

2021-06-20 – Rev Esmā Collins-Marks

Mark 4:35-41

Probably for the sake of privacy and relaxation, Jesus proposed a trip across the lake of Galilee. With the vividness so characteristic of our author, Mark gives a graphic account of the stilling of the storm and of the freeing of the demonized man whom Christ met on the “other side.” The great storm wind was typical of the Sea of Galilee, situated in a pocket, as it was, with hills on every side. The rising of the warm air of the day allowed the cooler air from the hills to rush down the ravines onto the lake with twisting, whirlwind action that churned the waters into an angry tempest. Mark’s account paints a vivid picture, taking readers to the very scene of action.

Obviously, this passage in literal terms records the account of Jesus and his disciples going to the “other side” of the Sea of Galilee. This wasn’t just some trip - this was into “forbidden territory.” It was unheard of to go to the other side! They probably thought Jesus was crazy!

“That day when evening came, he said to his disciples, “Let us go over to the other side.” Jesus was telling his disciples to go WITH him to the other side of the sea. This in itself was a bold move - unheard of. But this is where the lesson comes in. Jesus was teaching his disciples to “leave the crowds behind and go to unheard territory to proclaim the truth.

Are you willing to leave your comfort zone to do what God wants of you? Have you avoided living out your faith and going to the “other side” because of some excuse?

“Leaving the crowd behind, they took him along, just as he was, in the boat.” First, they were willing to leave the crowds to obey Jesus’ command. They were willing to GIVE SOMETHING UP in order to follow.

Second, they took him along. The disciples initiated the trip - Jesus just asked them. That’s the way Jesus works spiritually as well. He calls us, but we have to be willing to accept his calls to set things in action.

Third, the disciples “took him along, just as he was.” Nothing fancy, no clothes changing to visit the neighbours - just as he was. And that’s just another thing about “going to the other side.” God doesn’t care about getting cleaned up spiritually - he doesn’t care if we’re perfectly fit or not - he wants everyday, real, ordinary people! Look at most of the people in the Bible that God used - David, Moses - his disciples! They were all average!

“A furious squall came up, and the waves broke over the boat, so that it was nearly swamped.” -This is where it gets interesting. A wrench gets thrown in the machine as it were. Up until now, everything has been going pretty well. Granted, the disciples are quite reluctant to go to the other side of Galilee, but nevertheless, they have obeyed Jesus. No questions asked. But now the plot thickens.

But what now? What about the storm? I thought Jesus was supposed to keep them safe? As soon as we’re willing to go to the “other side” the storms will come! It’s rough - Jesus never said the journey would be easy! And THAT is when Satan tries to trick us into thinking God isn’t there in our lives! This keeps us from taking bold steps in our faith that are necessary to being truly effective. This is what is often called the “Evangelical Storm” of faith.

There are other storms. What about just everyday life storms. Does it seem like one thing after the other just keep hitting you over and over? Are the waves breaking over your lifeboat? Sometimes everyday problems seem to pile on each other until you feel your boat is about to sink! That’s why many people aren’t here today - they feel like that can’t handle it - do you feel like you can’t handle something? Let me tell you, if YOU let go of the paddle of your boat and let GOD steer for you, you’ll realize this type of storm can be controlled too! This type of storm, what I call the “Life’s Little Storms” can tear us down more than anything, but both of these storms can be tackled. You see, Jesus didn’t stop there. The storm didn’t defeat them.

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?” I find it interesting

that amidst all the waves and huge storm going on - disciples completely frantic - Jesus is nice and comfy right on the stern of the boat. The word sleeping is important here. See, Jesus wasn't going to immediately calm the storm himself. Sure, he would - but he wouldn't do it without the disciples asking! Just like when the disciples had to initiate the trip to the other side, Jesus wants us to initiate the calming of the storm. He's completely willing to do so, but he's just waiting for us to ask!

"He got up, rebuked the wind and said to the waves, "Quiet! Be still!" Then the wind died down and it was completely calm.

"He said to his disciples, "Why are you so afraid? Do you still have no faith?" Imagine, after Jesus calming the storm and the disciples probably stilling carrying on, griping and Jesus says "whoa boys-you still have no faith! Isn't that how we are sometimes? Isn't that so typical of us! You have to have faith that God is going to sustain you from the storm before he'll be willing to carry that promise out! If you truly have faith and believe that the Lord will protect you and calm whatever storm you might be going through, THAT's when he's going to fulfill that promise! Amazing isn't it?

"They were terrified and asked each other, "Who is this? Even the wind and the waves obey him!" All the mighty works the disciples had witnessed, so phenomenal was this miracle that they still wondered who their teacher really was. They were amazed and "fearful" of how the Lord IMMEDIATELY stopped the storm!

Are we willing to have enough faith in God to completely and undoubtedly trust that he will Calm our storms? If we are willing to "Go to the other side" - the side of faith that Christ desires for us to have, are we willing to "take on the storms" that come with it? If so, trust that God will carry us through and ultimately succeed in his plans.

Following God to the "other side" takes extreme obedience and faith. Remember, when we're in the midst of "taking on the storms," don't give up! Because when you're doing what God wants you to do, he'll protect and provide!

When we're ready to "Go to the other side" remember that it is God's plan for us! It's to prosper us! God will prepare us and give us the strength we need to "Take on the Storm!"

Read notes from Sea Sunday Brochure