

Christ's Sovereignty over Nature
Mark 4:35-41
Series: Christ Our Focus

1. Introduction:
 - a. A key question for everyone to consider is found in the closing verses of this passage: Who can this be?
 - i. This question beckons the reader to see Christ in the light of his works and ministry and answer.
 - ii. Christ's actions stand alone and demand of the reader a response.
 - b. Disciples here are forced to choose between faith and fear.
 - i. We are also faced with the same decision.
2. Verses 35-36 – Embarkation
 - a. It had been a busy day for Jesus.
 - b. Christ demonstrates his humanity in that when evening came he is exhausted
 - i. Since he was not only thoroughly divine but also thoroughly human, he was in need of rest.
3. Verse 37 – A furious tempest
 - a. A desperate situation
 - i. A great wind storm arises
 1. the Greek construction here is of whirlwinds
 2. Matthew calls them sea-quakes
 - b. The sea of Galilee
 - i. It is about 13 miles long and 7.5 miles wide.
 - ii. It is 680 feet below sea level.
 - iii. It is surrounded by mountains some as tall as 9,2000 feet above sea level.
 - iv. When warm air mixes with the cold, violent storms would emerge.
 - c. The small fishing boat has become a toy of the sea and the storm and it is beginning to sink.
4. Verse 38 – A Desperate Cry
 - a. The original language has the “sleeping” at the very end of the sentence, creating a dramatic effect – a striking contrast
 - i. This is not what we expect Christ to be doing.

- ii. This, however, shows us Christ's trust in the heavenly Father—his own Father—was unfaltering.
- b. The Outcry – do you not care
 - i. Implied in this statement is the thought that Jesus was unconcerned with the well-being of his disciples.
 - ii. Many have accused Christ of this same thing.
- c. It means –
 - i. Do we mean so little to you?
 - ii. With death staring us in the face, how can you sleep?
- d. This criticism comes from fear –
 - i. We quickly forget that God has commanded his disciples never to fear unto unbelief:
 - 1. **Joshua 1:9** Have I not commanded you? Be strong and courageous. Do not be frightened, and do not be dismayed, for the LORD your God is with you wherever you go."
 - ii. The strongest can be overcome by fear
 - iii. However, there is a measure of faith – they wake Christ up.
 - 1. Even little faith can be rewarded.
- e. Comparison to Jonah –
 - i. Both are asleep in the midst of a tremendous storm
 - ii. Both are awakened by rebuking sailors.
- f. The divine humility of Christ is demonstrated by his tolerance of the reproaches of his disciples.

5. Verse 39 – An Astounding Miracle

- a. The important fact conveyed by the expression, “Peace, be still” is that in a very effective manner Jesus asserted his authority over the elements of nature, so that there was a deep calm.
- b. He rebukes both separately and they both comply immediately.
 - i. The wind was “censured”
 - 1. Greek word is *epitiman* – rebuked – used of evil spirits.
 - ii. To the waves Jesus “muzzles”
 - 1. Greek Word is *pephimoso* – used as if addressing a person
 - iii. The language is of exorcism
- c. The storm goes from a raging monster to a docile peace instantaneously.

- d. Nature is made to conform to the command of the Master.
- e. Not but prayer but by the authoritative word of Christ – His command.
- f. Just like God produced order from chaos in the beginning:
 - i. **Genesis 1:1-3** In the beginning, God created the heavens and the earth. (2) The earth was without form and void, and darkness was over the face of the deep. And the Spirit of God was hovering over the face of the waters. (3) And God said, "Let there be light," and there was light.
- g. Ultimate purpose is to show that Jesus does what only God can do.
 - i. **Psalms 107:23-32** Some went down to the sea in ships, doing business on the great waters; (24) they saw the deeds of the LORD, his wondrous works in the deep. (25) For he commanded and raised the stormy wind, which lifted up the waves of the sea. (26) They mounted up to heaven; they went down to the depths; their courage melted away in their evil plight; (27) they reeled and staggered like drunken men and were at their wits' end. (28) Then they cried to the LORD in their trouble, and he delivered them from their distress. (29) He made the storm be still, and the waves of the sea were hushed. (30) Then they were glad that the waters were quiet, and he brought them to their desired haven. (31) Let them thank the LORD for his steadfast love, for his wondrous works to the children of man! (32) Let them extol him in the congregation of the people, and praise him in the assembly of the elders.
 - ii. In the Old Testament – God alone can control the weather
 - 1. **Psalms 65:7** who stills the roaring of the seas, the roaring of their waves, the tumult of the peoples,
 - iii. In this story, Mark demands that we understand that Christ does the same.
- h. Jonah comparison – In Jonah, the sailors recognize the presence of God in stilling the storm. Here, the disciples must understand that that same presence is in Christ authority.

6. Verse 40 – A loving Reproach

- a. Have you still no faith –
 - i. They were men of little faith that still did not comprehend the love, care, mercy, and grace of the savior for them.
 - ii. Still no faith – despite what you have seen
 - iii. The word still teaches us that the purposes of the things sent to us are for the building of our faith—not to produce incapacitating fear.

7. Verse 41 – A Profound Effect

- a. Luke 8:25 demonstrates that they were more afraid of Christ after than of the storm previously.
 - i. Here is One that suddenly, completely, and dramatically stilled nature’s fury.
 - ii. Many, when encountering the true nature of Christ, feel likewise:
 - 1. **Isaiah 6:5** And I said: "Woe is me! For I am lost; for I am a man of unclean lips, and I dwell in the midst of a people of unclean lips; for my eyes have seen the King, the LORD of hosts!"
 - 2. **Luke 5:8** But when Simon Peter saw it, he fell down at Jesus' knees, saying, "Depart from me, for I am a sinful man, O Lord."
- b. The purpose of this miracle was for the disciples and for all future disciples- focus in the whole passage is the disciples and not Christ per se.
- c. What Christ reproaches them for and us is for our fear
- d. So far, the disciples have seen that Jesus demonstrates control over audiences, sickness, demons, and also nature itself.
- e. The story ends with a question which we all must answer.

8. Benediction:

- a. **1 Timothy 1:17** To the King of the ages, immortal, invisible, the only God, be honor and glory forever and ever. Amen.