

The Gospel According to Mark The One Who Controls the Storm

Mark 4:35-41

Sunday, July 12, 2020

Introduction

In Mark 4:35-41 we come to a familiar story that pushes us to ask an important question: Who do we believe God to be? And along with that a related question: how does our understanding of who God is impact the way we respond to difficult seasons in life?

These are important questions and questions that at times have divergent answers. While we profess a high view of God and of His power and goodness, we may be tempted to view our situations and respond with worry and fear. We may determine that God is negligent or uncaring.

The story of Jesus calming the storm is a story about the revelation of Jesus as God. In addition we have the reminder that He can be trusted. Like the disciples we must consider whether we will respond to the situations of our lives with faith in God or with fear of our situations.

A Common Misunderstanding

Like many familiar Biblical accounts, the story of Jesus calming the storm is often misunderstood. Some are quick to conclude that Jesus is revealed as the One who will calm every storm in our lives, but this misses the main point of the text.

This Scriptures don't promise that Jesus will calm every storm. The central truth of the passage is that Jesus is God. He has power over the wind and the waves and He is in fact God in flesh. By extension, because Jesus is God we can trust Him and choose to live in faith in Him rather than fear, regardless of situations of our lives.

The Setting – Crossing the Sea of Galilee (4:35-36)

- Jesus had spent much of His day sitting in a boat and teaching large crowds that were gathered on the shore (4:1-34), and as evening came He instructs His disciples to sail across the Sea of Galilee.

The Storm and the Sleeping Christ (4:37-38a)

- **A great storm** - The Sea of Galilee is known for its' sudden and severe storms. The geography of the area makes it ripe for quick and violent storms and that's exactly what happened as Jesus and His disciples were crossing the sea. The severity of the storm is evident not only by what Mark says, but in light of the reaction of these experienced fishermen – they feared for their lives.

- **The sleeping Christ** – Amid the chaos of the storm there is one thing that is out of place; Jesus is asleep in the rear of the boat. His sleep is a reminder both His humanity (He required rest) and also of the sovereign plan of God. God planned to use Christ's sleep to reveal both the weakness of the disciples' faith and the true identity of Jesus.

The Response of the Disciples (4:38b) (They rebuke Jesus)

- The response of the disciples reveals both their fear and their lack of trust in Jesus. They are frustrated and angered by His apparent disregard for their situation and they tell Him so.
- The Scriptures are replete with examples of people who question God's seeming negligence or lack of care. At times we may find ourselves echoing the sentiments of the Psalmists and doubting God's presence and watchfulness (Psalm 13:1-2, 22:1-2; 10:1). It's a common temptation.

The Power of Jesus is the Power of God (4:39) (He rebukes the storm)

- **A great calm** - Before addressing the disciples directly Jesus shows His power and His true identity. With His words He does something that only God can do, He commands the wind and the waves and they obey Him. When Jesus speaks He uses words and commands that He previously used in silencing demons (Mark 1:25).
 - Throughout the Scriptures the sovereignty and might of God are described by His power over nature, especially the seas (Job 12:13-15, 26:10-12; 28:23-28; 38:8-11; Psalm 29:3-4; 33:6-9; 65:5-7; 89:8-9; 107:23-32). In the New Testament it becomes clear that Jesus Himself is the creator and sustainer (Colossians 1:15-17; Hebrews 1:3).

The Call to Faith Over Fear (4:40) (Jesus rebukes the disciples)

- After rebuking the storm, Jesus then rebukes His disciples. Their response revealed that their fear of the situation was greater than their faith in Him and His ability to care for them.

The Recognition of Jesus as God – The Disciples Stand in Fear (4:41)

- **A great fear** – After describing the great storm and the great calm, now Mark acknowledges the great fear of the disciples as they consider who Jesus really is – they are in the presence of God Himself.

Conclusion - A God to be Feared and Trusted – The recognition of Jesus as God and of His power should lead us to fear, especially as we consider our sin against Him. But this is also a story of His compassion. And the message of the Gospel is that Jesus came so that we can be saved from our sin and reconciled to God. We should be quick to recognize His power and majesty and also quick to trust Him. He hasn't promised to calm every storm, but He has promised that He will never leave us and never forsake those who trust in Him.