

“Calming the Storm”
Mark 4:35-41
(Preached at Trinity, July 7, 2010)

I’m supplying these notes for the benefit of busy pastors who may be engaged in bi-vocational work, feeling the pressure of preparing to preach twice on the Lord’s Day while trying to balance full-time secular work as well as caring for their families. While the notes of another man are no substitute for personal study, I pray that these may aid in the process of preparing to preach.

Disclaimer: These are the actual notes I bring with me to the pulpit, which I follow loosely. They are not designed for publication. While I try to make every effort to give proper credit to my sources from the pulpit, adequate citations will sometimes be absent from my notes. If anyone feels their intellectual material has been used without adequate citation, please contact me and I’ll make immediate correction giving credit.

1. This story is also found in Matthew 8:23-27 and Luke 8:22-25
 - a. We are told this took place the same day Jesus had taught the parables recorded earlier in the chapter.
 - b. We also we find there were several small ships which left together
 2. There arose a severe storm – In the Mark and Luke account the word λαίλαψ is used – it describes a whirlwind such as a tornado or a hurricane – It was a powerful storm. Mark further describes it as “fierce” which is from a word that means “great”
The disciples truly thought they were in great danger of losing their lives.
 3. This took place on the Sea of Galilee which is actually a large lake. It is 13 miles long and 7 1/2 miles wide. It is capable of violent storms.
 4. Jesus was asleep in the stern of the boat.
- I. First the obvious thing to notice is the humanity of Jesus
- A. He took upon Himself a true body
 - B. He experienced all of the frailties of humanity
 1. There were times when He was hungry
Matthew 21:18 – “Now in the morning, when He was returning to the city, He became hungry.”
 2. He knew what it meant to thirst
John 19:28 – “I thirst”
 3. He understood grief and sorrow
Isaiah 53 calls Him a man of sorrows
When Lazarus died the Bible tells us the “Jesus wept”
 4. He understood physical weariness
John 4:6 – “and Jacob's well was there. Jesus therefore, being wearied from His journey, was sitting thus by the well. It was about the sixth hour.”
 5. In this passage we find Him soundly sleeping in exhaustion
 - C. Both His humanity and deity are essential
 1. As our Prophet He was God, knowing the mind and will of God, yet as a man He was fitted to impart it to us – Emmanuel, “God with us”
(Not because of God’s inability to impart His will, but because of our inability to comprehend it – it was God’s condescension
 2. As our Priest He could have shed no blood if He were not a man, yet unless He was God it would have had no value
 3. As our King, had He not been a man, He would have been of a different nature, and so not a suitable head for us – yet, if He were not God He could neither rule or defend the church

- D. We also see the peace of spirit in Christ
1. While others were in fear and anguish, Jesus was sleeping soundly
 2. Have you ever lost sleep over a difficulty? Do you ever worry, fret
 3. Jesus was God ruling all of creation
Colossians 1:16-17 – “For by Him all things were created, *both* in the heavens and on earth, visible and invisible, whether thrones or dominions or rulers or authorities-- all things have been created through Him and for Him. ¹⁷ He is before all things, and in Him all things hold together.”
 4. Jesus was also man. As a man He had full confidence in His Father and in His Father’s purpose.
 Even before going to the cross, while in great anguish of spirit He proclaimed, **Luke 22:42** - “Saying, Father, if thou be willing, remove this cup from me: nevertheless not my will, but thine, be done.”

II. Next, we see the desperation of the disciples

- A. As the storm increased in fury the disciples were in great fear
1. Remember, at least some of them were experienced seamen
 2. They had probably been through many storms and yet this storm had intensity not often seen.
 3. It is possible that this storm was the craft of Satan
 - a. From the beginning Satan had tried to destroy Christ
 We can see it in the plot of Herod to kill Christ as a child
 We can see it the wilderness temptation
 We can see it as even His own disciples discouraged Him
Mark 8:33 – “But turning around and seeing His disciples, He rebuked Peter, and said, “Get behind Me, Satan; for you are not setting your mind on God's interests, but man's.”
 Even in His torment in the Garden of Gethsemane
 - b. We can see in Job Satan’s power over the earthly realm
Job 1:18-19 - "Your sons and your daughters were eating and drinking wine in their oldest brother's house, ¹⁹ and behold, a great wind came from across the wilderness and struck the four corners of the house, and it fell on the young people and they died, and I alone have escaped to tell you."
- B. The disciples had begun to see Jesus as more than a carpenter having witnessed His miracles
1. On one hand they may have been agitated that Jesus would be sleeping at such a time as this.
 2. On the other hand perhaps He might be able to do something, although they had doubts that He could do anything against such a storm.
 3. Their cry was with great fear – fear is sin. It is a mistrust of God.
 4. By impugning Christ’s care for them their fear led them into deeper sin
Mark 4:38 – “Teacher, do You not care that we are perishing?”
- C. One might expect that having Jesus with them the waters would be smooth
1. Having Christ does not keep us from the storms
 2. Having Christ sees us through the storms which demands that we trust Him

III. Jesus' response

A. Each Gospel also records a different aspect of Jesus' response

Matthew 8:26 – “And He said to them, “Why are you timid, you men of little faith?”

Luke 8:25 – “And he said to them, Where is your faith?”

Mark 4:40 – “And He said to them, “Why are you so timid? How is it that you have no faith?”

1. We find the unity of the authors reporting the same event, yet, we find each reporting it from their own perspective
2. It stresses the importance of reading all of the accounts to get the whole picture
3. Matthew states that their faith was small
4. Mark and Luke imply that their faith was almost nonexistent
 - a. This was the cause of their fears
To be afraid, to worry is to not trust Christ
 - b. Though their faith was little, they still fled to Christ
This the characteristic of genuine faith

B. With great power Jesus He rebukes the wind bringing it into absolute submission The Sovereign of the universe can do what He pleases

1. It was done easily – with a word - “Hush, be still.”
2. Again, it is possible that the storm was caused by Satan in an effort to destroy Christ which would explain why Christ rebuked the storm.
3. Christ has dominion over the works of Satan

C. The effectual nature of His command – “there was a great calm”

1. Picture the scene – great wind, deafening noise, terrible rocking of the boat – And then there was absolute quiet
2. The word for “perfectly” is the same word translated “fierce” in **Verse 37**
Just as the storm was great now the peace and calm is equally great
3. It was a sudden calm. Usually storms slowly subside. By the power of Christ the storm suddenly ceased and there was perfect quietness. As Jesus brings us calm it is truly the peace that is beyond comprehension.
Philippians 4:6-7 – “Be anxious for nothing, but in everything by prayer and supplication with thanksgiving let your requests be made known to God. ⁷ And the peace of God, which surpasses all comprehension, will guard your hearts and your minds in Christ Jesus.”

- IV. We must not overlook the spiritual picture this provides
- A. Those who come to Christ must be in desperation
 - 1. They must be at the end of themselves.
 - 2. Matthew's Gospel is particularly stirring
Matthew 8:25 - "Save *us*, Lord; we are perishing!"
Lord, If you do not help me I perish
 - 3. There was great fervency in their plea. Men are not saved by half-hearted approaches to Christ
 - B. They went straight to Christ
 - 1. He is the only source of our redemption
Acts 4:12 – "And there is salvation in no one else; for there is no other name under heaven that has been given among men by which we must be saved."
 - 2. Jesus was asleep but they didn't hesitate to wake Him
 - C. They came to Him in His supremacy
 - 1. The KJV translates it "Master"
Matthew's Gospel uses the word, Lord - κύριος
Luke account uses the word ἐπιστάτης – Master, Superintendent
 - 2. All who come to Christ must receive Him as Supreme Master and Lord
 - D. Saving faith may be little faith – we may still be full of doubts and fears yet throw ourselves at the mercy of Christ.
 - 1. Full assurance doesn't come all at once
 - 2. A lack of assurance is caused by little faith
We'll see more of this next time.
 - E. Finally, it resulted in amazement. They were deeply impressed by the power and might of Christ. Those who have witnessed the mighty power of Christ in transforming lives are amazed.

Conclusion:

- 1. We will face many storms in this life. Many of them will be horrible tempests. Jesus is always with us and is powerful to defend us.
- 2. Christianity does not free us from the storms, yet Christ is always with us. Look to Him. Be not faithless. Do not doubt His ability to save you.