

平静风暴的主——马可福音 4:35-41

The Lord Who Calms the Storm – Mark 4:35-41

Introduction, outline

- Scripture reading: Mark 4:35-41; Psalms 104
Mark 4:35-41 (NASB 95)
35 On that day, when evening came, He said to them, “Let us go over to the other side.” 36 Leaving the crowd, they took Him along with them in the boat, just as He was; and other boats were with Him. 37 And there arose a fierce gale of wind, and the waves were breaking over the boat so much that the boat was already filling up. 38 Jesus Himself 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?” 39 And He got up and rebuked the wind and said to the sea, “Hush, be still.” And the wind died down and it became perfectly calm. 40 And He said to them, “Why are you afraid? Do you still have no faith?” 41 They became very much afraid and said to one another, “Who then is this, that even the wind and the sea obey Him?”
- 4:35-5:43: A group of four miracles which not only demonstrate Jesus’ power from many aspects, but also, in context, mark the beginning of Jesus’ ministry expansion. Capernaum had hardened their hearts and rejected Jesus, so Jesus no longer wasted time with them.
- The four miracles demonstrate Jesus' power over the natural realm, over the spiritual realm, over diseases, and over life and death.
- Throughout history, the power of natural forces has always been a most feared thing. Our Bible passage today shows Jesus’ authority over the natural realm. Besides natural storms, Christians may also encounter various kinds of storms in life - health storms, career storms, emotional storms, relational storms, death-of-loved-one storms, spiritual storms... This passage contains many general principles that can help Christians to face the storms of life.
- Outline
Title: **The Lord Who Calms the Storm**
 1. The Calm Before the Storm (vv 35-36)
 2. The Calm During the Storm (vv 37-38)
 3. The Calm After the Storm (vv 39-40)
 4. The Storm After the Calm (vv 41)

The Calm Before the Storm (vv 35-36)

- "That evening": There was not the slightest sign of a coming storm.
【Principle】 Storms of life often come suddenly without a warning.
- "Go over to the other side": Not to take a break, but there’s an important task waiting for Jesus on the other side of the lake (5:1-20). The only brief time for rest was the boat ride in the night, so they rested while making their way.

- "Jesus said to his disciples": This is Jesus' command. The very reason that the disciples got into this storm is because they obeyed Jesus' command.

【Principle】 The result of faith and obedience is not always a smooth-sailing life on the surface. Obeying God's will sometimes leads us into storms. God wants believers to come to know Him more through various storms.

1 Peter **4:12** says, "Beloved, do not be surprised at the fiery ordeal among you, which comes upon you for your testing, as though some strange thing were happening to you;"

"He [God] loves us too well to promise that [that we shall have no afflictions]. By affliction He teaches us many precious lessons, which without it we should never learn. By affliction He shows us our emptiness and weakness, draws us to the throne of grace, purifies our affections, weans us from the world, makes us long for heaven. In the resurrection morning we shall all say, "it is good for me that I was afflicted." We shall thank God for every storm." - A pastor.

- "Leaving the crowd, they took Him along with them in the boat, just as He was; and other boats were with Him." What's the point of all these details? Why are there other boats? What do they have to do with the message? The key point of details is that this is a true historical account that we can put ourselves into the scene to experience it! Mark wants us to put ourselves in the boat when we read it.

The Calm During the Storm (vv 37-38)

- "A fierce gale of wind developed": The Sea of Galilee is situated at an altitude of -215 meters, surrounded by mountains, which provides favorable conditions for storms to form. When conditions are right, cold air from the mountain would rush down the steep slopes and collide with the warm air on the lake, creating gigantic waves on the surface. (There is a video online of a storm on the Sea of Galilee in 1992.)
- "asleep on the cushion": Even in such a storm, Jesus slept. This shows how exhausted He was. Jesus, like us, has a true human nature that needs rest to recover physically in order to continue His work. Yet, from the perspective of His divine nature, He created this storm Himself. He created it for the disciples to experience, so He had no need to panic.
- "The disciples woke him": In stark contrast to the calm of Jesus, the disciples were in a state of panic and unrest.

【Principle】 How can we judge the maturity of a Christian's spiritual life? Give them a little storm and observe their reaction. Are they more like the disciples or Jesus? The more mature a Christian is, that is, the greater his faith in God's sovereignty, the greater his ability to remain calm through storms. This is not a matter of natural personality, but it is the result of a strong faith in God's sovereignty. Conversely, one of the most typical signs of immaturity is restlessness and anxiety. An immature Christian easily becomes anxious, impatient, and restless at the slightest sign of trouble.

- "Do You not care that we are perishing?": You don't even care if we die, do you? What an insult to Jesus' character! If He didn't care, He wouldn't even come into the world! Jesus said, "I came so that they would have life and have it abundantly." The whole purpose of Jesus coming into the world was to give abundant life to His sheep. That's why He became flesh; that's why He lived a perfect life to fulfill God's righteousness for them; that's why He went to the cross to bear God's wrathful punishment for their sins. And now what? We are about to die, and you don't even care?

We need to see the disciples' basic faith in Jesus here. When a group of professional fishermen in the boat asked a carpenter for help, you know they had faith in Jesus and knew He was more than a carpenter. They believed Jesus could at least do something to save their lives. However, from verse 41 we know they never thought that Jesus could directly calm the storm. Based on their years of experience as sailors, they concluded that such a storm could not be immediately calmed.

【Principle】 When our faith is small, we often evaluate our circumstances based on our own experiences rather than trusting in God's Word.

The Calm After the Storm (vv 39-40)

- "He rebuked the wind and said to the sea": Wind and sea are personified as if they have mind, emotion, and will, capable of understanding and obeying Jesus' words. The key point is the authority of Jesus. They were created by a word in the first place, and they'll be destroyed by a word in the end. In between, all they do is in obedience to Jesus' word.
- "It became perfectly calm": Normally, a calm lake would still have gentle ripples; but here, the surface of the lake became instantly as calm as a mirror. There was not even a process of gradually calming down; it immediately became like a mirror.
- "Why are you afraid?": A gentle rebuke. There is no excuse for them to still lack faith. By now, you should've known who I am. I've already performed countless miracles before you. You have been following me for so long, and if you truly believe in my teachings and works, you should've already had a clear understanding that I am God. And if I am God, then what is there to be afraid of? Can't God control this storm? Can't He achieve His good purposes through this storm? Why are you afraid?

The faith that is lacking here is not the initial saving faith, but the faith they need to deal with difficulties. "You still have no faith" implies there's a growing process for this kind of faith, and that God has different expectations for the measure of faith in a new believer as compared to those who have followed Him for a long time. Jesus did not give them this trial in the beginning. But since they had been following Him for so long, their performance was utterly unacceptable. And that's why Jesus gently rebuked them here.

【Principle】 Do not make excuses to justify your weak faith. If God has called you through the Gospel and has opened your heart to know the Gospel, then you have no legitimate reason to be afraid in any situation.

The Storm After the Calm (v41)

- "They became very much afraid": When the wind was strong and the waves were high, they were just "afraid." Now that the wind and waves are all gone, they become "very much afraid." Why? Because what is more terrifying than to have a storm outside your boat is to have God inside your boat. The external storm is now gone, a greater internal storm has just started in the hearts of the disciples, for they've come to realize that the holy, righteous, almighty God is with them in their small boat. (See Luke 5:8; Isaiah 6:5)

Matthew 10:28 “Do not fear those who kill the body but are unable to kill the soul; but rather fear Him who is able to destroy both soul and body in hell.”

The Greek word for "fear" can convey a reverential kind of fear. The panic kind of fear focuses on oneself; the reverential kind of fear focuses on the object. The panic fear recognizes that I am in a dangerous situation; the reverential fear recognizes that the object is so great. The panic fear drives one away from God; the reverential fear draws one close to God, even though he knows he's not worthy. The disciples here certainly have some reverential fear, for they already have the basic saving faith and did not flee from Jesus out of fear but continue to follow Him. However, the major ingredient of their fear is the panic kind, for they've not yet known who Jesus really is or what it really means that He is God. More importantly, they have not yet seen the great love of Jesus to be revealed on the cross. When salvation is fully revealed and they come to know God's love, the panic kind of fear would then be removed, and they'd become fearless soldiers for the Gospel who would never back out even when facing severe persecution.

【Principle】 The more Christians understand the salvation of Jesus, the more they'll have assurance of their own salvation, and the more reverential fear they'll have and the less panic fear they'll experience. Unbelievers can only have the panic fear in the face of God; they cannot have the reverential fear, for theirs is the eternal judgment. The panic kind of fear can only drive people away from God.

Conclusion:

What about you? In the face of God, do you have more panic fear or more reverential fear?