A Lesson in the Storm

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[0:00] This is the First Mustang Pulpit Podcast, a podcast of the weekly preaching and teaching at First Mustang.! Thank you for joining us.!

I have had some good experiences on boats, and I've had some unpleasant ones. For my birthday a couple of years ago, we were in California with my family on vacation, and my wife thought it would be fun to book a whale-watching little excursion, which would have been fun if there would have been whales around.
And it would have been more fun if I was not on the absolute most rockiest boat ever created. I have a bit of an aversion to seasickness anyway, and so she usually buys these little herbal patches you put behind your ear and try to help you to kind of stay at equilibrium.
And so I had done that, and it did absolutely no good whatsoever. And about 10 or 15 minutes into this little excursion, I literally thought one of two things was going to happen.
Either the Lord was going to just call me home right from the boat, or I was going to jump off the boat and ask Him to do that. I was absolutely miserable, and I said, honey, this is not working.
[1:47] I'm not supposed to be green. That's not the way this is supposed to work. And so I went from like one patch to about six just all over my body, and it did no good at all.

And if there would have been any way off that boat other than to be eaten by whatever lives in the Pacific waters, I think I would have given it a shot.
So I have a little bit of sympathy when I come to John 4 for the disciples who find themselves in the midst of a storm and feel panicked. And maybe for you this morning, it's not about a physical boat and a physical storm on the water, but you know what it's like to feel panicked.
You know what it's like to receive news that at least emotionally feels like you have been thrown so hard back and forth that you just kind of wonder, am I going to be able to survive this?
Maybe not in a life and death sense, but can your emotion, can your heart, can your mind withstand such grief and such stress and such agony?
[2:58] As always, when we read in the Scriptures of those whose faith was weak, it's always easy or tempting at least for us to think that we somehow would be better.

We would somehow do different. We would not be as prone to faithlessness or to panic. But I suppose everybody in this room can remember a time when something happened to you or was happening around you that made you feel as if you were in the middle of a boat, in the middle of the ocean, and you didn't know if you were going to survive it.
When we come to Mark 4.35, we see Jesus and the disciples and some of His followers who are going to find themselves in such a storm.
Just a little bit of remembrance here. It begins in verse 35, on that day. This is the same long day that started back in Mark chapter 3.
This one day that Mark, through the Inspiration Holy Spirit, records for us is all of the events that we have been studying about now for probably the last two months since Mark 3.
[4:17] This is one long day in the life of Jesus. This is incidentally why John says in his gospel that there's no way that all the books of the world could contain if it was recording everything Jesus did.

The Holy Spirit gives us a glimpse of His life and a glimpse of His healings and miracles and teachings and interactions enough to let us know who He is, enough to let us know what we are to do in response.
But can you imagine if every day and every event of His life were recorded? But on that day, verse 35, on the same long day that we've been reading about, when evening had come, He said to them, let us go across to the other side.

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So just to orient you a little bit here, they're going to go across the Sea of Galilee. The Sea of Galilee is roughly 13 miles long. It's roughly 7 miles wide.
About 150 feet deep. But one of the important features of the Sea of Galilee is it sits about 680 feet below sea level.
[5:37] Now that's important because it's part of what allows storms to come up so quickly. Jesus tells His disciples, let's go across to the other side.

There are the 12 disciples who are likely with Him here, along with other followers. We don't know for sure how many people are there, but we know at the end of verse 36 it says, and other boats were with Him.
So there's probably a number of His followers who are there with Him going across the other side. Now I want you to understand, before we get to the events of the storm, it's the words of Jesus in verse 35 that says, let us go across to the other side.
Leaving the crowd, they took Him with them in the boat just as He was. So they make no real preparation. So we don't know how many people for sure go, but the big crowd is left behind.
It's just Jesus and some of His followers. We don't know how many for sure went with Him.
Probably enough that needed several boats to get across. But I want you to notice that the reason why they are on the boat is because it is Christ who says, let us go to the other side.
[6:54] And I bring that out because there are some times where we find ourselves in the midst of a storm because of our disobedience. Think in the Old Testament about Jonah, who had been called by God to do a certain work.

He did not want to do it, and so he went. He paid the fare to get on the boat and go the exact opposite way. He's running away from the will and the purpose of God, and a storm comes up.
Jonah found himself in a storm because of his disobedience. But on this day, Jesus says, let's get to the other side, and He leads them to get in the boat, and the storm that comes up is not because they were disobedient.
They are right where they were supposed to be. And I think that's important. Because sometimes it's tempting to think that if something is raging in your life, then surely you've done something wrong.
If something is really a mess at home or at work or with your children, then surely you've done something wrong.
[8:08] That may be true at times, but not always. Sometimes the storms find you right in the midst of your obedience.

It says that they go across to the other side, and the problem then arises.
Matthew's gospel adds to us that a great windstorm came without warning. This is how it would happen often in the Sea of Galilee. Because it sits about 700 feet below sea level, and you've got hills all around it, you get cool air that rushes down.
You get warm air right above the water. And that cool air that rushes all the way down that low below sea level with the warm air right above the water, when those two systems collide, you get an instant storm.
Often without any warning at all. Matthew adds to it that this storm came with no warning. And in verse 37, Mark's gospel says, A great windstorm arose, and the waves were breaking into the boat, so the boat was already filling.
[9:31] Is there any more helpless image than a sinking ship? What can you do? I mean, it's one thing when all the water is outside the boat, and it can lift you up, and it can toss you back and forth.

But when the water now becomes to get inside the boat, you can't get the water out as fast as it's already coming in, and there's not much you can do.
And it's not just a storm, verse 37 says, it's a great windstorm. Verse 38, Jesus was in the stern, asleep on the cushion.
Now, I want to help you with something that I think is very important here. In the Old Testament, when the storm came in Jonah's case, Jonah was sleeping.
They woke him up. Jonah was able to sleep even though he was disobedient and running from God.
[10:44] Jesus finds himself here asleep, though he's done nothing wrong, obviously. But both Jesus and Jonah, at least from the outside looking in, appear to be at peace in the storm.

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I can't tell you through my life how many people have told me that while they maybe know what they're doing is not what the Bible says, or the decisions they're making they know do not align with God's will as revealed in Scripture, yet they have a peace about it.
I've heard that more times than I could possibly count. Now, I know the Bible says I should do this, but I really want to do this, and I have a real peace about it. Or I know this may not be what godly counsel in my life thinks I should do, but I have a real peace about it.
I just want to remind you that Jonah had a real peace in his life, too. Don't confuse your ability to sleep in the midst of disobedience with thinking that somehow is no big deal.
As Jonah would soon find out, his disobedience was a huge thing. But Jesus here in this account also is able to sleep on the cushion that's been provided there.
[12:15] And this is where the real problem begins. The storm is one problem, but it's just part of it.

There are in this account three rebukes that are given, and I want to use the rebukes that are given to guide our thinking this morning. Let me just read the rest of the account, and you can see where the rebukes happen for yourself.
Verse 38, 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? 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. And he said to them, Why are you so afraid? 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 sea obey him?
First, we see a rebuke from fear. A rebuke that is made from fear. We see it in verse 38 where the disciples go to Jesus, and they say to him, Teacher, do you not care that we are perishing?
[13:33] They rebuke him and ask him, Why are you sleeping when we're dying? I mean, we're not only about to die, but it seems as if you don't even care that we are about to die.

Now, we have to ask ourselves, What was the mistake the disciples made? I don't think it was a mistake to go wake Jesus up. I don't think it was a mistake to let him know of their worry in the moment.
Their mistake is that in their moment of trial, they questioned the love Christ had for them and his care for them. Notice their first question is not, Are we going to die?
In verse 38. It's do you not care that we are perishing? Their rebuke to Jesus came out of fear, not merely fear that they would die, but fear that Jesus no longer cared.
This is always going to be one of the temptations the enemy will use against you. If God really loved you, would you be going through this storm?
[14:59] If Jesus really cared about you, would he allow you to hurt like this? If God is really good, why are you having to grieve through this loss?

If Jesus really knows what you're going through, and he really cares about you and your family, why is your family going through such turmoil?
Well, the questions from the enemy will be endless. Does Jesus care? That's a question you need to be able to answer.
In fact, there's a great old hymn that says, Does Jesus care? Some of you have been around a long time will remember it. It's an old, old hymn. And the chorus of the song says, Oh yes, he cares.
I know he cares. His heart is touched with my grief. Do you not care that we are perishing?
[16:10] Here's the thing. We can talk about the storm you're going through, and we can talk about how intense it is, and we can talk about how long it's going to last, and we can talk about how much pain is going to be involved.

But the reality of it is, all of those things are bearable if you're convinced that your God knows you and cares about you. If you're not convinced God knows and cares, then it doesn't matter what you're going through.
No storm will be as damaging to your soul as the storm of thinking he doesn't care. They rebuke him, and the problem is not that they woke him.
The problem is they are tempted here and giving in temptation to believe that he doesn't even care. Their perceived lack of care and compassion from Jesus to them is what is their real concern.
So that first rebuke comes from fear. There's a second rebuke, and it's a rebuke of the storm. We see it in verse 39. And he awoke, and he rebuked the wind, and he said to the sea, Peace, be still.

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[17:16] Literally, the rendering here would be, Hush, he says to the storm. Jesus looks out across the water over the edge of the boat, and he just speaks to the storm, and he says, Storm, hush, that's all.

This is not the first time we've come across this exact wording. Go back just a couple pages to Mark chapter 1. In Mark chapter 1, Jesus is in the synagogue in Capernaum.
Verse 23, a demon speaks. Immediately, there was in their synagogue a man with an unclean spirit, and he cried out, What have you to do with us, Jesus of Nazareth?
Have you come to destroy us? I know who you are, the Holy One of God. But Jesus, same word, rebuked him and said, Be silent.
It's the exact same language he used in Mark 4. The same voice, the same command that told the demon to hush.
[18:35] Same voice, same command that told the storm to be still. Now picture for just a moment yourself in the shoes of the disciples.

Jesus has said, Let's get on the boat. They got on the boat. Let's go to the other side. That's where they're going. He's been teaching. He's been healing.
He's faced opposition. If you read from Mark 3 to where we are now in Mark 4, it's been a very, very long day. Jesus lays down.
He goes to sleep. This instant storm arises. The disciples, themselves probably tired, likely hungry, now find themselves in the midst of a storm, so strong, they are convinced they are going to die.
But the worst part of it is they are convinced Jesus doesn't care. And so in a rebuke of his sleep, while they think they are dying, they wake him up and say, What's wrong with you?
[19:47] Don't you care? Don't you see what we're facing? Don't you know what we're experiencing? Why don't you do something? Why don't you care about us? And Jesus, with one spoken word, hush, and the storm's gone.

Now, whatever the disciples think about Jesus and whatever their theology is about who he is and the power he has, it's just been taken up about 10,000 degrees.
Who can do this? And you get the disciples' rebuke from fear towards Jesus, and you get Jesus' rebuke of the storm, but a third rebuke comes up, and this is a rebuke about doubt.
In verse 40, he said to them, Why are you so afraid? Have you still no faith? Let's just answer the questions Jesus asked them.
Why are you so afraid? Well, I think the answer is quite obvious, right? They're afraid because they think they're about to die.
[21:08] But that's not what prompted them to rebuke Jesus. It's that they thought he didn't care. That's why they were so afraid.

Not just because they thought the storm could take their life, because they thought that Jesus didn't care. But he says to them, Have you still no faith?
In other words, something about your faith ought to put fear in its proper context. Why are you so afraid?
Have you still no faith? Insinuating that if we had faith the way it was supposed to be, it ought to do something to our fear. What Jesus is telling us here is that the faith that you have in God and the faith that you have that you believe in your mind and your heart must be so real and so genuine that your faith gets applied even in the moment of your greatest distress.
You must be able to have a faith that gets lived out and is applied. So you've got to ask yourself, when the storms of my life are raging, where do I turn?
[22:44] Where is my hope? And do I have a faith in Christ so real, so strong, so lasting, so lasting, that it actually impacts my fear?

And Jesus is expecting them to have a faith that would change their fears. Now, to be sure, they are afraid of the storm.
They are. And they're afraid they're going to die. It's true. But their greatest fear was that Jesus didn't care.
And Jesus says, why are you so afraid? Have you still no faith? If you knew about Christ, what you should know about Christ, it would alleviate your fear that He doesn't care.
We are supposed to have a faith so rooted in biblical, scriptural truth that it sustains us and causes us to rise above the storm, not because the storm itself will always go away, but the Christian never has to doubt, does God care?

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[24:18] does He know what I'm going through? Does He love me? Does He hear when I pray?

Look, sometimes we find ourselves in the middle of storms because of bad decisions we've made. We've all been there. We find ourselves in trouble because we were disobedient.
We've all been there. But sometimes you're just doing what you're supposed to be doing and the storm finds you. Sometimes your heart is broken over things that have happened in the world that aren't your fault.
Sometimes your heart is broken over what someone else has done and it's not because you're disobedient. And in that moment, you take the faith you have in Christ and you say, I believe with all of my heart.
I'm still hurting. I'm still grieving. I'm still crying. I still have questions. My faith is imperfect but my faith is on Christ and I know that He loves and I know that He cares and I trust Him to see me through.
[25:39] Now I want you to understand that these disciples who were so afraid, they've seen Jesus do the miraculous.

They've seen Him cast out demons. They've seen Him heal the sick. They've seen Him tell a man who was lowered down from the roof on a pallet and ropes to rise and walk.
They believe, they know that Jesus can do all things but when it's their storm, it feels a little different.
It's one thing to tell somebody else just trust the Lord. It's much harder when it's your storm. It's one thing to say Jesus knows and Jesus cares and He's going to see you through but it's something else when you're the one in the boat that's taking on water.
And Jesus tells the disciples it's not enough to just believe I can do miracles for somebody else. It's not enough to just believe that I can take care of other people's problems when it's your life and your worry and your anxiety and your broken heart in that moment let your faith silence your fears.
[27:11] Corrie Ten Boone said it this way when a train goes through a tunnel and it gets dark you don't throw away the ticket and jump off you sit still and trust the engineer.

Now let me show you something else here in this short passage. There are in the ESV that I'm preaching from there are three uses here of our English word great as R.C. Sproul points out here in the Latin you get three uses of the word magna in the Greek you get three uses of the word mega and they're important I think we need to catch these.
in verse 37 there was a great windstorm that arose in verse 39 at the end of the verse the wind ceased and there was a great calm a mega calm now just stop for just a minute we're going to be tempted to think a great storm came up and that scared them and then Jesus spoke to the storm and told it to be quiet and a great calm came we're going to be tempted to think then their fear subsided big storm silenced big calm their fear is gone that's not the case look at verse 41 and they were filled with great fear after the storm was calmed before the storm they were frightened once the storm ceases now they are really frightened mega fear after the storm why is that verse 40 where why are you so afraid have you still no faith and they were filled with great fear but that's after verse 39 when there was a great calm why are their hearts filled with fear after the storm has ceased the reason is because they realized more than they ever had before they were in the presence of holiness we know that because verse 41 says they said to one another who then is this that even the wind and the sea obey him this is the key question for all humanity you see
Jesus you hear his teachings you see his miracles you read about his life you see his claims to deity you look at all the evidence of who he is and the question for all of us is who then is this who is this he claims to be God he claims to be the savior for those who believe he claims to be the redeemer he claims to be the promised one from of old who is this is he God who is this man is he a fraud is he delusional is he out of his mind well this takes us back to where we were a few months ago where even his own brothers thought he was out of his mind and his religious opponent said he is of the devil who then is this who is this man who doesn't merely claim to be
God but he speaks to the winds and the waves and says hush and the water is still now one of the reasons why the disciples were filled with such great fear is because they knew their Old Testament Psalm 107 Psalm 89 both explicitly say only God can calm the raging waters they've just seen Jesus do what only God can do they just questioned whether God himself cares about what they're going through and whatever fear they had when they wondered if
[33:00] Jesus cared is taken up to a higher degree when they realize his absolute power see my friends there is a sense of reverence and awe and rightful fear of the Lord that should always

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accompany our worship you never ever in the scripture see someone in the presence of Jesus when they begin to understand the depth of his holiness and who he is where their response is silliness you never see somebody get a glimpse of the holiness of God and their response is to do something trivial or light whenever you see people gathering together and their response to the word of

God is a worldly! man centered kind of triviality it is because they have not understood the God of the Bible they were afraid before the storm they've just seen one more evidence of who Jesus truly is and that holiness is more frightening than any storm they've ever been through the revelation of who Christ is captures the whole heart and mind let me just give you four quick implications from this to help you in the days to come this week number one storms are not the absence of the presence of Christ storms are not the absence of the presence of
Christ we know that because in this account itself these are men are doing exactly what the Lord called them to do and the storm comes anyway so I don't want you to conclude that the storm in your life today must automatically mean that you've done something wrong and it certainly does not mean that Christ has forsaken you the storms in your life are not the absence of the presence of Christ number two storms are opportunities to test our faith storms are opportunities to test our faith if Jesus had asked the disciples before they got on the boat do you believe I can do all things I think they would have said yes if he would have said do you believe that I care about you I think they would have said yes I mean after all this long day that Mark records for us has been filled with but when the storm came to them their faith was tested and their weakness got exposed and storms are the same thing for us we can say that we trust we can say that we believe we can say we rest in the providence of
God but when the storm comes to your life you have got to make sure that you are faithful to trust in him third the right response is always to pray when storms come the right response is always to cry out to the Lord always to lift up your needs in Philippians 4 do not be anxious about anything but in everything by prayer and supplication with thanksgiving let your requests be made known to God when you are going through a storm it may be because of your sin cry out to God it may be because of choices you made that were not wise cry out to God the storm may have nothing to do with your disobedience at all you may have a storm in your life because of somebody else's sin and somebody else's disobedience cry out to God the storm you're facing may not have anything to do with anyone's disobedience it may just because life in a whatever the storm looks like and whatever the details of it may be the right response for
God's people when you face a storm is always to cry out to God know that he knows know that he cares and cry out to him no matter what you're facing that's always the right response and finally when we face our final storm our God will be proven faithful when we face our final storm our God will be proven faithful 2nd Timothy 418 the Lord will rescue me from every evil deed and bring me safely into his heavenly kingdom to him be the glory forever and ever we sang Wednesday night with our or Wednesday afternoon with our senior adults and then one day we'll cross the river [39:06] I'll fight life's final war with pain and then as death gives way to victory I'll see the lights of glory and I'll know my savior lives when you face your final storm the Lord will be faithful to deliver you to bring you home to glory so in this room this morning we've got some children and it's not that your lives are easy you too have been sad you too have had your feelings hurt but whenever a storm gets too bad you just go to mom and dad and they somehow seem to make it all better that's good that's what children should do you go to your mother and father to help you but in this room we also have teenagers and adults who need to remember you never outgrow that in a spiritual sense in your storm you go to your heavenly father you can trust him for moms and dads if you've got a teenager and they've had their heart broken somebody has broken up with them in a relationship or somebody has left them out or somebody has hurt their feelings and your little child or your teenager comes to you and says but mom but dad do you know what this feels like do you have any idea what

I'm going through the answer is yes and your child says well you don't understand you're so old well that's true but those two things aren't mutually exclusive you may be old but you remember when you were left out you may be old but you know that the hurts and hardships of life are what make us and what fortify our faith you know that the storm raging in your fifth graders heart and life is not going to last forever you know that their heartache because their girlfriend just broke up with them is going to go away and as a parent what you want to do is reassure your child in that moment

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I love you I'm here for you you're going to get through this and as an adult when storms raise up in your life go to your heavenly father who knows who understands who is compassionate and will see you through the storm you have in your life today will not last forever one day he will deliver you safely home where there will be no more sorrow no more tears no more death safely home with the Lord and until that day trust your savior who cares
Lord we thank you for your word today we pray that you would use it to bring us encouragement we pray you would use it to help us to trust you more Lord I pray for my friends in this service who may have heavy hearts today those in our church who are grieving the loss of loved ones those in our church whose families are going through storms those in our church who physically are sick and countless other needs that would be known only to you I pray that for all of us we would trust you right in the midst of the storm and learn these lessons that you know and that you care that you are strong and that you are working always working we give you thanks amen to

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