

# Mark 4:35-41

Various 2022:  
Lord of the Storm

*Rev. Jonathan M. Romig / June 12<sup>th</sup>, 2022*

This Rembrandt painting is called “Christ in the Storm on the Lake of Galilee.” It depicts Jesus calming the storm on the Sea of Galilee. While most of the painting is black and dark grays and blues, you can see golden-light and light blue skies in the distance. Two thieves disguised as police officers broke into the Isabella Stewart Gardner Museum in Boston and stole it in 1990. If you know where it is, let the FBI know.

Jesus has been teaching the crowds all day beside the lake, the Sea of Galilee (Mark 4). The crowd is so large and pushes up against him that he has to get in a boat and sit and teach out in the lake. He talks about the parable of the Sower, not hiding your lamp and seeds turning into great plants. You can imagine that as the orange sun began to set over the Galilean foothills and lake, he would have sent the crowds away so that he and his disciples could eat a roasted fish dinner along the shore. But Jesus had other plans.

Instead, Jesus decides to cross the lake, and boats follow. I wonder if his disciples tried to stop him. When Jesus first called Peter and Andrew and James and John to be his disciples, they were all fishing (Matthew 4:18-22). They were fishermen by trade. By the end of Jesus’ ministry, Nathaniel and Philip were fishing too (John 21:2-8). So about half of Jesus’ disciples, if not more, had experience on the waters. And they would have known that the Sea of Galilee is a dangerous place. It was located just under 700 feet below sea level, and the shape of the hills funneled sudden, violent downdrafts into the lake, churning up deadly squalls.

After a long day of ministry, you got to wonder if Peter thought about stopping Jesus. “Jesus, we’re tired. Don’t you know it’s dangerous to cross the sea? Best to rest up and go over in the morning. To do it Jesus’ way, they risked an inconvenient storm. And yet, Jesus took them directly out onto the boat and into the sudden storm. Couldn’t there have been some other way? Some less risky, more comfortable, peaceful way?

Do you ever get the feeling that Jesus is leading you into a storm? Not away from it? Maybe you’ve felt that about your marriage. You see how there doesn’t need to be a storm, but there is! But for some reason, Jesus keeps leading you forward into the storm. Or how about your job? Things aren’t going well. Maybe you struggle with pay or success or feel fulfilled or anxious? And something comes up at work that could have been avoided, a sudden, violent squall?

Or maybe you’re wrestling with health issues or mental health issues, or you name it. Jesus, why take us through? Why take us into the storm? This is my last month as your pastor. Maybe that feels like a storm. It’s really hard to go through change. Why God? Why would you allow this? Why this storm? Here are **three truths** that can help us with these storms:

## **Jesus is Lord in the storm.**

I don’t know why Jesus takes us into storms. I don’t know why he lets our families, friends, our loved ones, and even our church sail into storms, but he does. But Jesus gets in the boat with us. Jesus is in the boat. There are other times when Jesus isn’t with his disciples in the boat in the New Testament (Matthew 14:22-33; Mark 6:45-52; John 6:16-21). But here, Jesus is in the boat with them. He’s experiencing the storm. He is putting himself at risk to be with his disciples, the ones he loves. That’s what God does for us.

God has put himself at risk to be with you. That’s the incarnation. God took on human flesh, became a baby, dwelt among us, was almost killed by Herod, and lived a life. He entered into this storm that is humanity so that he could be with us in the chaos. Before Jesus ever calms the storm, he is there. So no matter what

you're going through, you can trust that Jesus is with you. No matter what we go through as individuals, as families, and as a church, Jesus is with us. Through the Holy Spirit, he resides with us.

Water is breaking over the boat. This 27-foot long, 7.5-foot wide, 4 feet deep, sturdy, reliable fishing boat might go down in the waves. It's raining sheep and goats. It's cold. It's windy. And Jesus' disciples are terrified. "Where's Jesus!" you hear Peter yell. "I don't know!" squeals James. "I last saw him sleeping in the stern," coughs Andrew. And as they beat against the waves with their oars, their heads all turn. Judas rolls his eyes. Thomas's mouth drops open. Because there's Jesus, all the way at the back of the boat, on an elevated part called the stern, sleeping like a baby, his head on a soft cushion.

Have you ever tried to sleep in a rainstorm? We went camping last summer. A few drops, and I was out throwing an extra tarp over the tent. But Jesus just needs a pillow. I wonder if it's full of wool or cloth, hard or soft? I wonder if rain was pelting his face or if he'd covered it with a blanket or his robe. Jesus must have been really exhausted from teaching the crowds all day. He was giving his all. We think of him as a demi-god, and even though he's fully God, he's experiencing this storm as a man. He's exhausted. He's in the storm. He's getting soaked along with his disciples. But he's asleep.

Because even though Jesus is in the storm, he's not of the storm. He's not controlled by the storm. He's at peace, resting in the knowledge that his Father is good, his Father loves him, and he will be okay. His perspective on the storm is not one of worry or fear but of peace and trust. How can we have that? How can we have that perspective? I think it helps to look at Jesus. It helps to turn your head; maybe don't roll your eyes. But look at Jesus, now seated on his throne, resting. Jesus isn't pacing heaven watching what's going on down here. He's sitting, resting, watching. He's been here. He knows what it's like. Whatever you're going through, you can bring it to him. He'll walk with you. Jesus is Lord in the storm.

Have you ever made a meal not because you know your kids want to eat it but because you want to eat it? That's what I'm doing today. I need to hear this. This whole job transition and not knowing what's next feels like a storm. What's your storm? Jesus with us. He has not abandoned you or forsaken me. And if he wants to, Jesus can hush the storm. *Jesus is Lord in the storm.*

## **Jesus is Lord over the storm.**

Jesus, if he wants to, when he wants to, can get up, rebuke the wind and waves and say, "Quiet! Be still!" And the wind and waves will immediately die down and be completely calm. You will go from being in a storm-tossed sea to Lake Placid. That's exactly what happens to Jesus' disciples. Jesus gets up, rebukes the wind and waves, and they all calm right down. Who can calm storms? Can you do it? Can you rebuke the wind and waves, and they listen? No human can do that. Or only one human, who is also God. *Jesus is Lord in the storm, and Jesus is Lord over the storm.* Jesus is God.

I want to stop and read a portion of a Psalm. I originally saw this parallel in *Christianity Explored*, and I think it's worth revisiting here what it tells us about God. In this storm, there's God, weather, and sailors.

### **Psalm 107:23-27 (NIV)**

<sup>23</sup> Some went out on the sea in ships;  
they were merchants on the mighty waters.

<sup>24</sup> They saw the works of the Lord,  
his wonderful deeds in the deep.

<sup>25</sup> For he spoke and stirred up a tempest  
that lifted high the waves.

<sup>26</sup> They mounted up to the heavens and went down to the depths;  
in their peril their courage melted away.

<sup>27</sup> They reeled and staggered like drunkards;  
they were at their wits' end.

Some merchants, like our fishermen, go out to the sea, but God stirs up the tempest. They acknowledge that God is the one who controls the waters. They encounter giant waves going up and down, and their courage melts. It's not so fun anymore. They come to the point of desperation, their "wits' end." Perhaps Jesus is taking us through our storm so that we can come to our wits' end. Have you come to your wits' end? I feel like I have, but then Jesus takes me deeper into the storm. Or do we pretend there is no storm? Lots of people try that. Or do we call to the one who is Lord over the storm?

<sup>28</sup> Then they cried out to the Lord in their trouble,  
and he brought them out of their distress.

<sup>29</sup> He stilled the storm to a whisper;  
the waves of the sea were hushed.

<sup>30</sup> They were glad when it grew calm,  
and he guided them to their desired haven.

<sup>31</sup> Let them give thanks to the Lord for his unfailing love  
and his wonderful deeds for mankind.

<sup>32</sup> Let them exalt him in the assembly of the people  
and praise him in the council of the elders.

We cry out to God. Help us! That's what these sailors do. What do the disciples do? "Teacher, don't you care if we drown?" Are you calling out to Jesus in your storm? Whatever you're going through? Do you have tunnel vision on the waves? Or are you calling out, crying out to Christ, to the Lord over the storm? God has the power to hush the waves if he so chooses in his timing. That's what he will do for us all. He will, one day, forever and always hush our storms as he takes us through the last storm of life, death itself. He will bring us to that place of deepest longing and desire, our forever haven, where there are storms no more.

Maybe our Lord will bring us through the storms of this life unscathed, soaking, or hurt, but one day he promises to undo all storms. And the only response is to give thanks. "Give thanks to the Lord for his unfailing love." The God who takes us through the storm is the same God in the storm is the same God over the storm, and is the same God who loves us dearly. But how do we know he loves us? If he loves us, wouldn't he spare us the storm? Wouldn't he spare us this trauma? This depression? This anxiety? This joblessness? This divorce? This job loss? This home loss? This death? This failure? This? This? This? This is how we know Jesus loves us... *Jesus is Lord in the storm. Jesus is Lord over the storm. And...*

## **Jesus is Lord under the storm.**

Jesus is the God who enters into the storm of humanity and takes that storm upon himself so that you and I can find peace. Jesus asks why they're afraid. Because they face imminent drowning! Why doesn't Jesus fear death? Because Jesus knows that one day he is going to drown, but that's not this day. One day Jesus is going to willingly drink the cup of his Father's wrath and face the chaos waters of death and give his life on a cross so that you and I can drink the waters of eternal life. Jesus is Lord under the storm because he allows the storm of God's wrath to swallow him whole, forsake him, break his body, spill his blood, take his life.

But this storm leads to life. Three days later, on the morning we celebrate Easter, Jesus rose from the waters of death. Jesus came back to life, satisfying God's wrath against sin and thus conquering sin, conquering death, and conquering every storm we can face. Jesus did all that so that we could experience God's unfailing love, just like those merchants in Psalm 107, just like Jesus' disciples in Mark 5.

Jesus is asking you a question, "Will you come sail away with me?" Jesus doesn't promise to take you around life's storms. Instead, Jesus says:

### **John 16:33 (NIV)**

“I have told you these things, so that in me you may have peace. In this world you will have trouble. But take heart! I have overcome the world.”

Take heart! You will have trouble, but Jesus has overcome the world.

### ***Jesus is Lord in the storm. Jesus is Lord over the storm. Jesus is Lord under the storm.***

We don't know why Jesus takes us through storms. But as I was thinking about Jesus and his twelve disciples on the sea of Galilee, I read the passage just after this. Jesus didn't stop and eat grilled fish that night but instead slept in a boat as his disciples fought a storm so that the next morning, Jesus could arrive at the Gerasenes, Gentile country, and set free a man imprisoned by evil spirits and living in the tombs. Could that wait till that evening? No! Jesus has come to set the prisoners free. Jesus wants to deliver the demon-possessed man from his own storm. So he made his disciples go through their storms. Who might God want to heal through your storm? What if there's a redemptive purpose in your suffering? Would that make it worth it? *Jesus is Lord in the storm. Jesus is Lord over the storm. Jesus is Lord under the storm.*

*Pastor Jonathan Romig preached this sermon at Cornerstone Congregational Church in Westford, MA. You can listen to his other sermons at [CornerstoneWestford.com](http://CornerstoneWestford.com).*

### **Artwork**

By Rembrandt - [www.gardnermuseum.org](http://www.gardnermuseum.org): Home: Info: Pic, Public Domain, <https://commons.wikimedia.org/w/index.php?curid=6812612>

### **Service & Sermon**

You can watch the [full service on Facebook](#) or only the [sermon on YouTube](#).

### **Discussion Time**

**Ice-Breaker** – What's your favorite water activity?

*\*It's up to the group leader whether to spend more time in Bible study or sharing life below. Save 10 minutes for prayer at the end (start prayer at 10:15 AM).*

**Bible Option 1** – Read Mark 4:35-41 and Psalm 107:23-32. What's the Psalm about? How does it help us interpret Jesus' miracle and understand its theological significance?

**Bible Option 2** – Read Jonah 1:1-17. How does Jonah's storm contrast with Jesus' storm? What does this tell us about Jesus?

**Sharing Life** – What's a storm you've experienced? How has Jesus brought you through?

*\*If any group has extra time, they can examine the other Bible question.*

**Prayer** – What's a storm you or someone you love is going through? How can we pray?

**Recap** – What's your one-sentence takeaway from today?

### **Follow-Up**

Dear Church,

Thanks for listening to this past Sunday's sermon on Mark 4:35-41. My big idea was: *Jesus is Lord in the storm. Jesus is Lord over the storm. Jesus is Lord under the storm.*

**Reflection:** How has Jesus revealed himself to you in your life storms? Can you think of a time Jesus silenced your storm in a sudden and unexpected way?

**Sermon:** The text following ours is the Gerasene demoniac from Mark 5:1-21. What type of storm was he experiencing? How might the disciples' storm prepare them to face Jesus' miraculous power to heal? If you'd like, you could listen to [Alison Gerber preaching a moving sermon](#) on this text.

**Worship:** Listen to [Jesus Savior Pilot Me](#) by Robbie Seay.