

BRIDGES to the Good News

Sunday Summary

Mark 4:35-41

Today's story of the stilling of the storm comes at the end of Jesus' proclamation of the kingdom in parables (4:1-34) and serves as a transition as Jesus and the disciples cross the Sea of Galilee to inaugurate the kingdom ministry for the Gentiles with a massive exorcism of a "legion" of demons. In chapters 5-8 they will crisscross the Lake performing similar signs and wonders on both the Jewish and Gentile sides of the Sea.

The storm on the sea not only illustrates the situation of the disciples but also that of Mark's community—tossed about by the chaos around them with Jesus apparently asleep at the steering rudder (v. 38). In their panic, the disciples awaken Jesus, who calms the storm with a word. Then Jesus issues the first of a set of challenges to them (7:18; 8:17, 21; 9:19) to come to faith in the rule of God as shown in him (4:40).

The great storm is a test of what the disciples have learned from Jesus' teaching (4:34). But as always in Mark's gospel, the disciples fail to demonstrate that they have understood. Jesus' demonstration of power over nature is another indication that Jesus' ministry participates in God's power.

Weekly Reflection

Much as we might like to think otherwise, "the fear of the Lord is the beginning of wisdom." And how much better to fear God who saves than to fear the things that threaten to destroy us!

This is illustrated by the disciples' experience on the Sea of Galilee. Putting out to sea in the evenings was a grave risk, since the sudden storms that come up on the sea often occur at sundown. In this scene, the disciples were obeying the Lord's command against the odds for security. We tend to think that having Jesus in the boat would have spared them any trouble.

The disciples are not prepared for the action Jesus takes. He stills the storm at sea in an exhibition of God's power and control over creation. His question: "Why are you afraid? Have you no faith?" is meant to convey to the disciples that their security lay in a different realm.

When God is in control, no forces of destruction can touch them. Not a bad lesson to learn, even if fear is the teacher.



Food for Thought

- ❖ How can the experiences of reconciliation with God and with others bring us peace?

Food for Thought

- ❖ In what ways have you personally encountered the power and presence of God?

Bridges for Tridgers

Recipe for Awareness

Begin with a moment of centering silence and quiet reflection, setting aside the concerns and agenda of the day.



1 We come to an awareness of God's presence in our family.

"Dear God, who is present with our family now, and at all times and in all ways,..."

Continue with:

2 We express our gratitude for today's gifts from God.

"Today I give thanks for..." or
"Today, I am grateful for..."

Pause again for another moment of centering silence and quiet reflection.

3 We come to an awareness of God's presence in our own experience.

Silently contemplate the question:
"When have I acted from love?"

Silently contemplate the question:
"When have I acted from fear?"

Based on your contemplation, create your intention to move forward as an expression of God's Love.

4 We plan and move forward with God.

"God, help me to manifest your presence today by..."

Invitations to Community

- We want family life to provide shelter from life's storms, but life together exposes us to the needs and troubles of others. What common disappointments and troubles do the families in our community of faith share? What support do we need to offer them? Pray for the families of our church, that they may know Jesus' power.
- Everyone, from young children to adults, has in common the experience of storms that accompany normal growth. Which church members are blessed with the unrest and excitement of new development? Pray for those experiencing growth, that God will bring them through every storm.

Suggestions for Families

Work together to make a storm poster, perhaps using chalk or charcoal on newsprint. You might play music that is wild and "stormy"—such as Rimsky-Korsakov's "Night on Bald Mountain"—as family members draw. Cut small boat shapes from construction paper. Have family members write on each boat a personal "storm" they face this week. Pray for help to still each storm. At dinner, ask them to share stories about these "storms." Have they been stilled? What new help or prayer is needed?

Prayer Starter

God, thank you for the power of Jesus to bring peace to every story. May Jesus calm my fears as he calmed the storm at sea...

