

Upside Down – Turning Fear Upside Down

March 15, 2020 – Pastor Randy

Mark 4:35-41 (ESV)

On that day, when evening had come, he said to them, "Let us go across to the other side." And leaving the crowd, they took him with them in the boat, just as he was. And other boats were with him. And a great windstorm arose, and the waves were breaking into the boat, so that the boat was already filling. But he was in the stern, asleep on the cushion. And they woke him and said to him, "Teacher, do you not care that we are perishing?" And he awoke and rebuked the wind and said to the sea, "Peace! Be still!" And the wind ceased, and there was a great calm. He said to them, "Why are you so afraid? Have you still no faith?" And they were filled with great fear and said to one another, "Who then is this, that even the wind and the sea obey him?"

I. Storms Happen

Life is accompanied by storms whether you choose to follow Jesus or not.

There are three kinds of storms that you might experience:

1. Storms that result from not following Jesus. If you gamble your money away don't blame God when they take your car and house! The solution when you are in these storms is to change your direction.
2. The second kind are those storms that occur BECAUSE you decided to follow Jesus. These trials we call persecution. They are the kind of trial you would not have faced had you not chosen to follow Christ.
3. Some storms occur WHILE following Jesus. These trials are faced by non-Christians as well as Christians. They are not directly related to being a disciple. These disciples would have encountered a storm like this even if they were on the lake by themselves. Our experience of having our home damaged by flood waters fits into this category.

The first key lesson is this: Discipleship does not exempt us from all storms. It will save you from those heartaches that are caused by sin, but not those resulting from living in a corrupt world and trying to live right. Shortly after this incident, Mark records the execution of John the Baptist.

So storms are a part of life. You will experience them either WHILE or BECAUSE you are following Jesus. The next thing you need to know is:

II. Jesus isn't worried about what worries you!

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Notice Jesus' response. He is sleeping. Many of you have read this story but have not allowed yourself to meditate on it closely. He is with the disciples on a boat in the middle of a "furious storm". Waves are being swept over the boat. The fact that Jesus is sleeping is hard to believe. It has to make you think back to Jesus earlier statement when he said the "Son of Man has no where to lay his head". Jesus must have been really tired to be able to sleep through this kind of a storm even though, according to Mark's gospel Jesus was asleep in the elevated stern of the ship on a cushion. There is some important significance to the fact that Jesus was sleeping while the trained fishermen were scared to death.

Psalm 4:8 & 3:5 speak of the ability to sleep as indicative of person who truly trusts God. I think we have all experienced being robbed of adequate rest due to worry and anxiety. Jesus didn't just preach about trusting and not worrying, he modeled it.

Beth Moore in her book, *Breaking Free*, wrote about how she used to live out her own version of Phil 4:6,7. Phil. 4:6-7 states, "Do not be anxious about anything, but in every situation, by prayer and petition, with thanksgiving, present your requests to God. And the peace of God, which transcends all understanding, will guard your hearts and your minds in Christ Jesus."

Beth says that her version was:

"Do not be calm about anything, but in everything, by dwelling on it constantly and feeling picked on by God, with thoughts like, "and this is the thanks I get", present your aggravations to everyone you know but God. And the acid in your stomach, which transcends all milk products, will cause you an ulcer, and the doctor bills will cause you a heart attack and you will lose your mind."

Belief in a sovereign and good God is the best antidote to worry!

When you are in the middle of a storm remember: God is never up on His throne, wringing His hands, wondering what is going to happen and worried about what will happen!

III. Storms Reveal Who and/or What We trust in.

Upside Down – Turning Fear Upside Down

March 15, 2020 – Pastor Randy

Now notice the disciples' response to the storm. They woke Jesus and said, *Teacher, do you not care that we are perishing?*

The disciples were men of faith. Everyone has faith. Everyone trusts in something or someone. Their problem wasn't that they didn't have faith. Their faith wasn't missing it was just misplaced!!!

Here was their confession of faith: "We are perishing!" Not only did they profess their faith that death was imminent, they also said, "Don't you care?". They had greater faith in the storm's power to destroy them than in Jesus power to save. They were amazed when Jesus stopped the storm.

What about your faith? Who do you have greater faith in; the Devil or Jesus? Do you have more faith in the storm's ability to wreck your life or in God's power to redeem your life? Is your storm's power to intimidate you greater than Jesus power to calm you? Do you believe other people's plots against you are more powerful than God's plans for you?

The disciples were afraid of the storm. That fear was then transferred to Jesus after He calmed the storm. This word fear is used to describe both terror and respect or reverence. It refers to a sense of awe in light of someone or something's power. In the first instance they were in awe of the power of the storm to destroy. In the second they were in awe of the power of Jesus to calm the storm. Power in the hands of your enemy creates awesome fear, but power in the hands of your friend inspires awesome confidence.

IV. Jesus isn't worried about your storms, but He does care about you!

There is a slight difference in Matthew's acct of this story. Matthews account gives the following chronology of events: The disciples woke up Jesus crying for help. Jesus *replied, "You of little faith, why are you so afraid?"* THEN *he got up and rebuked the winds and the waves, and it was completely calm.* In both Luke and Mark Jesus calmed the storm first and then spoke to the disciples. These are not necessarily contradictory accounts. First of all, it is very possible that Jesus could have addressed their lack of faith both before and after. Secondly, Mark and Luke don't seem to be stressing the order as much as Matthew does. Either way, if we believe that all scripture is inspired, and we do, then Jesus did address them even before he calmed the storm and maybe after too. Why

Upside Down – Turning Fear Upside Down

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am I making an issue of this small detail? Because it is a powerful reminder that,

Jesus is more concerned with the storm going on inside you than he is with the storm raging around you.

Was Jesus concerned about their circumstance? Sure. But He was more concerned about the fear in their heart. Storms are going to rage around you. Our goal must not be to eliminate all storms from life because if that is our goal, we will become very frustrated.

Mark records another “nature miracle” in chapter 6:45-52. This time the disciples were fishing without Jesus present in the boat with them. From the shore of Lake Galilee, Jesus noticed them struggling as they were once again caught in another storm. Jesus walked out on the water to where they were. They were terrified when they saw him, supposing he was an evil spirit responsible for the storm. Jesus spoke to their fears. *“But immediately he spoke to them and said, “Take heart; it is I. Do not be afraid.” And he got into the boat with them, and the wind ceased.* The key similarity in these two different incidents is that Jesus spoke to the fear raging in the hearts of the disciples and then he calmed the storm. Jesus wants to...

KEEP THE STORMS THAT RAGE OUTSIDE US FROM RAGING INSIDE US.

v. Jesus will do something about your storms.

Mark mentions that after Jesus spoke to the wind and sea there was a GREAT CALM! In the second incident Mark didn't record Jesus ever saying anything to the wind and waves. He just got in the boat and they stopped.

It's great to know that God cares about you, but you also need to know he can take care of you. Belief that God is both good and sovereign is the best antidote to worry! These nature miracles reveal another level to Jesus power and authority. He not only has the authority to forgive sinners, heal sickness, and command demons; he has authority over the whole created order.

These nature miracles are foretastes of the future Kingdom when Jesus comes again. At the culmination of God's redemptive work, He will create the new heavens and new earth. Everyone who has become a child of God through faith in Christ will enter that unshakable kingdom with NO MORE

Upside Down – Turning Fear Upside Down

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STORMS. His children will live in the safety of His powerful hands and security of His loving arms! IT WILL BECOME COMPLETELY CALM.

If Jesus is not your Lord and Savior, the reality is not so encouraging: Without Christ life doesn't end with perfect calm but with judgment. Two weeks ago we saw that Jesus is the fulfillment of God's promise, given through Isaiah that God would return as warrior and shepherd. As warrior he will come to judge and as shepherd he will come to rescue.

Without Christ you are experiencing the calm before the storm. God's justice is as real as His love. Turn to him in faith and You will be the object of His love rather than the object of His judgment!

Fear is the by product of the effects of a world full of sin and death. *Jesus came to defeat death and the fear of death. For only as a human being could he die, and only by dying could he break the power of the devil, who had the power of death. Only in this way could he set free all who have lived their lives as slaves to the fear of dying.* Hebrews 2:14-15 (NLT)

Fear and anxiety have turned our lives upside down but Jesus has come to turn them right side up, freeing them from fear and filling them with his shalom.

