

Mk 4:35-41 (ESV) On that day, when evening had come, he said to them, “Let us go across to the other side.”⁽³⁶⁾ And leaving the crowd, they took him with them in the boat, just as he was. And other boats were with him.⁽³⁷⁾ And a great windstorm arose, and the waves were breaking into the boat, so that the boat was already filling.⁽³⁸⁾ But he was in the stern, asleep on the cushion. And they woke him and said to him, “Teacher, do you not care that we are perishing?”⁽³⁹⁾ And he awoke and rebuked the wind and said to the sea, “Peace! Be still!” And the wind ceased, and there was a great calm.⁽⁴⁰⁾ He said to them, “Why are you so afraid? Have you still no faith?”⁽⁴¹⁾ And they were filled with great fear and said to one another, “Who then is this, that even wind and sea obey him?”

1. Background: Jesus and His disciples have had a full day of exhausting ministry

- A. It’s been hot – crowds have been huge – Their day has been busy, noisy, chaotic
- B. Finally evening arrives and Jesus being exhausted from the day’s labor
 - Decides to take His disciples across the lake to a place that is quieter so they can rest
 - 1). But here on the Sea of Galilee an ordinary boat ride is going to turn into an extraordinary event
 - 2). Jesus is going to take His disciples into the classroom – lessons they needed to learn

Transition: Let’s pick up the narrative in v. 35 with the Lord’s command

Mk 4:35-36 (ESV) On that day, when evening had come, he said to them, “Let us go across to the other side.”⁽³⁶⁾ And leaving the crowd, they took him with them in the boat, just as he was. And other boats were with him.

1. Nothing out of the ordinary here

- A. A group of tired ministers getting into a boat (Grk. Large fishing boat with sails. Not a row boat)
 - 1). They leave for a time of much needed rest
- B. Jesus moves to the stern of the boat where He falls into a deep sleep

Transition: So it’s a peaceful scene – but that is going to be shattered by a violent storm

- A. It is in this storm we will learn some valuable lessons

Outline: We will break this up into four sections

- A. Lessons from the *severe storm*
- B. Lessons from the *sleeping Savior*
- C. Lessons from the *sudden stillness*
- D. Lessons from the *Savior’s scrutiny*

I. LESSONS FROM THE SEVERE STORM

Mk 4:37 (ESV) And a great windstorm arose, and the waves were breaking into the boat, so that the boat was already filling.

1. Violent storms weren’t unusual on this lake

- A. It’s located 638 feet below sea level – surrounded with mountains with deep ravines
 - 1). Those ravines act like gigantic funnels that focus the wind down onto the lake
- B. Not unusual for severe storms to suddenly happen with no warning
 - 1). But this one must have been extraordinarily violent
 - Because these fisherman – used to dealing with storms on the lake – are terrified by this one

2. The scene

- A. You have this boat being thrown about – waves crashing over the side
 - 1). Water is filling boat threatening to sink it
- B. These hardened fisherman are terrified – feeling helpless against this onslaught of nature

Transition: That’s the background – let’s move to the lessons to be learned from this event

- A. We will see 5 as we move along

Lessons Learned from This Storm

1. **First lesson: We learn Christ's disciples aren't exempt from difficulty**

- A. We tend to think trials are unusual for a believer unless we've really messed up = sin
 - 1). It's true sin brings trials – ex. Jonah – storm sent to turn him from his rebellion
 - 2). If you're living in sin you should expect storms – the Father's discipline
- B. But these disciples were right in the middle of God's will
 - 1). They were there *because they had obeyed* Christ's command
 - a). Therefore in this instance – *following Christ sent them into difficulty*

Question: Why did Jesus send them out there? Didn't He know the storm was coming? *Of course He did!*
AND If He knew the storm was coming then why did He still send them out onto that lake?

Answer: Because the storm was that day's *curriculum*

- A. God MUST send His people into storms (trials) *because they teach lessons only storms can teach*

Transition: Brings us to the second lesson we learn from the disciples experiencing this storm

2. **Second lesson: Trials and difficulties are necessary for the believer to grow**

- A. Without difficulty we remain shallow – immature and ineffective
- B. Because God loves us He will send trials because they are so necessary and beneficial

JC Ryle: "By affliction God shows us our emptiness and weakness, draws us to the throne of grace, purifies our affections, weans us from the world and makes us long for heaven. ON the resurrection morning we will all say, "It was good for me to be afflicted" (Ps 119:71). *We will thank God for every storm."*

Thought: We need to see the benefits in them – for our own joy when we are experiencing them

How Trials Benefit Us

- A. They help purify us

Ps 119:67 (ESV) Before I was *afflicted* I went astray, *but now I keep your word.*
- B. They drive us back to God when we have strayed

Hosea 5:15 (ESV) I will return again to my place, until they acknowledge their guilt and seek my face, *and in their distress earnestly seek me.*
- C. Trials cause us to turn to God where we experience Him in a greater way
 - 1). The trial provides the wonderful opportunity of experiencing God's comfort

2 Co 1:4 (ESV) (God) who *comforts us in all our affliction...*
 - 2). The trial that drives us to God provides the opportunity to experience His love in a greater way

Ro 5:3-5 (ESV) More than that, we *rejoice in our sufferings*, knowing that suffering produces endurance, ⁽⁴⁾ and endurance produces character, and character produces hope, ⁽⁵⁾ and hope does not put us to shame, *because God's love has been poured into our hearts through the Holy Spirit who has been given to us.*

 - a). We see His love in trials that are different than in times of ease – different perspectives
- D. Our trials cause spiritual growth

Jas 1:2-4 (ESV) Count it all joy, my brothers, when you meet trials of various kinds, ⁽³⁾ for you know that the testing of your faith produces steadfastness (perseverance). ⁽⁴⁾ And let steadfastness have its full effect, that you may be perfect (mature) and complete, lacking in nothing.

 - 1). Trials produce perseverance – the ability to continue doing the right thing regardless of the resistance
 - a). We remain weak without trials – we give up too easily before trials change us
 - b). You can tell seasoned saints when trouble hits – they carry on – they don't panic
 - 2). Notice what it says – as we continue doing that right thing even when it's hard
 - a). That is when character (Christlikeness) is fashioned
 - b). So perseverance is necessary to grow in Christlikeness

BUT it is the trials produce that perseverance

Thought: So Paul says in Romans 5 to *“rejoice”* when we’re suffering in times of trial
James says to *“count it all joy”* when we’re in times of trial

- A. Not saying we rejoice because of the pain the trial brings – we’re not masochists
 - 1). But I can rejoice because I know what that pain is producing – the end result
Jas 1:2–3 (ESV) Count it all *joy*, my brothers, when you meet trials of various kinds, ⁽³⁾ *for you know...*
- B. Here we see a key in having consistent joy – even when it is painful - it starts with our thinking
 - 1). We must run every circumstance in our life through the truth – what *we know* from Scripture
 - a). I know this trial is necessary to fashion in me what I long to be
 - b). I know this is necessary for my faith to grow – my character to be fashioned
 - c). This trial is going to produce something that makes the pain worth it

How Paul puts it: Eph 2:8-10 (NIV) For it is by grace you have been saved, through faith--and this not from yourselves, it is the gift of God-- (9) not by works, so that no one can boast. (10) *For we are God's workmanship...*

- 1). “Workmanship” Poema – His poem – He’s making a masterpiece out of you
 - a). One of the main tools He will use to sculpt us is trials

Transition: Lessons so far

- A. Saints aren’t exempt from trials – they are necessary even when we are in God’s will
- B. Trials are never wasted pain – we can have joy because we know what they are producing
 - 1). Therefore I must remind myself of this – it is worth it – this pain is necessary and valuable
- C. Back to the storm where will see some more lessons

II. LESSONS FROM THE SLEEPING SAVIOR

We have the storm raging – the boat flooding – the disciples panicking – and the Savior sleeping

Mk 4:38 (ESV) But he was in the stern, asleep on the cushion.

1. Here we get insight into the incarnation (Jesus both God and man)

- A. In a moment He will display His *divinity* = Calming the storm with a word
But now we become aware of His *humanity* = He is absolutely exhausted
 - 1). Sound asleep in the midst of something that should make sleeping impossible
- B. Shows His body was subject to tiredness just like ours
 - 1). Scripture also tells us He got hungry, thirsty, experienced pain just like we do

2. We also get a great illustration of the peace available to the Christian

- A. Jesus is always the example of what the Christian can and should be like – what we can experience
 - 1). And in the middle of these frightening circumstances He is experiencing this deep peace

Question: How could Jesus have such peace during such circumstances?

- A. Here we see another thought we must add to what we’ve already seen

3. **Third lesson: He was living in absolute dependence upon God the Father! He is thinking Biblically – resting in who God is!**

- A. He *knew* what God was like – that He was in total control of all things including the weather
 - 1). We must not forget God – His character when we are facing adversity
 - 2). We have to preach to ourselves
“Think Bill. God is sovereign and in control of every aspect of this!”
“He promised all things will for your good. He will control all things so that they do!”

“So rest. You will see His goodness like you always have”

Point: In times of trial you must think Biblically – I can’t let my emotions control me!

- A. I see Christians 20-30 years in the Lord – and every situation throws them for a loop
 - 1). They don’t stop and think – what does the Bible say about this? How does it tell me to respond?
- B. But to know what the Bible says you must read it! That is the problem so much of the time

Ro 12:2 (ESV) Do not be conformed to this world, but be transformed by the renewal of your mind...

- 1). To govern how you think you must replace the lies your emotions tell you with truth
 - a). Emotions yell at you all the “What if’s” – we listen and we are terrified
- 2). The only way to fight that is to silence our emotions with God’s truth
 - a). God is in control of all the “What if’s” – they all will work for my good
- 3). You see the peace godly thinking produced in Jesus – asleep in the storm
See the same thing with King David – surrounded with enemies

Psa 3:5 (NIV) *I lie down and sleep*; I wake again, *because the LORD* sustains me.

- a). I will not lie awake all night worried – because *I know* God is in control

Question: What do you do when trials hit your life – just react – or do you stop and think?

- A. Do you force truth into the situation – or just let your emotions bully you?
- B. You don’t have to be defeated by every adversity
 - 1). God has given you truth that is powerful enough to bring joy and peace into your life
 - a). But you must read it – understand it – and apply it

Transition: So Jesus is asleep – let’s look at the disciple’s reaction – it is a bit different

The Disciples Reaction to a Sleeping Savior

They get upset and they rebuke Him: Mk 4:38 (ESV) But he was in the stern, asleep on the cushion. And they woke him and said to him, *“Teacher, do you not care that we are perishing?”*

1. Does that sound familiar at all?

- A. Same reaction many have when storms roll into their lives
“God don’t you care about me? You must not if you’re allowing something like this to happen!”

2. They were overwhelmed – they thought they were finished = Perish

- A. The way it is isn’t it? We get into a trial and we think we’ll never make it
“This trial is to much for me, it’s going to destroy me AND where is God? Doesn’t He care?”

Summary: Let’s add another thought to our mini-theology on trials

First lesson: We’ve seen every child of God will experience trials

Second lesson: We’ve seen every trial is sent for our good – to develop us and NOT to destroy us

Third lesson: We’ve seen we have to remind ourselves of Biblical truth – not just react emotionally

- A. God is in control of all this – it will work for our good
This trial has tremendous value in what it is producing in my life – it is worth it

3. Fourth lesson: God will not give us more than we can bear

1 Cor 10:13 (NIV) No temptation has seized you except what is common to man. And *God is faithful; he will not let you be tempted beyond what you can bear...*

- A. Because God is in control – He sets the limits of every trial within the boundaries of what we can bear
 - 1). We may think we can’t handle it – Lord I’m being crushed – I can’t carry on!
- B. But in God’s wisdom He knows the precise amount of pressure it will take to change us
 - 1). But it will never be too much pressure that will destroy us
 - a). Again – here is Biblical truth we must tell ourselves – preach to ourselves

Point: We are building a foundation of Biblical thinking to enable us to handle our trials better

A. Regardless of how you feel – this is way you must think – *put your emotions in their place with Truth*

Transition: So the storm is raging – the disciples are panicking and accusing Jesus of not caring

A. They don't realize the storm is sent because He does care – He wants them to grow

B. They don't realize every wave is under His control and that boat is being held by a divine hand

Lessons from the Storm – Lessons from the Sleeping Savior

III. LESSONS FROM THE SUDDEN STILLNESS

Mk 4:38-39 (ESV) But he was in the stern, asleep on the cushion. And they woke him and said to him, "Teacher, do you not care that we are perishing?" (39) And he awoke and rebuked the wind and said to the sea, "Peace! Be still!" And the wind ceased, and there was a great calm.

They do what they need to do to wake Him – they rebuke Him for what they perceive to be a lack of concern

1. Jesus arises – calmly says to the storm "Peace! Be still!" = immediate calm, glass

A. Important – Peace **AND** be still

1). He could say "Peace" and the winds could stop – but maybe that is coincidence – He got lucky

2). So He adds "Be still" – the sea is glass – proving there is no coincidence there

B. After a large storm waves remain stirred up for hours afterwards – NOT THIS TIME

1). He simple says "Be still!" – and the sea obeys!

Thought: Put yourself into this scene – imagine what it was like

A. Wind is whistling – sails whipping – waves crashing – boat is creaking and filling – disciples yelling
Its loud, noisy, chaotic and horrifying – *man seems so helpless against this raging nature*

B. Then Jesus arises – says three words "Peace! Be still!" = immediate calm – silence

The sea that was raging 10 seconds ago is now glass! The boat that was battered isn't even rocking now!

1). Their jaws must have dropped – probably slumped into the seats wide-eyed and confused

In a state of shock. "Uhhhhhhhh.....what just happened?"

2. Now they are really afraid

Mk 4:41 (ESV) And they were filled with great fear and said to one another, "*Who then is this, that even the wind and the sea obey him?*"

A. The power of the wind was terrifying but we've seen wind before

We've never seen anybody tell the wind to stop and it obeys!

B. They had seen many miracles before – but this one shocked them

1). It's one thing to control a demon – but this! – three words and Nature bows to Him

Transition:! Brings us to our next point in our theology of trials

3. Lesson Five: Adversity is just an opportunity God uses to show His greatness

A. How many times does God send trouble into our lives to do this

1). To show us how much greater He is than this impossible obstacle

B. Isn't that what He did at the Red Sea? Remember how He orchestrated that situation

1). Sea in front – mountains to left and right – Pharaoh closing in from behind

2). God puts them into this impossible situation to show His greatness

He just opens up the Red Sea and they walk across on dry ground

Point: God sets up circumstances to exalt Himself and to increase their faith

A. Same thing with this storm! To let them see God in a very real way! For their growth – confidence

Transition: They had just been in God's classroom to learn such valuable lessons

A. Let's see what this would do in their lives

Practical Application from The Lessons Learned in The Storm

Here is part of that good that trials bring into our lives – how they shape us

1. They got a greater glimpse of God's greatness

A. God set up these circumstances to pull back the veil for them to see what He's like

- 1). To see how powerful He is! To see that nothing is too hard for Him

Thought: To do this He must orchestrate circumstances that are impossible for you to manage

A. See that with the raising of Lazarus – Mary sends messengers – tell Jesus he's sick

But Jesus waits until he dies – Why? He's waiting until the circumstances are impossible

- 1). Healing a fever is nice – raising a man from the dead is amazing!
- 2). Why did He do this? Jesus said He did it so His disciples would believe

Point: He put His power on display to teach them He could handle anything that came into their lives

A. What seems impossible to us is easy for Him

- 1). The only way to learn that is through trials – where we experience His greatness personally
Where we are put into situations that overwhelm us – that are beyond us

Transition: As we go through these and see His power – see His care – see His love for us

A. The next thing happens – we grow in our confidence in Him – and we start to rest

2. They were learning to depend upon Him

A. Notice how all this worked – the trial was designed to drive them to an end of themselves

- 1). They had tried to handle the situation – finally had to admit they couldn't
 - a). This caused them to cry out to Jesus for help

B. The lesson they were learning – when his children cry to Him – He hears – He cares

- 1). It was a living illustration of 1 Peter 5:7
1 Pe 5:7 (ESV) casting *all* your anxieties on him, *because he cares for you.*

C. They were learning they could depend upon Him

- 1). Their faith in His love and their confidence in His help was growing

Question: What teaches us to do this? Trials!

A. Trials force us to Him – to cast our cares upon Him – He answers – our confidence grows

- 1). We learn more and more to rest
- 2). I think Christian growth is seen – when we rest more quickly – we don't panic

Summary: We see His greatness – we learn nothing is too hard for Him – we learn to depend upon Him

A. These are all part of that good that trials bring into our life

Transition: We've learned through the severe storm – the sleeping Savior – the sudden stillness

A. One more thing...

IV. LEARNING THROUGH THE SAVIOR'S SCRUTINY

He rebukes the storm and then turns to these shocked disciples and asks an important question

Mk 4:40 (ESV) He said to them, "Why are you so afraid? Have you still no faith?"

Mark 4:40 (NLT) And he asked them, "Why are you so afraid? *Do you still not have faith in me?"*

"After all you've seen me do – after you've witnessed my care and concern for people – you still panic during the storm and question whether I care about you or not!"

1. Don't miss the connection between fear and lack of faith

A. Lack of faith will always result in fear

- 1). Little faith has a hard time trusting God in times of trouble

Finds it difficult to rest in His care and rely upon His help

Point: So Jesus gently rebukes them so they'll see their faith needs to be strengthened

- A. They needed to start acting like people who had seen the things they had been privileged to see
 - 1). They've seen His greatness again and again
 - a). Controlling sickness, demons, nature!
- B. It was time to put into practice what they knew – applying that to their lives
 - 1). It was time to grow up and think correctly – not just react emotionally

2. Application for us

- A. This is an amazing question to ask after all they'd seen Jesus do
“Why are you so afraid? Don't you have faith? After all you've witnessed!”
- B. But could He ask many of us the same thing?
 - 1). How many of us have walked with Him for years – have a lifetime of His faithfulness behind us
 - a). But still when storms come we panic and question God's concern for us

Thought: Is it time we start acting like people who have been recipients of His goodness

Time to start acting like we really believe this book we carry – act like the promises are true

- A. Isn't it time for some of us to put our feelings in their place – to stop allowing them to bully us
 - 1). Your feelings will always lead to panic when things go South on you
Only way to have peace – joy – victory is to CHOOSE to respond to truth rather than emotions
- B. You may not understand what you're going through right now – But you can trust God in it
 - 1). He loves you and will use this for your good – no matter how painful it might seem right now
- C. The storm may be financial – marital – physical – emotional - relational
 - 1). If you'll just seek Him - trust Him – eventually like these disciples on that lake
You'll see His glory – You'll grow – You'll see how God turned it all for your good
 - a). Your emotions may be shouting out PANIC! The Bible whispers REST!
If only you could see what God is doing through this. You would have JOY!

CONCLUSION: LESSONS FROM A STORM

1. Believers who are in the middle of God's will go through trials

- A. Why? Because they are necessary for our growth

2. When we are in trials what are we to do? So we can have peace like Jesus did

- A. We must think Biblically rather than emotionally
 - 1). Thinking Biblically about God who controls the trials – then we can *rest*
 - 2). Thinking Biblically about what God is controlling those trials to do – then we can *rejoice*