

<sup>35</sup> That day when evening came, he said to his disciples, 'Let us go over to the other side.'

<sup>36</sup> Leaving the crowd behind, they took him along, just as he was, in the boat. There were also other boats with him. <sup>37</sup> A furious squall came up, and the waves broke over the boat, so that it was nearly swamped. <sup>38</sup> 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?' <sup>39</sup> He got up, rebuked the wind and said to the waves, 'Quiet! Be still!' Then the wind died down and it was completely calm. <sup>40</sup> He said to his disciples, 'Why are you so afraid? Do you still have no faith?' <sup>41</sup> They were terrified and asked each other, 'Who is this? Even the wind and the waves obey him!'

**Mark 4: 35-41      Calming the storm      A talk by Rev David Eastwood on 18 July 2021**

Mark's purpose in writing his gospel, is to show us that Jesus Christ, **is** the Son of God. And here in this passage, we see this very dramatically. We can read about this event in the gospels of Matthew and Luke, as well.

The interesting thing here in Mark, who is noted for his brevity, is that we actually get a longer account – we're given more details than Matthew or Luke give us. This is probably because Mark has got his information from his mentor, Peter, who was in the boat. This will have left such an impact on Peter – we see that in the final verse – *'the disciples were terrified. Who is this, they asked? Even the wind and the waves obey him!'*

Lake Galilee is like a tea cup – it's a basin of water (about 700' below sea level) surrounded by mountains. Cool air from the Mediterranean is drawn down the narrow mountain passes, and clashes with the hot, humid air lying over the lake. That's the reason for these ferocious and sudden storms – it happens today.

1. Calm before the storm
2. Calm during the storm
3. Calm after the storm
4. Storm after the calm!

**1. Calm before the storm**

Jesus has been teaching by the lake, and as the crowd was so large, he began to teach from a boat on the lake, with the people on the shore. He taught about the kingdom of God - the parable of the soils (sower), the lamp on a stand (we must show Jesus to the world), and he showed us how **we** scatter the seed, and **God** grows his kingdom

And at the end of a long and exhausting day, (like doing a dawn walk!) Jesus says to his disciples – *'Let's go over to the other side of the lake'*, and they take a ride across the lake. Jesus falls asleep in the boat, his head on a cushion.

This is the only time we read of Jesus sleeping. It's Jesus' idea to cross the lake, and the disciples follow – they obey him. And all is calm

**2. Calm during the storm**

Then, without any warning, there was a fierce storm. A storm of enormous power. Waves were coming over boat, it was filling up with water. The boat was sinking. It's now evening and dark. The disciples freak out, panic.

Do they wake Jesus, and ask him if he wouldn't mind doing something please, fairly soon, if possible? No! They yell at him – Jesus – wake up, how can you sleep, how can you be so calm – can't you see we're all going to die, don't you care? Jesus is calm - Whilst the disciples are in

absolute despair, frightened, angry, beside themselves. Yet whose idea was it to cross the lake? – it was Jesus'. Jesus can be trusted, even here.

Even in our darkest moments, Jesus can be trusted. They did get something right – they went to Jesus. The disciples had already seen his power over disease, his power over evil and evil spirits, his power to forgive sin, but none of the miracles so far were to save them from danger and death – and so they turn to Jesus

### 3. Calm after the storm

There are three rebukes here: a) The disciples rebuke Jesus – Don't you care Jesus? What is the first thing Jesus does? b) rebukes the wind and waves: *'Quiet! Be still' 'Peace, be still'* And at his words, the wind and waves immediately stop. As soon as the Lord of Glory who created the heavens and the earth gives his command, the sea becomes like glass, it's completely still, and completely calm. The wind and the waves recognise the voice of the creator. This is God.

a) Then Jesus rebukes the disciples - Why are you afraid? How is it that you still have no faith? You didn't need to be terrified and afraid.

Haven't I proved that you can trust me?

How do the disciples respond? Thank you, Jesus. That's just what we thought you'd do - No! They were afraid during the storm, and now, after the storm, they are **even more** afraid.

### 4. Storm after the calm!

The lake is calm, but the disciples are now terrified. 'Who is this? Even the wind and the waves obey him.'

God is in the boat with them. The creator of the world, of the universe, is there in the boat – and they're terrified.

This is very similar to that occasion when they've been fishing all night and caught nothing. Jesus is on the shore and tells them to put their nets on the other side. Okay Lord, if you say so. And they do, and just about every fish in the lake jump into the nets. How does Peter respond? He falls on his knees and says – *'Depart from me, for I am a sinful man.'*

When they see the storm instantly calmed by the command of Jesus, they were terrified. What kind of man is this?

Even the wind and the waves obey him. This is Jesus, the Lord. The disciples see the holiness and the power of Jesus. They liked his power when they were in trouble. But when he showed them his power, his holy power – they could see he was different to everyone else. This is the Holy One of Israel.. And like Isaiah – when confronted with the holiness of God, we become aware of our sinfulness – *'I am a man of un-clean lips'*.

The message is - **Not** that Jesus stilled the storm, and he can still the storm in our lives - I believe the message is about the awesome power and holiness of Jesus, the creator God, and our need to trust in him in all things. It's like a storm after the calm. He stilled the storm on the lake, but caused a spiritual storm in the hearts and minds of the disciples. He calmed the sea, and

stirred them up. And they found themselves saying – Who is this? Even the wind and the waves obey him. We need to know this:

In every storm in life, in every trial we go through, there is an opportunity for us to be reminded, with the disciples, of the identity, the authority, the holiness, and the majesty of Jesus. It's no surprise that much of Christian art in the first century, is of a boat on a sea. A picture of the Church in the world. The early readers of this Gospel faced dreadful persecution by the Romans. They were threatened with their lives, and by all kinds of hardship that would have swamped them. They didn't need a Sunday School lesson – Jesus fixes the storm, and he can fix you as well – true as that may be. They needed the lesson you and I need – Jesus is majestic, he is King, ruler, Lord of all, he is a holy God. And whether he intervenes and heals our cancer (and he has complete power over cancer), or whether the cancer takes us prematurely (from **our** perspective) or whether that relationship that has broken down in your life and has not been restored as you had hoped - The very storm itself, is an opportunity for us to make this discovery which is vital – Jesus Christ is Lord of all – so trust him

Lucy (a deeply committed Christian and a friend of mine) 42yrs old, married with 2 young children. Died of bowel cancer three weeks ago. Her funeral was last week. In the midst of her fierce storm, this is what Lucy wrote, to be read out at her funeral -

*In the middle of the storm Lean in. I'm coming on the water, Walking on the stormy sea, Lean in and walk with me. In the face of mountains Lean in. I am coming leaping across the mountains, Bounding over the hills. Lean in and dance with me. In the presence of your enemies, Lean in. I have prepared a table before you, Right in front of your enemies. Lean in, and feast with me. I am Your peace, Your hope, Your joy, Your King, Lean in, affix your eyes Walk, dance, feast and sing!*

If you are tempted to say – Lord, don't you care if I drown? - Don't let the storm get in between you and the assurance of his love for you. Make the trials you're facing bring you closer to him. There are rough seas out there.

We need to know that Jesus is Lord. Lord of every situation. And when we're threatened, and feel like we are sinking, feel like giving up, may we be drawn to him. Trust him. Lean in.

He is the Lord!

AMEN