

The Place of Change

The Power of Jesus to Change Us

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Text: Mark 4:35-41, 2 Corinthians 5:17

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Series: Mark (Introducing Jesus)

Introduction: Open your Bible to Mark 4:35-41. *Have you ever heard of the “Perfect Storm”?* It’s a true story.

1. In October of 1991 – a storm stronger than any in recorded history, hit the coast of Massachusetts. It has become known as the "Perfect Storm" inspiring both a book and a film with the same title. It was called the "Perfect Storm" because it was three storms combined into one- it was a cyclone, a hurricane, and a tropical storm all converging on one place.
2. Sebastian Junger in his book *The Perfect Storm* wrote: “A mature hurricane is by far the most powerful event on Earth... A typical hurricane encompasses a million cubic miles of atmosphere and could provide all the electric power needed by the United States for three or four years”.¹
3. All of us have a healthy fear of storms and nature’s disasters.² But often what hits even closer to home are the devastating storms of life. These storms often make us think God doesn’t care. It’s quite the contrary. Storms are God’s pressure cookers that bring us to grown up faith faster.

For the next three weeks, we are going to talk about *HOW* Christ changes us. Today we are going to talk about the *PLACE* of change. God sends storms to rid us of our *pride* – to show us how *small* we really are – to make us more *dependent* on Him alone. In storms we see ourselves as we really are. It’s a *scary* place. It’s a place of helplessness. Completely *unable* to help ourselves.

In Mark 4, Jesus demonstrates His *divine power* over nature. He reveals Himself to be the *Supreme God* of the Genesis account. When the Bible says, “in the beginning God”, it was referring to Jesus Christ. The winds and the sea obey Him! *He’s the only one that can help you*. But in order to see that, we often, like the disciples, need to be brought to a *terrifying* place.

Look at **Mark 4:35-40**, “And the same day, when the even was come, he saith unto them, Let us pass over unto the other side. 36 And when they had sent away the multitude, they took him even as he was in the ship. And there were also with him other little ships. 37 And there arose a great storm of wind, and the waves beat into the ship, so that it was now full. 38 And he was in the hinder part of the ship, asleep on a pillow: and they awake him, and say unto him, Master, carest thou not that we perish? 39 And he arose, and rebuked the wind, and said unto the sea,

¹ Sebastian Junger. *The Perfect Storm* (New York: HarperCollins, 1999), 102.

² We think of the unbridled power of storms. The Earthquake of Haiti that took the lives of 250,000. The Tsunami of Indonesia where 130,000 were killed December 26, 2004.

Peace, be still. And the wind ceased, and there was a great calm. 40 And he said unto them, Why are ye so fearful? how is it that ye have no faith? 41 And they feared exceedingly, and said one to another, What manner of man is this, that *even the wind and the sea obey him?*”

[Prayer for Guidance]

When storms come, do you trust God, or do you want the storm to pass? We need to appreciate the storms because God intends them to be a **PLACE** OF CHANGE. None of us likes the trials and storms and difficulties. But be of good cheer. God’s purpose is to help you see your weakness and His power. We are far too self-confident. The storms of life often reveal how weak our faith is. *Where is your faith during the storms of life?*

Proposition: I want to encourage you when you are in a storm that **you are in a good place to see Christ bring change.**

Questions

This morning we are going to begin by asking some questions about these storms that bring change to us:

1. What is the place of change?
2. Where is the place of change?
3. When do storms come?
4. Why must we have the storms?
5. Who bring the storms?

Let’s get started...

I. **WHAT** is the place of change? Verse 37, “**And there arose a great storm of wind, and the waves beat into the ship, so that it was now full.**”

- A. **The place of change is a storm, a crisis, a cross, a difficulty, a trial.** It is the place you feel helpless. It is often a place of confusion and frustration, and waiting on God. It is that corner you get into and you know only God can help you.
- B. **The storms of life are allowed by God to push you toward change.** God is always in full control of the universe. He works everything out according to His plan. Look at verse 36, “**And the same day, when the even was come, he saith unto them, Let us pass over unto the other side.**” Jesus knew what would happen. Jesus Christ is the God of nature, and it was and is His purpose to test the faith of His children and to bring us a crisis of change in our lives.

Application: When storms come, you need to realize it is God’s good hand in your life pushing your toward change. He is building your faith. Jesus brought the disciples through many storms, so you cannot imagine that you will be exempt. Consider this...

1. **The disciples had to leave their professions.** That was a storm that required faith. Matthew had to leave his money. The fishermen had to leave their family businesses. Probably there was lots of criticism. Some of you have had to totally rearrange your life, including your job situation, because of your faith in Christ.

2. **The disciples received major opposition from their church.** The church leaders (the Pharisees) were calling their leader (Jesus) a servant of Satan. That was a severe storm for them. Some of you have had to leave the church of your childhood and of your parents because it did not preach the Gospel. You've been criticized because you are going against the beliefs of your family and the church you were raised in. It's nothing different than the disciples faced. So the disciples had storms behind them, and there would be storms in front of them.
3. **Jesus knew that there was a storm waiting for them once they sailed across the Sea of Galilee.** For the disciples this was a literal storm. They had already faced many tests already. Following Jesus Christ means facing lots of storms in life. It meant facing lots of storms for the disciples. There were little storms and big storms.
4. **In chapter 5, the disciples meet a Gentile man possessed by a legion of demons.** And the disciples would be in Gentile, pig-eating country. Going into another culture is a storm. Dealing with people of different cultures can be a storm—trying to adjust—trying to understand—trying to deal with your prejudices. They would be met by a mad man, chained in a graveyard who would snap chains by the power of the devil. And they would come face to face with evil as they had never known it. That's a storm.
5. **If you read through the entire Gospel, you'll see storm after storm after storm, including the crucifixion.** Of course throughout there were many, many miracles as well as the greatest miracle, the Resurrection. But there were many storms everywhere. You know that is a lot of what life is.

C. **We can waste our energy in life by praying, "Don't let there be another storm".** Saints, there will be another storm. Following Jesus means we are entering into many storms. Jesus has said, "In the world ye shall have tribulation: but be of good cheer; I have overcome the world" (John 16:33). The disciples were not exempt. As a follower of Jesus you need to expect many storms.

Application: Instead of worry, the next crisis that comes into your life, I want you to pause, and thank God for it. Paul tells us in **1 Thessalonians 5:18**, "In every thing give thanks: for this is the will of God in Christ Jesus concerning you." Even in trials you need to have a thankful spirit. "Count it all joy when ye fall into divers temptations" (James 1:2). "Rejoice in the Lord always: and again I say, Rejoice" (Philippians 4:4). This is the will of God. **Philippians 4:6**, "Be careful for nothing; but in every thing by prayer and supplication with thanksgiving let your requests be made known unto God." You can rejoice because *God is going to change you through this storm.*

II. **WHERE** is this place of change?

Look at **Mark 4:35** "And the same day, when the even was come, he saith unto them, Let us pass over unto the other side. 36 And when they had sent away the multitude, they took him even as he was in the ship. And there were also with him other little ships. 37 And there

arose a great storm of wind...” Jesus had been teaching from a boat to the multitudes on the shore and mountainside of the Sea of Galilee. It says they “**took him even as He was in the ship**”. They didn’t get back on land to get supplies from Peter’s house there in Capernaum. They took the Lord as He was.

A. **For the disciples, it was a very familiar place—on the Sea of Galilee.** Peter was right at home, back on his beloved lake. He had gone to this lake hundreds of times as a fisherman. And he was used to going home after a hard day and having his wife and maybe his little children wrap their arms around his neck. Yet Peter was no longer fishing. On this day, this familiar place that Peter knew so well would become his *deathtrap*.

B. **The peaceful places in life are often where the storms play out.** You expect peace and calm with your car, and BOOM, the transmission goes. You get that fixed and the brakes go. You take a new job, and its not what you expected. You get married, and its not what you expected. You have kids and its not what you expected. I met someone who said his marriage was going better than ever, and suddenly his wife wants a divorce. You pour your love into your children, and they disappoint you. You may you’re your job. You have a serious turn for the worse with your health. Suddenly life is very confusing. Why? Because what we expect to be calm is turned upside down.

We often pray for these things to go away! This dear saint is the place of change. This is where we need to trust God.

C. **As a follower of Jesus you need to expect many storms to occur in all of life**—in relationships, in your finances, at work, at home, with you health, even in your walk with God. We are used to a very calm sea in life, but all the sudden everything is turned upside down. Life is fine and peaceful, and then, a death, a job loss, a car repair, a broken relationship, a serious illness, a friend betrays you. He is using these storms to reveal the hard places in your heart. He wants you to see your own lack of faith. Let’s ask another question.

III. **WHEN** does this storm, this place of change, take place?

A. **The storms of life are often very sudden and unexpected.** Let’s read verses 36-37, “**And when they had sent away the multitude, they took him even as he was in the ship. And there were also with him other little ships. 37 And there arose a great storm of wind, and the waves beat into the ship, so that it was now full.**”

1. **The disciples weren’t expecting this place of safety to suddenly turn into a place of fear.** It was late in the evening. The Lord had a long day. Everyone was tired. They wanted *rest*. They crossed the Sea of Galilee in order to find rest. It seemed like a safe place to rest and get refreshed.
2. **The storms of life are intentional pop quizzes from God.** Out of nowhere even today, a storm can overtake the Sea of Galilee with waves over 20 feet high. It could be a beautiful day, but the storms on Galilee were SUDDEN. Storms of life come at us when we least expect them. They are there to test and grow our faith.

They are there to show us the power of Jesus Christ to change a situation. We need to trust in Him. But we cannot predict when we will be tested.

Fire Truck Illustration: I read the story of a man in Ohio whose oil well caught on fire. He sent out an all-points bulletin for help even offering a \$30,000 reward to whoever could put out the fire. Fire departments from all over came to help. They came with all their modern equipment, but not one truck was able to get closer than 200 yards of the blaze. Finally one of the Volunteer Fire Department appeared on the scene. They came up with their old rickety beat up old fire truck equipped with a single ladder, a few buckets of sand and water, along with a few blankets. When they reached the point that the others had stopped, surprisingly they kept right on until they were in the thick of the blaze. The men jumped out, poured their buckets of sand and water on the fire and beat out the fire with their blankets. The oilman was so impressed with what they had done that he presented the fire department with a \$30,000 check on the spot. He then asked, "What are you men going to do with the money?" The driver, standing there shaking like a leaf, said: "The first thing we are going to do is get the brakes fixed on our truck."

Application: We often wish we could put breaks on our trials, don't we? The storms of life are often unannounced. They take us off guard, and often they even seem unfair. Why this? Why now? Why here? Where are you God?

3. **God asks us to have a response of faith to the sudden storms of life.** I want encourage you when you are in a storm that you are in a good place to see Christ bring change.

Application: Do you truly trust God that all your trials are directed by Him to bring you to Christlikeness? God is not cruel. Let's consider this. We often think God is cruel and that He has left us alone.

- B. **The storms of life seem to occur when God is on vacation.** Look at verse 38, "Verse 38, "And he was in the hinder part of the ship, asleep on a pillow". May I remind you that God is *never* on vacation? It seems like He is in this passage. Can I just read Psalm 121 to you?

Psalm 121:1-8, "I will lift up mine eyes unto the hills, from whence cometh my help. 2 My help cometh from the LORD, which made heaven and earth. 3 He will not suffer thy foot to be moved: he that keepeth thee will not slumber. 4 Behold, he that keepeth Israel shall neither slumber nor sleep. 5 The LORD is thy keeper: the LORD is thy shade upon thy right hand. 6 The sun shall not smite thee by day, nor the moon by night. 7 The LORD shall preserve thee from all evil: he shall preserve thy soul. 8 The LORD shall preserve thy going out and thy coming in from this time forth, and even for evermore."

1. **We often feel that God is disengaged and uninterested when we are going through a storm.** We see first here that Jesus is sleeping on a pillow during the storm. Verse 38, "And he was in the hinder part of the ship, asleep on a pillow: and they awake him, and say unto him, Master, carest thou not that we perish?" The disciples knew that Jesus was there. They could see Him. The

problem with storms is not whether or not we believe that God is aware and present in our situation.

2. **Our greatest fear is that God does not care.** We have the same question that the disciples have. “Master carest thou not that we perish?” (verse 38). In the storms of life, our greatest question is not about our problem, it’s really about God. “God if you’re in charge, how could you let this happen?” “Don’t you care?” That’s the place many here find themselves in. It is a storm. It is a place of trial.
3. **Sadly, our attitude is “if God doesn’t stop the storm, then He must not care”.** “If He cared, He’d get up and stop the storm”. We must throw out the theory that if Jesus stops the storm He really cares, and if He doesn’t stop the storm, He doesn’t care. So what is this? So why is Jesus sleeping on a pillow? It is a test. In this case it was a natural event that was typical of the Sea of Galilee. It came out of no where.
4. **We must affirm on our knees that Jesus is aware and Jesus cares and He wants our faith to grow.** Do you not believe that Jesus controls all things? Rest in Him! Is Jesus not all powerful? Trust Him to work out His perfect will in your life. Are you surrendered to Jesus? Are you at rest in His plan in the middle of the storm?

Main Lesson: Do you believe that God is just as much in control as when He is seemingly asleep as when He is obviously awake? Do you trust God that He loves and cares for you and directs your life even when He seems to be inactive?

5. **Do you believe God is in control when you are waiting?** At any moment God could remove the trial. Christ is the God of creation and nature, and He can say “Peace Be Still”.
6. **God is not going to explain everything to us while we are here.** Amy Carmichael, the Irish missionary to India said, “Contentment is accepting the unexplained and trusting God with it”. Contentment is the ability to sleep on a pillow when there is no earthly reason you should sleep in a storm. When trouble comes we can’t sleep. How could Jesus sleep through the storm? He had perfect faith in His Heavenly Father.

IV. **WHY** are we in the place of the storm?

Look at **Mark 4:35-40**, “And the same day, when the even was come, he saith unto them, Let us pass over unto the other side. 36 And when they had sent away the multitude, they took him even as he was in the ship. And there were also with him other little ships. 37 And there arose a great storm of wind, and the waves beat into the ship, so that it was now full. 38 And he was in the hinder part of the ship, asleep on a pillow: and they awake him, and say unto him, Master, carest thou not that we perish? 39 And he arose, and rebuked the wind, and said unto the sea, Peace, be still. And the wind ceased, and there was a great calm. 40 And he said unto them, Why are ye so fearful? how is it that ye have no faith? 41 And

they feared exceedingly, and said one to another, What manner of man is this, that *even the wind and the sea obey him?*

A. God sends storms to **show us God is bigger than the storms**. Verse 39, “And he arose, and rebuked the wind, and said unto the sea, Peace, be still. And the wind ceased, and there was a great calm”. Imagine the waves are twenty feet high, and then the voice of the Son of God literally says, “Be quiet” “Peace Be Still!”

You don’t know what tomorrow holds. As long as there is breath there is hope.

B. God also sends storms to **reveal our own heart to us**—that we are not as strong in our faith as we thought. Jesus asks in **verse 40**, “Why are ye so fearful? how is it that ye have no faith?” Let me ask you, where is your faith? Do you trust God? They are asking Christ if He cares. He would soon lay His life down for them.

C. But God also sends storms **to strengthen our faith**. Verse 41, “And they feared exceedingly, and said one to another, What manner of man is this, that *even the wind and the sea obey him?*” Their faith in Christ was strengthened. They saw Him as almighty God. Jesus is the only one that can calm our souls. He wants to change us. He wants to build our trust in Him.

James tells us when trials come knocking at our door—storms of all kinds—we are to accept them as friends because this will grow our faith. *What we learn in one storm will help us in the next.*

Application: Instead of praying, “Don’t let me suffer. Remove this illness. Don’t let me go through another storm.” If we could only pray “Help my faith to grow in this trial.” “Strengthen my faith Lord!” Then what we learn in this storm is going to make us stronger for the next one.

V. Now we must ask, **WHO** brings us to the place of change? Who is this?

That’s exactly what the disciples asked. We read in **verse 41**, “And they feared exceedingly, and said one to another, What manner of man is this, that even the wind and the sea obey him?”

Who is this?

A. **It is GOD!** It is the God of Creation! Who do you have living in your life? It’s GOD Almighty! There is only One Being in the universe that “that even the wind and the sea obey him” (**verse 41**). It is the Master.

The Bible says that when He arose, He "rebuked the wind, and said unto the sea, 'Peace be still.' And the wind ceased, and there was a great calm." The words "peace be still" literally mean, "be muzzled." Jesus told the winds and waves to sit down and shut up! The winds and waves lay down at His command like whimpering puppies at His feet and there was a great calm.

Who is this?

B. It's the only one that can calm the storm. Verse 39, “And he arose, and rebuked the wind, and said unto the sea, Peace, be still. And the wind ceased, and there was a great calm.” Friends we may not be able to see Jesus physically in our storms, but He is present. He can stop the storm at any time.

Who is this?

C. It is the one who loves you and who lays down His life for the sheep. You need to trust! You are forgetting who's on board. He says “I will never leave you. I will never forsake you” (**Hebrews 13:5**).

Conclusion: On behalf of Jesus Christ I ask you—“Where is your faith?” Is Christ the center of your life? Do you trust Him? Do you walk with Him? Do you worship Him? Is He the vine and you the branches? Is He the Source of your strength and the joy of your life? Thank God for the storms that bring us to Him!

For the saved: Where is your faith? Do you trust Him in the trials? If you are not in the place of testing, you will be soon. It is not because Jesus doesn't love you. *Jesus cares if you perish.* He laid down His life for you. He wants you to trust Him.

For the lost: If you have never met Jesus Christ, cry out for Him and He will hear you and come to you. If you already know Him, know that He is with you now. In the center of the storm, His peace is clearly seen. Take His hand and ride out the storm with Him. Remember—the storm will end, but you must let Him decide how and when.

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