

062324 English Sermon "Why are you afraid?" Mark 4:35-41

1. Today, we delve into a passage from the Gospel of Mark, where Jesus demonstrates his authority over nature itself. As we read Mark 4:35-41, we encounter a moment that reveals not only Jesus' divine power but also challenges us to reflect deeply on our own faith and trust in him.

The Gospel of Mark 4:35-41 recounts the story of Jesus calming a storm while he and his disciples were crossing the Sea of Galilee in a boat, with other boats accompanying them. Suddenly, a furious storm arose, causing large waves to break over the boat. The disciples, including experienced fishermen, were terrified as the boat was in danger of sinking. While all this was happening, Jesus was asleep in the stern of the boat on a cushion. The disciples woke him, fearful for their lives, and asked him if he cared that they were about to drown.

Jesus stood up, rebuked the wind and commanded the waves to be still. Immediately, the storm ceased, and there was a great calm. Jesus then questioned his disciples, asking why they were afraid in the presence of Jesus and whether they still lacked faith despite witnessing his miracles. The disciples were awestruck and terrified by Jesus' power over nature. They wondered aloud who Jesus really was, realizing that even the wind and the waves obeyed his command.

2. According to the Gospels in the New Testament, there were two occasions when storms at sea put Jesus' disciples in danger. One was the story from today's Gospel of Mark. While Jesus was in the boat with his disciples, they encountered a storm. The other was the story of Jesus walking on the water and coming to the disciples while they were struggling in a stormy sea. In the former, Jesus was in the boat with the disciples, and in the latter, Jesus was not in the boat with the disciples. In both cases, the disciples encountered storms. Even if Jesus was in a boat, or even if Jesus was not in a boat, a storm could come in their lives.

Let's think for a moment about the story of Jesus walking on water. After Jesus performed the miracle of five loaves of bread and two fish, he went alone to pray and then walked on the sea and came to the boat where his disciples were. At that time, there was a storm in the sea, but the disciples said they were afraid because of the storm, and when they saw Jesus, they were terrified again! They were afraid and yelled out, "Yikes, it is a ghost!" Then, the Lord said, " Take

heart! It is I. Do not be afraid."

And Peter makes a famous saying here. "Lord, if it is you, command me to come on the water!" The other disciples were feared and couldn't say anything, but Peter boldly spoke to Jesus. Clearly, Peter was special, wasn't he? However, while Peter was walking on the water to get to Jesus, and he looked at the Lord and didn't drown, but when he saw the winds, he got scared and lost sight of the Lord and drowned. We too can often be afraid of situations and realities. We are bound to fall into fear, and when we do, we need to turn to the Lord.

Finally, Peter confessed his weakness of faith by saying, "Lord, save me," as he was drowning. Jesus picked him up like a fallen child and said, "O you of little faith, why did you doubt?"

3. There are so many fears in the world today. It seems that the more complex the world becomes, the more things there are to fear. Teens are afraid of being alone, young children are afraid of their first day at school, and college students are afraid of the outcome of a test and their future. We are afraid of failure, rejection, disappointment, and the unknown. We are afraid of hurricanes, earthquakes, and fires that ravage our land and our lives. We are afraid of not being chosen, but on the other hand, we are also afraid of being chosen.

Just as the disciples faced a literal storm on the Sea of Galilee, we all encounter storms in our lives—times of uncertainty, fear, and chaos. In those moments, do we trust in Jesus, believing that he has power over every situation? Or do we, like the disciples, allow fear to overwhelm our faith?

The disciples asked each other, "Who is this? Even the wind and the waves obey him!" This question echoes through the ages to us today. Who do you say Jesus is? Is he merely a great teacher, a moral guide, or do you recognize him as the Son of God, with authority over all creation? Our answer to this question shapes our entire worldview and relationship with him.

Let me conclude my sermon with a real story. A church was planning a large outdoor service and a picnic in an outdoor park. The pastor thought the only thing they could not have was Rain. Three weeks in advance he began to talk to God. He told God how long that he has been serving Him. He told the Lord that he hasn't asked Him for much, but he will ask Him for one thing. He needs No Rain for that weekend. He cannot have rain, because it will ruin everything.

Saturday night he spoke to God about his prayers and talked to Him again about no rain. That night it started to sprinkle and he is thinking that this is too dangerous with all the electrical cords everywhere. It sprinkled that night but it wasn't bad enough to mess everything up.

He went home and got down on his knees and said, "Dear Lord. it sprinkled tonight and I have a heart to let you slide on this, but tomorrow I can't have this. Remember how long I have been serving you and I'm doing some good stuff. I really need you to help me out here." The next morning, he got up, and it was pouring down rain. He looked outside and kept telling himself Keep My Faith Up.... Keep My Faith Up.... As he drives out from the parsonage, he leaves his windshield wipers off and try to Keep My Faith. He gets to the park and it is pouring rain.

There is a huddled group of fifteen people in the middle that start the service with their hands high thanking the Lord, and him on the side with his hands up complaining. "Come On I have been praying for weeks about this, and the very thing I ask, you are not doing. God Come On.. How many times have I served you, and put in overtime for heaven. These people are worshiping and they see me on the side, thinking – Oh our Pastor is worshiping...and it encourages them to worship more." But he was on the side complaining and grumbling. Now all of a sudden it seemed like time stopped.

He heard God speak to him so clearly. In the midst of his grumbling he heard God say, "son, you are more interested in the absence of Rain than you are in the presence of God. For the last three weeks you never asked once for my presence. You only had a tirade about removing problems. If I stopped the rain, but you did not have my presence, this church would become a barren desert. On the other hand, if my presence were there, regardless of the rain I would start a revival that would sweep the community."

Dear beloved sisters and brothers in Christ, don't ask for the absence of problems. Ask for the presence of God and He will take care of the rest. Because God is our Heavenly Father and He is a good shepherd. Just as David said in the 23rd Psalm, "Even though I walk through the valley of the shadow of death, I will fear no evil, for you are with me; your rod and your staff, they comfort me." May we become hungrier for the presence of God. Fairfield Grace, may God's grace, peace, goodness, and mercy be with you, your family, your business, your studies, and with the lives of your children. To Christ be thanks and praise. Amen.