

Mark 4:35-41 – "Master of Wind and Waves"

35 On that day, when evening came, he told them, "Let's cross over to the other side." 36 So they left the crowd and took him along since he was already 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. They woke him up and said to him, "Teacher, don't you care that we're going to die?" 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!"

Key Background:

- **"On That Day" (v. 35):** This refers to the same day described in Mark 4:1-34, when Jesus taught a series of parables (including the Parable of the Sower, the Growing Seed, and the Mustard Seed) from a boat on the Sea of Galilee. The crowds had been so large that Jesus got into a boat and taught from the water while the people stood on the shore. By evening, Jesus was exhausted from this intensive day of teaching.
- **Sea of Galilee:** This lake is about 700 feet below sea level, surrounded by hills and mountains. Cool air from the heights often collides with warm air over the water, creating sudden, violent storms that can arise with little warning.
- **Fishing Boats:** These were sturdy working vessels designed for the lake, but even experienced fishermen like Peter, Andrew, James, and John could be overwhelmed by severe storms on Galilee.
- **Evening Crossing:** Evening storms were particularly dangerous because visibility was reduced and help from shore was less likely.
- **Jesus's Humanity:** His sleeping during the storm demonstrates his genuine human nature - he was exhausted from teaching all day and needed rest like any person.
- **Divine Authority:** Jesus's ability to command natural forces with a word demonstrates his divine authority over creation, echoing God's power described in the Old Testament.
- **The Disciples' Fear:** Despite being experienced fishermen familiar with the lake, they were terrified, indicating this was an exceptionally severe storm that threatened their lives.
- **Old Testament Background:** God's power over the sea is a recurring theme in Scripture (Psalm 89:9, Psalm 107:23-32), and Jesus's actions would have recalled these passages to Jewish minds.

Questions from the Story:

- **What was Jesus's instruction to his disciples when evening came (v. 35)? What does this tell us about Jesus's intention and plan for their journey?**
- **How did the disciples respond to Jesus's instruction (v. 36)? What does their immediate obedience show about their relationship with Jesus?**
- **What kind of weather arose during their crossing (v. 37)? How severe was this storm based on the description of waves breaking over the boat?**
- **What was Jesus doing during this life-threatening storm (v. 38)? What does this reveal about his trust and peace even in dangerous circumstances?**
- **What did the disciples say when they woke Jesus up (v. 38)? What does their question "don't you care that we're going to die?" reveal about their state of mind?**
- **How did Jesus respond to the storm (v. 39)? What does his ability to command the wind and sea with mere words demonstrate about his identity?**
- **What was the immediate result of Jesus's command (v. 39)? How complete was the change from storm to calm?**
- **What questions did Jesus ask his disciples after calming the storm (v. 40)? What do these questions reveal about Jesus's expectations of their faith?**
- **How did the disciples respond to Jesus's miracle (v. 41)? What does their terror and amazement show about their understanding of who Jesus is?**
- **What question did the disciples ask each other (v. 41)? What does their wonder about Jesus's identity reveal about their growing awareness of his divine nature?**
- **Why do you think the disciples were afraid during the storm when Jesus was with them in the boat? What does this teach us about faith during difficult circumstances?**
- **What does Jesus's peaceful sleep during the storm teach us about trusting in God's sovereignty even when life seems chaotic?**
- **How does Jesus's rebuke of their fear challenge us about the relationship between faith and circumstances?**
- **What does Jesus's complete authority over natural forces reveal about his divine identity and power?**
- **How does this miracle demonstrate that Jesus is not just a great teacher but the Son of God with power over creation?**
- **What does this story teach us about bringing our fears and desperate situations to Jesus?**
- **How should the knowledge that Jesus has power over the storms in our lives affect our response to difficulties and fears?**