

Why Are You So Afraid? **Mark 4:35-41**

I believe that every one of us comes to a place where we have to settle in our hearts and minds that God is God – that either He is greater than our greatest fears and weaknesses – or that He isn't. We have to decide if God is someone we can trust with our lives, our calendars, our children, our money and our vocations.

And this generally isn't proven out in our minds and hearts as long as life seems smaller than we are. But the moment it all becomes larger than what we feel we can manage, it is all tested.

Two initial points from the event:

1. If you are Christ's you are Always a Cry Away from His Mercy

Psalm 116:1 – “I love the LORD, for he heard my voice; he heard my cry for mercy.”

Now Pride would convince us that crying to God is some admission of weakness – which it is – but that such an admission is a horrible thing, when in fact the Gospel offers its most beautiful displays when we **recognize** our weakness.

So for the disciples the only thing that distinguished them from the other boaters was that they had Jesus with them – they had someone to cry to – so cry to Him.

2. You can never be too Far Removed from Christ's Rescue

The Gospel assures that if you belong to Jesus you are constantly within reach of His Grace – it is His reach.

For our friends on the boat, as for us, for Jesus to be asleep was in their thinking for Him to be a million miles away – as though He weren't there – an unreliable Friend who could care less for them.

But it wasn't the storm that separated them from Jesus, nor the waves or the noise or even His sleep – it was their unbelief. They honestly didn't believe that Christ cared.

When Jesus finally awakened, and after He ordered the waves and winds to settle down, He looked to His friends and asked what they were afraid of.

The word He uses here for, 'afraid' is a strong word – it means to be a coward, to be chicken. Jesus isn't trying to humiliate these guys – He is restoring perspective.

As soon as Jesus calmed the storm, something happened in the disciples. They stopped fearing for their lives and they started fearing Jesus.

And this is the point of the entire passage – and the underlining essential when it comes to trusting God. As soon as we settle that He is bigger and better and greater than all our troubles, and larger and smarter and grander than our fears, we become less chicken and more secure in Him.

The formula: **Little People – Big Troubles – Bigger God**

What did they do?

- They Faced Their Smallness – Facing this is part of the journey home.

- They Stayed on the Boat – Panic has caused worst things. Unlike the other boats, this one had Jesus.
- They Stuck Together – The disciples became a community that acted as one in a hard time.
- They Named Their Fear – The disciples were afraid of dying – and they said it – and that is a good thing.
- They Found Their Friend – They did exactly the right thing – they were terrified but they fled to Jesus. Sure, they were of little faith – but not because they went to Him – Jesus jumped on them because they thought He didn't care.
- They Served the Lake – By virtue of their cries to Jesus, Jesus essentially heard the cries of everyone on the lake – the disciples fled to Jesus – and what He did for them, He did for the other boats – because that is what the Gospel does. As it changes us it brings healing through us.

Note that Jesus doesn't toss His friends overboard for their unbelief (and that is what they were – friends – and that is who you are if you are His – in other words, our momentary lapses of faith are never enough for us to lose His friendship – and I'm glad of that) – they believed Him enough to cry to Him. This was the case with Job as well – he even prayed his doubts of God to God – that is faith.

The Gospel

The Gospel promises that God will never be smaller than we are – or our circumstances – even when we think He is and we feel

swallowed by the waves and winds. And the only thing that will prevent you from experiencing the grand goodness of God is your unbelief – the pridefulness of thinking that you can manage and control your own life on your terms – when you know this isn't true, because regardless of what we show on the outside, we know what is on the inside – and what is on the inside is hardly in control.

So let's be amazed with Jesus. **Isn't** He amazing? He is so secure that He can sleep in a storm and He is secure enough that He can absorb His friends' accusations – without defending, panicking, despairing, or pouting.