

The Life of Christ, Teacher's Guide

Lesson 7: Lord Over Nature: Who Then Is This?

Mark 4:35–41

Teaching Aim (Teacher Orientation)

This lesson centers on a single, concentrated miracle, the stilling of the storm, and on the question it forces: “Who then is this, that even the wind and the sea obey him?” The doctrinal heart of the lesson is the deity of Christ revealed in His authority over creation. In the Old Testament, the calming of the raging sea is the work of God alone. The psalmist sings that the Lord stills the storm to a whisper (Psalm 107:29), and God Himself sets the boundaries of the sea (Job 38:8–11). When Jesus speaks to the wind and waves and they obey, He is doing what only the Creator can do. This is consistent with John’s declaration that all things were made through Him and Paul’s that in Him all things hold together (John 1:3; Colossians 1:16–17). The One who made the sea rules the sea.

Hold this together with the true humanity displayed in the same scene. Jesus is asleep in the stern, genuinely exhausted from a long day of ministry. Here, in a few verses, is the wonder of the incarnation: the same Lord who is so tired He sleeps through a gale is the Lord whose word the gale must obey. Help your class see both natures clearly. As with the previous lesson, the miracle is presented as a real, historical event that confirms who Jesus is; keep the focus on what it reveals about Him rather than treating it as a pattern for present-day sign gifts.

Formationally, this account speaks directly to fear and faith. The disciples’ terror, and their accusation that Jesus did not care, expose how storms tempt us to doubt God’s love and power. Jesus’ gentle rebuke, “Why are you so afraid? Have you still no faith?” is not a dismissal of their fear but an invitation to a deeper trust in the One who is in the boat with them. Help your class bring their own storms to the Lord of the storm, and move from merely knowing about Him to the awe and trust that the wind and sea already display.

Question 1

Student Question:

In Mark 4:37–38, a violent storm threatens the boat while Jesus sleeps on a cushion in the stern. What does His exhaustion and sleep show us about His true humanity, and why is it important that the One who commands the storm is also fully and genuinely human?

Commentary and Teaching Notes

Draw attention to the humanity of Jesus in this scene, which is easy to overlook in the rush to the miracle. Jesus is asleep on a cushion, so deeply asleep that the storm and the shouting do

not wake Him. He is genuinely tired. A long day of teaching crowds has drained Him. This is not pretense; it is real human weariness.

Explain why this matters. The same wonder we saw at the manger and in the wilderness is here in the boat: the eternal Son is truly and fully human. He hungered, He thirsted, He grew tired, and here He sleeps. If we lose His true humanity, we lose the One who can sympathize with us and stand in our place. The Savior who commands the storm is the Savior who knows what it is to be exhausted.

Hold the two natures together. In a single scene, Jesus sleeps like a weary man and then commands the sea like the Creator. This is the mystery of the incarnation in miniature. Neither nature cancels the other. The One asleep in the stern is the One whose word the storm obeys.

Bring comfort from His humanity. Because Jesus knows weariness and the pressures of life from the inside, He is a Lord we can approach in our own exhaustion. He is not a distant deity untouched by our frailty, but God who became flesh and dwelt among us.

Doctrinal / Christian Living Issues

- The true humanity of Christ shown in His real weariness and sleep
- The union of full deity and true humanity in one person
- The importance of Christ's humanity for His sympathy and saving work
- The mystery of the incarnation displayed in a single scene

Discussion Prompts

- What does the sleeping Jesus show us about His true humanity?
- Why is it important that the One who commands the storm is also genuinely human?
- How does it comfort you that Jesus knows weariness from the inside?

Question 2

Student Question:

In their terror the disciples cried, "Teacher, do you not care that we are perishing?" Where in your own storms are you tempted to accuse God of not caring, and what does it do to your faith when circumstances make His care seem absent?

Commentary and Teaching Notes

Notice the shape of the disciples' cry. It is not a calm request for help but an accusation: "Do you not care that we are perishing?" Fear had convinced them that Jesus' sleep meant indifference. The same logic tempts us: when God seems silent or still while our storms rage, we conclude that He does not care.

Help the class recognize this temptation in themselves. In the middle of a crisis, an unanswered prayer, a prolonged hardship, the enemy whispers that God has forgotten us or does not love us. The accusation feels justified in the moment, just as it did to the disciples bailing water in the dark.

Point to the truth that corrects the accusation. Jesus was in the boat the whole time. His sleep was not indifference. And He proved His care not by sparing them the storm but by being with them in it and speaking peace to it. God's apparent silence is not the same as His absence or His indifference. Invite each person to name where they have been tempted to accuse God of not caring, and to bring that honest fear to the One who is in the boat with them.

Doctrinal / Christian Living Issues

- The temptation to read God's silence as indifference
- Fear distorting our perception of God's care
- The presence of Christ in the storm as the proof of His care
- Bringing honest fears to God rather than nursing accusations

Discussion Prompts

- Where in your storms are you tempted to think God does not care?
- What does fear do to your perception of God's love?
- How does the truth that Jesus was in the boat speak to that temptation?

Question 3

Student Question:

Jesus awoke and rebuked the wind and said to the sea, "Peace! Be still!" and at once there was a great calm (4:39). What does this command over wind and sea reveal about Jesus, especially in light of passages where God alone stills the raging sea (Psalm 107:23-30)?

Commentary and Teaching Notes

Let the action speak. Jesus does not pray for the storm to stop; He commands it, as one with inherent authority. He rebukes the wind and tells the sea to be still, and instantly there is a great calm. Wind and waves do not subside gradually as a storm naturally would; they obey at once, the way a servant obeys a master.

Set this against the Old Testament background, which is the key to the scene. In the Scriptures, mastery over the raging sea belongs to God alone. The psalmist says of the Lord that He made the storm be still and hushed the waves (Psalm 107:29). God sets the boundaries of the sea (Job 38). For the disciples, steeped in these Scriptures, to see a man command the sea would be to see something that only God can do.

Draw the conclusion the text intends. The One who calms the sea with a word is doing the work of the Creator. This is not merely a display of power but a revelation of identity. Jesus is exercising the prerogative of God Himself. We will develop the full force of this at Question 9; here, let the class feel the weight of seeing God's own work done by the man in the boat.

Lead toward worship. The right response to such a scene is not analysis alone but awe. The disciples were filled with great fear, the fear that is the beginning of worship, when they realized whose presence they were in.

Doctrinal / Christian Living Issues

- Christ commanding creation with a word, not merely praying
- Mastery over the raging sea as the work of God alone (Psalm 107:29; Job 38)
- The miracle as a revelation of Christ's identity, not merely His power
- Awe and worship as the fitting response

Discussion Prompts

- How does Jesus' way of stilling the storm differ from a prayer for help?
- What do the Old Testament passages about God and the sea add to this scene?
- What does it reveal about Jesus that He does what Scripture says God alone can do?

Question 4

Student Question:

Storms have a way of confronting us with how little we actually control. What circumstances in your life right now most make you feel that things are beyond your control, and what would it mean to trust the One who can speak peace to them?

Commentary and Teaching Notes

This question turns the storm into a mirror. The disciples' terror came largely from helplessness; for all their skill, the storm was beyond them. Our storms do the same, exposing how little we truly control. Help the class name the circumstances that most confront them with their lack of control.

Acknowledge that the loss of control is genuinely frightening. For some it is health, for others finances, relationships, the future, or the well-being of those they love. We spend much energy maintaining the illusion of control, and storms strip it away. This is not a small thing, and the class should not be shamed for feeling it.

Point to the better object of trust. The answer to our lack of control is not to grasp for more of it but to trust the One who has all of it. Jesus does not promise that we will master our storms, but that He is master of them. To trust Him is to rest, not in our ability to manage the waves, but in

His authority over them. Invite each person to name one out-of-control circumstance and one way they will entrust it to the Lord this week.

Doctrinal / Christian Living Issues

- Storms exposing how little we actually control
- The fear that comes with the loss of control
- Trusting the sovereignty of Christ rather than grasping for control
- Resting in His authority over our storms rather than our management of them

Discussion Prompts

- What circumstance most makes you feel things are beyond your control?
- How do you usually respond when you lose the sense of being in control?
- What would it mean to entrust that circumstance to the Lord this week?

Question 5

Student Question:

After calming the storm, Jesus asked His disciples, “Why are you so afraid? Have you still no faith?” (v. 40). What does this reveal about the relationship between fear and faith, and what was Jesus calling His disciples to believe in the midst of the storm?

Commentary and Teaching Notes

Handle Jesus’ questions with care, for they are searching but not harsh. He asks, “Why are you so afraid? Have you still no faith?” He is not condemning all fear, nor is He indifferent to the real danger of the storm. He is exposing the connection between their fear and a failure to trust who He is and that He was with them.

Clarify the relationship between fear and faith. Jesus is not teaching that faith means feeling no fear; the issue is what we do with our fear and where our trust rests beneath it. The disciples’ panic revealed that, even with Jesus in the boat, they had not yet grasped that they were safe in His presence. Their fear was not wrong because storms are not frightening, but because they had forgotten who was with them.

Identify what He called them to believe. In the midst of the storm, Jesus was calling them to trust that He was Lord, that He cared, and that His presence meant they would not perish apart from His will. Faith would have looked, not like fearlessness, but like resting in Him rather than accusing Him. The same call comes to us.

Encourage growth rather than guilt. The disciples’ faith was real but immature, and Jesus was stretching it. Our faith, too, grows precisely in storms, as we learn to trust Him more deeply than we trust calm seas. The aim is not to scold the fearful but to invite them into a sturdier trust.

Doctrinal / Christian Living Issues

- The relationship between fear and faith, and where our trust truly rests
- Faith as resting in Christ's presence, not the absence of all fear
- What Jesus called the disciples to believe about Himself in the storm
- Faith growing and maturing through trials

Discussion Prompts

- What is the relationship between fear and faith that Jesus exposes here?
- What was Jesus calling His disciples to believe in the storm?
- How can storms become the place where our faith grows rather than fails?

Question 6

Student Question:

Jesus connected the disciples' fear to a lack of faith. When trials come, what does your own fear tend to reveal about where your trust is really resting, and how might Jesus be inviting you to grow?

Commentary and Teaching Notes

This self-examining question invites honest reflection on what our fears reveal. Fear is often a kind of diagnostic. When a trial comes, the thing we are most afraid of losing shows us where our trust and our treasure actually lie. The disciples' fear revealed a trust that had not yet rested fully in Jesus.

Help the class read their own fears this way, gently. A fear of financial ruin may reveal a trust resting on security rather than God. A fear of others' opinions may reveal a trust resting on approval. A fear of the future may reveal a trust resting on control. The point is not to add guilt but to gain self-knowledge that leads to growth.

Frame the trial as an invitation. Jesus' question to the disciples was an invitation to a deeper faith, and our storms carry the same invitation. Ask each person to consider what their most persistent fear reveals about where their trust rests, and how Jesus might be inviting them to entrust that very thing to Him. Growth in faith usually happens not in spite of our storms but through them.

Doctrinal / Christian Living Issues

- Fear as a diagnostic of where our trust and treasure rest
- Reading our fears for self-knowledge rather than guilt
- Trials as invitations to a deeper faith
- Entrusting to Christ the very things we are most afraid to lose

Discussion Prompts

- What does your most persistent fear reveal about where your trust rests?
- How might Jesus be inviting you to grow through that fear?
- What would it look like to entrust to Him the thing you are most afraid to lose?

Question 7

Student Question:

The disciples were left asking, “Who then is this, that even the wind and the sea obey him?” (v. 41). Why is this the central question of the whole scene, and how does the obedience of the wind and sea answer it?

Commentary and Teaching Notes

Identify the climax of the passage. Mark builds the whole account toward this question. The storm, the sleep, the command, the calm, all of it drives to the disciples’ awed whisper: “Who then is this?” The miracle is not finally about the weather; it is about identity. The storm was the occasion; the question is the point.

Show how the obedience of creation answers it. The disciples ask who Jesus is, and the answer is already lying flat and silent around them: the wind and the sea obey Him. In the Scriptures, only the Creator commands the elements. Their very obedience declares His identity. Creation answers the question that the disciples are only beginning to ask.

Press the question as the question of the whole study, indeed of every life. Everyone must answer it. The wind and waves have answered; the demons have answered; the grave has answered. The remaining question is how we will answer. This is a natural place to invite the class to consider their own answer, which the next question makes personal.

Note the kind of fear the answer produces. The disciples, who had feared the storm, now fear something greater. This is the awe that the presence of God produces, the beginning of true worship and the doorway to faith.

Doctrinal / Christian Living Issues

- “Who then is this?” as the central question of the scene and the study
- The obedience of creation as the answer to the question of Christ’s identity
- The universal demand to answer who Jesus is
- Awe at Christ’s identity as the beginning of worship and faith

Discussion Prompts

- Why is “Who then is this?” the heart of the whole scene?
- How does the obedience of the wind and sea answer that question?

- Why must every person finally answer this question for themselves?

Question 8

Student Question:

In practice, how you respond to your storms reveals how you truly answer the question, “Who is this?” Where do you sense Jesus inviting you to move from merely knowing about Him to a deeper awe and trust that shapes how you face fear?

Commentary and Teaching Notes

Connect belief and behavior. We may give the right answer to “Who is this?” with our lips while our panic in storms gives a different answer with our lives. How we respond when the waves rise reveals what we truly believe about Jesus. This question invites honest comparison between confessed and lived belief.

Distinguish knowing about Christ from knowing Him in awe. Many of us know a great deal about Jesus and could state His deity correctly, yet that knowledge has not sunk into the kind of trust that steadies us in fear. The disciples were moving from information to awe, from knowing Jesus as Teacher to glimpsing Him as Lord of creation. We are called on the same journey.

Encourage a concrete next step toward deeper trust. This might mean meeting a recurring fear with a deliberate act of trust, returning to worship with renewed awe, or meditating on who Christ is until that truth reaches the places where fear lives. Invite each person to name where Jesus is inviting them to move from knowing about Him to trusting Him in the face of their fears.

Doctrinal / Christian Living Issues

- Our response to storms revealing our true belief about Christ
- The difference between knowing about Christ and knowing Him in awe
- Moving from information to trust that steadies us in fear
- Concrete steps toward a deeper, awe-filled trust

Discussion Prompts

- How do your reactions in storms reveal what you truly believe about Jesus?
- What is the difference between knowing about Christ and trusting Him in awe?
- Where is Jesus inviting you to a deeper trust that shapes how you face fear?

Question 9

Student Question:

Jesus’ authority to command the wind and the sea is the authority of the Creator over His creation, for all things were made through Him and hold together in Him (John 1:3; Colossians

1:16–17). *How does this real, historical miracle reveal the full deity of Christ, and why does it leave no room for regarding Jesus as merely a great man or teacher?*

Commentary and Teaching Notes

This is the heaviest doctrinal block of the lesson, so let it carry the weight of the whole scene. Begin by gathering the evidence. Jesus commands the wind and sea and they obey instantly. In Scripture, this is the unique prerogative of God: the Lord rules the raging of the sea and stills its waves (Psalm 89:9; Psalm 107:29). When Jesus does what only God does, He reveals that He is God.

Connect the miracle to the doctrine of creation. John says that all things were made through the Word, and Paul that in Christ all things were created and in Him all things hold together (John 1:3; Colossians 1:16–17). The sea that obeys Jesus is the sea He made and sustains. He is not borrowing authority over creation; He is exercising His own, as its Maker. The storm obeys its Creator.

Show why this excludes the lesser views. A great man, however wise or godly, cannot command the elements. A mere teacher can instruct the mind but cannot still the sea. The miracle places Jesus in a category no creature can occupy. To watch the wind and waves fall silent at His word and still conclude that He is only a remarkable man is to refuse the plain meaning of the sign. The deity of Christ is not a later church invention laid over the Gospels; it is written into the events themselves.

End where the disciples ended, in awe that becomes worship. Establishing the deity of Christ is never merely about winning a point. It is about coming, like the disciples, to a holy fear before the One who made the sea and rules it, and then entrusting ourselves to Him. The Creator is in the boat. That is reason for both reverence and rest.

Doctrinal / Christian Living Issues

- Christ's command over creation as the unique prerogative of God (Psalm 89:9; 107:29)
- The full deity of Christ revealed in a real, historical miracle
- Christ as Creator and sustainer of all things (John 1:3; Colossians 1:16–17)
- Why the miracle leaves no room for regarding Jesus as merely a great man
- The deity of Christ written into the events, not added later
- Awe that becomes worship and rest in the Creator who is with us

Discussion Prompts

- What does it mean that Jesus does what Scripture says God alone can do?
- How does the doctrine of creation deepen the meaning of this miracle?
- Why does commanding the wind and sea leave no room for calling Jesus merely a great teacher?

Question 10

Student Question:

Looking back over the storm, the calm, and the question it raised, bring one specific storm you are facing to the Lord who commands the wind and the sea. Name one way you will trust Him in it this week, and one way you sense Him forming a deeper faith in you through it.

Commentary and Teaching Notes

This capstone gathers the lesson into a personal act of trust. The whole scene moves from terror to a great calm to a great question, and finally it asks each of us to bring our own storm to the One whom the wind and sea obey. Help the class name a real, current storm rather than a hypothetical one.

Invite two specific responses: a way to trust Him in the storm this week, and a recognition of how He may be forming faith through it. The first keeps the lesson from staying abstract; the second helps the class see their storm not merely as something to survive but as something God is using to deepen their trust. Both should be concrete enough to remember.

Close by lifting their eyes to the Lord in the boat. He has not promised His people lives without storms, but He has promised to be with them in every one, and He has shown that He has authority over them all. Encourage the class to write down their storm, their step of trust, and the faith God is forming, and to return to the question of the passage when the next storm rises: "Who then is this?" The answer, now known, is meant to steady them.

Doctrinal / Christian Living Issues

- Bringing a real, current storm to the Lord of the storm
- Trusting Christ concretely rather than abstractly
- Recognizing how God forms deeper faith through trials
- The promise of Christ's presence with us in every storm

Discussion Prompts

- What specific storm will you bring to the Lord this week?
- What is one concrete way you will trust Him in it?
- How do you sense Him forming a deeper faith in you through it?