



# Jesus Calms the Storm

FAMILIES IN TRUTH

Matthew 8:23-27; Mark 4:35-41



Jesus taught like no one had ever taught before. He came to teach about the Kingdom of God. A handful of men gave up everything to follow Him and learn more. These disciples watched as Jesus performed many miracles. But they were about to be placed right in the center of one of these miracles. How would they react? What would they learn about faith?

## Day #1: Fear

The disciples had been hanging out with Jesus for some time. They had seen and heard amazing things. He was completely different than anyone they had ever met, or even heard of. They knew He was special, but they weren't yet sure that He was the Son of God (Mark 4:44).

Large crowds gathered everywhere Jesus was. One evening, after teaching next to a big lake (called the Sea of Galilee), Jesus told His disciples it was time to go to the other side. They all climbed into a boat and the exhausted Jesus fell asleep.

Several of the disciples had been professional fishermen. It seemed they had spent half their lives on this very lake. They certainly knew how to handle a boat. But suddenly, very strong winds began to blow.

**+** *A wild storm came up. Waves crashed over the boat. It was about to sink. Jesus was in the back, sleeping on a cushion. The disciples woke Him up. They said, "Teacher! Don't you care if we drown?" - Mark 4:37-38*

The disciples were gripped with fear. They lacked faith that Jesus had this situation under control. They doubted that Jesus could save them. The disciples, themselves, were like the waves:

*Anyone who doubts is like an ocean wave tossed around in a storm. - James 1:6b CEV*

**\*** **ONLY with your parent's permission**, grab two cushions off of your sofa and stack them on the floor. **While holding your parent's hand**, walk on the cushions. How does this feel? (It is wobbly, and it isn't firm; you could fall off at any moment.) This is like living in fear. You are off balance as you wonder if something bad is about to happen. Now, walk across a wooden or tile floor. How does this feel different? (It is solid; you can stand firm.) This is like standing on God's promises. You are sure-footed and have confidence to take your next step.

When trouble comes, do you want to be tossed around by fear and doubt? Or do you want to stand firm on your faith in the Creator of the universe? This week, we will look at how to have more faith.

## Day #2: Still Waters

The boat was sinking and the disciples were panicking! Frantically, they called out to Jesus.

**+** *(Jesus) got up and ordered the wind to stop. **He said** to the waves, "Quiet! Be still!" Then the wind died down. And it was completely calm. - Mark 4:39*

Instantly, the elements obeyed Jesus' words, and the violent storm ended.

If we back up to the very beginning of the Bible, we see a similar scene. Using just the power of His voice, God spoke everything into existence.

**God said**, "Let there be light." And there was light. - Genesis 1:3

God **spoke** and created the sky. By His words, the enormous sun and dazzling stars came into being. Through His command, came every colorful fish and soaring bird, every useful plant and unique animal. Everything God created was very good (Genesis 1:10, 12, 18). It was in perfect order. Things were just as they should be.

Then, thousands of years later, that same voice spoke out of a small fishing boat, in middle of the Sea of Galilee. Jesus **spoke** to the unruly storm and it was calm. As in creation, God spoke, and things were peaceful and orderly; things were as they should be.

*The voice of the Lord is powerful. The voice of the Lord is majestic. - Psalm 29:4*

**\*** The **SAME VOICE** that formed the planets, carved out volcanoes, and calmed the Sea of Galilee, wants to speak to you! Read the Bible - it is God's word, written like a love letter to you. Listen for His voice (John 10:27). He will speak to you in the stillness of your heart (Psalm 46:10).

Know that when God speaks to you, He brings order and peace to any situation.

## Day #3: Faith

Are you sure that the sun will rise tomorrow morning? You saw it rise today and yesterday, but you cannot see tomorrow! So, how can you be sure?

We are all certain the sun will rise tomorrow, because it always has. We have seen it ourselves, and the history books never tell of a day without a sunrise. Because of our own experience and the testimony of those who

Day #3 continued:

lived before us, we all have **faith** that the sun will rise tomorrow. We **know** it will rise even though we can't yet see it happen. The Bible defines faith:



*Faith is being sure of what we hope for. It is being certain of what we do not see.* - Hebrews 11:1

After Jesus calmed the storm, He spoke to His disciples about their lack of faith (Mark 4:40).

Jesus wanted His disciples to have **faith in Him**. He wanted them to know that He was the Son of God who had come to save them from their sin.

*Without faith it isn't possible to please God. Those who come to God must believe that He exists. And they must believe that He rewards those who look to him.* - Hebrews 11:6



Do you have faith? Do you believe God exists? Do you believe He created everything? Do you know that He sent His Son to die on a cross to take away the penalty for your sin? Are you certain that you are adopted into His family and are a part of His kingdom? Are you certain that He is all-powerful, and that He will always do what is best for you? We learn from our own experiences with God and from the testimony of those who have gone before us that God is all these things and more! Knowing these things, as sure as you know the sun will rise tomorrow, is having faith.

If you are not certain of these things, ask God to increase your faith, just as the disciples asked (Luke 17:5).

## Day #4: Move Over Fear

Fill a cup with water and set it in your kitchen sink. The cup is completely full of water, and there is no room for anything else. Now, take your fist and put it into the cup. What happens to the water? It had to get out of the way! Your hand was stronger than the water, and both could not fill the cup at the same time.

After Jesus calmed the storm, He had this to say:



*He said to His disciples, "Why are you so afraid? Don't you have any faith at all yet?"* - Mark 4:40

Jesus made it clear that His dear friends were full of fear instead of faith. Fear and faith cannot occupy the same space. Just like your hand pushed the water out of the cup, faith pushes fear out of your heart and mind.

Faith is from God; fear is not! (Romans 8:15) Faith is stronger than fear. Faith is being CERTAIN that God will not allow anything to happen that is not going to work out for your good - even if it is difficult to see the good at first (Romans 8:28). Fear is not being sure that God is able or willing to do what is best for you.



Whenever you feel fear creeping in, play the "fear says, faith says" game. Think through each fear you have, and

Day #4 continued:

claim God's promises. For example:

Fear says, "This situation in my life (my parents arguing, my going to a new school, my grandmother being sick) is going to ruin everything!" Faith says, "God won't let anything happen that isn't best for my life." (Romans 8:28)

Fear says, "I doubt if God even cares." Faith says, "God delights in me and sings over me." (Zephaniah 3:17)

Fear says, "I'm not sure if God is strong enough to handle this." Faith says, "Nothing is more powerful than God." (Jeremiah 32:18-19)

Then, instead of focusing on how big your problem is, you will focus on how much **bigger** your God is!

## Day #5: Smooth Sailing

Do you ever wonder why difficult things happen to those who follow Jesus? Sometimes bad things happen as a result of sin; sin spoils everything! But, other times (such as that night on the Sea of Galilee), God allows difficult things to happen in order to grow the faith of His people (John 9:1-3, Psalm 107:25-31).

After the sea was calm, the disciples were amazed. They asked each other, "Who is this? Even the wind and the waves obey Him!" (Mark 4:41)

Certainly, Jesus could have made sure there was no storm that night. But, if the disciples had sailed smoothly to the other side of the lake that day, what would they have learned? (Nothing.) They would not have known any more about Jesus than when they climbed into the boat. But, because of the storm, they learned that Jesus had power over nature. They learned that even when they were helpless, Jesus had complete control. They learned that they could trust Jesus.

Often, when a trial comes our way, we immediately pray for God to take it away. But the Bible says we should be thankful for our trials. They cause our faith to grow. They cause us to learn more about Jesus and to trust Him even more.



*My brothers and sisters, you will face all kinds of trouble. When you do, think of it as pure joy. Your faith will be put to the test. You know that when that happens it will produce in you the strength to continue. The strength to keep going must be allowed to finish its work. Then you will be all you should be. You will have everything you need.* - James 1:2-4



If you are in a trial right now, pray for God to use it to grow your faith. Or, if you know of someone else who is going through a difficult time, pray for God to grow his or her faith. Thanking God for the trial, and expecting to know Him more at the end of it, will help you to have a completely different attitude while you walk through it!