

## Our God Reigns

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 Title: Where Faith Lives, Fear Cannot!  
 Text: Mark 4:35-41

The Need: Right now many of you are distracted by something that is outside of your control. If I invited you to write on a piece of paper the one thing that is really bothering you, what would you write down? Today, I want you to take note of that “thing” and then I want you to see it in light of who God is. My assertion for today is simple: Faith in God’s control and compassion will remove fear in life’s circumstances. Faith in God allows us to find rest in our most difficult moments. Rest, comfort and hope are conditions we as believers are to enjoy (Matt. 11:28; John 14:1; 1 Thess. 4:13).

“Our Lord calls for fearless trust in Him in spite of terrorizing circumstances.”  
 (Royce Gordon Gruenler, “Mark,” in Baker Commentary on the Bible, ed. Walter A. Elwell, [Grand Rapids: Baker Book House, 1989], 774).

The Holy Spirit is calling to us from this passage to consider three ideas.  
Think on these things – (1) you must know that God is in control and the events of life are in His hand and under His plan. They are expressions of His love, mercy, grace, and kindness.

Choose to live in light of Him – (2) you must choose to understand your circumstances by what you know to be true.

Rest in Him – (3) I invite you today to make a simple gesture of surrenderance to the loving hand of God by affirming His control and saying that He is enough no matter what, and He is all you need in the absence of everything else.

This is the first story in a sequence of four stories about healing.

- Jesus will “heal” the storm (4:35-41)
- Jesus will “heal” the demoniac (5:1-20)
- Jesus will “heal” the daughter of Jairus (5:21-24, 35-43)
- Jesus will “heal” the woman bleeding for 12 years (5:25-34)

The Son of Man has power over all things created.

The events of our passage takes place in the region of Galilee and the immediate context is on the sea of Galilee. Most note how the Sea of Galilee was vulnerable “To such sudden squalls [because of] its position, in a deep basin, skirted on the east by lofty mountain ranges, while on the west the hills are intersected by narrow gorges through which the wind sweeps across the lake, and raises its waters with great rapidity into a storm.”

<http://www.ccel.org/ccel/jamieson/jfb.xi.ii.v.html>

The Sea of Galilee lies 600 feet below the level of the Mediterranean and has a tropical climate. Only a short distance north are the high mountains of Lebanon. The heated air about the sea invites the rush of cold waves from the mountains.

Notice the following features within the story.

First, the day referenced in verse 35 began in verse 1 where he spoke before a numerically significant crowd. He taught them through parables.

“A very long and tiring day of ministry. They did not have a minute of solitude or rest. They were physically, emotionally, and spiritually exhausted” (v. 35).

Second, Jesus was going to explain the meaning of His public instruction to His disciples. I want to believe that what follows is a part of this “private” instruction. When we find ourselves in the deep place, let us not forget that God is teaching us. This is a time of great instruction.

Third, the events that are about to unfold were intentional (v. 35). Luke 8:22 tells us that Jesus led them into the boat and across the Sea. Notice His intent. It was to go to the other side. Sometimes we desire to dictate what this looks like.

Consider this thought from the apostle Paul when aboard a vessel that would appear to be doomed in Acts 27:21-26.

<sup>21</sup> “When they had gone a long time without food, then Paul stood up in their midst and said, ‘Men, you ought to have followed my advice and not to have set sail from Crete and incurred this damage and loss. <sup>22</sup> Yet now I urge you to keep up your courage, for there will be no loss of life among you, but only of the ship. <sup>23</sup> For this very night an angel of the God to whom I belong and whom I serve stood before me, <sup>24</sup> saying, ‘Do not be afraid, Paul; you must stand before Caesar; and behold, God has granted you all those who are sailing with you.’ <sup>25</sup> Therefore, keep up your courage, men, for I believe God that it will turn out exactly as I have been told. <sup>26</sup> But we must run aground on a certain island’ ” (Acts. 27:21-26).

Paul knew he was going to get to where God promised him, but he also knew that it would include much toil.

Fourth, it is often when we are the most tired and physically and emotionally drained that we will find our greatest battles. Was this not true of Elijah in 1 Kings 17-19 when he faced off with the pagan priests of Baal under the brutal reign of King Ahab and Queen Jezebel.

Fifth, the events we encounter in life are not uncommon but widely experienced by many. Notice verse 36, “And other boats were with him.” This same idea is present in 1 Corinthians 10:13.

These other ships did not have the comfort of an immediate presence. They struggled in His physical absence. Consider how great their trial might have appeared.

Finally, verse 37 tells us that their day did not get easier – it got HARDER! Once in the boat they met an incredible storm.

Matthew Henry rightly notes how, “The end of a toil may perhaps be but the beginning of a toss.” (Matthew Henry’s Commentary on Mark 4)

The storm was so great the boat was being buffeted (like a boxer beating a bag or an opponent). It was filled to overflow with water. Matthew 8:24 tells us it was “covered” with water. The boat was sinking.

“When those accustomed to fish upon that deep thus spake, the danger must have been imminent.” <http://www.ccel.org/ccel/jamieson/jfb.xi.ii.v.html>

It is in this context that we have our story. Let us now note the actions of two groups: the disciples and our Lord.

I. The response of the disciples to the storm.

A. They were very afraid (v.38)

Remember these were fishermen. They were use to storms and hard weather. Yet this storm was so terrible that they feared for their lives. They were afraid they were going to die. The danger was real and they were terrified. Why did they fear?

B. They had no faith.

1. They had no faith in God’s control.

a. Who led them into the storm? He said let us pass over to the other side. Could a storm now stop Him from fulfilling His objective?

b. Who controls the storm?

In passing, let us note how God is bigger (Isa. 40:12), smarter (Isa. 40:13-14), and greater (Isa. 40:15) than man. God is more than the sum total of His attributes. God is BIG and man is small.

The Bible is persistent in showing us that God is in control of life's storms.

- Joseph and his brothers (Gen. 50:20)
- Samson's disobedience (Judges 14:1-4)
- A randomly shot arrow (1 Kings 22:34)
- The story of Job (Job 1:21; 13:15)

Job is a classic example of one who exercised biblical faith in the midst of life's storms. Job 1:21 – "the Lord gives, . . ." Job 13:15 – "though he slay me, . . ."

- The atrocities of the Tribulation (Rev. 17:16, 17)

I cannot explain how the purpose of God is worked through the will of man, only that He does.

#### Making it personal:

Right now you are in a storm. God has led you there in ways that are incapable of being understood. Will you trust Him to teach you truth and will you rest in Him to guide you to the other shore?

2. They had no faith in God's compassion (v.38).

This is the question that plagues all of us in our most trying moments, "Teacher, don't you care if we drown?"

"In Luke (Lu 8:24) this is doubled—in token of their life-and-death earnestness—"Master, Master." <http://www.ccel.org/ccel/jamieson/jfb.xi.ii.v.html>

Who do you think said this? Their cry was one of fear, panic, and bewilderment. They questioned whether God really cares. Have you ever been there? Have you ever been brought to the house of why? Why is this happening to me?

They assumed that God's apparent inactivity and notable silence was because of indifference or absence. They failed to know and see God in each detail.

God is . . .

- Your shepherd
- Your intercessor
- Your advocate
- Your righteousness
- Your wisdom
- Your justification
- Your sanctification
- Your glorification

What do you need that you do not already have in Him?

“The panic stricken disciples woke Him with a cry of reproach at His apparent indifference to their situation.” (BKC, 122). Their cry was one of fear, panic, and bewilderment. They questioned whether or not God really cared. Have you ever been there? Have you ever been brought to the place where you wondered if God really cared?

Have you ever seen the blackness of doubt? Have you ever tasted the emptiness of unbelief?

II. The response of our Lord to the storms.

I use the plural storms because there were two storms present. One was in the weather and the other in the hearts of His disciples.

A. His response to the weather.

1. He slept!

We would be amiss if we failed to remember the other “prophet” who slept in a boat in the midst of an intense storm. “Jonah’s sought to silence God’s displeasure by sleeping, Jesus sought to celebrate God’s control by resting.”

Though asleep, He is nature’s Lord. How could He sleep in the midst of the storm? He believed in God!

2. He stopped the storm.

“He that made the seas, can make them *quiet*.” (Matthew Henry’s Commentary on Mark 4)

He “muzzled” it. As a wild dog muzzled, it could no longer bite them.

“The sudden hushing of the wind would not at once have calmed the sea, whose commotion would have settled only after a considerable time. But the word of command was given to both elements at once.”

<http://www.ccel.org/ccel/jamieson/jfb.xi.ii.v.html>

Before we continue with this text, we need to note the immediate context provided by Mark 5:1 and following. As soon as they leave the boat, an aggressive demoniac meets them. I have to believe their hearts were still racing and faint from the storm and now they are immediately met by another “storm.” What do you think their initial response might have been (i.e. flight!)? I am sure that many thoughts were running through their minds. In addition, I would presume the predominate thought would be one of panic!

B. His response to the disciples (v.40).

1. He calmed their fears by stopping the storm (v.39)
2. He questioned their faith (v.40)

“When we know not what to do, our eye must be to him (2 Chron. 20:12); we may be at our wits' end, but not at our faith's end, while we have such a Savior to go to.” (Matthew Henry's Commentary)

Nothing could happen unless God allowed it. Friend, the vessel that carries Jesus can never perish (2 Cor. 4:7-11, “we have this treasure in earthen vessels). God will always provide a way of escape (1 Cor. 10:13). You will have one of two responses to life's trials: FEAR or FAITH.

III. The response of the disciples to the Lord of Glory (v. 41).

Consider the contrast between the disciples in 4:41 and that of the demons in 5:6 and 7.

“What is this? Israel has all along been singing of JEHOVAH, 'Thou rulest the raging of the sea: when the waves thereof arise, Thou stillest them!' 'The Lord on high is mightier than the noise of many waters, yea, than the mighty waves of the sea!' (Ps 89:9; 93:4). But, lo, in this very boat of ours is One of our own flesh and blood, who with His word of command hath done the same! Exhausted with the fatigues of the day, He was but a moment ago in a deep sleep, undisturbed by the howling tempest, and we had to waken Him with the cry of our terror; but rising at our call, His majesty was felt by the raging elements, for they were instantly hushed—'WHAT MANNER OF MAN IS THIS?'”  
<http://www.ccel.org/ccel/jamieson/jfb.xi.ii.v.html>

ILLUSTRATION:

My father's death as an unsaved 14 year old / no faith = fear  
 Getting hit by lightening, August 27, 1996 / faith = no fear

APPLICATION (Making it Personal, What's the NEXT STEP, Making it real practical)

First, a question.

How big is your fear? How big is your God?

Second, an observation.

Difficulties are but opportunities for Him to display His power.

Third, let me leave you with four action steps.

1. Learn to know who God is in a practical, relational manner. This will only happen by spending time with Him.
2. Learn to see your circumstances through God's eyes and not yours. If you live by sight, you will struggle. You must learn to live by faith.
3. Right now acknowledge God in your storm.
4. Learn the promises of God and believe that nothing will fail of all that He has promised.

Fourth, wrapping it up.

Perhaps your life is buffeted, filled and covered by life's trials. Right now, you need to see the control of God and the compassion of God. Jesus Christ our Lord is Master of all circumstances and sufficient for every emergency. Have faith in God and fear will leave.

Divorce, death, physical ailments, child rearing, job change, and unemployment, how deep is the water in your boat? Friend, God is in control and He really cares. Come to Him now and find His rest.

By the way, who said, "carest though not that we perish?" I would probably guess Peter! Did Peter learn? 1 Peter 5:7 – "casting all your care upon Him, for He cares for you." God is in control and God cares for you.