

**Another Sign of the Kingdom - Mark 4:35-41**  
**Argyle – 10/2/16 – 52 Key Bible Stories**

**Introduction to Scripture**

This morning's Scripture passage begins with the words "That day" and what a day it had been. It began with Jesus teaching a group of folks by the Sea of Galilee. The crowd grew so large, however, that Jesus had to get into a boat with his disciples to teach from off shore so everyone could hear him. The focus of Jesus' teaching that day was the kingdom of God. The kingdom was an important theme for Jesus. He had begun his public ministry by declaring, "The time has come. The kingdom of God is near. Repent and believe the good news."

But what exactly is the kingdom of God? That is the question Jesus was attempting to answer that day by the sea. Using a series of parables he taught about how God's rule was breaking into the world. But Jesus didn't just talk about the kingdom, he demonstrated the kingdom. Through a series of miracles, Jesus showed that the kingdom had come and that he was the one who had brought it. In calming the storm, casting out demons from a man from Gerasenes, healing the woman who had been bleeding for 12 years and raising Jairus' daughter from the dead, Jesus was not only addressing human needs. These were signs that God's kingdom was breaking into the world. God was moving to reverse the disastrous consequences of the fall.

We know from Revelation 21 that when Jesus returns and the kingdom is completely established there will be no more death or mourning or crying of pain, because those things will have been done away with. The curse of the sin will be reversed by the work of Jesus. John the Baptist sent his followers to ask Jesus if he was the Messiah they had been looking for. Jesus answered, “Go and tell John what you hear and see: the blind receive their sight and the lame walk, lepers are cleansed and the deaf hear, and the dead are raised to life and the poor have good news preached to them.” These were all signs that God’s reign was breaking into the world. This morning we are going to be looking at one of the signs that God’s kingdom. (Recite Mark 4:35-41) That day, when evening came ... (Pray)

I am going to use the three questions in this passage as my outline this morning.

### **Don’t You Care?**

As they were crossing to the other side of the Sea of Galilee a violent storm suddenly came up and these seasoned fishermen were afraid. Jesus, however, was asleep on a cushion in the stern of the boat. I love the little details that Scripture includes. Jesus wasn’t just asleep, but he was in the stern sleeping on a cushion. This was clearly an eyewitness account of this incident with details like this and the presence of other boats that don’t add substance to the story. The disciples woke Jesus up and said, “Teacher, don’t you care if we drown?” Jesus, don’t you care?

It is normal in suffering to ask God, “Don’t you care?” What is the answer? Of course, God cares. How do we know that? Many of us learned a song when we were children that answers that question. “Jesus loves me this I know, for the Bible tells me so.” All throughout the Bible we are reminded of God’s provision and protection and love in the midst of the challenges of this world. Jesus said not to worry about what we will eat because the God who provides for birds of the air will provide for us. And don’t worry about what we will wear because the God who clothes the lilies of the field will cloth us. And don’t worry about people who may threaten us because God even knows how many hairs are on our heads. That is how interested he is in us.

Of course, the greatest demonstration of God’s love for us is in the sending of his Son to die for us. “For God so loved the world that he gave his one and only Son...” Paul spoke powerfully of God’s love for us in Romans 8. “What, then, shall we say in response to these things? If God is for us, who can be against us?”

<sup>32</sup> He who did not spare his own Son, but gave him up for us all—how will he not also, along with him, graciously give us all things? (Romans 8:31-32) Paul went on to ask “Who shall separate us from the love of Christ?” He suggested some possibilities. “Shall trouble or hardship or persecution or famine or nakedness or danger or sword?” His conclusion is a classic that we should all be familiar with. “No, in all these things we are more than conquerors through him who loved us.

<sup>38</sup> For I am convinced that neither death nor life, neither angels nor demons, neither

the present nor the future, nor any powers, <sup>39</sup> neither height nor depth, nor anything else in all creation, will be able to separate us from the love of God that is in Christ Jesus our Lord.” (Romans 8:37-39)

Donald English summarizes it this way in his commentary on this passage, “We do not judge his care for us, nor the state of our discipleship, by the roughness of the seas over which we will sail.” (*The Message of Mark*)

“Jesus, don’t you care?” Of course, Jesus cares for and he demonstrated that in the giving of his life for us. Although we will experience suffering because of our own brokenness and the brokenness of this world, nothing, absolutely nothing will ever separate us from the love of God in Christ Jesus our Lord.

### **Why Are You So Afraid?**

Once Jesus had calmed the storm, he turned to his disciples and asked, Why are you so afraid?” When Jesus asked someone a question, it was never because he didn’t know the answer. It was always to make a point. He knew the disciples were afraid because of the storm, but he wanted them to realize that as long as he was present, there was no need to be afraid. He was in control. That meant that he might calm the storm as he did or he might let them drown. Either way he was in control of the situation and his will would be done. And, we should always want God’s will, even when it is not our will. And there is the rub for us. Sometimes our greatest desire is not God’s will, but our own.

Jesus wrestled with that in the Garden of Gethsemane. He knew that he was heading toward a brutal death at the hands of the Romans. Like any of us when we are facing suffering, he didn't want to go through it. So he prayed, "Take this cup from me." And then he added, "...yet not my will, but yours be done." How suffering can be God's will is one of the most challenging issues that we face, but we know from Scripture and even from our own experience that it sometimes is. The promise of God is that he will always be with us and because of that, we don't need to be afraid. So David wrote, "Yea though I walk through the valley of the shadow of death, I will fear no evil because Thou art with me." Another psalmist wrote, "God is our refuge and strength a very present help in trouble. Therefore, we will not fear though the earth give way and the mountains fall into the heart of the sea, though its waters roar and foam and the mountains quake with their surging." (Psalms 46:1-3) Speaking through the prophet Isaiah God said, "Fear not, for I am with you. Be not dismayed for I am your God. I will strengthen you, I will help you, I will uphold you with my righteous right hand." (Isaiah 41:10).

"Why are you so afraid?" That the point of Jesus' question was to help the disciples recall some of these verses and remember this important truth. This incident was a favorite of the early church when they were going through persecution. In fact, in early Christian art, the church was sometimes depicted as a boat in the midst of a storm with Jesus in the midst. There was nothing to fear.

## Who is This?

The final question is the one the disciples asked one another once the wind and the waves calmed down. “Who is this?” “Who is this? Even the wind and the waves obey him!” Even though this is early in Jesus’ ministry, the disciples had seen some amazing things. They had seen Jesus heal a number of people and cast out an evil spirit. So, they knew he had great power, but telling the wind and waves to be quiet, that was new territory. Who indeed is this guy?

Their knowledge of the Old Testament should have helped them. In talking about God’s great power in Psalm 65, David wrote, “You faithfully answer our prayers with awesome deeds, O God our savior. You are the hope of everyone on earth, even those who sail on distant seas. <sup>6</sup> You formed the mountains by your power and armed yourself with mighty strength. <sup>7</sup> You quieted the raging oceans with their pounding waves and silenced the shouting of the nations.”(Psalm 65:5-7) In Psalms 107 we read, “He spoke, and the winds rose, stirring up the waves. <sup>26</sup> Their ships were tossed to the heavens and plunged again to the depths; the sailors cringed in terror. <sup>27</sup> They reeled and staggered like drunkards and were at their wits’ end. <sup>28</sup> “LORD, help!” they cried in their trouble, and he saved them from their distress. <sup>29</sup> He calmed the storm to a whisper and stilled the waves. <sup>30</sup> What a blessing was that stillness as he brought them safely into harbor! (Psalm 107:25-30)

What was true of the God of Israel was true of Jesus. Jesus' calming the storm was not just an exercise of great power that rescued the disciples. It was a revelation that Jesus was God in their midst. Who is this? He is Christ, the Son of God, the long awaited Messiah and his kingdom was breaking into the world.

### **Conclusion**

In this life we will encounter storms. Because of the damage that sin has brought on us and creation, we will experience all kinds of suffering. We can avoid some suffering by not being stupid, but we will still experience lots of suffering in our lives. This story of Jesus calming the wind and the waves will be one we want to remember in those tough times. It will remind us that our suffering is not because Jesus doesn't care about us. And it will remind us that we are not alone. Jesus, the Son of God is always with us. With him in our boat, there is no reason to be afraid. And he told us at the very beginning how to invite him into our boat. "The kingdom of God is near. Repent and believe the good news."