

Jesus Calms a Storm Mark 4:35-41

Many have been left a little unhinged at this virus. We have even let our government do things we normally would never have allowed. And even Christians have acted as if they were helpless in a helpless situation. I am here this morning to tell you, that even if we are helpless to do anything, we have a God who is not helpless during a natural crisis.

In the story that Stefan read this morning, Jesus had been teaching to great multitudes. He even had to get into a boat so as not to be crushed by the people and the people sat on the shore to hear his teaching. Even before our story, Jesus hardly had time to eat because of the crowds. The last parable he taught had been on the Kingdom of God being like a Mustard seed that when it grows up it will be the biggest plant in the garden.

It was after a series of lessons taught as parables, that in **verse 35** Jesus said to his disciples, “***Let us go across to the other side.***” He was speaking of the Sea of Galilee, where he had to get into one of his disciples’ boat to preach to the people on shore. Now across the sea was the country of Gerasenes where the demon possessed man was living in the tombs after the townspeople had not been able to contain him with chains.

Verse 35 lets us know that Jesus had been teaching all day and it was now evening! His request was so sudden that according to **verse 36**, the disciples, “***took him...just as he was.***” They had no time to get fresh clothes or food or nothing, just as he was. It also appears that other disciple had more boats, because the verse also says, “***other boats were with him.***” What I am trying to say is that this trip was unexpected and no special preparations had been taken. Jesus out of the blue and at the end of the day asked the disciples to take him across the Galilean Sea. Normally, that would have been roughly a two-hour trip – but this was not to be a normal trip.

For in **verse 37** we read, “***a great windstorm arose***”. This was no ordinary storm, no rain or lightening – it was a windstorm. The Greek word for great – “***me-gas***” – means large, as great in size, and it means much as in quantity, plus it also has the connotation of strange or astonishing, even surprising. This was an unexpected mighty windstorm that caught the disciples, some of whom were Galilean

fisherman who were used to the storms of this sea, totally by surprise. These were to bring them into perspective, hurricane type winds – more than would be the normal case for these fishermen. The Greek word “*tailaps*” means a whirlwind or hurricane strength gusts of wind, not just one gust but a continuous blowing.

The Bible tells us, “*the waves were breaking into the boat, so that the boat was already filling.*” Waves, the Greek word “*Kymata*”, were filling the boat with water. These are monster waves, a really rough sea. Matthew’s account says the boat was being swamped. The boat was being tossed “*to and fro*” in the extremely rough waters.

Our text then says that the waves “*were breaking into the boat.*” The Greek word “*epeballen*” can have the meaning of breaking and entering, as in our penal codes. Entering without permission in a violent way. It has the thought of smashing and battering this small fishing boat. Even the trained fishermen that made up the crew thought they were lost. The Greek lets us know that these waves were constantly beating the boat and swamping it.

And where was Jesus? He was onboard – but he was sleeping in the rear of the boat on a cushion. Fairly recently they found a first century fishing boat, probably much like the one Jesus was using, and it had a rear compartment with walls and a roof. If this was like the one Jesus was using, it would explain why he hadn’t woken up from all the water being splashed on board. But let us remember, Jesus has been extremely busy. He has been teaching, the people have been following him everywhere – they can’t get enough of his teaching and healing. At one point he was having a hard time finding even a time to eat. He had taught all day, and I can imagine just how exhausted He was – Afterall, he is a real man, and he does get tired!

And the disciples, were they afraid? Yes, they were afraid. They had done everything they could, as experienced fisherman, they had pulled in the sails, securing the boat, they were bailing out the water, and now they were probably clinging to the side of the boat. Being frightened and with no other recourse – they wake Jesus. **Verse 38** tells us “*they woke him and said to him*”. The thought here is they laid hands on him and shook him awake, maybe even yanking him up. Once again, the Greek points to the fact that Jesus was so tired that they had trouble waking Him up. Their fright was that strong. Here is what they said to Him, “*Teacher, do you not care that we are perishing?*” Have you ever felt that

way? Do you feel that way now? Literally they said, “*Is there no care in you?*” The thought is, aren’t you paying attention, don’t you know what is going on? How can you sleep at such a time? As if Jesus could care less what is happening or in particular, what is happening to them – His disciples.

There fear was so great they thought they were perishing. The Greek word is “*apollymi*,” that is – were finished, coming to an end, destroyed. There can also be the connotation of being abandon. In essence what they are saying, here we are perishing, as in the end of life, and you have abandoned us. So, “*Don’t you care what is happening to us as we perish? Have you abandoned us?*”

When Jesus awoke from his much needed rest, the first thing He did was give his full attention to his disciples. Matthew lets us know the first thing Jesus did was to ask the disciples. In **Mt. 8:26** he said, “*Why are you so afraid, O you of little faith?*” Jesus fully understood their problem – lack of faith in Him and who He was. Had they not been with Him all this time? Had they not personally seen the miracles, God’s working through His Son. {**Brethren, we are in a perilous time. But have we forgotten the One we follow? Like the disciples in the boat that day, do we have a lack of faith?**}

The next think Jesus did, was that he rebuked the wind. Jesus understood that the waves were not the real problem, they were a symptom of the main problem – the wind. The wind is an unseen enemy, but the waves could be seen. Instead of worrying about cause, which is often unseen, they and often we too, worry about the symptoms – but Jesus, and now we too, can know that the problem is not the Coronavirus, that is a mere symptom, we need to be looking for the unseen cause of our woes. But back the main thought, Jesus rebuked the wind – that word rebuke is the Greek word, “*Epitimaō*,” which means, a verbal assault or judgment against someone or something. So, Jesus *reproached* (or *chastened*) the wind for the trouble it was causing and it stopped. When I see this story, I am reminded of **James 4:6-8**, “*But he gives more grace. Therefore, it says, God opposes the proud, but gives grace to the humble. Submit yourselves therefore to God. Resist the devil, and he will flee from you. Draw near to God, and he will draw near to you. Cleanse your hands, you sinners, and purify your hearts, you double-minded.*” If we but resist the Devil and draw near to God, not doubting, but coming to the Lord in purity of heart, God will calm the storm that we are presently going through. He is with us, as He promised, “*And behold, I am with you always, to the end of the age.*”

Because immediately after He rebuked the wind, He turned to the sea, and said, “**Peace! Be still!**” The Greek “*siapao*” can have the meaning “*Hush now, be still.*” As if He was speaking to a small child.

And what happens, not only has the wind ceased, but the sea calmed immediately, no wave action after the fact. The sea was glass still! The God who created the world and who once rebuke the sea at creation as he made land, had once again given a command and the sea obeyed. This is the same God who parted the Red Sea for the people of Israel, this is the same God who called forth the water during the flood. It was no hard thing for Jesus to calm the sea once the core problem had been addressed. Often, we Christians only see the symptoms, and ignore the core problem behind those symptoms, because we cannot see them. We wish the problems, that is the symptoms gone, But God knows that the core problem is still there. Satan wants us to fight the symptoms, he wants us to waste our energy and tire ourselves out on the symptoms. Because when we are to tired to continue the fight against the symptoms, the core problem has remained.

All, that were on that boat knew what happened. This was no coincidence, the Lord had commanded nature, and it obeyed the voice of the Creator. This brother, was a miracle. The same can happen to the unannounced storms in our lives. All our efforts being ineffective can make us fearful. But what happens after the fear is gone and the seas are once again calm?

How did the disciples feel? **Verse 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?’*” It is no wonder they were in awe and fear, they understood they were in the presence of God Himself, the Creator of the universe.

Just as the disciples that evening fell into panic when an unexpected windstorm almost destroyed them. They remembered who was in the boat with them. Through that whole incident, Jesus remained calm. *He had a mission and nothing was going to deter him from that mission.* This whole trip to cross the sea was for a purpose, once over on the other side he healed accord to **Matthew 8:28**, two men who were demon possessed. What was the result of that account? The Two men went throughout Decapolis, declaring the mighty works of God through Jesus Christ (**Mark 5:20**). Afterward, Jesus did not remain in that land (by the way, this was a gentile land) he returned back to Capernaum to continue His work in that

city – with the healing of a woman who had a problem with discharge of blood, and brought back to life the daughter of Jairus, one of the rulers of the synagogue. He only had a small break in his ministry to rest and Satan tried to throw a wrench into that rest.

We too brethren, will come through the storms of life, so that we might also *declare the marvelous works of God in our lives*. The Apostle Peter explains to us why God has saved us from this evil world, “*that you may proclaim the excellencies of him who called you out of darkness into his marvelous light*” (**1 Peter 1:9**). Like Jesus we have a mission, and as long as we are on that mission, we can have the peace, the calm, of Jesus in our lives. We need to stop majoring in the minors and get the heart of the problem. We live in a sin filled world and should not be surprised by the storms, but let us not get caught up in battling the symptoms, (like the waves filling the boat with water), let us get back into the true fight, preaching the gospel of Jesus Christ. We are never going to get rid of the symptoms of sin, unless we get the real issue solved, those lost in sin need to hear the gospel of Jesus Christ. They need the teaching of the Lord Jesus, and when people give their lives to Him will we have a chance to end the symptoms. Forcing people to obey God never works – it takes winning their hearts to God. Only God can bring the peace, only God can change people’s hearts and attitudes, but that means we need to get busy preaching the gospel and spreading the marvelous acts of God to an unbelieving world.

God in the Coronavirus has given us a unique opportunity to teach the gospel through internet to all who will listen. So, what am I calling you to do this morning?

Today, our faith can grow as we study God’s word. We can ask for more faith and seek to be more like Him by imitating his life and actions to the best of our God given abilities. And our little faith will grow just as God promised us in the parables of Jesus. Brethren, we live by faith and not by sight. **Hebrews 12:2** puts it best, “*...looking to Jesus, the founder and perfecter of our faith...*” Fix your eyes on Him and walk holy! Remember always, The One who could silence the winds and calm the waves, is still with us!