

When the Storm Come

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Preacher: Dr. Daniel Heeringa

[0 : 00] Take that girl home with me, my soul. Got me tore up.

I think she's about to get tore up, and that made it worse. I was, not to be personal, but I'm going to be, I was in the shower this morning getting ready to come here about three or four hours ago.

And the Lord just laid on my heart to change my path. And I said, all right, Lord, you're going to have to do that.

So you can tell me afterwards if he did or not. But if you have your Bibles, I want to turn to Mark chapter 4. Mark chapter 4.

I'm going to take an excursion today from our series on the real war because I think life's taken an excursion of sorts and been heavy on my heart.

[1 : 08] In the winter of 2000, we went to Mississippi. We were living here, and we went to Mississippi for Christmas and was on our way back and noticed a bad patch of ice on a bridge on the way back.

Matter of fact, there was a car facing me on the interstate. And so that got my attention. So I slowed down for the next bridge, and it was iced.

And by the time we got about 80 miles down the road, the road was a solid sheet of ice. And I made a decision right in the city, right before it became a solid sheet of ice, whether to continue on or whether to stop.

And in my prophetic ability, I went ahead and moved on and got on a solid sheet of ice.

Cars on both sides of the road, dozens of them that had been abandoned in the night as things iced up. And we had no knowledge that it was even coming.

[2 : 14] I don't know how that happened, but we didn't. A van full of guys went flying by us on that road, and we went over a hill, and they were all laying in the median, you know, rubbing their head.

They looked coherent anyway. We had a nine-month-old in the back seat and a worried mom and dad in the front, and I was blessed to have my wife remind me that my nine-month-old was in the back seat the whole time I was driving.

That was a blessing. It could have been worse. It was bad enough. I know people who've been through a lot more.

When I pastored in South Mississippi, people were marked by Hurricane Camille. It had come through decades before, but they were still marked by it.

And they would tell you that happened before Camille. Or that happened after Camille. In the same way, when I was in college, I preached in churches all over North Carolina, and I spent the night in a home and got up that morning.

[3 : 28] The next morning, went into the bathroom and looked out the window, and everything behind that house had been cleared out. There were loads of trees. I didn't have a clue.

It looked like somebody had just come through and cleaned the land out. When I walked out of the bathroom, I asked the family, I said, was that Hugo? I said, yeah.

People in North Carolina in those days would talk about what happened before Hugo and what happened after Hugo, they were affected by Hugo. When I pastored in North Mississippi, I pastored after Hurricane Katrina, but because the efforts of so many were to help the coastal area, it was a trip that so many of them took to help out, that they were marked by it.

And they would talk about before Katrina and after Katrina, like we do today about COVID, before COVID or after COVID, or 9-11 if you were around then. What happened flying a plane before 9-11 was a whole different deal than it is today.

It was different. And now Helene, or whatever her name is, whether it's trying to survive a storm or the aftermath of one or, to be honest, maybe it's a different kind of storm in your life.

[5 : 00] Maybe what's happened in these last days is somewhat symbolic of what's happening in your life in some ways. Whatever it is, I want to show you some things in Scripture that came to my mind this morning.

And because in this passage, the disciples are, we're in a storm, and the winds were blowing, and the rains were coming, and the waters were rising, but I realize, even in the aftermath of what we've been through, there might even be bigger storms than that.

Mark chapter 4, beginning in verse 35, it says this, On that day, when evening came, he said to them, let us go out across to the other side.

And leaving the crowd, they took him with him, they took him with them in a boat, just as he was, and other boats were with him, and a great windstorm arose, and the waves were breaking into the boat, so that the boat was already filling, but he was in the stern, asleep, on the cushion, and they woke him, and said, Teacher, do you not care that we're perishing?

And he awoke, and rebuked the wind, and said to the sea, peace be still, and the wind ceased, and there was great calm. And he said to them, why are you so afraid?

[6 : 34] Have you still no faith? And they were filled with great fear, and said to one another, who then is this, that even the wind, and the waves, and the sea, obey him.

Big torrential storms, on the Sea of Galilee, are not an oddity, due to the lay of the land around it, it's not a large body of water, about 12 miles long, about 6 miles wide, however, it's in a natural setting, for tremendous storms, it's 600 feet, below sea level, and it is surrounded by hills, it is tropical conditions, at the lake surface, bananas grow there, yet it is chilly nights, in the hills.

The high hills, and the narrow valleys, make for a wind tunnel, that raises the water, and makes boisterous waves, quickly. I've heard Joe Cassie, can be like that here, even more so in Galilee.

It probably happened here, to the disciples, and Jesus in the boat, and we can learn, from that experience, about when storms come. So this morning, and I want to be real efficient, this morning, but when the storm comes, I want you to keep, three things in mind, and I hope I do, as well.

The first one's this, when we don't think, he cares, he does. When we don't think, Jesus cares, he does.

[8 : 19] These were fishermen. They lived on the sea, that's what they did. They had been in storms, before. They had quickly, taken care of these matters, and allowed Jesus to rest, until the storm, was over, is what would be typical, but something was different, about this storm.

The darkness of night, didn't help that, but their storm, was violent. Matthew calls it, a great shaking, a sea quake, is what, could be translated.

And when they looked at Jesus, he was asleep. They woke him up, and said, don't you care? Have you ever, woke God up, and said, don't you care?

Now, I know he never sleeps, I know he never slumbers, but, sometimes his silence, makes us feel like he does. Have you ever felt like, really trying to wake up God, by asking him, don't you care?

I mean, you don't have to admit that, but, for most of us, there's been times, and it could have been, as big a thing, as being picked last, on the kickball team.

[9 : 29] Or, or it, it could have been, when the prom date was late, you know? Or, it could have been, when the car broke down. Could have been, when you was with a sick loved one.

Or, you felt like your family, was crumbling. Or, you had a kid, that was going crazy. Or, a job that was playing out. Or, maybe your health, that you had leaned on, began to stagger.

Or, somebody else is close to you. Maybe you didn't pray about it, maybe you just thought it. Does God really care about this? Well, Jesus, quickly responded, to them.

and he will, quickly respond to you, if you'll turn to him. First Peter, chapter five, verse seven.

And we've been dealing with these verses, and a whole other series. But, but this one, begins first. I mean, this is the first of that section. When he says, cast all your cares, your anxieties on him, because he cares, for you.

[10 : 48] Of, of course he cares. And never think you're alone. Even when God is quiet, he's still in the boat with you, in every wave, that you face.

I promise, but more important than what me promises, he promises. Second thing is this. When we don't think he's in control, he is.

When we doubt that, I mean, can you imagine this situation? This is a sturdy vessel. It's able to hold several men, and no match for the ten foot waves.

It plunges nose first, into a wall of water. Force of the waves, dangerously tip the boat, until the bow seems to be pointing straight up. Just when you think you're going to go backwards, it pitches forward, into a valley of another water.

A dozen set of hands clutch the mass, but one's missing, and he's asleep. Sawed logs in the stern of the boat. Around him, these men are amazed, and a little angry, and they wake him, and they ask him if he cares.

[12 : 05] And with his voice, the storm goes away. It reminds me of the book of Jonah. Jonah was running from God, and he got in a boat, with a bunch of sailors, and a mighty storm came, and everybody called upon their God.

Jonah slept. They were desperate. They had ran out of rabbit's feet, and whatever else, they were leaning on for luck, or hope, or whatever, and so they woke him up, and asked him to call on his God, and when they realized, that he worshiped the real God, they panicked.

And Jonah said, throw me over, and he'll spare you, and they were afraid, if they threw him over, he wouldn't spare them, so they tried their best to row, and then when they threw him over, the sea grew calm.

I want you to notice in this passage, verse 41, verse 41 says, they were terrified, but the storm was gone, but yet they're terrified.

What are they terrified of? They're terrified of his power. They're terrified of him. Who can do this?

[13 : 31] They were no longer concerned about the weather. They were now focused on Jesus. They were now beginning to see him for who he really is, but that only came when they faced a storm, or when they had such a great, great a need that he had to intervene.

They were looking for him to intervene. God allows those things to come so we can see. Sometimes we can't see him calm the winds and the rain if there's not a storm.

In a storm, he's there, right there with us, right here with us.

He's in control, even though I may not feel like he is. Our feelings have nothing to do with the truth of God.

Just because you feel that way don't mean it's true. Because he is who he is is what makes it true. And when you don't think he's in control, he is.

[14 : 45] Lastly is this. When we feel overwhelmed, we need to remember. When we feel overwhelmed, we need to remember.

There were three reasons why these men should have been disturbed in this storm, should not have been disturbed in this storm. One is this. He promised they were going to the other side.

In verse 35, he promises, let us go across to the other side. He already had the destination in mind.

He had that figured out. The second thing is he was with them. They knew the Lord was with them. And the third thing is Jesus was at peace in the midst of the storm.

When I'm on a flight and the flight hits turbulence, you know what I do? I look at the flight attendant. She's flown a lot more than I have.

[15 : 50] And so I look at her or him and see how they respond to that turbulence. And if they're cool, I'm cool. If they start to show a little panic and look at each other, man, I start freaking out.

They don't have any control. Those flight attendants don't have any control over what's taking place on that plane when it comes to turbulence, when it comes to the direction in which we're going.

They have no control. But they've been there before. They've rode the storm before. They've been there. And so if they're cool, I'm cool. I got news for you.

Jesus has already been there. Jesus has been there before. And you know what the difference is? He controls it. He's on it. It's interesting to me that the very storm that made veteran fishermen panic made the Lord Jesus drowsy.

Ain't that interesting? That what put fear in their eyes put him to sleep. That the boat that was a sure tomb to the followers was a steady cradle to Christ.

[17 : 04] I mean, he was so patient with them. He could have told them to be quiet. He could have told them he could have jumped up and angrily stopped the storms.

He could have pointed out their immaturity, but he didn't do any of that. Did Jesus know the storm was coming? It's interesting to me. Before he got in the boat, he was sharing in the previous passages how faith works.

Before he got in the boat, he was sharing how the kingdom grows. Before he got in the boat, he was sharing with them the truths of God.

And now a faith lesson, an object lesson for the disciples. This storm was nothing but the curriculum of God.

And the reality is every storm that we face, that's what it is. I don't mean that we deserve it.

[18 : 08] I don't mean that we understand it. I mean that every storm that we face is an opportunity. I don't believe we face all our storms due to sin.

I mean, people that tell you that, it's not true, but the storm wasn't, this storm wasn't due, their storm wasn't due to sin. I mean, and although our sins can cause storms in our life, they sure can.

Many of them come for other reasons. However, all of them come as God's curriculum, God's life lessons. And do you know what he's teaching us?

Jesus can be trusted in the storms. When we don't think he cares, he does. And when we don't think he's in control, he is.

And when storms come, remember who you're dealing with. Remember what he's done to this point. Because the reality is, the greatest storms that we face are not the winds and the waves.

[19 : 16] They're not even in the deaths and the disappointments. The greatest storm that we face is a lack of belief in our hearts for who God really is. And that's what constrains the Lord from doing what he could do in our lives.

That's what sometimes makes our journey rough. And this is the very reason why all those other storms are allowed to come so that God, who is fully in control, allows them to come so that we can understand.

He's still in control. And we can rest in him. No wonder these men were ready to die for him. And the question is, are we ready to live for him?

Because really all he wants for us is to do is live for him. And I love the way this ends. Because this section ends with a question that they ask one another as they feared the Lord.

They ask, who then is this that even the wind and the sea obey him? And we don't have an answer in the text.

[20 : 32] I mean, we do throughout the gospel. But we don't have an answer at the end of this account. No answer is given.

And I believe it's our responsibility to fill that in ourselves. So I ask you today, who is this that even the waves and the winds obey him?

Who is he to you? With every head bowed and every eye closed, I ask you this morning, have you ever entrusted Jesus to your life?

I mean on a large scale. I mean on a life scale. Have you ever admitted to the sin that separates you from God and asked him to forgive you of that sin?

To come into your life and to cleanse you and to change you? Have you ever surrendered your life to Christ?

[21 : 52] If you haven't, I want you to know he'll accept you as you are. If you feel any pulling toward that at all, it didn't come from you, it came from him. He's calling you to himself. Maybe you're here and you have done that and you've never publicly acknowledged that.

We were supposed to have baptism this morning and the circumstances have changed that. We'll do that next week, the Lord willing. Do you need to do that? Do you need to publicly acknowledge your faith through baptism?

As Jesus showed us by his example and as he commanded us in his commission? Maybe you're here and God's drawing you to First Baptist Church. You feel like this is the place that God would have you to serve.

It's a different kind of day for us today, but it's a day when the doors of the church are open if God's leading you. Maybe you're here and you just need to lay some matters out before the Lord.

You need to entrust him with them. You need to walk in obedience with them. And I want to encourage you in just a moment as we stand and sing, but instead of standing and singing, that you just stand and pray or come down here and pray at this altar.

[23 : 03] I'll be happy to pray with you if that's what you'd like. Whatever. Let's just do business with God while we're here. We've got limbs to move and logs to saw and power to restore and all those things when we leave this place.

But before we leave here, let's just make sure we're right where we need to be with the Lord Jesus. I'm thankful, Lord, that your word tells us that you're right in the midst of the storm with us.

And I pray, dear God, today that you'll walk with each and every one of us. Help us to lean on you. Help us to rely upon you. Help us to trust you, oh God, I pray.

And all that we face and all that we do. Help us to trust you right now and I'll trust you enough to be obedient to follow as you lead, God, I pray. In Jesus' name, amen.

Stand together if you will. Let's sing, but more important than that, obey Christ as he speaks to you.