

**Theme: “Be Still!”**

**Text: Mark 4:35-41 (EHV)**

<sup>35</sup> On that day, when evening came, Jesus said to them, “Let’s go over to the other side.” <sup>36</sup> After leaving the crowd behind, the disciples took him along in the boat, just as he was. Other small boats also followed him. <sup>37</sup> A great windstorm arose, and the waves were splashing into the boat, so that the boat was quickly filling up. <sup>38</sup> Jesus himself was in the stern, sleeping on a cushion. They woke him and said, “Teacher, don’t you care that we are about to drown?” <sup>39</sup> Then he got up, rebuked the wind, and said to the sea, “Peace! Be still!” The wind stopped, and there was a great calm. <sup>40</sup> He said to them, “Why are you so afraid? Do you still lack faith?” <sup>41</sup> They were filled with awe and said to one another, “Who then is this? Even the wind and the sea obey him!”

You’ll probably agree with me that one of the great blessings we enjoy living here in the Bay Area is the weather. For most of the year our weather is usually very pleasant. We get plenty of sunshine and warm temperatures and we usually don’t have to deal with severe storms. Yes, the last couple of winters we’ve had a lot of rain and even a few legitimate storms with high winds and rain that knocked down trees and took out power for a while in some areas, but our area usually isn’t affected by severe storms like tornados or hurricanes like some areas of our country are.

I think it’s safe to say that the storms we experienced the past couple of winters did not rise to the level of the one experienced by the disciples in our text. As often happened on this lake, a fierce storm swept down upon the Sea of Galilee that night. This storm, however, must have been particularly fierce. Our text tells us, “**A great windstorm arose** [this word in the Greek can mean *hurricane*], **and the waves were splashing into the boat, so that the boat was quickly filling up.**” (v. 37). I can’t imagine how terrifying it must have been to experience a hurricane-like storm while on a boat in the middle of a big lake like the Sea of Galilee. Even these experienced fisherman who were, no doubt, accomplished sailors were terrified and feared that they were about to die.

Listen again to their reaction to this terrifying situation, **They woke him** [Jesus] **and said, “Teacher, don’t you care that we are about to drown?”** (v. 38). Imagine the conflicting emotions and thoughts must have been running through the disciples! They obviously believed that Jesus, the God-Man, could do something to save them—I mean, why else would they come running to Jesus? He was a teacher and a carpenter, but not a professional sailor. But as they battled this deadly storm which was beginning to sink their ship what was Jesus doing? “**Jesus himself was in the stern, sleeping on a cushion**” (v. 38a)! What?! Sure Jesus was in the boat with them, but He was sleeping while they were dying! The disciples, of course, took this as indifference on Jesus’ part and cried out, “**Teacher, do You not care that we are perishing?**” (v. 38b).

The reality of the situation is that Jesus was actually showing a great display of *faith* by resting comfortably in the midst of this horrendous storm. His heart was completely absent of fear and He trusted perfectly and completely in His Father’s care. He then showed His disciples in the most powerful way just how little they had to fear: **Then he got up, rebuked the wind, and said to the sea, “Peace! Be still!” The wind stopped, and there was a great calm.** (v. 39). Wow!

Think of the worst storm you’ve ever been in. Now think of someone simply saying, “**Peace! Be still!**” and that raging storm immediately stops and it’s completely calm. Would you be astounded if you saw that happen? The disciples certainly were: **They were filled with awe and said to one another, “Who then is this? Even the wind and the sea obey him!”** (v. 41). This man is Jesus, the almighty, eternal God; the Ruler of heaven and earth! The disciples had Him in the boat with them! Therefore Jesus had every right to give them this rebuke, **He said to them, “Why are you so afraid? Do you still lack faith?”** (v. 40).

Well, we may be blessed in this area by not having to worry about too many severe storms, but despite our outstanding climate and our usually beautiful weather we are definitely not immune to having “storms” pop up in our lives. Those types of “storms” can be every bit as terrifying—if not more so—than the intense windstorm the disciples were facing that night on the Sea of Galilee.

When these “storms” arise in our lives do we always remember or realize that we have Jesus “in the boat” with us every moment of our lives? We have the almighty God of the universe watching out for us everyday! We have Jesus Himself “riding along” in our “boat” of life everyday and He has said to us, “**I am with you always, even to the end of the world**” (Matthew 28:20).

Well, maybe we know that. Maybe that thought is always in the back of our minds, but maybe our problem is much like the one the disciples had in the boat. The storms of life are swirling fiercely around us and are about to take us under, yet it appears to us that God isn’t doing anything about it. To us it appears as if He’s “sleeping;” indifferent or unconcerned about our problems. We think maybe He’s forgotten about us, or worse yet, maybe He’s *punishing* us for our past sins! In our fear we cry out, like the disciples, “**Jesus, don’t you care that we are about to drown?**” (v. 38).

Let’s ask ourselves—honestly—what kind of Jesus do we believe in? One who if we can’t see or *feel* His presence near by must be uncaring, unjust, or simply unable to help us? Do we have a God who is “asleep” on the job while we are perishing?

Or is He the one who comes to us with His **peace** and tells the storms of our lives to “**Be still!**” and calms the “wind and the waves” of the stresses and pressures of the world we live in—our job, our school, our relationships, our family matters, our health, our financial issues, etc.? Is He the One who, most importantly, calms the storms *within* ourselves; Who speaks to our troubled hearts and our consciences, which are drowning in sin and guilt and says, “**Peace! Be still!**” (v. 39). “**Be of good cheer; your sins are forgiven you!**” (Matthew 9:2)? That’s our Jesus!

He is true man: In His compassion He came to this earth to be one of us. Our text made this very clear, didn’t it? Jesus spoke with a human voice; traveled by human methods of transportation (boat); He even slept (Mark 4:38)! He became man to be our Brother, our Friend, to go through what we go through in life; to be tempted like we are tempted, but Jesus never sinned. And so He became man to do for us what we could never do: live a sinless life and keep God’s holy Law. Jesus lived for us; He even died for us! He became man to suffer the punishment of death and hell for our sins so that we would never have to! As the Bible tells us, “**For [God] made Him [Jesus] who knew no sin to be sin for us, that we might become the righteousness of God in Him**” (2 Corinthians 5:21).

Jesus is also at the same time true God. The disciples asked at the end of our text, “**Who then is this? Even the wind and the sea obey him!**” (v. 41). The answer: He is God! Only God can control the winds and the waves. Only God can simply speak His Word and His will is done. Only God is powerful enough to save us. Jesus is true God! His blood is the only thing powerful enough to pay for all our sins—*all* of them! He is the only one powerful enough to raise Himself to life victoriously from the grave; to ascend to heaven; to rule heaven and earth for eternity. He is the only one powerful enough to raise us from our graves and give us the gift He earned for us: eternal life in heaven!

So, if I were to ask you to think about the worst “storm” of life you’ve ever been through, would a particular tragedy or traumatic event stand out—or maybe several? I would guess that we all can. Now, think of how Jesus got you through that “storm”—or those “storms.” You’re still here today, aren’t you?

Are you facing some of these “storms” of life right now? Think about that for a moment. What “storm(s)” of life are making you fearful; making you feel like you just might go “under” and drown in all the chaos and destruction? Now, trust Jesus, know that He will get you through this “storm”—or these “storms”—just as He has in the past, just as He has promised. Cast yourself completely on Him and cry out to Him. He

comforts us and encourages us in His Word with His promises, **“Call upon me in the day of trouble; I will deliver you, and you shall glorify me” (Psalm 50:15 ESV).**

Does Jesus still rule the winds and the waves? Absolutely! The words of the hymn we are about to sing are still true, *“Be still my soul; the waves and winds still know His voice who ruled them while He dwelt below.”* (Hymn 751 v. 2 LSB). Even more importantly, let’s also remember that Jesus still stills our storms, the storms of life, and the storm of *sin*. Let’s remember the words we have heard Jesus, our God, speak to us again today: **“Why are you so afraid? Do you still lack faith?” (v. 40).** **“Peace! Be still!” (v. 39).** **“Be still, and know that I am God” (Psalm 46:10)! Amen.**