

Adrenaline Running!

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Identity, Purpose, Belonging / Jesus Calms a Storm / Mark 4:35-41

practice the way pg 60-61

Have you ever run a marathon or a really big race?

I haven't but I've been in a situation where my adrenaline was running so much that I imagined it was what it felt like.

It was 2020, I'm sure you all remember the year. Well, that fall we were back to school after having the longest time away from the physical classroom. Teaching looked different, way different. All the kids wore masks to school, they ate at their desk, they couldn't move from class to class as they usually did, so instead us teachers had carts where we went from classroom to classroom. Well, one day, because we now ate in our classrooms instead of the cafeteria or outside, I was eating with students in my team partner's classroom with her students and she was eating in my classroom with hers since that was the class we ended with right before lunch. I remember her running into her classroom with a look of terror on her eyes and saying, I need you. I quickly dropped what I was doing, knowing there was another adult in the room at that moment and

ran across the hall. There, one of our students, who was anaphylactic to a variety of foods, had taken down her mask to show a swollen face and complaining of a scratchy throat. We rushed her into the POD, I grabbed her medical plan in one of my binders off the desk, and I went through the steps of her plan. Step 1. Given any of these symptoms (some of which she had), administer Epipen. Oh boy, I had never given an epipen. I had taken training on it, but we all know it's different in person than it is in training. I asked her to pull out her epipen from her pouch she had on her. I took it out of its container and repeated in my head, blue to the sky, orange to the thigh...something we had been taught in first aid training. I stabbed her with it....nothing. I did this a couple times when all of a sudden I remembered the cap! I flung the cap off and did it again, poking her through her pants in her thigh when she let out a scream. I knew it had finally worked and I sat there and very slowly counted to 10. Step 1 done, Step 2, call 911. They asked where we were located, what we had done so far, how she was, and that they were on their way. They hung up with us (which I didn't think usually happened), but then we proceeded to the next step. Step 3: Call the parents. I called and spoke with her mother. She decided the best option was to meet the ambulance at the hospital since they lived closer to the hospital than the school. I don't remember what Step 4 was but it was at this point I remember saying to Krista, my team partner, that we hadn't yet told the

office what was going on. Krista runs down the hallway to the office while I remain with the student. The rest happened rather quickly, the principal and vice principal quickly showed up, followed by the paramedics dressed in what looked like outerspace gear for Covid-19. They took her by stretcher to the ambulance and we were left behind to continue on with our day.

While I can remain rather calm throughout high stress situations in the moment, it is once the dust settles that my body then begins to feel everything I just went through. As Scientists have determine, when the body comes down from an adrenaline rush, **the parasympathetic nervous system works to return the body to a non-aroused state.** This process can take 20–30 minutes to calm down, but the effects of adrenaline on the body can last up to an hour. I just felt like I went through one of the biggest events in my life and I had to go back into the classroom to teach for the rest of the day? I had to still teach? I went outside for a quick break, sitting on a bench trying to process what had just happened, while trying to get my heartrate to slow down, my breathing under control, recognizing that I still had to go about my day as if nothing had happened...even though it did.

The Scripture for today comes from Mark 4:35-41. We're going to go step by step through what these 7 verses are saying.

Mark 4:35–37 “On that day, when evening had come, he said to them, “Let us go across to the other side.” And leaving the crowd behind, they took him with them in the boat, just as he was. Other boats were with him. A great windstorm arose, and the waves beat into the boat, so that the boat was already being swamped.”

God is always working in the circumstances of our lives. Sometimes we might not think so, or we wonder where God is, we haven't heard from him in awhile, but if we are calm enough to listen He is always there, ready for us to listen. We've got to be prepared. By this point in time, Jesus has probably had a full day of teaching as it is now evening and they are crossing to the other side. He and the disciples need rest, as it is now the evening, nothing unusual. Galilean fishing boats were usually fairly small. Often built of cedar planks. In addition to a mast, it had four places spread out for rowers. A great windstorm begins. In fact, the word speaks of hurricane-type winds, and they were taking on water, much of which resembles the story of Jonah, but that is for another time. Some of the disciples were seasoned sailors and fishermen, they would have known these waters. The Sea of Galilee is 680 feet below sea level. The shape of the hills surrounding the Sea of Galilee can funnel storms onto the water; they can be sudden and devastating to small boats out in the midst of the lake. They find themselves in a storm unlike

anything they have ever experienced. Yet it was Jesus who led them into the storm! This was not accidental. This did not catch God off guard. As an individual writes, “We should not be alarmed by surprises in our lives. They are divinely ordained moments whereby God is working in the everyday circumstances of our lives to reveal who He is, who we are, and who we need! Trials and tribulations, difficulties and desperate moments are when God does His greatest work in our lives. When He brings us to the end of ourselves, we are driven to Him and Him alone as Savior and Rescuer.” God does not cause evil, but He can use it for good.

Continuing on in Mark 4:38 “But he was in the stern, asleep on the cushion; and they woke him up and said to him, “Teacher, do you not care that we are perishing?””

This speaks to 2 things: 1. Jesus is human, aside from sin. While Jesus is fully God, He is also fully human. He came to Earth to live amongst us and experienced humanness, except for sin. Other stories speak to his humanness of being hungry, angry, and crying. Here he sleeps. He probably had an exhausting day and so He sleeps through the storm. He has complete trust in the care of His Father. The disciples aren't happy that Jesus is sleeping, yet sleeping is often evidence of trust in God.

This is seen elsewhere in Scripture:

Psalm 3:5 “I lie down and sleep; I wake again, for the Lord sustains me.”

Psalm 4:8 “I will both lie down and sleep in peace; for you alone, O Lord, make me lie down in safety.”

Job 11:18–19 “And you will have confidence, because there is hope; you will be protected and take your rest in safety. You will lie down, and no one will make you afraid; many will entreat your favor.”

And the second point this verse speaks to is that we panic when we lose faith in the one we should trust. This scene depicts chaos without or in the physical outside of us (the storm at sea), and chaos and panic within (the disciples fear).

We see an often human reaction to something we cannot control, not the spiritual response we might expect from those who have been with Jesus. They panic. They are definitely not calm in this situation. They question his love and concern for them, and when they feel there is no hope in a situation that they cannot handle, they lash out rather than exhibiting faith. Think about your own life. Jesus has proven Himself faithful over and over, yet when we are caught by surprise or are surrounded by trouble do you fume or show faith?

As Spurgeon, a Baptist preacher, said, “God is too wise to err, too good to be unkind; leave off doubting Him, and

begin to trust Him, for in so doing, you will put a crown on His head”

Continuing in the passage, Mark 4:39 “He woke up and rebuked the wind, and said to the sea, “Peace! Be still!” Then the wind ceased, and there was a dead calm.”

The disciples terror is magnified by the meaning of the sea in the ancient world. Across ancient cultures, the sea represented cosmic powers of chaos and was understood as a deity who threatened to undo the order of creation. This explains the fright of the disciples and Jesus’ restful sleep. Just as the God of Israel dominates the sea and is exalted far above all symbols of earthly and cosmic power, Jesus is undisturbed by the chaos of the sea.

As it says in, Psalm 29:3–10 “The voice of the Lord is over the waters; the God of glory thunders, the Lord, over mighty waters. The voice of the Lord is powerful; the voice of the Lord is full of majesty. The voice of the Lord breaks the cedars; the Lord breaks the cedars of Lebanon. He makes Lebanon skip like a calf, and Sirion like a young wild ox. The voice of the Lord flashes forth flames of fire. The voice of the Lord shakes the wilderness; the Lord shakes the wilderness of Kadesh. The voice of the Lord causes the oaks to whirl, and strips the forest bare; and in his temple all say, “Glory!” The Lord sits enthroned over the flood; the Lord sits enthroned as king forever.”

Jesus is God. He has authority over nature.

Jesus often shows his authority over evil spirits by giving them orders as Mark portrays in other parts of the gospel.

When the disciples have asked Jesus, don't you care if we drown just a few verses before, it might seem that this is why Jesus is rebuking them. But this would have been common language with the prayers of Scripture. It wasn't uncommon for sailors to cry out to God while in the midst of a storm.

Look to Psalm 107:23–29 “Some went down to the sea in ships, doing business on the mighty waters; they saw the deeds of the Lord, his wondrous works in the deep. For he commanded and raised the stormy wind, which lifted up the waves of the sea. They mounted up to heaven, they went down to the depths; their courage melted away in their calamity; they reeled and staggered like drunkards, and were at their wits' end. Then they cried to the Lord in their trouble, and he brought them out from their distress; he made the storm be still, and the waves of the sea were hushed.”

For the ancient Israelites, pouring out one's extremely honest emotions before God was a manifestation of faith in God rather than the reverse.

As one commentary says,

| Mark (Jesus Rebukes His Disciples (vv. 40–41))

After Jesus rebukes the wind and the sea, he rebukes his disciples for their fear and their lack of faith. It is unclear, however, why Jesus rebukes them since they followed scriptural examples of calling out to God amid trouble (e.g., Ps 34:17). Why does that demonstrate a lack of faith? Moreover, it does not seem that Jesus is rebuking them merely for being afraid. In some way the disciples were afraid and did not believe. But what was Jesus expecting them to do?

Mark does not provide any clues as to what they should have done, but from the larger context we can surmise that Jesus was expecting them (the disciples) to calm the storm themselves. If this sounds outrageous, keep in mind that Jesus had been announcing the kingdom of God, declaring that the reign of God has invaded the realm dominated by Satan and demonic powers. And this reign was bringing with it the healing of creation and the restoration of humanity. God's original commission to humanity was to exercise rule and dominion over creation, overseeing its flourishing and managing its life-giving and humanity-sustaining capacities (Gen 1:28). Humanity had failed to rule creation for the glory of God, but this is precisely what Jesus has been doing in his ministry. Yes, he is God himself, but he is also the true human. Mark portrays him overseeing the spread of God's rule of shalom wherever he goes, freeing people from demons and sickness and calling everyone to enter the life-giving kingdom of God. And he has called the disciples to be "with him" (Mark 3:14), to do what he does, and to partner with him in spreading God's rule and calling others to enter it.

End quote. The miracle in which Jesus fed five thousand people with a few fish and loaves, was supposed to be done by the disciples. Jesus was expecting them to do the impossible. As it says in, Mark 6:37 "But he answered them, "You give them something to eat." They said to him, "Are we to go and buy two hundred denarii worth of bread, and give it to them to eat?"" They had been with him for many missions in which they had cast out many demons and healed many who were sick. Because they are "with Jesus," they have access to the miracle-working power of the

kingdom of God. Their fear is a shrinking back from leaning into the fullness of being “with Jesus.”

The disciples, while being with Jesus a lot throughout the years of his teaching, have not seen the resurrected Christ to fully understand what He did for them on the cross. We have no excuse. We know Jesus is all-powerful and all-knowing God. We know He has taken care of all our sin. We know He rose from the dead. We know He can be trusted no matter what! We continue to experience trials and difficulties to strengthen our faith.

And the last verse, Mark 4:41 “And they were filled with great awe and said to one another, “Who then is this, that even the wind and the sea obey him?”” This is the first of three boat scenes in Mark’s Gospel. Each is associated with a miracle, each is a challenge to understand and settle the identity of Jesus. Each is adequate for them to draw the conclusion we must draw as well—“You are the Christ, the Son of God.”

Life won’t always be calm, in fact, probably a lot of it won’t. You can’t always control the situations that may happen around you, but who or what do you run to for the calm amongst the storm?

Jesus endured the storm so that we could find peace and be saved. Jesus calmed the only storm that could truly drown us: God’s judgment. He went down in the storm only

to emerge three days later as the One who stilled the just and righteous judgment of God against sinners.

When that school incident happened, all I wanted to do was to go home after it, but my students needs me to stay, to reassure them, continuing on, not as if nothing had happened, for it did, but as reassurance that things were going to be okay even if they might not be at that moment.

Mark Living by Faith, Not Fear

In this episode in Mark, the disciples were afraid for their lives and did not have faith that the power of the kingdom was fully present and that they could participate in it fully. As we face the countless difficulties in our lives, we can pay close attention to how our fears drive us to adopt familiar patterns of self-protection and self-preservation. We can note these and refuse to give in to them. And we can begin to imagine what it might be like to enact faith—to take concrete steps to draw on the kingdom's power that is present among us.

While God can calm the storm, he sometimes asks you to be the calm within the storm, with Him by your side. To trust and rely on him, proclaiming Jesus the Christ, the Son of God.

