

Soteria Church, June 27, 2010
Mike Rydman

Mark 4:35-41
Jesus as Sovereign Creator of New Heavens and Earth

Mark 4:35-41 *on that day, when evening had come, he said to them, "Let us go across to the other side." And leaving the crowd, they took him with them in the boat, just as he was. And other boats were with him. And a great windstorm arose, and the waves were breaking into the boat, so that the boat was already filling. But 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. 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 wind and sea obey him?"*

Here they are in the boat from which Jesus had been teaching the crowds who were gathered on the shore. A typical boat of this time was:

- 26 feet long, 7 ½ feet wide, 4 ½ feet high
- The fore and aft sections covered with a deck
- Propelled by four rowers, 2 on each side
- Could carry 15 people

The Sea of Galilee sits almost 700 feet below sea level

Mount Hermon (9,200 foot elevation) is 30 miles to the northeast
Cold winds from the mountain and surrounding hills combined with warm winds from the Sea of Galilee made and make for big winds of hurricane proportions

The typical early evening easterly winds are called "Sharkia" (Arabic for shark, because those winds bite)

Jesus experiences perfect peace (sleep) even as the storm rages

Confident of God's presence and power; to be Creator is to be in control.

The disciples wonder if Jesus even "cares" that they might die

This is how frustrated and desperate people speak – panicky rudeness

In our natural selves we often make a false assumption:

If things in our lives are going well, God must be blessing us

If things go sour, God must not be nearby, like he's abandoned us for a while

When our own "storms" come it seems like God is absent

Instead of recognizing God's presence and control in the midst of the storm

To Israelites, the ocean (sea) represented to them the dark power of evil

In the book of Daniel, the sea is where monsters come from

At the Cross, the disciples again feared for their well-being, their futures

Not unlike the Pharisees in the earlier part of this same chapter, the disciples
now also see but don't see, hear but do not understand

The "great calm" results in the disciples becoming even more afraid...of the power and
authority of Jesus

The disciples find themselves more afraid of God's supernatural power than they were even of
the power of nature

The Israelites were led to walk through the Sea of Reeds (Red Sea)

God used a storm at sea to redirect Jonah toward his calling

Psalm 107 talks of God's sovereignty over the sea, and his ability to rescue
his followers from the waves

Even at Creation, God brought his new world out of a dark primordial sea

In this case, the sea is compelled to conform to the same state Jesus was in – perfect rest.

Jesus "rebukes" (or "censures") the wind

Theologian H.C. Kee says it this way: *"the commanding word, uttered by God or by his
spokesman, by which evil powers are brought into submission and the way is thereby prepared
for the establishment of God's righteous rule in the world."*

The word Jesus used for "Be still" is the idea of "be muzzled"

Like "be still and stay still"

God's sovereign power is being unleashed – God's Kingdom is at hand

Jesus is displaying his sovereign power of the forces of nature. He is the Creator.

This foreshadows Jesus' sovereign power over the forces that disrupt human nature,
And his victory over those forces at the Cross

They wonder who this Jesus is they are getting to know

At the scene of the empty tomb at the Resurrection, the followers of Jesus were
again afraid...afraid of what God might have done, afraid that Jesus may
have done exactly what he said he would do

The parables Jesus had been teaching required a basis, a framework for understanding

A humble fear of God

An understanding of who Jesus is

Jeremiah 5:21-24 *hear this, o foolish and senseless people, who have eyes, but see not, who have ears, but hear not. "Do you not fear me?" declares the Lord; "Do you not tremble before me? I placed the sand as the boundary for the sea, a perpetual barrier that it cannot pass; though the waves toss, they cannot prevail; though they roar, they cannot pass over it. But this people has a stubborn and rebellious heart; they have turned aside and gone away. They do not say in their hearts, "Let us fear the Lord our God, who gives the rain in its season, the autumn rain and the spring rain, and keeps for us the weeks appointed for the harvest.""*

Who Jesus is marks who the disciples may become

The readers of Mark's gospel may have also thought God was indifferent to their suffering as an occupied people under the heavy hand of the Roman Empire

The disciples didn't really get who Jesus was until the resurrection and the subsequent proofs of Jesus conquering death

The real threat to our faith is not a lack of knowledge – it is doubt and fear

Jesus did ask them the question: "Why are you so afraid? Have you still no faith?"

What do we each fear?

Personal safety?

Loneliness?

Financial ruin?

Lack of competitive comforts?

Inconveniences and challenges and heartaches?

Lack of recognition, affirmation, attention or respect?

Personal, occupational or social failure?

Change of any kind?

Often, it is our fears that drive our motivations and behavior

And our fears are usually a sign of misunderstanding...who we are; our value

And our own idolatries can and will be the seed bed for fearful behavior

But does our fear lead us to faith, to put our trust in Jesus?

Our fears will either drive us closer to the grace of God, or away from God

Our church's present financial challenges are not a sign of God's disapproval;

This season for us is a gift from God

In this he is driving us to our knees...really for the first time as a church

How can this possibly be a bad thing?

Faith means we believe God to be who he is: sovereign over all things

Sovereign over all of our fears, unsubstantiated or real

True to his promises

Vitally interested in you, his creation, his redeemed