

## Mark 4:35-41

What do you do when the storms come into your life? We see what others do. Some try to tough it out. Others whine and complain. And there are those who become buried by the storms in life. They do not make it; they perish. What about you? Perhaps it depends upon the magnitude of the storm.

In Mark 4 the storm that came upon the disciples was enormous. The wind was so fierce that the waves were breaking into the boat so that it was filling up with seawater. These were experienced fishermen. They had ridden out countless storms before. But this one they could not handle. They were going under, and there was nothing they could do about it.

Maybe you are in the midst of such a storm right now in your life. You see nothing but wind and waves. There is no way through the storm. Sooner or later, your little boat will sink. The way you see it, there is no other outcome that is even remotely possible.

The story before us is not just descriptive; it is prescriptive. Yes, it describes what took place 2,000 years ago on the Sea of Galilee. But it also prescribes what will take place in your life with each and every storm that enters in, no matter how small or how enormous.

Many storms we bring upon ourselves because of our sinfulness. Some storms come simply because we live in a sinful world. The disciples did not cause this storm. It arose, says our text. While making their way across to the other side, this storm suddenly arose and came upon them.

That's life for us. We, like the disciples, are in the process of crossing over to the other side...to the side of heaven. But storms come. They make it difficult for us to keep moving forward. They push us back. They even try to push us under so that we perish. And they would succeed, except that here in the boat with us is our Savior, Jesus.

There He was in the boat with His disciples. But He was sleeping. Is Jesus unconcerned about storms? Did He not care that His disciples were frantic; that their little boat was about to go under? That's what they wanted to know. They woke Him up, crying, "*Teacher, do you not care that we are perishing?*"

Have you ever prayed in that way? "Lord, don't You care about me? Don't You care about the storm that I'm facing right now in my life?" Maybe you also think that Jesus is sleeping on the job. He's supposed to be taking care of you, but from the looks of things, it appears that He really doesn't care what happens to you.

What a horrible prayer!..."*Teacher, don't you care?*" If Jesus didn't care, then why bother Him? Why wake Him? If He doesn't care whether or not you perish, He won't help you anyway. So just let Him sleep.

But though it was a horrible prayer, Jesus answered it anyway. He responded to His disciples not because they had such a beautiful, eloquent prayer; He responded because of their need. The first part of their prayer was horrible, but the last part was spot-on ..."*we are perishing!*" "We cannot save ourselves!" was their cry. "If You don't help us, we will perish!"

That, too, is where we must be in life. Our daily prayer must be, "Jesus, I need You; without You, I will perish; I won't make it across to the other side!" Is this where you are at? Most are not. They are not to the point where they realize their utter helplessness; where they see that unless Jesus delivers them, they will perish.

Where are you right now? Maybe you're not that desperate. You aren't that bad off. You have some good qualities. You're not as bad as some. You have an inner strength to be able to move forward through the storms in life. You're not to the point of perishing.

Well then, friend, you don't need Jesus. Let Him sleep. But at some point in your life, if you are to make it to the other side, you will need to repent. You will need to see your utter helplessness and admit your wretched sinfulness.

Jesus does care. Look what He does for His disciples. Immediately upon rising, He rebuked the storm..."*Peace!*" He said, "*Be still!*" And there was a great calm.

Jesus calmed the greatest storm in your life in the same way. Upon rising...rising up, being raised up high on a cross, He rebuked the wrath of God against you. "Peace!" He said, "Be still!" And it was.

No storm in your life is greater than the storm of God's anger against you on account of your sinfulness. You and I are doomed to perish in hell, and there is nothing we can do about it. We are helpless to calm the storm of God's wrath. We cannot tell God to be at peace with us. We cannot prevent His anger from burying us in the depths far away from His love. "We are perishing!" is our constant cry. "I am a wretched sinner, O Lord...please forgive me; please deliver me."

Friend, God's storm against you is over. "*Father, forgive them,*" Jesus prayed from His cross. God is at peace with you. Look at the water of your Baptism. The waves have ceased. The water is calm. Your sins are forgiven. The storm is over. Jesus endured it for you. God's storm tore into Him with great fury, but now God's anger has been stilled. And it will never rise up against you again. As you come to the Lord's Supper today, and always, you are assured that God's storm against you is at an end, for the words "Peace! Be still!" are attached and connected to this Sacrament.

Now listen to this...every storm that comes now into your life cannot cause you to perish, even though it has that power. But you have Christ with you and for you. When the storms come, go quickly to the calm waters of your Baptism. There you have peace. There is God's comfort for you.

Since the great storm of God's wrath is at an end, why do storms still come? Out of His mercy, friend, out of mercy. Would you turn to Jesus if there was no storm in your life? Would you return to your Baptism? Would you hunger for the Sacrament? Would you be driven to the Word of God and to prayer? No you wouldn't, and neither would I.

God loves you too much to allow your little boat to sail happily through life. He keeps the storms coming so that we never stray from the side of our Savior. And with every storm, we know where to turn. Jesus is here for you, and so are His words, "*Peace! Be still!*" Amen.