

Sermon: 'Jesus Calms The Storm'

Rev. Martin Turner

Methodist Central Hall, Westminster – 18th January 2006 12.45pm

LESSON: Mark 4: 35 - 41

When everything is calm and going well in our lives it doesn't matter if God seems to be asleep,
we are in control of our life,
we can cope with what comes along,
in fact in many ways we perhaps prefer it if God seems to be snoozing
and doesn't interfere,
because that means that we can get on and live our lives just as we want to.

But then the storm comes,
perhaps it is a financial storm – redundant,
investments crash,
expectations of legacy disappointed,
mortgage rate goes up.

perhaps it is an emotional storm – relationship breaks up,
serious row with a friend
loss of a loved one

perhaps it is a spiritual storm – looking for meaning and purpose,
crises of faith

Then – we want God to be around,

to do something,

we shout – anger /perplexity / fear

we cry out with the disciples

verse 38

In the face of the cry of the disciples for help Jesus acts,

verse 39

but then when the crisis is over Jesus asks a question of these disciples,

verse 40

What do we learn from the question?

What do we learn from the story?

For we need to learn,

because in your life and mine we have the calms,

we have the storms,

and we have the emotional see-saw which goes as we swing between the two of them,

so what do we learn?

First notice who they were.

These men in the boat were very experienced fisherman,

they had never done anything else,

they knew the Lake and all its foibles,

they would not have gone out on to the lake if they had thought there was any danger at all,

especially if Jesus was with them,

the teacher they valued and loved so much,

so there seemed to be no risk or they would not have set out,

and yet the storm came regardless.

We often put our trust in our life's experience and the lessons it has taught us,
we rely upon our intelligence,
our wisdom,
our insights,
and most of the time we do fine,
but we are not superwoman or superman and although this works most
of the time there will be times when things just do not go as we expect them to.

Now you may think,

“Well I am a Christian, I prayed about it all”,

but even then I have to say to you that Christians are not exempt from the
stresses and strains and dangers of living.

you will have hard and difficult and sad times in your life and so will I,

so be warned for it is often when you think you have it all tied up,

everything sorted out,

that you are most in danger of being caught out in your complacency

and surprised in your self satisfaction.

Second, notice what they felt,

verse 38,

they thought that they were going to die,

but notice what they said,

they are not in fact asking Jesus to save them from death,

what they are asking is whether or not he cares for them in their time of crises!

If you think your situation is hopeless – call on Jesus,

if you cannot see your way through – call on Jesus,

if you feel totally overwhelmed - call on Jesus,

if you feel you are the worst person on the face of the earth – call on Jesus,
if you feel nobody loves you and nobody cares for you – call on Jesus.

These disciples didn't ask him to save them or expect him to save them but they called on Jesus because they wanted to be reassured that he cared for them, and in fact not only did they discover that indeed he did care for them but of course they also discovered that in a very practical way he stilled the storm and saved them, in the midst of that crisis you face now, or you may face in the future, call on Jesus, whatever the situation, whatever the time, call on Jesus.

Third, notice what they forgot

They forgot that Jesus was with them,
and they forgot as well that Jesus would not take them out of the situation but he would take them through it safely.

You see there are not times in your life when Jesus is with you and other times when he is not with you, Jesus is always with you, there may be times when you choose to forget that or even want to forget that, but the truth is that Jesus is with you in every situation in your life, at work, in your family life,

in your leisure time,
in your finances,
and in your relationships,
Jesus is in the boat with you.

Fourth, notice what Jesus did for them

Look right at the start of this passage, at verse 35

verse 35

It was Jesus who suggested they should go to the other side,
and I wonder if when the waves began to swell and the storm began to rise
whether or not they blamed Jesus for getting them into this mess.

Perhaps that is an issue for you this lunchtime,
you are a Christian and you felt that God called you into your place of work
but it is not going well,
you felt that God called you to serve him in some special work in your
Church or community but there seems to be no blessing,
you felt that God led you into that relationships but now it all seems to be falling apart,
the storms are crashing around you but God seems asleep.

You see the disciples would not have been in the boat unless Jesus had suggested it,
they had the faith to start out but they did not have the faith to believe that
they would finish what they had started!

Let me reassure you then,
if God has called you to something he will see you through,
he may seem to be sleeping just as Jesus was sleeping,

but he is still in the boat,
and of course when we look at this story we see that Jesus did get them
through to the other side,
they did arrive safely,
they did accomplish what they set out to do,
and so will you,
“Have faith” says Jesus,
he is in the boat with you,
he will take you across to the other side.

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