



## THE GOSPEL OF MARK

Study Guide Full  
Mark 4:35-41  
September 29, 2019

Continuing along our extended journey to understand the nature of discipleship in the Gospel of Mark, we move immediately from the sower/soil/seed parables to the narrative of Jesus calming the storm. While this passage is only seven verses long, it is full of insight into what it means to follow Jesus, as it speaks to the nature of Jesus' identity, authority, and character.

As we look deeply into the text, we would do well to remember the central premise of Rebecca's sermon:

*In the journey of life, whom we are traveling with makes all the difference.*

An early Christian hymn of Prudentius, a 4th-century Roman Christian poet:

*His power and miracles proclaim him God.  
I see the wild winds suddenly grow calm when Christ commands;  
I see the storm-tossed sea grow smooth, with tranquil surface bright,  
At Christ's behest; I see the waves grow firm  
As the raging flood sustains his treading feet;  
He walks dry-shod upon the flowing tide  
And bears upon the flood with footsteps sure.  
He chides the winds and bids the tempest cease.  
Who would command the stormy gales: "Be still,  
Your strongholds keep the boundless sea,"  
Except the Lord and maker of the winds?...*

—A Hymn on the Trinity



35 *That day when evening came, he said to his disciples, "Let us go over to the other side."*

36 *Leaving the crowd behind, they took him along, just as he was, in the boat. There were also other boats with him. 37 A furious squall came up, and the waves broke over the boat, so that it was nearly swamped. 38 Jesus was in the stern, sleeping on a cushion. The disciples woke him and said to him, "Teacher, don't you care if we drown?"*

39 *He got up, rebuked the wind and said to the waves, "Quiet! Be still!" Then the wind died down and it was completely calm. 40 He said to his disciples, "Why are you so afraid? Do you still have no faith?" 41 They were terrified and asked each other, "Who is this? Even the wind and the waves obey him!"*

## Mark 4:35-41

Notes:



*Jesus Calms the Storm*  
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## Commentary Notes:

v. 35. Jesus utters the command to his disciples to cross to the other side of the lake on the evening of “that day”—the same day on which Jesus had taught the crowds with the various soil/seed parables; Mark thus links the two passages by time. Not only this, but again the setting of a boat links the two teachings; perhaps the boat in 4:35 is even the same boat from 4:2.

Keep in mind that “the other side” refers to the other side of the Sea of Galilee, thus representing Gentile land, and a new moment in Jesus’ preaching ministry.

v. 36. We have already seen Jesus get in a boat to find room with crowds (4:1, 3:9), but now it is Jesus *and* the disciples. Note that in setting sail they were following Jesus’ command.

v. 37. As the Sea of Galilee often experiences fierce storms, here we have a *lailaps* (λαῖλαψ)—a tempest of wind and rain like a hurricane—that batters the boat. The English reader should be aware that Mark’s Greek verb tenses here—

## Discussion Questions:

*Study:* Aware of the connective tissue that Mark puts between this story of the storm and the teachings of the soil/seed parables, begin your discussion by reviewing those parables. Discuss: What truths seen in *those* parables about the kingdom of God are on continued display in *this* story of the storm?

*Discuss:* Why do you think that Jesus is going into Gentile land (see note) at this point in his ministry? What have we generally seen in the last few chapters of Mark in terms of Jesus’ interactions with the Jews?

*Discern:* Note that τὸ πέραν (*to peron*), “the other side,” refers to space on the other side of an area (lake, river, etc). In his inviting you to journey with him, discern: To where is Jesus calling to cross over? To what “other side” might he be calling you?

*Discuss:* What do you think were the expectations of the disciples on this journey, particularly in light of the fact that they were leaving behind the crowds?

*Discuss:* Why might Mark have included the note of the “other boats”? Where did they go? Speculate.

*Reflect:* What are your normal, ingrained tendencies as regards dealing with the “storms” of your life? Looking back on your past, even upon your childhood, consider: From where did you learn this approach?

*Study:* *Lailaps* is the word for storm used in Job 38:1,

the historical present and the imperfect—vividly draw the reader into the action.

**v. 38.** In the nature of their panicked question “Don’t you care if we drown?”, the disciples do seem to have a *partial* understanding concerning who Jesus is, and his authority over nature. In Jewish tradition, Yahweh was known to have power both to bring a storm and to still it, as revealed in Psalm 107. Yet, they do not fully know his identity, authority, and character.

**v. 39.** Jesus’ divinity is on full display and his authority is absolutely unmistakable before his disciples. Indeed, fulfilling the imagery of not only Psalm 107 but other OT passages like Psalm 106:9, Jonah 2, Job 26:12, Jesus is the voice of Yahweh who can command a storm to silence simply by his word.

**vv. 40-41.** After rebuking the storm, Jesus also rebukes his disciples, calling them *δειλοί* (*deloi*)—“cowardly,” in the sense of lacking confidence. Had they had here the faith to which Mark is pointing, described by Rebecca as a “realization that God’s power was at work in Jesus, (then) the fact that he was with them in the boat should have made all the difference.”

when the “Lord speaks to Job out of the storm.” Skim Job 38. Does that passage and its use of the rare Greek *lailaps* inform this passage?

*Meditate:* How are you prone this week to utter the words of the disciples, “Jesus, don’t you care if we drown?” How has the *apparent* absence of Christ left you fearfully anxious?

*Discuss:* What do we expect Jesus to do when we call to him? How do we grow in Christian discipleship in trusting in the truth that Jesus is with us in the storms, that he is in control over all things, and that he cares about our well-being?

*Study:* Read Psalm 107:23-32. Recognizing that the psalm likely informs Mark’s writing, consider: What is its tone? How does it begin and end?

*Meditate:* How is the omnipotent voice of Christ speaking to you the words “Peace, be still”?

*Encourage:* How did Christ quiet your past storms?

*Confess:* In what ways have you recently questioned the identity of Christ, even despite seeing overwhelming past evidence of his power?

*Reflect:* Is your theology such that you are expecting Jesus to save you from all storms of suffering in life? If so, how does this passage speak to you?

*Pray:* Pray that we would truly know with whom we’re journeying with in this life—the very Word.