roaring of the seas**, the roaring of their waves, the tumult of the peoples, so that those who dwell at the ends of the earth are in awe at Your signs.”*