

Mark 4:35-41

“When desperate need meets with almighty power glory is revealed”

Intro:

This month we all faced a deadline of sorts that Americans have been facing every mid-April since Tax Day was moved to April 15th in 1955. I hope you got your taxes filed already and that this isn't a very late reminder that causes you anxiety for the duration of the service. Growing up, I always assumed that Tax Day was closer to late January or early February as my family had a self-imposed early deadline to file for income tax returns. This early deadline was not driven by punctuality but by the desperate need for the money from the check that was sure to come from the IRS. Growing up in a family of 8 where the bills and financial emergencies always seemed to outpace the hard-earned paychecks, the coveted income tax return was something that we began looking forward to almost as soon as last year's return was spent. At almost every need or dream the answer was sure to be, **“Maybe we can afford that when the tax return comes.”** There was a desperate need for the reprieve that was sure to be found in the power of that glorious check from the IRS. We were always looking forward to it. The problem was, the power of the check was never enough to offer permanent peace from financial desperation. The glory of the tax return was never quite glorious enough. By springtime at the latest, we always found ourselves still dreaming of that family vacation or still putting off the much-needed car maintenance and still repeating the familiar refrain, **“Maybe we can afford that when the tax return comes.”** I'm sure that you can relate this morning to a time when you've found yourself in desperate need, longing for some outside power to breathe life and peace into your situation. Maybe you can relate to my story of desperate financial straits. Or maybe your desperation has been relational- a time when you've found yourself longing for

relief from loneliness. Maybe your desperation has been one of relief from constant health issues- a longing for the power of healing to be known in your body. In all of our desperations what we inevitably find is that the power we ultimately need is beyond what man can offer. The money always runs out at some point or can never really fulfill every desire... the people we lean on or cling to always fail us... new health issues and ultimately death await us all... We need a greater power in our deepest desperation.

In Mark 4:35-41 we find that Jesus holds that greater power, but he also holds something more. His disciples come to him in their greatest desperation and find not only amazing power, but astounding glory. They get more than they bargained for but exactly what they truly need. The growing saga in the book of Mark has been understanding just who this Jesus is, and that saga takes a massive step forward as Jesus calms a raging storm with the power of his voice. From this miracle, we find that: ***When desperate need meets with almighty power glory is revealed.***

Let's read Mark 4:35-41 to see this:

35 On that day, when evening had come, he said to them, "Let us go across to the other side."

36 And leaving the crowd, they took him with them in the boat, just as he was. And other

boats were with him. 37 And a great windstorm arose, and the waves were breaking into the

boat, so that the boat was already filling. 38 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?" 39

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. 40 He said to them, "Why are you so afraid? Have you

still no faith?" 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?"

PRAY

This morning's passage in Mark is a transition from where we've been in the last couple of weeks, but the goal in what Jesus is doing is still the same. Up until this point in the chapter Jesus has been revealing himself and his kingdom through teaching a series of parables. The disciples are slowly understanding him more and more, but the question of the first half of Mark's gospel still remains as the elephant in the room: **who exactly is this Jesus of Nazareth?** Well, beginning in verse 35 and going on into chapter 5, the disciples begin to see more clearly exactly who Jesus is as he performs a series of four miracles. The calming of the storm is the first of those miracles. The disciples find themselves in an impossibly desperate situation out on the dark waters of the Sea of Galilee so they turn to Jesus and are met with a display of unspeakable power and evident glory. ***When desperate need meets with almighty power glory is revealed.***

1. Desperate Disciples (v35-38):

We'll begin digging into this passage by looking closely at these desperate disciples: what got them into this situation and how do they respond?

All the way back in verse 1 of chapter 4, we find Jesus had been teaching the series of parables while standing in a boat on the shore. The large crowd had pressed in so much to see and hear him that he had to get in a boat to create some separation to be able to teach. Jesus stood on that boat and he taught the vast crowd all day. As the sun is setting on the waters Jesus decides that his teaching is over and his stay in this area is over. He tells his disciples in verse 35, **"Let us go across to the other side."** - that is across the Sea of Galilee to the other side. **It's important**

to note that Jesus initiated this crossing of the sea at this time because all that follows with his disciples is a result of them following his lead.

The disciples, many of whom were experienced fishermen, probably looked forward to this break from crowds and preaching and parables to just be able to spend a night in their comfort zone- sailing the Galilean Seas that they know so well. Gladly following Jesus' instructions, they set out for the other side of the sea. But, somewhere along the way in their journey across the sea a violent storm whips up with brutal winds and crushing waves. Our ESV translations read "a great windstorm arose" which sounds so wimpy, I like the NIV's wording better "**a furious squall came up**". Maybe the boys should have checked their weather apps before they set out. Perhaps it wouldn't have mattered because the Sea of Galilee- which is really a large lake- sits about 600 feet below sea level and is surrounded by mountains that funnel wind down into the sea creating sudden, unpredictable, violent wind storms.

This particular windstorm is quite furious as it's causing massive waves to break over into the boat, filling it: **37... and the waves were breaking into the boat, so that the boat was already filling.** Can you feel the desperation of the moment? I've been in a canoe with a slow leak on a calm pond and felt my anxiety rise when drops of water touch my leg. **These guys are out on a boat, miles from shore in the dark of night, winds so strong that you can barely stand, waves crashing into the boat on your head- you can't see because of the constant water being dumped on your head; you can't hear a thing over the violent wind and cries of despair from your friends.** Even these experienced fishermen knew the end was near and they were terrified for their lives. These men are staring death in the face- death by drowning in the dark violent sea. In their desperation, they look around for the one glimmer of help they may have- this

Jesus who they still don't quite understand, but they know well enough that he is a man sent from God and has power to at least heal very sick people. But where is Jesus during all of this commotion? Nowhere to be found. Has he fallen overboard? Is he cowering and clinging for dear life to the sturdy mast? **38 But he was in the stern, asleep on the cushion...** Asleep on the cushion?! During this deepest moment of desperation?! What a shocking juxtaposition we have going on in this boat- frantic fishermen fearing for their lives while the carpenter turned teacher sleeps peacefully on the captain's cushion. We see the desperation of the disciples in the rude awakening that they spring on Jesus as he peacefully naps in the stern: **38 And they woke him and said to him, "Teacher, do you not care that we are perishing?"** Speaking out of desperation, they come at Jesus with what amounts to a scathing rebuke. "Wake up! Do you not care about us!" The disciples were desperate- they feared for their lives in this moment and rightfully so... In their incomplete understanding of who Jesus is, I'm not sure exactly what they expected from him, but I can assure you that they got more than they bargained for as they now had front row seats to a display of almighty power unlike anything they could ever imagine.

2. Almighty Power (v39):

In Jesus' powerful response in verse 39 we find our next point of focus:

39 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.

Almighty power. Jesus rises from the cushion and shouts above the noise of the waves **"Peace! Be still!"** and instantly all is calm. I imagine it similar to moments as a kid when your mom uses your middle name and you freeze, drop everything, total submission. The disciples thought they

were scared of the waves and the wind that were sure to drown them- this guy, Jesus, speaks to the wind and waves and they instantly submit to his will! "Peace!" and all is calm. **"Who is this man?"** Remember that's the running question right now in Mark and they ask it explicitly here. **"Who then is this, that even the wind and the sea obey him?" "Who is this man that just moments ago was so exhausted from preaching all day that he was sleeping through the storm but then wakes up and rebukes the winds and waves?"** Their question of who Jesus is, is closer to an answer now: **he's the one that even the wind and the sea obey.** As they uttered this, surely the minds of these Jewish men who grew up with the Old Testament as their guides and who knew it so well were flooded with accounts and passages from the Bible of their God- Yahweh- commanding the wind and seas with his almighty power; their Almighty God who answered Job out of the whirlwind itself to challenge him:

That he is the God who **shut in the sea with doors**

when it burst out from the womb,

and prescribed limits for it

and set bars and doors,

and said, 'Thus far shall you come, and no farther,

and here shall your proud waves be stayed'

their Almighty God who showed his complete mastery of his creation and certainly of even raging seas as he parted the Red Sea at the exodus so that his people could cross on dry land.

Maybe their minds went to Psalm 107, our call to worship this morning:

Then they cried to the LORD (Yahweh) in their trouble,

and he delivered them from their distress.

**29 He made the storm be still,
and the waves of the sea were hushed.**

“Peace! Be still!” Who is this Jesus? This kind of almighty power, displayed by the one the disciples addressed as “teacher”, is only displayed by the one they know as “Yahweh”. With this display of almighty power Jesus is showing his disciples who he is. He is God. He is the one with authority over the weather because he is Creator. And they are terrified. They are terrified because they see Jesus’ amazing power but they are still missing out on the full glory being revealed to them. **If we’re honest, I think that this is a moment where we see ourselves to be more like the disciples than we want to be. Often when Jesus leads us out onto the waters and a storm hits- even when we’re convinced we were following him, even when we’ve seen his power- our first flinch is fear, not faith. We, too, often miss out on the glory of God in the moment.**

3. Glory Revealed (v40-41):

Jesus’ interaction with the disciples after calming the storm help us to see the glory revealed in this moment: **40 He said to them, “Why are you so afraid? Have you still no faith?”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?”**

Jesus told them earlier in the day in verse 11, **“To you has been given the secret of the kingdom of God”** but they were still weak in their faith and understanding of the kingdom of God. Their fear reveals their lack of faith. The fear of the storm revealed the lack of faith to be sure, but especially their great fear after Jesus’ display of power over nature betrays their lack of faith. There is glory being revealed but due to lack of faith they miss it and instead are greatly

afraid. **Do you see God's glory revealed in this account?** An easy way to define God's glory is *the weight of his character*. How is the weight of God's character displayed in this story?

You may say that God's glory is revealed in the fact that Jesus can shout to the storm and it instantly calms. That's a piece of the glory puzzle but not the whole picture. The disciples certainly aren't doubting the power of Jesus in this moment and yet they are greatly afraid- greatly lacking faith. They are closer to answering the "Who is Jesus?" question, but by missing God's glory revealed in the moment they are still lacking in their understanding and in their faith. The glory of the moment is this:

Jesus is absolutely the Almighty God. His glory- the weight of his character- is revealed in his presence and in his care for his people. The glorious answer to their question in v38, "Teacher, do you not care that we are perishing?" is YES! The Almighty God does care that you are perishing. He cares so much that he is present, in the boat, to calm the storm. **He is the Almighty God- he needs no one and yet, here he is, in a boat caring for his desperate, faithless disciples.** Saving the lives of the ones who do not yet understand him and who woke him with a **doubt-filled** rebuke. Why? Because Jesus is the Almighty God and he is present and he cares- this is glory revealed. The glory is that the Almighty One truly cares! **The Almighty One leverages his power to love doubters that call on him in their desperation.** If the disciples would have understood this, they would not have been greatly afraid but greatly encouraged. Jesus is patiently bringing them along to be faith-filled, they just aren't there yet. But let's not forget why they are in this moment of seeing Jesus' almighty power and glory- verse 35 Jesus tells them, **"Let us go across to the other side"**. Jesus brought them out on the water knowing that they would face a ferocious storm and find themselves in a place of deepest desperate

need. **When desperate need meets with almighty power glory is revealed.** Jesus is showing them his glory. He is helping them see who he is and he's also helping them better understand the secret of the kingdom of God. The disciples need to see that Jesus is not only the one that wind and waves obey, the Almighty God, but that he is the peace bringer.

In God's kingdom glory is displayed through meeting desperate need with power, care, and presence. Ultimately Jesus would meet their most desperate need- one they aren't even aware of yet. The most imminent danger to the disciple and indeed to every man and women, including you and I, is not death by drowning in a raging storm but the second death- the death that comes to the soul after the body dies and we face judgement for our sins. Faced with this storm, we can pose the same question the disciples did to Jesus: **"Teacher, do you not care that we are perishing?"** The answer is the same- he absolutely cares; so much so that he's present in the storm. He is the peace bringer- he came not just to calm the waters on the Sea that night but to calm the hostility we have with God because of our sin and to bring us true peace. **God** Almighty, God the Son, took on flesh to be present in the storm of this fallen world. He cares so much that we not perish that he enters into the storm, not just of this world but the storm of our sin. Though sinless, he was crucified for proclaiming the kingdom of God and on that cross he took on the sins of his people- bearing the punishment we deserved so that by faith in him we may not perish but have eternal life. When he uttered, **"it is finished"** from the cross it was as if he was shouting **"Peace! Be Still!"** to the raging wrath of God that our sins earned us. He rose again from the dead displaying his almighty power even over death- securing salvation for all who come to him. **Jesus ultimately displayed his great power and glory by being our sin bearer to bring us peace with God.** **On the cross of Christ the most**

desperate of needs met with the mightiest of power to reveal the true glory of the God of love- a God who is all powerful and leverages that power to be with and care for his people- all who come to him by faith. ***When desperate need meets with almighty power glory is revealed.***

Apply:

With our remaining time this morning I want to look together at how you and I should live in light of Mark 4:35-41. Two ways that we want to think about application this morning:

1. **What does this mean for my interaction with God?**
2. **What does this mean for my interactions with others?**

What does this mean for my interaction with God?

- First, we need to be sure that we've recognized our desperate need for God and come to him in faith with that need. Whether you readily recognize it or not, we all stand before God in desperate need- our need for forgiveness from God is truly our greatest need. I don't need to convince you that we all sin- the one common human experience that transcends time and culture is brokenness. We don't even live up to our own standards let alone God's perfect standard. The consequence of that sin is death- eternal punishment for sins against an eternal God. But in his glory, God has come in love to make a way for you and I to not just avoid this death but experience true life in him now and forever. In Jesus we see the power of God leveraged *in love* towards you and I as he comes to us to care for us but dying for our sins to purchase our forgiveness- so that we may not perish. I want to urge you if you don't know Jesus, trust in him today.

- For those of us that have trusted in Jesus and are following him, this passage has much to say in our interaction with God. The first thing to note is that just as Jesus initiated the trek out onto the sea, Jesus will use storms in our lives to reveal his power and glory to us all so that our faith in him will grow. Storms are inevitable for all of us, in fact they're part of the plan for us, but for followers of Jesus we can find purpose and hope within the storms knowing that they are not arbitrary. Like the storms on the Sea of Galilee trials may be sudden and unexpected to us, but they are no surprise to our Almighty God. Trials are an opportunity to see the glory of God revealed as we focus on the fact that he cares for us and he is with us. They are opportunities provided by our loving God to grow in our knowledge and experience of who God is. Storms are part of the process of spiritual growth. Charles Spurgeon said, **“I have learned to kiss the wave that throws me against the Rock of Ages.”** This isn't meant to minimize trials- our trials are real and they are significant- but it is meant to maximize the value and glory of knowing and following God in our lives. Spurgeon's words are a beautiful word picture for the heart behind Paul's words in Philippians 3: **8 Indeed, I count everything as loss because of the surpassing worth of knowing Christ Jesus my Lord. For his sake I have suffered the loss of all things (through many storms) and count them as rubbish, in order that I may gain Christ 9 and be found in him...** Storms are part of the process of spiritual growth.
- This passage should encourage us about the accessibility and care that Jesus has even in the midst of our trials. Just as Jesus was in the boat with his disciples, he is in the boat with you and I by the Spirit. In the last line in Matthew's gospel Jesus reminds us:

“behold, I am with you always, to the end of the age.” Christian, you may feel alone in your trial, Jesus lead you out onto the seas and you have been crying out for a long time but only hear silence. Maybe the words of poet E.E. Cummings resonate with you: **“King Christ, this world is all aleak, and life preservers there are none!”** Let the objective truth of God’s words speak to your subjective feelings: **“behold, I am with you always, to the end of the age.”** And let that truth of Jesus shout over the tumult in your soul, **“Peace! Be Still!”** He is there. He cares deeply. If you doubt his care, go back to the foot of the cross where he showed the ultimate love for you. The truth of Jesus’ accessibility should also encourage us to keep calling out to him and to keep listening for his voice. Call out to him in prayer, call out to him by sharing your struggles and trials with trusted brothers and sisters in Christ and listen. Listen for his calming, powerful voice in his word and through other Christians.

- Further, we find from this passage that our fears are invitations to trust in God. The disciples’ fears revealed their doubt in Jesus’ care for them. Their fear after he calmed the storm revealed their shallow understanding of who he truly is. The same is true for you and I- our fears are indications of areas where doubt and shallow knowledge of God are lurking beneath the surface. Therefore, fear is an invitation to press into God. If perfect love casts out fear as 1 John tells us, our fears reveal our need to grow in our understanding of God’s deep love for us. We’ll never be perfect, but we can be growing.

Cast out your fears with faith in the power and love of Christ! I have written in one of my Bible’s a quote from Jeff Purswell that is equal parts challenging and encouraging. He says this based on Psalm 46 but you could say the same from Mark 4:35-41: **“For the**

Christian, fear does not make sense.” This is encouraging because our God is so powerful and so present and so loving that fear makes no sense for you, Christian! It’s also challenging because we still fear, often. Those moments of fear are invitations to run to God.

What does this mean for my interactions with others?

Secondarily, the story of Jesus calming the sea has application for how we interact with others. Just as the desperate need of disciples was an opportunity to experience the almighty power and great glory of Jesus, the desperate needs of those around us are opportunities for you and I to mediate the power and glory of Jesus.

- Obviously, we see this foremost in the great need to pray for and care for one another. The needs of a brother or sister are an opportunity to see the power of prayer in action as we pray for one another. As God meets us in this we see his glory go forth.
- Also, as Jesus’ followers, we’re called his body and we are to reveal his glory to the world around us. Just as Jesus was a place of refuge and peace for his desperate disciples, we should be place of peace for those with desperate need in our community. Rather than run from the storms that envelope others, how glorious is it when the Church, like it’s Savior, runs to the storms of others to be present and to care for people just as Jesus does. I know that many of you do this but may we all be growing in this individually and as a people. May we be known all the more as a place of peace from the storms that single moms and dads face day in and day out. May we be known all the more as a place of peace for those in the throes of mental illness. May we be a place of peace for the homeless, for the rejected, the lonely, for the financially desperate, the

addict, for the doubting teen, the poor, the widowed, the orphaned. We must do the hard work to not be a place of fear for people with desperate need but a place of peace, all for the glory of God.

When the desperate needs of those in our community meet with the love and power of the gospel in the Church, the glory of God is revealed for all to see. ***When desperate need meets with almighty power glory is revealed.*** He is an all-powerful God that meets us in our deepest need with his presence, his care, his grace, his love. All of our desperate needs and deepest fears are opportunities to run to the God who cares and see his power and glory for forth. **Will you trust him with your deepest needs this morning?**

Let's pray.