

The Wind and the Sea Obey the Lord

Mark 4:35-41

Mark 4:35-42 – *“On the same day, when evening had come, He said to them, “Let us cross over to the other side.”* ³⁶ *Now when they had left the multitude, they took Him along in the boat as He was. And other little boats were also with Him.* ³⁷ *And a great windstorm arose, and the waves beat into the boat, so that it was already filling.* ³⁸ *But He was in the stern, asleep on a pillow. And they awoke Him and said to Him, “Teacher, do You not care that we are perishing?”* ³⁹ *Then He arose and rebuked the wind, and said to the sea, “Peace, be still!” And the wind ceased and there was a great calm.* ⁴⁰ *But He said to them, “Why are you so fearful? How is it that you have no faith?”* ⁴¹ *And they feared exceedingly, and said to one another, “Who can this be, that even the wind and the sea obey Him!”*

Background Notes

The Lord and His disciples were sailing from a spot on the western side of the Sea of Galilee to the southeastern side, a distance of about ten miles. Verse 36 says, *“they took Him along in the boat as He was.”* What does *“as He was”* mean? The Lord had been using the boat as His platform for teaching the crowds that were gathered along the shore (v1). So it appears that they started right out for the other side, without going ashore for a meal or a rest.

Windstorms can arise quite suddenly on the Sea of Galilee. The wind funnels between the high hills around the Sea of Galilee, and the cool air over the Mediterranean Sea to the west, and the hot air over the desert to the east interact to create sudden and fierce windstorms. This is particularly true in the late afternoon or evening, when this event took place (v1), or in the fall season. So somewhere in the middle of the lake the wind began to pick up – a lot! - and the waves began to break over the boat and fill it with water!

Verse 36 says there were other boats. What happened to them? Most likely these folks had come by boat to listen to the Lord teach on the western shore, and when Jesus and the disciples left by boat, these people decided to follow. But when the wind began to pick up the smaller boats probably turned back to safety on the western shore - so don't get the idea that the other boats fell apart and the people drowned!

The Lord and His disciples continued across the Sea of Galilee, but the wind became so strong that they were in danger of sinking, and the disciples panicked. The Lord didn't panic, however – he was peacefully sleeping in the stern of the boat, using a boat cushion as a pillow (v38). In their anxiety and fear, the disciples woke up the Lord and rudely accused Him: *“Teacher, don't you care about the situation? We're going to drown! We're perishing!”*

When the Lord awakened, he didn't join the ranks of the fearful, or wonder, "What are we going to do?" No, He got up and calmly rebuked the wind: **"Peace! Be still."** And Nature obeyed! Then the Lord rebuked the disciples - not for waking Him up, but for being afraid, and for their lack of faith and trust in Him.

Doctrinal Points

1. The Lord Jesus Christ is 100% God and 100% man.

Scripture teaches this profound truth, and this truth is exemplified in this miracle. The Lord Jesus is not 50% God, 50% man, or 75% God, 25% man, or 25% God and 75% man. No, He's fully God and fully Man...100% God and 100% man. The Lord Jesus was not God taking on what **appeared** to be a human body. And Jesus was not just a human with a divine spirit. No, **He was - and is - fully God and fully man—100% God, 100% man.**

Some events in Scripture strongly bring out His full deity - His detailed knowledge of His coming betrayal and death is certainly evidence of His full deity. Some events in Scripture strongly bring out His full humanity - like His prayer in the Garden of Gethsemane: "Father, if it is possible, let this cup pass from me; nevertheless, not my will but Yours be done." In this event we see both His deity and humanity. Where do we see His deity? He calmed the storm! He simply spoke a couple of words - and nature obeyed! And by the way, it's very interesting to note the verbs that the Lord used. "Peace. Be still" are the same verbs that the Lord used in Mark 1:25, when He cast the demons out of the man. These specific words *may* indicate that demonic forces were possibly behind this storm.

If we had been there, we probably would have had the same reaction as the disciples: *"Who can this be, that even the wind and the sea obey him?"* At that point the disciples did not yet fully comprehend the Lord's deity. Yes, they had seen the Lord heal the sick. They had experienced the miraculous catch of fish (Luke 5) and the raising of the widow of Nain's son (Luke 7). But this!?! He was in **complete control** of the elements! **He's fully God.**

Where do we see the Lord's full humanity in this passage? He slept. As a man, the Lord Jesus needed to eat and sleep, just as we do. The Lord had a human nature – but not a sinful human nature. **He's fully man.** The Lord Jesus Christ was 100% God and 100% man.

2. Jesus Christ's power over nature guarantees the promise of a disaster-free New Heavens and New Earth.

The Bible promises that the groaning of this present creation is going to come to an end. It's just a matter of time. Check it out in Romans 8:21-22. A new heavens and a new earth are coming. That is specifically promised in 2 Peter 3:13: *"Nevertheless we, according to His promise, look for new heavens and a new earth in which righteousness dwells."* In this new heavens and new earth there will be no more **disease**, no more **demonic** power, no more natural **disaster**, no more **death**.

In this last section of Mark 4 (as well as the miracles that take place in Mark 5) we're given a glimpse of what it will be like when the Lord returns and the new heavens and the new earth are fully brought in. At the end of Mark 4, we see His power over disaster. In Mark 5 we'll see the Lord's power over the demonic realm, over disease, and over death. (Did you get those four "D"s - "Demons, Disease, Death and Disaster"?)

The Lord Jesus Christ's complete power over Nature and natural disaster is a guarantee of the promise of a disaster-free New Heavens and New Earth. The fact that the Lord can speak a couple of words and instantly calm the wind and waves proves that nature is totally under His control. Storms are only **allowed** at the present time. Natural disasters are only temporary. Jesus Christ's power over Nature guarantees the promise of a disaster-free New Heavens and New Earth.

Practical Applications

1. Character is built through crisis.

Do you think the Lord knew that the storm was coming? Of course He did—**He's God!** So why didn't He just say, "Let's wait until tomorrow to go over to go across the Sea of Galilee." Well, one reason He didn't say that was that He knew the storm would allow the disciples would take a step forward in their faith. Verse 40 indicates that the Lord wanted their faith to mature. The Lord purposely led them into the storm - because crisis builds character!

Where would you be now in your walk with the Lord if all of life were just smooth sailing? God may currently be permitting a crisis in your life because He knows you need to grow in your faith and trust in Him. He wants your faith to become more mature. Maybe that's why God permitted you to have a business setback, or perhaps a time of great grief or suffering. If you're not a Christian yet, maybe through a crisis God will change your character completely as you place your faith and trust in Jesus Christ as your personal Savior. Remember - character is built through crisis.

2. We are not alone in the storms of life.

There was no need for the disciples to panic. The Lord was in the boat - there was no way that boat was going to sink! Yes, the Lord was asleep, but He was still in complete control. When storms arise in our own lives, it may seem as though the Lord is sleeping, or that He doesn't care, or that He has lost control of the situation. How wrong we are! We are **not** alone, and we are **not** abandoned. The Lord is with us, and **He is in control.**

Are you feeling alone and abandoned right now? If you know the Lord as your personal Savior, you're never alone. Hebrews 13:5 is a great promise: the Lord will *"never leave you nor forsake you."* Even though the waves may be breaking over your boat, and you feel like your boat is ready to sink - you are not alone, and the Lord can bring His peace and calm into any storm of life. Isaiah 26:4 says, *"You will keep in perfect peace the one whose mind is steadfast, because he trusts in You."* Don't underestimate the power of the Lord as the disciples did. Remember - we are not alone in the storms of life!