

POWER OVER NATURE

CORE PASSAGE: MARK 4:35-41

CONTEXT

Jesus taught in parables to a large crowd of people by the Sea of Galilee. Using the natural amphitheater-like acoustics of the lake, He sat on a boat near the shore while the crowd listened. That evening, Jesus decided that He and His disciples should cross to the other side of the sea in the boat, taking time to rest after a long day with the crowds. A powerful storm broke through the calm night, however, testing the disciples' faith in Jesus. Who indeed was this Man whom they had left everything to follow?

KEY CONCEPT

We can have faith in Jesus because He is God, sovereign over all things, including nature.

As you examine Mark 4:35-41:

- Take comfort that Jesus knows everything and is never surprised or anxious.
- Recognize that Jesus, being God, is sovereign over all things, including nature.



TIMELINE

Jesus Appoints His Twelve Disciples (Mark 3:13-19)

Jesus Teaches Parables on the Kingdom of God (Mark 4:21-34)

Jesus Heals Two Daughters (Mark 5:21-43)

Jesus Teaches and Explains the Parable of the Sower (Mark 4:1-20)

SESSION STUDY:
Jesus Calms a Storm
(Mark 4:35-41)

Jesus Feeds the Five Thousand (Mark 6:30-44)

Daily Readings

☐ **Day 1:** Mark 4:35-41

☐ **Day 4:** Luke 8:22-25

☐ **Day 2:** Mark 5:1-13

☐ **Day 5:** Luke 8:26-39

☐ **Day 3:** Mark 5:9-20

☐ **Day 6:** Psalm 44



Scan this QR code to access this session's Scripture passages.

PERSONAL PREPARATION

MARK 4:35-38

JESUS IS NOT ANXIOUS ABOUT WHAT WE ARE ANXIOUS ABOUT.

Underline the disciples' reaction to the storm, and highlight Jesus's reaction.

35 On that day, when evening had come, he told them, "Let's cross over to the other side of the sea." **36** So they left the crowd and took him along since he was in the boat. And other boats were with him. **37** A great windstorm arose, and the waves were breaking over the boat, so that the boat was already being swamped. **38** He was in the stern, sleeping on the cushion. So they woke him up and said to him, "Teacher! Don't you care that we're going to die?"

PLACE STUDY

THE SEA OF GALILEE: At almost 700 feet below sea level, the Sea of Galilee is the lowest freshwater lake on earth. Surrounded by steep mountains and hills, it can encounter powerful wind events when the cool air from the higher regions rushes down upon it, producing violent winds and waves.



Jesus and His disciples decided to take a boat across the Sea of Galilee after a long day teaching the crowds. Sometime during the night, “a great windstorm” blew up, producing powerful winds and dangerous waves that began to swamp the boat (v. 37). Yet despite the perilous environment outside the boat, Jesus slept soundly within.

These details mirror Jonah’s turbulent voyage on the Mediterranean Sea from Joppa to Tarshish, where the prophet also was found sleeping through a storm (Jonah 1). Unlike the rebellious prophet fleeing from God’s mission, however, Jesus slept peacefully within the perfect will of His Father. And indeed, He did sleep. Jesus, sharing the same fullness of humanity that we have, needed sleep the same way He needed food and water. Just like every human being, Jesus experienced temptation, felt pain, and was susceptible to death. It was because of this shared humanity that Jesus can sympathize with our weaknesses as sinful human beings, yet in His experience of human weakness, Jesus never sinned (Hebrews 4:15).

How can the fact that Jesus is fully man bring comfort to us during times of difficulty?

Jesus may have been sleeping peacefully during the storm, but the disciples definitely were not. Ironically, the disciples, several of whom were professional fishermen, came to Jesus for help when the waves began to spill over into the boat. Abrupt storms on the Sea of Galilee were not uncommon, so the disciples’ concern about this particular storm must have been warranted. The danger was real, and so was their fear. Previously, the disciples had witnessed Jesus’s use of supernatural power for the welfare of others in the healing of diseases and ailments and the casting out of demons. But their question for Jesus on the waterlogged boat in this storm exposed the doubt that often arises when believers experience difficulty: “Don’t you care?” (Mark 4:38).

How can you ensure that what you believe about God on sunny days does not unravel on stormy days?

VOICES FROM CHURCH HISTORY

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“The ship carried his humanity, but the power of his Godhead carried the ship and all that was in it.”¹

—Ephrem the Syrian (c. 306–373)

PERSONAL PREPARATION

MARK 4:39-41

JESUS CONTROLS ALL THINGS, SO WE CAN TRUST HIM IN ALL THINGS.

Identify the source of the disciples' fear before and after the miracle.

39 He got up, rebuked the wind, and said to the sea, "Silence! Be still!" The wind ceased, and there was a great calm. **40** Then he said to them, "Why are you afraid? Do you still have no faith?" **41** And they were terrified and asked one another, "Who then is this? Even the wind and the sea obey him!"

THEOLOGY CONNECTION

JESUS'S DEITY: Within the person of Jesus Christ, there are two natures—the divine nature and the human nature. Scripture teaches He is fully divine and fully human. His divinity is on display in passages that describe Him as being equal with God (John 1:1-18; Philippians 2:5-11; Colossians 1:15-20; Hebrews 1:1-3). The New Testament also points to the deity of Christ by showing how He possesses attributes that God alone possesses (Micah 5:2; John 1:4), how He performs works that only God performs (Mark 2:5-12; John 10:28; 17:2), and how He Himself claims to be the Son of God (Matthew 26:63-64; John 8:58; 10:30; 17:5).



Jesus seemed surprisingly passive up to this point. Once awakened, however, His actions and words produced profound results. Jesus spoke to the sea and “rebuked” the wind as He previously had rebuked a demon, showing His authority over the natural as well as the supernatural realms (v. 39; see 1:25).

In the Old Testament, as an act of the Lord’s judgment upon His idolatrous people, the prophet Elijah prayed it would not rain on the land, and for three-and-a-half years, it didn’t. Then Elijah prayed again and it rained (1 Kings 17:1; 18:41-45; James 5:17-18). Unlike Elijah, Jesus commanded the elements directly by His divine power. He silenced and stilled them with the same voice that spoke creation into being. God alone controls the winds and seas (Job 28:25; Psalm 107:25-30; Nahum 1:3-4), so they obeyed Jesus immediately. In the stillness of the subsequent moment, the disciples faced the truth of Jesus’s deity.

Why does Jesus’s divine nature demand a response from each of us?

After rebuking the wind and sea to silence and stillness, Jesus turned to gently rebuke His disciples. He identified the source of the disciples’ doubts and fear: not the presence of a storm but the absence of faith. Jesus noted that His gospel seeds had not yet produced in them a faith that endured testing (Luke 8:13).

Failing to understand Jesus’s limitless power and sovereign care over the storm, the disciples’ hearts produced fear rather than faith. They were even more terrified after the miracle. Although the storm exerted a strength that overwhelmed the disciples’ own, Jesus’s power over that force was more potent than any power on earth. But did they need to fear Jesus’s power? In the sense of respect, yes, but beyond that, the One who wielded power over wind and sea had not come to condemn them but to save them (John 3:17).

What is the relationship between faith in Jesus and fear regarding our circumstances in life?

CHRIST CONNECTION



Jesus demonstrated His deity by calming the storm. As God, He is omnipotent and sovereign over all.

THE PROPER PERSPECTIVE

Read Mark 4:35-41. In the columns below, write down words or phrases that reveal the disciples' and Jesus's perspectives on the storm.

THE DISCIPLES' PERSPECTIVE

JESUS'S PERSPECTIVE

What will faith in Jesus's power over creation mean for our perspective on the natural phenomena in our world, whether beautiful or dangerous?

Key Concept: We can have faith in Jesus because He is God, sovereign over all things, including nature.



HEAD

How would you answer the disciples' question about Jesus: "Who then is this?"

PRAYING SCRIPTURE

As you reflect on Psalm 44, pray that God would help you trust Him even when life is hard and He seems silent. Thank Him for the steadfast love and redemption He has already provided in Jesus Christ.

PRAYER REQUESTS AND PRAISES



HEART

How would you answer Jesus's question to the disciples: "Why are you afraid?" What threatens your faith today?



HANDS

What are some ways you can provide comfort and support for those who are fearful of or suffering under the effects of this fallen world?

