

The Life of Christ

Lesson 7: Lord Over Nature: Who Then Is This? -- Mark 4:35-41

It had been a long day of teaching, and as evening came Jesus said, "Let us go across to the other side." So they left the crowd and pushed out onto the Sea of Galilee, that beautiful bowl of water ringed by hills, where storms can drop without warning and turn the surface into chaos. And that is exactly what happened. A great windstorm arose, the waves broke over the boat, and the boat began to fill. These were seasoned fishermen, men who knew this lake and its moods, and even they were terrified. Whatever this storm was, it was beyond their skill.

And Jesus was asleep. In the stern, on a cushion, while the boat heaved and the water poured in, the Lord of heaven slept the deep sleep of an exhausted man. There is something tender here that we should not rush past: the eternal Word, truly human, worn out from a day of giving Himself to people, sleeping through a gale. But there is something unsettling too, at least to the disciples, who finally wake Him with words that sound less like a prayer than an accusation: "Teacher, do you not care that we are perishing?"

What happens next is one of the most staggering moments in the Gospels. Jesus stands, and He speaks, not to the disciples but to the storm. "Peace! Be still!" He says, as a person might speak to a child or to a barking dog. And the wind drops. The sea goes flat. A great calm settles over the water where, a moment before, there had been only fury. No struggle, no ritual, no straining. The Creator spoke, and creation obeyed, as it has obeyed Him since the first morning of the world.

Then Jesus turns to His friends with two quiet questions, "Why are you so afraid? Have you still no faith?" And they are left with a question of their own, whispered among themselves in a fear deeper than the one the storm had caused: "Who then is this, that even the wind and the sea obey him?" That is the question this whole study is asking, and this lesson presses it. The waves and the wind already know the answer. The question is whether we will come to know it too, and whether we will trust the One who commands the storm when our own boats begin to fill.

Group Discussion: The disciples were seasoned fishermen, yet this storm terrified them, and in their fear they asked Jesus, "Do you not care that we are perishing?" Why do you think storms have such power to make us doubt whether God cares, and what does this account show us in response?

Personal Reflection: The disciples' deepest question came after the storm was stilled: "Who then is this?" In the storms of your own life, what does your reaction tend to reveal about who you really believe Jesus to be? Where do you long to know Him more truly as Lord?

Read Mark 4:35-41

Study Questions

1. 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?
2. 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?
3. 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)?
4. 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?
5. 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?

6. 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?
7. 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?
8. 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?
9. 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?
10. 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.

Now or Later

Reflect on these passages: Psalm 107:23-30, where those on the sea cry to the Lord and He stills the storm to a whisper; Job 38:8-11, where God sets the boundaries of the sea and says, “thus far shall you come, and no farther”; Colossians 1:16-17, where all things were created through Christ and in Him all things hold together; Psalm 46:1-3, God as our refuge though the waters roar and foam; Isaiah 43:1-2, the promise that when we pass through the waters, God will be with us.