

# Gospel of Mark

## Chapter 4

### Introduction

This week we are looking at Mark chapter 4 together. We are focussing on verses 35-41. Read the chapter in your booklets and highlight or underline any words that Jesus says. That day when evening came, he said to his disciples, "Let us go over to the other side." Leaving the crowd behind, they took him along, just as he was, in the boat. There were also other boats with him. A furious squall came up, and the waves broke over the boat, so that it was nearly swamped. 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?" He got up, rebuked the wind and said to the waves, "Quiet! Be still!" Then the wind died down and it was completely calm. He said to his disciples, "Why are you so afraid? Do you still have no faith?" They were terrified and asked each other, "Who is this? Even the wind and the waves obey him!"

### Short Reflection

This passage has a significant place in the wider story of Mark's Gospel. Before this point, we (and the disciples) have seen Jesus perform miracles, heal people that others thought were incurable, and teach wisely. Firstly, we see Jesus make the decision to travel in the evening rather than the next morning. This was a strange decision given that a storm was coming, and as some disciples had backgrounds as fishermen, they are likely to have noticed. When the storm hits, Jesus appears to be sleeping, leaving the disciples to cry out and panic about the boat, which is already starting to fill up with water. As they cry out to Jesus, we might be able to see parallels between these cries and prayers that we've prayed in our lives. Their cry of 'don't you care?!' suggests that they think either Jesus doesn't have compassion on them and their situation, or that he isn't powerful enough to do a miracle this time.

As Jesus performs the miracle of calming the storm, showing his sovereignty over nature and all the earth he asks 'Why are you so afraid? Do you still have no faith?'. Jesus is questioning their fear over why they reacted how they did when the storm came, but the word 'are' suggests their fear was greater once they saw what Jesus was capable of. Jesus is questioning their level of faith, their level of trust in him, leaving the disciples to make a decision – 'who is this?'

I hope today we can reflect on where we are in this story. Do we truly understand what God is capable of or are we crying out to him like the disciples? This story is significant because of the place it has in the Gospels – it is a turning point, one where we've seen what Jesus has done so far but raises the question was that enough? Jesus questions the level of the disciple's faith going forward because he knows it will be important as he continues his ministry.

## Questions

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- 1) If you were a disciple in the boat, how would that story change the way you live?
- 2) Scripture tells us not to be afraid or fear, but yet to fear God. How might this story combine these two, giving comfort in our anxiety, but increasing our fear of Him?
- 3) We all face personal storms in our own lives, do you relate to this story? Have you seen breakthrough like this before?

## Prayer

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This week, pray specifically for breakthrough during our storms. This might be to do with the government, COVID-19, issues concerning justice or specific issues with friends or family. Pray for us to cry out in faith rather than fear and to know Jesus's presence regardless of how large the storm is.

Pray for any areas of anxiety you have personally. Pray for peace and for Jesus to settle our hearts and truly remind us of who He is.

## For next week

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There are only two stories in chapter 5, both of which teach us about healing: take some time to notice the place of faith. Who has faith?