

THE LORD'S WAY IN THE STORM

Mark 4:35-41

Intro: The ministry of the Lord Jesus was one of teaching and also the performing of miracles. The miracle which we read about in these closing seven verses of Mark 4, followed a day of very strenuous teaching. The Lord didn't work by the hour. His days of public ministry often closed when He sought to get away from the crowds, either to pray and have fellowship with His Father, or to be for a time away from the crowds with all of the needs that they were continually bringing to Him. On this particular day, His time had been given to teaching, teaching by parables, as we learn from verses 33 and 34. (Read.)

Teaching is work, and it is especially difficult when it is necessary for all of the teaching to be explained. And this He was doing especially with His disciples. It has been said that if a man puts himself into his teaching, he will spend as much energy in an hour as that same man would spend in eight hours of physical work. The Lord had to be very careful in His teaching because His enemies were always present, hoping to hear something that they might be able to use against Him.

Actually the Lord had been teaching most of the day, and at the end of the day He was very tired. So He was looking for a place to rest. He had been teaching from a large fishing boat, and as the evening had started to come, He told His disciples, "let us pass over unto the other side." The Lord had frequently done this because the far side of the Sea of Galilee was not as populated as it was around Capernaum, and so there was more opportunity to be without the crowds, and to rest. We see from our Lord's suggestion to His disciples, and from the fact that when they did what He wanted them to do, He promptly went to sleep that we have here evidence of *our Lord's humanity*. In fact, Mark does not tell us that anyone else went to sleep, so we can say that the day of teaching had been more physically and emotionally demanding upon Him than it had been upon any of His disciples. And yet He was not entirely successful in getting away from the crowds because we are told in verse 36 that "there were also with him other little ships."

The Lord was obviously exhausted. He must have been hungry too. He was in great need of rest. The disciples did not mind what He did until they found themselves in a severe storm. But it was the storm that caused them to awaken the Lord.

If you have visited that part of the world, you may have experienced such a storm, or maybe you were told how quickly and unexpectedly a strong wind can come up and turn the placid sea of Galilee into mountainous waves, some as high as twenty feet.

Now we need to remember that at least four of the disciples were fishermen by trade before the Lord called them to be disciples, and it seems quite certain that the rest were familiar with what can happen in crossing the sea of Galilee at any time.

It is apparent from the reaction of the disciples to the storm that they thought that they were all going to drown. It became so dangerous that they finally awakened the Lord because they had no other hope that they would be saved.

Now remember that it was the Lord's suggestion that they leave immediately to go to the other side. So they were doing what the Lord wanted them to do. But the conclusion of the account also makes it clear that there were things about the Lord which they did not understand. They were finding out that doing the will of the Lord would not mean that they would have a trouble-free journey. And it looked to them like the Lord had not know what was coming either. The boat was filling with water, and it would not be long before they all would be in big trouble.

There is a real parallel to the situation that the disciples faced and the experiences that we often have in daily life. We don't enjoy the physical presence of the Lord, but unexpectedly we sometimes find ourselves in trouble for which there seems to be no happy solution. The Lord never promises us a life free from trials. Basically we experience what everyone else experiences in this life. And it does not seem that even the Lord is aware of the trouble that we can be in.

It is like the sickness Lazarus, the brother of Mary and Martha. They sent word to the Lord that Lazarus was sick, but the Lord did not come. And these women couldn't understand why the Lord did not respond to their appeal for help. But when the Lord finally came after Lazarus had died, they both said the same thing to Him: "Lord, if Thou hadst been here, our brother had not died." And they had probably said the same thing to each other over and over again.

In the situation that we are considering here in Mark 4, the Lord was

asleep, and not even the storm nor water in the boat had awakened Him. And they said to Him, “Master (or Teacher), carest Thou not that we perish?” They seemed to know that He could do something, but instead it seemed to them that He was totally unaware of what was going on. We must remember that these men were only gradually learning about the ways of the Lord. They evidently believed that He could have done something about it if He knew what was going on, but how could He know if He were asleep. But even worse than that was the possibility that He knew, but didn’t care. We can imagine that they were all busy trying to get rid of the water that was in the boat, but all that they could do was not enough. All kinds of thoughts go through our minds when we are experiencing the height of some kind of a storm. They had seen the Lord perform other miracles, but not this kind of a storm. So it was a new experience for them. I often wish that we had sound in the words of Scripture. It would be interesting to know who had a part in asking this question, “Carest Thou not that we perish?” Our text says that “they awake Him, and say unto Him . . .” We can imagine that Peter and Andrew and James and John had given the others all of the advice they had based on their experience with the sea of Galilee. But that was not enough. And so finally they woke the Lord up, and asked Him the question that was on all of their hearts.

Now we need to remember that, as the Apostle John declared so clearly at the beginning of His Gospel, that this Lord Jesus was the Word Who was in the beginning with God, and that He was God, and that nothing was made that He did not make in all of creation. They did not know if in becoming a Man He had somehow changed. They certainly did not expect Him to do what He did. We can tell that from their response at the end of our chapter.

What did He do? He did not answer them immediately. He did not rebuke them first, but He rebuked the wind first. This means that He spoke to the wind. And then He spoke to the sea. They had never done that, and they did not know that He would do that. But He did!

And what happened? “The wind ceased, and there was a great calm.” The Lord of creation was showing His power over creation. And He did it with just two words in Greek which are better translated, “Hush, be still.” He didn’t call upon the Father. It was not anything that took Him a long time. He just spoke to the wind and the sea, and the storm was over. “The wind ceased, and there was a great calm.”

Try to visualize the scene when suddenly the storm was over.

And then the Lord, calmly and graciously, said to them, “Why are ye so fearful? How is it that ye have no faith?”

The disciples did not answer Him. They feared exceedingly. The storm on the sea might be over, but they were still recovering from the experience that they had just been through. But they did talk to one another, and said, “What manner of man is this, that even the wind and the sea obey Him?”

And right there Mark stopped. As chapter 5 begins we see that they got safely over to the other side of the sea.

But we have three questions that were asked, two by the Lord, and one that they asked each other. And quite evidently Mark put them here because he wanted us to answer them.

(Comment on the questions, and show how the Lord was showing them their need. And by their question they were acknowledging that they did not know the Lord the way they needed to know him.)

(Comment also on their fear which prompted their question. This was a different fear from that which the Lord mentioned in verse 40. They were being brought to experience the fear of the Lord, and to recognize how really great and powerful and gracious the Lord really was.)