

**Part II, The Still of Storms – Mark 4:35-41**  
Series: Look and Live #18

This is part two of our sermon on Jesus and discipleship. Remember, in this story Jesus is wiped out after a long day of ministry. He's been in a boat just off shore teaching crowds of people all day. Now he tells the disciples that they are going to cross to the other side of the lake. They set out at sundown, but somewhere along the way a massive wind-storm swept across the lake.

The disciples are terrified because this is a powerful storm. The waves are crashing so hard that they decide they are going to sink in the middle of the lake. In their panic, they turn around to see Jesus, only to find him sleeping at the stern of the boat. One of the disciples rebukes Jesus saying, "Teacher, don't you care that we're perishing." Jesus woke up and rebuked the storms; everything immediately calmed and submitted to his powerful Word. Then he directed his attention to the disciples as *he* rebuked *them* for their lack of faith. "Have I been with you all this time, and have you *still* no faith? Why are you so afraid?"

**Read Mark 4:35-41.**

In Part I we focused on what Mark was teaching us about Jesus. This time we're going to look at what Mark teaches us about our discipleship. Discipleship means following Jesus. Every time Mark shows us Jesus, he's simultaneously showing us how we're supposed to *follow* Jesus.

Look at verse 40 and let's note why precisely Jesus rebukes the disciples. It certainly wasn't for *waking him up*. Actually, the rebuke says, "Why are you acting so cowardly, or with such *fear*? Have you still no faith?" He rebukes them because they woke him up in panic and fear. They have no faith. That's the problem.

In my mind, the closest synonym for faith in English is "trust". The disciples were lacking *trust*. Their problem wasn't an intellectual one. No, it was a lack of trust that created their panic, and it was a lack of trust which made Jesus rebuke them. And obviously he means that they still have no *trust in him!* So the big problem is that they don't trust Jesus. They don't trust Jesus' *Word*. They don't trust Jesus' *care*. And they don't trust Jesus' *purpose*.

Now we are disciples of Jesus just like these men in the boat. And although we haven't been with Jesus physically in the flesh, we *have* seen his miracles through the eyes of faith as we read and study his Word. So Jesus Christ expects and *demand*s the same trust from us as he did from them.

In the "storms" of our life and in our everyday routine, Jesus expects us to trust him just as he did the disciples in the boat. Mark shows us at least three specific ways Jesus expected the disciples to trust him in this story. So there are at least three specific ways that Jesus demands *we* trust him from this story as well.

**Number one, Christ expects us to trust his Word.**

What did the disciples say to Jesus in verse 38? "We're dying!" But in verse 35, Jesus "said to them, '**Let us go to the other side.**'" There's the problem: Jesus said they were going to the other side, but they said they weren't going to make it. They didn't trust Jesus' Word.

We can't be sure why they didn't trust his Word. Perhaps they thought Jesus didn't see this coming when he made up his plans to cross the lake. No matter, what was missing in the disciples was the rock-solid trust that Jesus' Word is God's Word, that the earth and universe can pass away, but every period and exclamation point from Jesus' mouth must come to pass. That's what Jesus expected the disciples to feel. Their panic proved that they didn't have this kind of trust and assurance at all.

When God says, "This will come to pass," and we panic and say, "Oh, I don't know if this is going to work," we're in the boat with the disciples showing our lack of trust in his Word. The disciple of Jesus Christ should be like Abraham. When God commanded Abraham to sacrifice the son God had promised to make into a great nation, Abraham obeyed. He obeyed because to Abraham, God resurrecting his son from the dead and fulfilling his promises to him was a more sure possibility than God not keeping his Word. He was *so sure* God's Word could never fail that he was willing to obey even unto death. *That's* a disciple of Christ!

In this story, Mark has just showed us several truths about our Master. He is not just an everyday kind of guy, he is God sitting in that boat, accomplishing our righteousness, with the Word of God in his mouth, and the ability to control life's circumstances and dangers. That's our Master. His Word is as firm as the foundations of the earth.

Mark wants us to *learn* that truth and then ask ourselves, what is there in *my* life today that is inconsistent with who Jesus is? What is there in your life that treats the Word of Christ as if it were just the word of a friend instead of the word of your all-powerful King? What is there in your life this moment that doesn't get that it is a universal impossibility that one word from the mouth of Christ should fail? Is there something in your life that you've labeled, "*Beyond the help of Christ?*" Did you know that Christ said, "All authority in heaven and on earth has been given to me"? Thinking your marriage is hopeless is the exact same as the panic that Jesus rebuked in the boat. Both marital hopelessness and storm-generated panic are instances of not trusting Jesus' Word.

Or is their deep loneliness or abandonment in your life? Did you know that Christ said, "Behold, I am with you always, to the end of the age"? Don't think that might be true or that it's probably true. If you're a disciple of Christ, consider this promise as more sure than the universe itself.

His Word is our reality. We don't speculate whether his Word will come true based on what we're currently experiencing. We speculate about what we're currently experiencing based on the *surety* of his Word.

So the disciple trusts Christ's Word. It sounds so foolish to see the disciples say they're perishing, yet there are many equally foolish things in our lives where we betray our doubt in Christ's Word. Christ's Word has *never failed a single person in the history of the Universe*, he's certainly not going to fail us now. Disciple of Christ, trust his Word.

### **Number two, Jesus demands we trust his care.**

The disciples didn't trust Jesus' *care*. The disciples roused Jesus in their panic and said, "Teacher, *do you not care* that we are perishing?" What could they have said that would have proven their lack of faith more than this? *Do you not care?*

What a thing to say *to Jesus!* There are three truths that make this statement unbelievably wrong.

1. His presence in that boat was because he was pursuing righteousness on their behalf so that he could then give it to them because they had no righteousness of their own. He was there *saving* their eternal souls by giving his own self, and they say, “Don’t you care about our lives?”
2. *Their* presence in the boat with Jesus was only by his grace. They didn’t choose him. He chose them by his grace. He set his grace upon them and graciously saved them to be his disciples.
3. John tells us that Jesus’ presence in this world with his disciples is the last and final definition of sacrificial love. So while he’s there in their midst giving love a whole new depth of meaning, they ask him, “Don’t you care for us?”

Do you see how easy it was for the disciples to call into question the very fabric of their relationship with Jesus? They were asking, “Jesus, are you sure that your heart has a place for us and that we’re not just disposable income for you?” That’s what these life and death situations bring out of a person. They bring out the worst of man’s heart. In this case, the situation brought out of the heart’s of the disciples that they still didn’t completely believe that Jesus cared for them.

Of course, at another time and situation, the disciples will be sitting around with 5000 other men and women to see Jesus take a few loaves of bread and fish and fed them all 5000 of them. When he does *that*, their response is, “Oh he sure does care for us.” But as soon as their stomachs were empty and their physical safety threatened, all the sudden their entire faith is in question and they have no assurance about the heart of Christ toward them.

That is *not* discipleship. **A disciple does not measure how much Jesus cares for him or her by the circumstances in their life.** If you are in Christ, he has already told you that he cares for you, that you are forgiven, and that everything he brings into your life is for your good! He said that. A disciple does not call into question whether Christ cares for us because the circumstances of our life get tough, painful, or otherwise. Measure how much Jesus cares for you by whether you are his disciple. If you are, then he expects you to trust that he cares for you. Disciple of Christ, *trust his care for you*; trust him whether you feel his care or not.

### **Number three, Jesus expects us to trust his purposes.**

Jesus did *not* take on the flesh, spend himself to the point of complete exhaustion, and call twelve men to be his followers only to now just let them die in the middle of the lake because he wasn’t paying attention. Goodness, is that how small Jesus *was* to them? In their hearts and minds, either Jesus had no big purpose for them, or he was powerless to bring his purposes about. That’s the essence of their lack of trust. That’s what Jesus rebukes them for.

Back in Mark 1:16-20, we learned that Jesus was bringing God’s Kingdom by calling men to enter into a new disciple relationship with himself. We also learned that the *goal* of that relationship was/is conformity to Jesus. Those are his very big plans and purposes for his disciples. From the beginning Jesus has been preaching this same message: *repent* and follow Jesus, and he will make you a member of God’s eternal Kingdom, and he will teach you and train you and use your circumstances to make you like himself (*holy, righteous, and spotless* to serve and love God in his Kingdom forever).

Now the disciples in the boat think he's going to give all that up and just let them drown. They didn't trust Jesus' big, powerful purposes for them.

Are we any different? We typically are not convinced of Jesus' big, powerful purposes for us either. Jesus calls us to follow him because he intends to transform us into his image. So Jesus says, "I will conform you to my image by bringing various trials, hardships, and successes into your life." Then we say in the midst of those very trials, "God, nothing good could possibly come out of this situation." That's calling into question Jesus' purposes for us.

Every time we're in the middle of a situation and we consider it worthless, purposeless, or a waste, that's a failure to trust the purposes of Jesus. For a disciple of Christ, there's no such thing as an accidental circumstance and there's no such thing as a wasted life situation.

Illustration: sending the bulletin.

When I get so frustrated, I'm not trusting Jesus' purposes for me. I'm not trusting that every situation, circumstance, trial, accident, tragedy, and even every success are examples of Jesus bringing things into my life for my good as conforming me into his image. Nothing is wasted. And if my agenda is Jesus' agenda, there's no reason for frustration.

Never mind whether we see the purpose in this circumstance or that one. So what if we don't! Jesus does! He will *always* make your situation effective in your life to bring you into his Kingdom transformed into his image. Not one pain, not a knee-scrrape, not a stubbed toe, not an overdrawn checking account, *nothing* in your life is a waste. He's that big of a God, and that *good* of a Savior! Trust him. Trust his Word. Trust his care. And trust his big, sovereign, good purposes for you in your life.

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