

“THE FOLLY OF FAIR-WEATHER FAITH”

(Text: Mark 4:35-41)

Verse 35 begins with these words: “On that day, when evening had come ...”

- What day was this?
- It was the same day He’d shared with His disciples the parables of the Kingdom (**Matthew 13**).
- The same day He’d dealt with the opposition from His own family and friends (**Mark 3:20-21**).
 - The same day He’d dealt with the opposition of His foes (**Mark 3:22**).
 - The same day **Matthew** says He’d healed a demon-possessed man who was blind and mute (**Matthew 12:22**)
- Jesus had experienced a very long day – was tired and needed a rest.
 - He’d been teaching His disciples and now, it was time for them to see how much they’d really learned.
 - So, He gives them a test.
- It’s not enough just to HEAR the Word or STUDY the Word.

Adrian Rogers: “A faith that can’t be tested, can’t be trusted.”

- He also said, “A faith that fizzles at the finish was faulty from the first.”
- So, Jesus says, “Let us go across to the other side.”
 - **Verse 36a.** They leave the massive crowd behind, which had already forced Jesus into the boat where He could teach them without being crushed by them.
 - **Verse 36b.** They took Jesus with them in “the boat” – probably the 12 (**Apostles/Mark 3:14-19**).
 - There were other boats with them as well.
- This entourage of small boats leaves the safe harbor on one side of the Sea of Galilee to cross to the other side.
 - The boats would’ve had oars. But they are probably sailing at this point.

As they head out for the other side, suddenly, they find themselves facing ...

(1) A FEARFUL STORM (Mark 4:35-38)

- These were experienced fishermen, most likely, in their own boats.
- They were good with oars and sails. This was their domain. At least that’s what they thought.
 - Some would’ve said the Lord was in good hands with these fishermen on their boats.
 - They would soon find out it was actually just the opposite.
- So they’ve gotten on the boat and are sailing for the other side.

Verse 37, “And a great windstorm arose and the waves were breaking into the boat, so that the boat was already filling.”

- They were starting to sink.

Verse 38, “But he (Jesus) was in the stern, asleep on the cushion.”

- The stern of a boat is in the back. The bow is in the front. (So, Jesus was in the back – asleep.)

- When Jesus was on earth, He was fully God but He was also fully man.
 - **Hebrews 4:15** tells us He experienced everything we experience, yet without sin.
- Even the most popular preacher with the most enthusiastic and appreciative of crowds comes to the point when the crowds have to be sent away.
 - Jesus was tired. So He's asleep.

Two observations:

(1) Just because Jesus is on board doesn't exempt you from storms.

- Some preachers proclaim what is called a "prosperity gospel."
 - In other words, accept Christ and you'll be rewarded with health, wealth and unending happiness.
 - That's a FALSE GOSPEL.
 - Believers aren't exempt from storms and sickness and sorrows.
 - Just because we're followers of Christ doesn't mean we won't experience pain, poverty, persecution, disasters, trials, tragedies and even death.
- Nowhere in the Bible does God promise **protection** from all the storms of life.
 - Instead, He promises His **presence** in the storms of life.

(2) Some people believe storms only come when we are disobedient to God.

- The great irony of this situation was these disciples ended up in a storm, not because of their **disobedience**. Rather, it was because of their **obedience**.
 - They did what JESUS told them to do and wound up in a storm.

What kind of storm was this?

- The Sea of Galilee, which is really a large lake, is notorious for its sudden, fierce squalls that come racing down the surrounding mountains and whip the waters into a frenzy.
 - The lake is actually **13** miles long and **8** miles wide.
 - Surrounded by mountains.
 - On the **western** side they rise to over **1,500 feet**.
 - On the **northern** and **eastern** sides, they rise to over **3,000 feet**.
 - The lake essentially sits in a bowl and the water comes into the lake from **the Jordan River**, which flows out of **Mt. Hermon**, at **9,200 feet**.
 - The **summit of Mt. Hermon** straddles the border of **Syria** and **Lebanon**.
- This was a fierce windstorm of approximately **70 mph winds**.
 - Which would've produced some very treacherous waves.

One Commentator described it like this: "The best calculations would put this likely in the winter of the year 29 A.D. This would be the time of the worst winds. Cold air furiously funneling down the ravines and the slopes, gaining speed as it descended, colliding with the warm air in the low basin of the lake creating violent turbulence that began to whip and swirl the water, turning it into foam and very, very high waves. And because the lake is so small, thirteen by eight, once those waves hit the shore, they just explode back and collide again and again and again, wreaking havoc."

- These experienced fishermen had seen these kinds of storms many times over the years.

- But now they were scared to death!

WHERE DO YOU GET THAT? Verse 38. They woke the Lord up and said to him, “Teacher, do you not care that we are perishing?”

- In other words, “We’re going to die! Wake up! Do something!”

(1) A FEARFUL STORM

(2) A FAITHFUL SAVIOR (Mark 4:39-41)

- They must’ve been astonished that Jesus could sleep in the midst of this massive storm.
- Their world was being tossed and torn apart and He was totally unconcerned.
 - At least it seemed that way.
- They were **panic-stricken**. He was **sleeping** on a **pillow**.
- They were **scared**. He was **sleeping**.
 - JESUS had **no fear**. No **storm**, not even **Satan**, himself, concerned Him. So He **slept**.

Verse 38, “They woke him and said to him, ‘Teacher, do you not care that we are perishing?’”

- **Luke** says they said, “Master, Master.”
- **Matthew** says they said, “Lord.”
- **Mark** says they said, “Teacher.”
 - This isn’t an example of a conflict in Scripture.
 - Rather, it’s a clear indication these guys were terrified.
 - They’re calling to him from every angle of the boat.

- By the way, did I tell you it was completely dark?
 - Even if they had some kind of lamp (candle) in the boat, it would’ve been insignificant compared to the wind, the waves and the utter darkness that surrounded them.

- It’s dark. The boat is full of water. The floorboards are beginning to creak and crack.

Verse 39. “And Jesus awoke and rebuked the wind and said to the sea, ‘Peace! Be still!’” And the wind ceased and there was great calm.”

- When the storm arose (**vs. 37**) Jesus arose (**vs. 39**).
 - When a problem shows up in your life, Jesus will show up.
 - When a storm rises up in your life, Jesus will rise up.

Why do storms come into our lives?

1. Sometimes the storms come because of something we’ve done.

- A lot of the problems you and I experience in life are of our own making.
- Remember the story of JONAH? The storm came because he thought he could ignore God and do His own thing.
 - **Jonah 1:12**, “Pick me up and hurl me into the sea; then the sea will quiet down for you, for I know it is because of me that this great tempest has come upon you.”
 - In other words, “I’m the reason for the storm!”
- Sometimes, because of our own disobedience, we create our own storms.

2. Sometimes the Lord will allow a storm to discipline us.

- Too often, we become **over-confident**. Sometimes even **arrogant** when things are going so well.
 - We let down our guard, stop praying, stop having a quiet time, stop serving, etc.
- So God allows a storm to get our attention and get us back on track.
 - Adversity, tragedy, a trial, a challenge, it doesn't take much to get us back on our knees, back in church, back in the Word and back on the right track.
 - Sometimes, God will allow a storm just so you will draw closer to Him.

Hebrews 12:11, "For the moment all discipline seems painful rather than pleasant, but later it yields the peaceful fruit of righteousness to those who have been trained by it."

A third reason why storms come . . .

3. Sometimes storms are produced by the devil.

- **Ephesians 2:2** tells us the devil is "the prince of the power of the air."
- **Verse 39**, Jesus "rebuked the wind and said to the sea."
 - Did you notice the difference between what He said to the wind and what He said to the sea?
 - He rebuked the wind because the wind is what stirred up the waves.
- The Bible tells us that sometimes, demonic forces are involved when storms wreak havoc on our world (**Revelation 7:1-3; 8:1-6**).
 - Insurance companies refer to disasters they can't explain, circumstances they usually don't want to cover, as "acts of God."
 - When, in reality, it may be the devil behind much of the devastation that takes place.

Verse 39c. Mark tells us, "And the wind ceased, and there was a great calm."

- The **wind** and the **water** recognized the voice of their **CREATOR**.
- Instantly, the entire lake became as placid as a pond.
 - Suddenly, the sea was smooth as glass and they could probably see the shore, lit by the light of a now visible Moon.
- Just one sentence from the Savior and the storm was stopped.
 - He turned to His disciples and said, "Why are you so afraid? Have you still no faith?"

Faith and fear are mutually exclusive. They cancel each other out.

- Fear and faith cannot exist in the same heart.
- If we have fear, we have no faith. If we have faith, we have no fear.
- Their **FEAR** proved they had **FAIR-WEATHER FAITH** and nothing more.
 - In other words, they could trust God when things were going **well**.
 - But, when a storm came, their FAITH turned to FEAR.
 - That's always the way FAIR-WEATHER faith works.
 - In the time of trouble and adversity, **FAIR-WEATHER faith**, like **FAIR-WEATHER friends**, will turn on you.
- To borrow from **Dr. Adrian Rogers**, FAIR-WEATHER faith is a faith that can't be trusted because; when it's tested it fails.

Proverbs 24:10, “If you falter in a time of trouble, how small is your strength!” (NIV)

Verse 41. “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?’”

Dr. John MacArthur said, “You know what’s worse than having a storm outside your boat? It’s having God inside your boat.”

- Suddenly, they were back in the classroom, with the Master Teacher, and He had their full attention.
 - They thought they were on top of all this.
- Remember, when they’d gotten in the boat back in **vs. 36**?
 - You can almost hear them saying, “Lord, c’mon, get up in here and go to the back and relax. We’ll take it from here. We got this.”
- He wanted to teach them there would never be a situation or a storm where they didn’t need Him.
 - He wants to teach us the same thing.

HERE’S THE APPLICATION FOR US TODAY ...

Don’t put Jesus in the back of your life, your marriage, your family, your business, your serving, your giving, your anything.

- Don’t get over-confident when things are going well.
 - **FAIR-WEATHER FAITH** will always fail you.
- Keep JESUS #1, the top priority, in every area of your life.
 - That’s the only way to get safely to the other side of your storm