

35 That day when evening came, he said to his disciples, "Let us go over to the other side." 36 Leaving the crowd behind, they took him along, just as he was, in the boat. There were also other boats with him. 37 A furious squall came up, and the waves broke over the boat, so that it was nearly swamped. 38 Jesus was in the stern, sleeping on a cushion. The disciples woke him and said to him, "Teacher, don't you care if we drown?"

39 He got up, rebuked the wind and said to the waves, "Quiet! Be still!" Then the wind died down and it was completely calm.

40 He said to his disciples, "Why are you so afraid? Do you still have no faith?"

41 They were terrified and asked each other, "Who is this? Even the wind and the waves obey him!"

Terrified After the Storm

One of the least likely places you'll find me is on a plane. I'm not Mr. T when it comes to flying but I have no desire to put myself in a cigar tube flying through the sky out of control with the possibility of falling from the sky at any moment. I don't care for planes and or flying unless I've been given the opportunity to build and fly my own plane. For those of you who are frequent fliers have something in common with Jesus.

He turned over control to his disciples when he entered their boat. They took Jesus *just as he was*, they took control of the boat but just as planes fall from the sky – boats sink and a storm started to swamp their boat. This is as if a plane has lost power and is stuck in a downward spiral. The captain is heard on the intercom, "Brace for impact," and people are screaming but Jesus sleeps on blissfully unaware. It looks like he doesn't care.

When that happens, you may wonder why doesn't God help? Why doesn't he answer? When our problems get worse we may question if God is asleep or unable to do anything. A God who doesn't care isn't worth worshipping and a God who is unable to help is no God at all. But Jesus does care and he does help. That leaves them terrified after the storm

Being out of control and placing your life in the hands of another isn't such a comforting experience. But Jesus didn't seem to have any problem with his disciples taking charge. After all Jesus was a carpenter. Wood floats but carpenters don't. Drowning is a very real possibility. The disciples are the fishermen. They are the experts on the sea. They were raised on the water and accustomed to typical storms of Galilee

which could whip up at a moment's notice. Why would they need Jesus' help? There Jesus is sleeping on the ballast bag of the boat. And a storm rages on around him. The disciples are out of options. They realize this storm is out of their hands and go to the teacher for options. They don't expect him to do anything. They didn't wake him while singing, "Jesus, Savior, Pilot me - over life's tempestuous sea." Instead they're upset that Jesus is sleeping and it doesn't appear as if he cares. "*Teacher, don't you care if we drown?*"

Jesus shows his power over even the sea. Madmen have tried to prove their power over creation. Xerxes is famous for whipping the sea, branding it, and shackling it after losing his army to the water. But Jesus is actually able to do something. He turns his attention to the sea forcefully telling the wind and waves to "Be quiet" and then to "muzzle it" or even more forcefully, "Shut up!" and then he looks to his disciples. He isn't hangry. He isn't upset about having his nap interrupted. He is disappointed with his disciples and judges them as having little faith. That's a strong theme throughout the book of Mark – the lack of faith among even the closest disciples. The disciples have every reason to fear. Jesus has just proven that he is more than meets the eye. They feared a great fear. Before they wondered how he could sleep during such a storm but now they are terrified after the storm.

There are times when we too are overwhelmed by a situation and we may question, "Where is God in this? Doesn't he know what I'm going through? Why doesn't he do something about it? Don't you care Lord? We could allegorize our lesson and make this very real storm about our "storms" of life. Where and to whom we turn when we struggle. But this is a very real storm and the disciples were really in a danger. One of the ways to avoid trivializing what the disciples went through is to place ourselves in a similar serious situation, hence a plane falling from the sky.

Sometimes it feels like he doesn't care. It's at those moments when I want to grab Jesus by the collar, shake him awake while screaming, "Don't you care!" Like Job we'd like to question God about our unfair treatment. We may even assume we could do better than God. Is that how we handle life and death situations? I'd probably say a few things I'd regret later. I'd probably begin stating my innocence, condemning my circumstances, and finish up by blaming God for all of life's troubles.

Sometimes the storm is stilled, the plane regains power, the problem goes away - sometimes it doesn't. But God always answers our prayers. When we realize the power he holds – that's terrifying because he's the same God we've insulted, called to give an account, and blamed. The disciples are terrified after the storm because Jesus is no Xerxes. He actually is capable of controlling the elements. One who simply speaks and it happens. The one who created the cosmos by speaking it into existence and hearing him say, *"Why so cowardly. Do you still have no faith?"* Having someone so powerful against us is terrifying.

The disciples, *"filled with great fear and said to one another, "Who then is this, that even the wind and the sea obey him?"* But knowing who Jesus is, isn't enough. One must also know what Jesus has done.

Jesus doesn't use his power to hurt or humiliate his disciples. He saves them. This is just the beginning as he leads them to believe that he is the Christ. The Savior from more than just storms. The God who does more than just parlor tricks. He is the God who lays down his life for his people.

Jesus has been answering that question, "Who is this?" with parables on the kingdom of God. He is the one who has come to bind the strongman and steal his goods. He is the sower who sows good seed. He is the lamp that gives light to a room. The reign he brings may not look like much (mustard seed) but all the birds of the field will find shelter and shade in this tree. But since his own rejected him, he gets in a boat and heads to the nations. The other side of Galilee where he encounters the demon possessed strong man. There on the other side of the sea he provides peace to even Gentiles. Jesus here is demonstrating authority over nature itself, over the created order something only God can do.

He saves them not only by calming the storm but by dying on a cross. Even though they are of such small faith, he saves them. This is why he is in the same boat as them. Jesus calmed the storm and forgave sin. He is the one who can command waves and yet he willingly gave up his life on the cross. Jesus is leading them to believe that he is the Christ. He is the one sent to do the will of his Father.

The more time they spend with Jesus, the more they hear him speak, they more they realize he is no ordinary rabbi. They still don't get it. They will be just as confused when Jesus is crucified, dead, and buried. They will be just as terrified after the resurrection–

but he doesn't give up on them at that moment. He continues to speak peace to their troubled hearts.

That's the same message he gives to us that even though we are of such little faith – he saves us. Jesus is in the same boat with us – he entered humanity. It may seem for the moment like Jesus is sleeping and that he does not care. But rest assured there is still hope. He saves us not by calming every storm in life but by dying on the cross for our sins. The one who calms storms – can calm our hearts.

If the wind and the waves obey his words – why wouldn't we? Hear his voice as he announces forgiveness through his church, "*I forgive you all your sins in the name of the Father, and of the Son, and of the Holy Spirit.*" Hear his voice proclaimed over you in baptism as he binds you to himself and washes away all your sin. Hear his words, believe that they have power to do more than just calm storms but to provide us with peace. That doesn't mean every problem will immediately go away but even when bombarded with constant messages all conspiring to tear down our trust in God – we can still look to him unafraid.

What God does to nature he does to the Strong man the devil. The one he has bound with his Word. Jesus is not going to let you perish. He silences the devil and our conscience – *Be still. Quiet.* His blood has covered our sins. He leads us to believe and not be afraid. We will not perish eternally. Rather, we will live, because Christ is exercising his authority on our behalf. He speaks, and you are saved.

We don't have to ask, "Who is this, that even the wind and waves obey?" We already know who it is. You know what he has done for you. Soon we will confess the Christian faith, reciting the basics of Christianity. Jesus is the Son of God. The Lord of Creation. Our savior and Redeemer. Trust him with your life and with your death. You can even trust him when you fly, drive, or take a cruise. There isn't anywhere you can go, anything out of his control. He is God. He cares for you. He died for you. He rose and reigns for you. He is strong enough to save you. Amen.