

THE GOD OF THE WIND AND WAVES

Mark 4:35-41

Intro: Of the eighteen miracles that are recorded for us in Mark's Gospel, this is number six.

In chapter 1 there are three miracles. In chapter 2, one. In chapter 3, one. In chapter 4, this one miracle.

The three in chapter 1 were the deliverance of the man with the unclean spirit (vv. 23-27), the healing of Peter's mother-in-law (vv. 30-31), and the cleansing of the leper (vv. 40-42). But we also have scattered throughout the Gospels verses like 32 through 34 which tell us of many miracles that the Lord performed, although they are not described in any detail for us.

The miracle in chapter 2 is the healing of the man with palsy where his friends brought him to the Lord, letting him down through the roof when they could not get through the crowd that was in the house (vv. 1-12).

The miracle in chapter 3 is that of the man with the withered hand (vv. 1-5).

Today in chapter 4 we come to the miracle of our Lord stilling the storm (vv. 37-39).

I am indebted to Dr. Graham Scroggie for much of the following information about the miracles. He wrote in his book, *A Guide to the Gospels*, that the miracles have been classified by many to fall into three classes:

- 1) Those performed on people.
- 2) Those having to do with the world of nature.
- 3) Those having to do the unseen, but very real, spirit world.

The three in Mark 1 have to do first, with the spirit world, and then the next two with people: Peter's mother-in-law, and then the leper. The miracle in chapter 2 had to do with a person, the palsied man. The miracle in chapter 3 also had to do with a person, the man with the withered hand. Here in chapter 4 the miracle has to do with nature: the wind and the waves. Of the thirty-five specific miracles recorded in the four Gospels, eighteen are found in Mark. Of course some of those mentioned in Mark are included also in the other Gospels.

It seems to me that the main purpose, or purposes, of all of the miracles which are recorded in Matthew, Mark, and Luke, are identical to what the Apostle John mentioned with reference to the miracles which he included in his Gospel. I am sure that most of you will remember the verses that I am going to read to you now, found in John 20:30-31:

30 And many other signs truly did Jesus in the presence of his disciples, which are not written in this book:

31 But these are written, that ye might believe that Jesus is the Christ, the Son of God; and that believing ye might have life through his name.

The Apostle John was one among others who called the miracles, *signs*, which Archbishop Trench says in his book, *Synonyms of the New Testament*, that the miracles point to something outside of themselves. In the case of our Lord's miracles, they pointed to His grace and power, and to the fact that He was more than a mere man. As the Apostle John expressed it,

1) "That ye might believe that Jesus is the Christ, the Son of God;

2) "And that believing ye might have life through His Name."

And he said that these purposes not only applied to the miracles that he had mentioned in his Gospel, the Gospel of John, but it applied to the many other miracles which are recorded in the Gospels.

So they are to show us that Jesus was the God-Man, the Man Who was also God, but believing, not just convinced intellectually, but trusting in this Miracle Worker for the gift of eternal life. So the miracles are real and powerful evangelistic tools. They are written to cause people to ask what the disciples asked in our text, "What manner of man is this, that even the wind and the sea obey Him?" If there was another person on the face of the earth today who could calm storms, even hurricanes, you can be sure that our country would have brought him from wherever he lived, to spare us from the tragic effects of the recent hurricanes which have caused so much death and destruction and expense in the billions of dollars. Jesus Christ was such a Person. Matthew believed that. John Mark believed that. Luke believed that. And the Apostle John believed that. The record of this miracle is not only found in the Gospel according to Mark, but also in the Gospel of Matthew (8:23-27) and in the Gospel of Luke (8:22-25). These men wanted us to know the truth about Jesus Christ, and so does the Holy Spirit even today because He led Matthew, Mark, Luke, and John to write what they did, so that we might believe and be saved! So the miracles of our Lord are of the greatest importance for anyone who reads the Bible, or who hears it taught, today!

So now let us examine this important miracle. First, let us notice:

I. THE SETTING.

The Lord had spent a very busy day of teaching. It is hard to tell when the particular day that we are concerned with in this parable, began, but it may have gone back into chapter 3. The Lord had spent hours of teaching as He sat in a boat just off of the shore on the Sea of Galilee. We are told in verse 33 that the Lord taught many more parables than those that are recorded here in chapter 4. The Lord had to be very, very weary. And the proof of that is that while they were crossing the Galilean Sea, He went to sleep in the back part of the boat. And His suggestion that they go to the other side of the Sea of Galilee was obviously an attempt to get away from the crowds who had listened so attentively to Him as He taught for what must have been several hours. The disciples took in the ship where He had done His teaching, but we are told that He didn't get away from all of the people because we read at the end of verse 36, "that there were also with Him other little ships." It must have been that only rarely was the Lord successful in getting away from all of the people. It was not that He didn't want to be with them, but He needed a break. A very real part of His humanity was that He got hungry, and tired, and needed rest. It may even have been that the Lord experienced more weariness than others did. I say that because when He and His disciples on another occasion were in Sychar, a city of Samaria (John 4) the Lord rested on Jacob's well while His disciples went into the city to get food.

The next thing that we read about is called:

II. "A GREAT STORM OF WIND" (Mark 4:37).

Several years ago when Lucille and I, along with a group of Christians with whom we were on a tour, took a boat trip on the Sea of Galilee, we were told by our guide that a storm can come up very quickly on that body of water, and, if my memory serves me correctly, he said that in no time at all there would be huge waves, blown up by the wind, reaching several feet in height. That was the wrong time to be on the Sea of Galilee.

Well, the Lord and His disciples got caught in such a storm, and it wasn't long before the ship was full of water. This was an alarming situation, even for those disciples who previously had made their living in fishing boats and doubtless had been caught in storms before. But this storm, if

anything, was a worse storm than any of them had ever been in before. The boat was not full of water, but getting there very quickly. It looked like it wouldn't be long before they all would be in the water.

But there was something about their circumstances which made them even more fearful than the storm. It was the condition of the Lord.

III. THE SLEEPING LORD (Mark 4:38a).

This is proof that He was tired. He was in a deep sleep, so much so that not even the storm had awakened Him. Hendriksen said in his commentary that "pillow" is not a good translation of the place where the Lord had gone to sleep. He had His head on some kind of a headrest, which might even have been the wooden railing of the boat. The point is not that He was comfortable, but that He was extremely tired and that He had fallen into a very deep sleep. And this bothered the disciples greatly.

And so we read about:

IV. THE FRANTIC CRY OF THE DISCIPLES (Mark 4:38b).

The disciples had been taught that the Lord would take care of them, that He would lead them, and that they would always be safe with Him. The Lord had called them to serve Him. He had been teaching them and training them. And now it looked to them like all of them, including the Lord were going to die. It was hard for them to believe that the Lord would sleep instead of doing something to help them.

Now we need to remember that the disciples were still learning, not only learning the truth that He had been teaching them, but even learning about the Lord Himself. They had trusted Him enough to leave their fishing business, or whatever means of support the rest of them may have had, to follow the Lord, and now it looked like what happened to them was of no great concern to Him. Had they been foolish in trusting Him so completely?

Now the Lord doesn't always act as quickly as He did on this occasion, but notice what He did.

V. THE LORD'S RESPONSE (Mark 4:39-40).

He obviously heard their cry of distress. First He spoke to the wind, and then He spoke to the sea. And finally He spoke to His disciples.

What did He do to the wind? Our Bibles tell us that He “rebuked the wind.” He spoke as the Lord of all creation. There is the thought here that He was critical of the wind for doing what it had done, and He was telling it in no uncertain terms to quit doing what it was doing.

And then the Lord spoke to the sea, saying, “Peace, be still.” It is three words in the KJV, but just two words in the original. And the Lord meant, *Be still, and stay still.*

We all know that storms don’t just suddenly stop. But this one did! “And there was a great calm.” First there was “a great storm of wind,” and now in response to the word of the Lord, “there was a great calm.” The end of the storm was just as amazing as its beginning had been. The storm suddenly stopped at the word of the Lord Jesus Christ.

What did the Lord say to the disciples? “Why are ye so fearful? How is it that ye have no faith?” What did the Lord mean? He meant that He had been the One Who said, “Let us pass over unto the other side.” He did not say, Let’s start, and hope that we make it.” They were in the boat with the Lord, and He had said that they were going to get to the other side. Thus, they were in the boat by the will of God, and they were going to the other side of the sea by the will of God. So they had no reason to be terrified like they were. He didn’t say that their faith was weak; He said that they had no faith at all.

Our final point is:

VI. THE RESPONSE OF THE DISCIPLES (Mark 4:41).

The disciples did not respond to the Lord. They talked to each other. But first notice that the Lord had said according to verse 40, that they were “fearful” in the storm. Then afterwards we read in verse 41 that “they feared exceedingly.” Mark used two different words here. The one in verse 40 means that they have been overcome by the storm. It had gotten the best of them because they were not really trusting the Lord. But when the storm was over they feared the Lord in a good sense. They realized that He was greater than they thought He was. And so they asked, “What manner of man is this that even the wind and the sea obey Him?” And

with that John Mark's account of that miracle suddenly comes to an abrupt end. Why did he end his account of the miracle that way? I don't know all the reasons, but I know one: it was so you and I would ask the same question about the Lord Jesus Christ.

It would have been wonderful to see the Lord perform any of his miracles. To see a leper suddenly cleansed of his leprosy, would have astounded anyone. Or to see a poor soul suddenly delivered from demon-possession would have been an experience that we would never forget. But I think that if any of us had been in that boat that day, watching those high waves work at filling our boat with water, know that we were certainly going to die, and then to awaken the Lord out of His sleep, have Him stand up, then speak first to the wind, and then to the sea, and almost instantaneously have the wind stop and the angry sea become like a placid lake, that would really have been amazing.

Dr. Scroggie has a section in his book where he seeks to show his readers how the various miracles apply to their lives. And this is what he wrote about this miracle when the Lord stilled the storm: "The stilling of the storm tells of Christ's power over the upheavals of life" (p. 205).

Concl: We all have storms in our lives when it seems like our faith is being destroyed. They are experiences that often don't make sense to us. And sometimes they go on and on. I am sure that the disciples has a hard time understanding their storm. It looked like they would never make it. And they wouldn't have made it without the Lord. The Lord was giving them one of many lessons that they were to have in the future when they were learning not to trust in themselves, but to put their trust in the Lord. But for now the storm rages on.

Years after this when the Apostle Peter was writing his first epistle, I am sure that his mind went back to that day on the say of Galilee when he and the other disciples awakened the Lord out of a deep sleep, crying out in fear and great distress, "Master, carest Thou not that we perish?" And as he wrote to those believers who had suffered, and were suffering, greatly for their faith, he encouraged them with this message, "Casting all you care upon Him; for He careth for you" (1 Peter 5:7). And he used the same verb that all of the disciples had asked the Lord that day in the storm. The question could be paraphrased this way: "Master, does what is happening to us matter to you?" And Peter's words in 1 Peter 5:7 would bear the translation, "Cast all your cares upon him, for it matters to Him

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about you.” We know the verse, but how well do we know the Lord Who stands behind that promise? That is the test. Our trials are designed not only for our blessing and growth in the Lord, but primarily that we can become better acquainted with our Savior and our Lord. The life of faith is at times tough, really tough, but glory lies ahead. And how glorious is the calm after the storm. So let us trust Him, and love Him, and live for Him. His grace is sufficient for our needs whatever they may be.