

“QUIET! BE STILL!”

Mark 4:35-41

Key Verse: 4:39

“He got up, rebuked the wind and said to the waves, ‘Quiet! Be still!’ Then the wind died down and it was completely calm.”

In 4:35-5:43 Jesus demonstrated his authority as the Son of God over the laws of nature, demons, diseases and death. In today’s passage Jesus focused on planting faith in his disciples in the midst of a storm. In each of our lives, we face our own kinds of storms. Whenever we encounter storms we feel swamped and that we are nearly drowned. Our only desire is that the storm may pass by quickly. So we earnestly pray, “Lord, save me from this storm!” We think of the storm as our enemy, who wants to harm and destroy us. But in the storm, there is God’s good purpose for each of us according to his will and wisdom. Our desire is to survive the storm. But God’s desire is to use the storm for our ultimate good. He wants us to know him more fully in our practical experience and to grow in our relationship with him. In that sense, the storm is good. Let’s think about the meaning of the storms to each of us and God’s great purpose through them.

First, Jesus rebuked the wind and waves (35-39). Jesus had been teaching parables about the kingdom of God to a large crowd of people by the lake. It seems that Jesus had been teaching from the boat all day long, without taking a break. Jesus had an eager desire to help the crowd to understand the kingdom of God as much as they possibly could. Now the sun was setting over the western horizon. It was time to have dinner and rest. More than that, Jesus wanted to have personal time with his disciples. When Jesus chose the twelve, it was that they might be with him. Jesus’ main concern was to raise them as men of faith. Jesus wanted to train them in various ways, as opportunity arose. But thus far, he had not had much personal time with them due to the demands of the crowds. So Jesus said to his disciples, **“Let us go over to the other side”** (35). In order to escape the crowd, they took him along, just as he was, in the boat. There were also other boats with him (36). As soon as the boat departed, Jesus fell asleep. Even though Jesus was asleep, he was with his disciples, so they were happy. Philip began to sing, “Row, row, row your boat....” Then Andrew suggested, “Let’s sing a spiritual song.” Peter said, “I will lead the singing. Follow me: *‘What a fellowship, what a joy divine, Leaning on the everlasting arms! What a blessedness, what a peace is mine, Leaning on the everlasting arms! Lean-ing, lean-ing, Safe and secure from all alarms; Lean-ing, lean-ing, Lean-ing on the everlasting arms.’*” And they all said, “Wow! It was much better to sing a spiritual song.” With a gentle breeze at their backs, and stars hanging above them in the night sky, the boat glided through the

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water. For a brief moment, they thought, “Life with Jesus is good.” But this did not last long. The Sea of Galilee can change quickly. Cool air from the Mediterranean is drawn down through the narrow mountain passes and clashes with the hot, humid air lying over the lake. This produces sudden, violent storms on the lake, which still arise in our times. When the disciples were singing in a high spirit, suddenly a furious squall came up, and the waves broke over the boat, so that it was nearly swamped (37).

Life can be compared to crossing a lake by boat from one side to the other. Some days are sunny, warm and delightful. We feel that God is good and life is enjoyable. But life is not always like that. There are also stormy days when the wind blows hard and heavy rain falls. These storms come in the form of accidents, illnesses, bankruptcy, natural disasters, failure in school or work, depression, misunderstandings that break relationships, family strife, and many other things. These storms come unexpectedly and without warning. These storms are beyond our control. We cannot subdue them with a credit card. These storms usually produce fear and doubt in our hearts. Our first response may be, “Why me?” Though these storms threaten our life security, in God they have great meaning. We can examine ourselves to see what is really in our hearts. We can throw off false hopes and have true hope of the kingdom of God. We can discover and correct flaws in our way of thinking and our character and grow to be mature. In truth, God uses these storms for his own purpose. So we can say that God works for our good through the storms (Ro 8:28).

At this critical moment, what did Jesus do? Verse 38a says, **“Jesus was in the stern, sleeping on a cushion.”** Jesus was not bothered by the storm at all. There is no doubt that Jesus was physically exhausted. Jesus was fully human. But how could he sleep in the midst of a storm? When we think about Jesus’ words to his disciples, **“Do you still have no faith?”** it is clear that Jesus could sleep because of his faith. David, a man of faith, said, **“I lie down and sleep; I wake again, because the Lord sustains me. I will not fear though tens of thousands assail me on every side”** (Ps 3:5-6). Inability to sleep is a big problem to many people. According to the American Academy of Sleep Medicine, insomnia occurs in 15 to 20 percent of adults.¹ But the Bible says, God **“grants sleep to those he loves”** (Ps 127:2b). Proverbs 3:24-26a says, **“When you lie down, you will not be afraid; when you lie down, your sleep will be sweet. Have no fear of sudden**

¹ <http://www.nydailynews.com/life-style/health/study-identifies-behaviors-linking-stress-insomnia-article-1.1858445>

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disaster or of the ruin that overtakes the wicked. For the Lord will be at your side.....” Trusting God fully is the best medicine, better than any sleeping pill.

While Jesus was sleeping on the cushion, what did the disciples do? They woke Jesus and said to him, **“Teacher, don’t you care if we drown?”** (38b) At first glance, it seems that the storm caused the problem. But when we look at the disciples’ words carefully, we find that doubt about Jesus’ love was their real problem. In the midst of the storm, they felt that Jesus did not care about them. They also had the fear of death. Both doubt and fear come from lack of faith. If we have faith in God’s love and in his power to give life, nothing can be a problem to us. Paul says, **“Who shall separate us from the love of Christ? Shall trouble or hardship or persecution or famine or nakedness or danger or sword?...No, in all these things we are more than conquerors through him who loved us”** (Ro 8:35,37). The disciples did not yet have this faith. So they were fearful. But in their fear, they did the right thing—they woke up Jesus. Though our faith is imperfect, the Lord never despises faith that cries out to him in a crisis. He listens to his children. So it is good to cry out to God in the midst of trouble.

What did Jesus do? Did Jesus yell at them for waking him up? No. Let’s read verse 39. **“He got up, rebuked the wind and said to the waves, ‘Quiet! Be still!’ Then the wind died down and it was completely calm.”** Through these words Jesus revealed his identity as God and the authority of his word. No human being can rebuke the wind and waves. Only the Creator God can do this. Jesus’ words are God’s words. In the time of crisis, all we have to do is to come to Jesus and listen to his words. His words have power to make any kind of storm subside. Psalm 46 says, **“God is our refuge and strength, an ever-present help in trouble. Therefore we will not fear, though the earth give way and the mountains fall into the heart of the sea, though its waters roar and foam and the mountains quake with their surging...He [God] says, ‘Be still, and know that I am God’”** (1-3,10).

As many of us know, M. David Kim of Tempe, Arizona has been suffering with liver cancer which was so advanced it was inoperable. For the last three months, he went through radiation and chemo embolization treatment. Depending on the success of that treatment, he could be considered for a liver transplant. Last week he received the news that one tumor was reduced from 4.1 to 2.4 cm and the other was reduced from 2.0 cm to none. So he is qualified for a liver transplant. He testified: “A while ago P. Abraham Kim called and read Psalm 23 and prayed for me. Ever since then, I read Psalm 23 again and again to understand the word of God. I noticed that sheep sometimes were in green pastures, but at other times

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sheep were in the valley of the shadow of death. But sheep do not fear evil at all. In my life, there was a good time as well as a bad time. In this current situation, I am definitely in the dark seasons of life and walking through the valley of the shadow of death. But I know God will be able to help me pass through it and guide me to his goodness. Actually God is more real to me through this tough time.” In the time of crisis, all we have to do is cry out to Jesus until we hear his word that has power to calm any storm of life.

When Jesus rebuked the wind, saying, “**Be still!**” he used the same word that he used to rebuke demons in 1:25 (“fee-mo'-o” in Greek). This suggests that there were demonic elements in the storm that made it a “furious squall.” We cannot say that every storm is caused by demons. But we should realize that the devil has actively worked against God from the beginning. When Jesus was born, the devil tried to destroy him along with all the baby boys in Bethlehem (Mt 2:16). From the outset of his messianic ministry, Jesus did battle against the devil. Jesus defeated the devil’s temptation in the desert with the word of God. Jesus resisted the false accusations of religious leaders with the truth. Jesus drove out many demons. Here the devil seems to have used nature. Later the devil used Peter to tempt Jesus to avoid the cross, and Judas Iscariot to betray Jesus. The devil is very sneaky. Our real enemy is not people or the environment, but the devil (Eph 6:12). We cannot defeat the devil by our own strength. But Jesus’ words have power to subdue the devil. Jesus said, “**Quiet! Be Still!**” and the devil fled. Jesus wins victory over the devil and he shares this victory with his children. Let’s accept it by faith.

Second, Jesus planted faith in his disciples (40-41). After calming the storm with his rebuke, Jesus turned to his disciples. He did not ask, “Oh! Are you okay?” Instead, Jesus said, “**Why are you so afraid? Do you still have no faith?**” (40) Jesus rebuked them, not because they woke him up, but because they lacked faith. Their lack of faith was expressed in two ways: through fear and powerlessness. Jesus wanted them to be men of faith overcoming fear. Furthermore, Jesus wanted them to experience the power of faith. He first said, “**Why are you so afraid?**” We may think it was very natural to become fearful in the storm. But Jesus does not think it is normal for us. This kind of fear does not come from God. Then where did it come from? Fear first appears in the Bible in Genesis 3:10. When God called to him, Adam replied, “**I heard you in the garden, and I was afraid because I was naked; so I hid.**” When Adam had a right relationship with God, God’s voice was a joy and delight to him. But when their relationship was broken through Adam’s disobedience, God’s voice made Adam very afraid. This is the fear of death that comes from a sense of punishment, for God had said, “**When**

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you eat of it, you will surely die” (Gen 2:17). Satan uses this fear to enslave people and keep them from coming to God (Heb 2:15). Sometimes those who study the Bible regularly suddenly stop and we wonder why. Of course, there may be many reasons, but one of them is fear. At the time they should commit themselves to grow as Jesus’ disciple, Satan whispers in their ear, “If you commit to Jesus you will lose everything, especially the freedom to do what you want and the pleasures of this world.” Fear is not a small matter. It is one of the most effective weapons in Satan’s arsenal.

When the people of Israel came to the border of Canaan, Moses sent twelve leaders, one from each tribe, to explore the land ahead of them. After doing so, ten leaders reported, **“This land devours those living in it. All the people living there are of great size... We seemed like grasshoppers in our own eyes”** (Num 13:32-33). Because of fear they gave a bad report to the people and planted fear in their hearts which led to rebellion against God. This provoked God’s anger. God said, **“How long will these people treat me with contempt?”** God dealt with their unbelief very seriously. He had them wander for forty years in the wilderness and they all died in the desert, except for Caleb and Joshua who had faith that obeyed God. Revelation 21:8 tells us that the cowardly are number one on the list of those who go to hell. Rev 21:8 - **“But the cowardly, the unbelieving, the vile, the murderers, the sexually immoral, those who practice magic arts, the idolaters and all liars—they will be consigned to the fiery lake of burning sulfur. This is the second death.”** Fear tries to creep into our hearts in various ways—through a sense of failure or defeat, pressure from peers or family members, government persecution, anxiety about future security, and so on. Fear affects every aspect of our lives. Those who are slaves to fear cannot live as Jesus’ disciples. How then can we overcome fear? We should recognize that these fears come when we do not have faith in God. Jesus wants us to overcome fear by having faith in God in any situation. Jesus wants us to believe the love of God absolutely. 1 John 4:18a says, **“There is no fear in love. But perfect love drives out fear....”** We can believe the love of God as we hear his words. **“Faith comes through hearing the message”** (Ro 10:17). As we hear his word, Jesus pours the Holy Spirit into our hearts, and by his help we can be sure that we are children of God (Ro 8:15). We can overcome fear when we listen to Jesus’ word in the midst of a storm. **God does not give us a spirit of fear, but of power and love and self-control** (2 Ti 1:7).

Jesus wants us to not only overcome fear, but to experience the power of faith in our practical lives. When Jesus said, **“Do you still have no faith?”** it was not just a rebuke for lack of faith; it was an encouragement to learn the power of

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faith in the midst of a storm. Faith is not just an idea or theory. Faith is to trust in God and his great power. This power is demonstrated in practical life through our faith. Our society faces many social issues, such as gun violence and gang activity. Tougher laws and more policemen have not solved this problem. We each have our own personal problems and character flaws, such as an anger problem, lust, alcohol and drug abuse, jealousy and hatred, bitterness, an unforgiving heart, and the like. We have problems in our families and with our children. We face obstacles in raising disciples and having fruitful ministries. When we think of all these issues, we feel overwhelmed, powerless, helpless and frustrated. It is easy for us to give up. But in the course of dealing with all these issues, Jesus wants us to experience the power of faith. With man, many things are impossible, but with God, all things are possible. Jesus said, **“Have faith in God...Truly I tell you, if anyone says to this mountain, ‘Go, throw yourself into the sea,’ and does not doubt in their heart but believes that what they say will happen, it will be done for them”** (Mk 11:22-23). When we have faith in Almighty God, we can overcome our limits and say, **“I can do all this through him who gives me strength”** (Php 4:13).

How did the disciples respond? They were terrified and asked each other, **“Who is this? Even the wind and the waves obey him!”** (41) The disciples were no longer thinking about the storm; they were in awe of Jesus. They began to ask who Jesus was. From that time on, this question, **“who is Jesus?”** remained in their hearts and continued to inspire them to learn new things about Jesus. This led them to eventually confess that Jesus is the Messiah, the Son of the living God (Mt 16:16; Mk 8:29). The more they learned of Jesus, the more they grew until they became spiritual giants. In the book of Acts, we see that they confronted all kinds of storms with faith in Jesus and experienced the power of God to spread the gospel all over the world. When they had faith in Jesus, they became world changers.

In all of the storms of life, Jesus is at work to plant faith in our hearts and to help us know him better and grow in his likeness. When we look at Jesus instead of the storm we can overcome the storms and even surf on them. This is possible because Jesus, the anchor for our souls, keeps us firm and secure (Heb 6:19). Let's listen to Jesus' words, **“Quiet! Be Still!”**