



Mark 4:35-41 - “A Meteorological Miracle” - February 14, 2021

OPEN

What is the worst storm that you have ever experienced? Hurricane? Hail? Wind? Blizzard? In 1991 three powerful factors came together on in the Northeast of the US to create what became known as “The Perfect Storm” – a title which author Sebastian Junger used for his book. What were the factors that caused this “extratropical cyclone”?

- *warm air from a low-pressure system coming from one direction*
- *flow of cool and dry air generated by a high-pressure from another direction*
- *tropical moisture provided by Hurricane Grace* [source: [Wikipedia](#)]

Today we are going to consider a storm. There are some metaphors from the pages of the Bible that are rather intuitive. It takes little imagination to connect darkness to evil, for example. And it is not hard for us to appreciate how storms portray the painful, fearful, disruptions to our lives. Consider Mark’s original audience. Think of the storm of persecution that faced first Century Christians in Rome.

DIG

As we look at the book of Mark today, we are going to see a perfect storm – at least as it was viewed from the perspective of Jesus’ followers. Our current series is “**Follow Me: The Call of Jesus in the Gospel of Mark**”. We began by examining Jesus’ **ministry launch** and then **responses** to His call.

These are illustrated well by the **parable of the sower** (Mark 4:1-13) which we considered last week. Jesus parables to penetrate human pride. As Albert Einstein said, “*If you can’t explain it to a six-year-old, you probably don’t understand it yourself.*” Jesus’ full knowledge of the Kingdom (He is the source of that knowledge!) is revealed in His very accessible yet authoritative teaching. So...when it comes to the four soils, **what kind of soil are you?**

Mark 4:33-34 tells that parables filtered out false followers. Now, let’s read about a storm **Mark 4:35-41**.

Later, Mark recorded Jesus walking on water (see 6:45-52), which was another fearful experience for His followers. From Mark’s account in chapter four, what do we learn for our lives today? First, let’s understand what made this a perfect storm for the disciples. Then, we will see what Jesus did about it.

[1] Storms arrive suddenly

Having taught through the day, Jesus was weary and a trip across the lake was a way to be revived and escape the crowds. He fell asleep (v.38). The disciples were unprepared for the storm. Some were used to the kind of storms that occurred on Galilee. Situated in a basin and surrounded by mountains, Galilee is susceptible to sudden squalls. The warm air is heavy and still. But the cold westerlies are pulled into the basin creating sudden and strong storms.

In verse 37 we read that a “furious squall came up” so that the boat was in danger of being swamped. Why did this impact the disciples so much? The obvious answer is that there was no warning of the coming storm. But perhaps there were some other, more subtle, factors at work in their hearts.

- **ministry euphoria** – do we get so swept up in the thrill of serving that encountering a problem is a shock; we simply do not account for storms?
- **ministry entitlement** – do we get so focused on our sacrifice and dedication that we come to expect God to keep us free from problems?

[2] Storms overwhelm resources

When we face storms, we come to realize that our personal resources are insufficient – if we are honest Even though there were other boats (v.36) and sailing experience, this was beyond their capacity to cope. They were at the end of themselves. They were weary from the day, battered by the wind and the waves, and Jesus was unaffected!



The boat was being swamped and no amount of **scuppers** would help! Scuppers drain water from the deck of a ship. And tragically, we try to have enough “scuppers” or human resources in our lives so that we can be self-sufficient. But this is just the opposite of following Jesus.

Winds and waves will come! We must accept the fact that storms will overwhelm our own resources and capacities. In **II Corinthians 1:8-11** Paul described what such an acceptance will lead to in our lives – reliance on God!

[3] Storms trigger fear

Storms are the times when fear takes hold. In the story, the storm itself did not cause fear and doubt. The storm was the context for the disciples’ heart condition to be exposed. This happened when they questioned Jesus’ concern for them (v.38).

What was exposed? Not only were they fearful but they did not believe that Jesus **cared** or was **capable** to rescue them. Satan doesn’t have to change our understanding of God’s power if he can subvert our understanding of His compassion and care!

How is anxious unbelief avoided? We must recognize God’s controlling care in everyday life. Then, when a storm comes, we will face it from a practiced posture of trust. Amy Carmichael described this:

*Before the winds that blow do cease, teach me to dwell within thy calm;
Before the pain has passed in peace, give me, my God, to sing psalm.
Let me not lose the chance to prove the fullness of enabling love.
O Love of God, do this for me: Maintain a constant victory.*

REFLECT

Clearly, calming the storm reveals the authority of Christ over the elements. Jesus alone is the Lord over creation – all things **by Him were created** and **in Him consist** and find cohesion (Colossians 1:16-17). How did Jesus respond to this situation?

- **Jesus rebuked the wind and waves (v.39)** – literally He said “be muzzled”. I remember storms in Ucluelet when the ocean roared for days after the storm ended. But to go from storm to silence is a **meteorological miracle!**
- **Jesus rebuked His disciples (vv.40-41)** – Jesus’ rebuke was for their cowardice but also for their lack of faith. In Matthew 8:26 Jesus called them “little faithed” before calming the storm. Once He did so, they were “fearful with great fear” (“phobia” is from this term, v.41)!

Do you ever do that? First you fear the problem or storm in your life. But then you persist in fearful doubt even when God acts on your behalf! Let us believe it – Jesus is always caring for His followers faithfully, no matter the weather!

Songwriters Benton Stokes and Tony W. Wood put it this way in their song “[Sometimes He Calms the Storm](#)”

*All who sail the sea of faith find out before too long
How quickly blue skies can grow dark and gentle winds grow strong
Suddenly fear is like white water, pounding on the soul
Still we sail on knowing, that our Lord is in control*

*Sometimes He calms the storm with a whispered peace be still
He can settle any sea, but it doesn't mean He will
Sometimes He holds us close, and lets the wind and waves go wild
Sometimes He calms the storm, and other times He calms His child*

*He has a reason for each trial that we pass through in life
And though we're shaken we cannot be pulled apart from Christ
No matter how the driving rain beats down on those who hold to faith
A heart of trust will always be a quiet peaceful place*

For further reflection on how God brings calm to our hearts in the midst of significant storms, read the story behind the hymn “[It Is Well With My Soul](#)”.