

DON'T YOU CARE JESUS?

Mark 4:35-41

What was the ultimate purpose of Jesus' miracles? The miraculous works of Jesus were ultimately for the purpose of authenticating His claims. As one author puts it, "...what Jesus *did* (His works) authenticated what He *said* (His words)."¹

Jesus came preaching that the Kingdom of God was at hand (1:15). He claimed the authority of God to forgive sins and to govern the Sabbath (2:1-12; 23-27). The Kingdom of God was at hand because Jesus was both the promised Messiah and the Son of God possessing the authority and power of God to establish the Kingdom. Jesus came offering the promised Messianic Kingdom to His people, Israel, but their response was mixed.

The crowd viewed Him as a healer, His family thought Him insane, the leaders of Judaism accused Him of being demon possessed (3:7-30). Only a few were open to His claims – those He appointed apostles and a few from the crowd whom Jesus likened to "good soil" (3:13-19; 4:20).

Through the parables of 4:1-34, Jesus explained why so few who heard His teaching would go on to produce spiritual fruit (4:1-20). But Jesus assured His disciples and those of the "good soil" that God will bring the Kingdom of God to fruition – from its tiny beginning to its glorious fullness (4:26-34).

Mark 4:35 begins a section that contains four miracles clearly showing Jesus' authority and power. The four miracles include calming a storm on the Sea of Galilee (4:35–41); delivering the demoniac from Legion (5:1–20); curing a chronic illness (5:25–34); and raising the dead (5:21–24, 35–43).

As we study the first of these four miracles, notice the details John Mark recorded like the other boats and the cushion. These details indicate John Mark was recording an eyewitness report, most likely that of the Apostle Peter.

Jesus and His disciples sail to the east side of the Sea of Galilee (4:35-36)

Mark 4:35–36 (ESV)

³⁵ On that day, when evening had come, he said to them, "Let us go across to the other side." ³⁶ And leaving the crowd, they took him with them in the boat, just as he was. And other boats were with him.

The evening of the day Jesus taught the four parables (4:1) He made the decision that He and His disciples would sail to the east side of the Sea of Galilee. The passage doesn't tell us why, but perhaps Jesus was seeking a place to rest or He was looking to expand His ministry to the eastern shore (1:38-39). John Mark says the disciples "took him... just as he was" meaning that Jesus was already in the boat; He had been teaching from the boat throughout the day (4:1). Try as He might, there was no getting completely away from the crowd; other boats tagged along.

¹ John D. Grassmick, "Mark," in *The Bible Knowledge Commentary: An Exposition of the Scriptures*, ed. J. F. Walvoord and R. B. Zuck, vol. 2 (Wheaton, IL: Victor Books, 1985), 121.

A violent squall hit the Sea of Galilee (4:37)

Mark 4:37 (ESV)

³⁷ And a great windstorm arose, and the waves were breaking into the boat, so that the boat was already filling.

The Sea of Galilee is over 600 feet below the level of the Mediterranean to the west. The hills and narrow valleys that surround the lake act like wind tunnels and sudden wind storms like the one described are common on the Sea of Galilee. This squall was so violent that the waves kept breaking over the boat so that the boat was nearly swamped. This squall was so severe that, as we will see, veteran fishermen such as Peter, James and John thought they were going to die.

While the storm raged Jesus slept, but the disciples panicked (4:38)

Mark 4:38 (ESV)

³⁸ But he was in the stern, asleep on the cushion. And they woke him and said to him, "Teacher, do you not care that we are perishing?"

How Jesus could sleep through this storm is hard to understand. Perhaps He was just that exhausted.

The disciples on the other hand were terrified. They were also upset with Jesus because here they were bailing to save their lives and He wasn't lifting a finger to help! This man for whom they had sacrificed their careers and families didn't appear to really care what happened to them. Angry, they woke Him up and accused Him of not caring.

Jesus rebuked the wind and then His disciples (4:39-40)

Mark 4:39-40 (ESV)

³⁹ And he awoke and rebuked the wind and said to the sea, "Peace! Be still!" And the wind ceased, and there was a great calm. ⁴⁰ He said to them, "Why are you so afraid? Have you still no faith?"

More literally what Jesus said to the sea was "Be silent! Be muzzled and remain so!" This verb, "be muzzled", was somewhat of a technical term used by Jesus in silencing demons (1:25) and may indicate that demonic powers were behind this storm. Whatever the case, the wind stopped and the lake became still. The "great windstorm" gave way to a "great calm".

Then, Jesus turned to His men and rebuked them. What He literally said first was, "Why are you cowards?" or perhaps, "Why are you so cowardly?"² His second statement was literally, "Do you not yet have faith?" Jesus clearly had expectations that His disciples should have developed some level of conviction that Jesus could handle the storm and some level of confidence that He cared about them.

The storm put their faith to the test and found it wanting.

²δειλός (deilos), cowardly, timid. The Lexham Analytical Lexicon to the Greek New Testament. Logos Bible Software, 2011.

The disciples feared Jesus (4:41)

Mark 4:41 (ESV)

⁴¹ And they were filled with great fear and said to one another, "Who then is this, that even the wind and the sea obey him?"

The Greek text literally reads they became afraid with a great fear.

Fear was the right response. They watched as this man whom they had just yelled out in frustration stood up and, with a word, shut down the wind and the waves. It went from a "great windstorm" to a "great calm" in an instant.

Who does that?³

THINGS TO THINK ABOUT

First, let's think about what this passage teaches about Jesus. This is an historical event; Jesus commanded the forces of nature. According to the Old Testament Scriptures only God controls wind and sea. Jesus was functioning with God's authority and power. This is strong evidence that Jesus is the Son of God as He claimed.

Second, what does this passage teach about faith?

- Storms reveal what we really believe.
- Storms tempt us to believe that Jesus doesn't care; but He does.

Romans 8:35-39 (ESV)

³⁵ Who shall separate us from the love of Christ? Shall tribulation, or distress, or persecution, or famine, or nakedness, or danger, or sword? ³⁶ As it is written,

"For your sake we are being killed all the day long;
we are regarded as sheep to be slaughtered."

³⁷ No, in all these things we are more than conquerors through him who loved us.

³⁸ For I am sure that neither death nor life, nor angels nor rulers, nor things present nor things to come, nor powers, ³⁹ nor height nor depth, nor anything else in all creation, will be able to separate us from the love of God in Christ Jesus our Lord.

- Storms are opportunities for growth.

James 1:2-4 (ESV)

² Count it all joy, my brothers, when you meet trials of various kinds, ³ for you know that the testing of your faith produces steadfastness. ⁴ And let steadfastness have its full effect, that you may be perfect and complete, lacking in nothing.

Through every storm Jesus is with us.

Through every storm Jesus is growing and changing us.

Let us, therefore, face each storm with courage and faith for He who controls wind and wave loves us and we can trust Him.

³ cf. Psalm 107:23-32