

# **How to Faith the Storms of Life**

Mark 4:35-41; Luke 8:22-25; Matthew 8:23-27

**INTRODUCTION:** Probably the greatest maritime disaster of history was the sinking of the Titanic on April 15, 1912. It wasn't a storm that sank her. It was an iceberg, but it was also the hubris of the shipbuilders. It was supposed to be an unsinkable ship, but it's mostly known for was sinking. One of the crewmembers commented to Mrs. Sylvia Caldwell when she boarded, "God himself could not sink this ship."

We all know the tragic story of how there weren't enough lifeboats and over 1,500 perished. But there's a part of the story you've probably never heard. The Titanic had been built in Belfast, Northern Ireland. After the news of the sinking, the people of Belfast took to the streets to weep and mourn.

The ship sank on Monday. The following Sunday, at Derry Presbyterian Church, there was great sadness because 16 men who were members of that church had been working as engineers on the ship and all 16 had drowned in the icy waters of the North Atlantic.

The church was packed to overflowing that Sunday. Pastor Andrew Smith chose to preach from the text we're going to look at today, Mark 4:35-41. He made this amazing statement to the grieving congregation. **"There was only one vessel in all of history that was truly unsinkable—the little boat occupied by the sleeping Savior." Then he added, "And the only hearts that can weather the storms of life are hearts with Jesus inside."**

So, turn with me to Mark 4:35-41. ***"35 As evening came, Jesus said to his disciples, "Let's cross to the other side of the lake." 36 So they took Jesus in the boat and started out, leaving the crowds behind (although other boats followed). 37 But soon a fierce storm came up. High waves were breaking into the boat, and it began to fill with water. 38 Jesus was sleeping at the back of the boat with his head on a cushion. The disciples woke him up, shouting, "Teacher, don't you care that we're going to drown?"***

***39 When Jesus woke up, he rebuked the wind and said to the waves, "Silence! Be still!" Suddenly the wind stopped, and there was a great calm. 40 Then he asked them, "Why are you afraid? Do you still have no faith?" 41 The disciples were***

*absolutely terrified. “Who is this man?” they asked each other. “Even the wind and waves obey him!” [NLT]* **LET’S PRAY**

This story appears Matthew 8, Luke 8 and here in Mark, chapter 4.

Just so you know, the gospels of Matthew, Mark, and Luke are referred to as the synoptic Gospels because they include many of the same stories, often in a similar sequence and wording. They stand in contrast to John, whose content is largely distinct. The term synoptic in Greek means, ‘seeing all together.’ The modern sense of the word in English is "giving an account of the events from the same point of view or under the same general aspect."

On any given night, it should have taken the disciples about three hours to sail or row across the lake. So, Jesus and His disciples started out on a three-hour tour. The weather started getting rough. The tiny ship was tossed. If not for the courage of the fearless Lord, the disciples would be lost.

The title of my message today is: **How to Faith the Storms of Life.** That’s not a mis-pronunciation. We all have storms, but instead of just facing storms, as a believer in Christ you can **faith** the storms of life.

The Sea of Galilee is mentioned 53 times in the Gospels and is the setting or backdrop for many stories and miracles of Jesus. It is actually a freshwater lake, also called Lake Tiberias, or Lake Kinneret. It’s fed by the Jordan River and sits 600 feet below sea level making it the lowest freshwater lake in the world. It’s about fourteen miles long and about 7 miles wide and shaped like a harp.

It was called the sea because it had a lot of the same characteristics. It was known for its severe storms. Cold wind would whip down from snow-capped Mount Hermon and combine with the warm lake air causing explosive thunderstorms and gale-force wind. It was not uncommon for the waves to reach a height of 10-12 feet. One commentator writes: “The Sea was known to swallow entire ships and gulp down people.”

Whenever you see the ‘sea’ mentioned in the bible, it holds multifaceted symbolism, representing chaos, mystery, and divine power, as well as a place of transformation and revelation. Its vastness and unpredictability often serve as a

metaphor for the unknown and uncontrollable aspects of life, while also illustrating God's sovereignty over creation.

## I. **The Certainty of Storms.**

### A. **Storms are Inevitable**

You are going to encounter storms! You say pastor, I don't go on boats. (Story of uncle Paul) Not just talking about storms on the sea, but storms of life.

You say, 'I've never had a major storm in my life.' I say, 'You've been very blessed', but what Jesus said, 'In this life you will have trouble!'

Jesus knew all things and when He said let's go to the other side, He knew they would encounter a storm. Sometimes people who know and love the Lord make the mistake of thinking that just because they're saved, they will be immune to trouble, tribulation, and trials.

**Here's a thought: Even though Jesus is in your life, you will still encounter storms.**

There are physical storms, financial storms, emotional storms, and relational storms which can strike you suddenly with no warning. But just because you find yourself in a storm, doesn't mean that God doesn't love you or is punishing you, so don't be surprised when you face storms.

Everyone has storms; in fact, for some of you this morning, the storm clouds are gathering. Some of you, perhaps, are in the worst storm of your life, but what I want you to realize is everyone has them.

In fact, Jesus said in Matthew 5, "**He makes the sun rise on both good and bad people. And He sends rain for the ones who do right and for the ones who do wrong.**" So, you can see storms, problems, difficulties, trials come to all of us.

### B. **Storms are Imminent**

Jesus had been working miracles. He had been preaching and teaching. The 12 had just been appointed as apostles. In other words, life was great and they thought it would be smooth sailing and then **'boom.'**

Mark says it 'rose up.' Luke 8 says, 'The storm came down.' Matthew 8 says, ***'Then Jesus got into the boat and started across the lake with his disciples. 24 SUDDENLY, a fierce storm struck the lake, with waves breaking into the boat.'***

**HUMOR:** I think one of the hardest jobs would be a weather forecaster. There was a Native American chief on a remote reservation in South Dakota whose tribe asked him if it was going to be a cold winter. He didn't want them to know he couldn't predict the weather, so he snuck away and called the National Weather Service. The forecaster said, "We're fairly certain that it's going to be a cold winter." So, the chief went back and told the others to collect a lot of firewood for the cold winter. A few weeks later he called back and asked the forecaster again. This time the forecaster said, "We are more certain now that it's going to be a very cold winter." So, the chief went back and told the tribe to collect even more firewood. A few weeks later the chief called the forecaster again and asked about an update on the forecast. The forecaster said, "We are now certain that this will be one of the coldest winters we've ever had." The chief said, "How can you be so sure?" The forecaster said, "The Indians are collecting firewood like crazy!"

We can usually handle storms better if we have some notice. Sometimes a meteorologist will give several days' notice of an approaching storm. Sometimes LIFE gives a warning. But most of the time, it doesn't.

Storms are inevitable...Storms are imminent

### **C. Storms are Intense**

Luke 8 says they were 'swamped and were in great danger as water filled the boats.' Matthew says it was a "Great storm." The Greek word here is "seismos" = earthquake. An earthquake underneath the water creates a tsunami. These were PROFESSIONAL fishermen, yet they were afraid!

## **II. The Cause of Storms**

### **A. Sins of others**

## **B. Satanic attack**

Christ Himself underwent attacks and temptations from Satan.  
God allowed Satan to tempt Job with terrible storms.

Ephesians 6:12 - *'Our struggle is not against flesh and blood...'*

1 Peter 5:8 - *'Be sober. Be vigilant. For our adversary the Devil is like a roaring lion seeking someone to devour.'*

## **C. Sovereignty of God**

God knows that some of life's lessons are best learned in storms.

1. **Some storms come because we are out of God's will.** An example of that is Jonah, who deliberately disobeyed God's will in the Bible.
2. **Some storms come because we are in God's will.**

Here they are out during the storm, but Jesus is the one who put them there.  
**They're literally with Jesus, but they're having the storm of their life.**

Job is a perfect example. He was righteous in God's sight and yet he was going through the storm of his life.

Joseph is another example. Joseph was blessed with dreams, but was sold in slavery by his brothers, falsely thrown in prison.

I'm saying that it is possible for you to be obeying God, walking in all the light that you possibly could, be right in the center of God's will and yet at the same time encounter a terrific storm. Be careful in assuming that those who go through terrible storms must be sinful or out of God's will.

The Bible says, *"Dear friends, do not be surprised at the painful trial you are suffering, as though something strange were happening to you...if you suffer as a Christian, do not be ashamed, but praise God that you bear that name."* (1 Peter 4:12,16 NIV)

The prophet Amos, chapter 5:18- 19 says, **“What sorrow awaits you who say, “If only the day of the Lord were here!” You have no idea what you are wishing for. That day will bring darkness, not light. 19In that day you will be like a man who runs from a lion—only to meet a bear. Escaping from the bear, he leans his hand against a wall in his house—and he’s bitten by a snake.” [NLT]** **Talk about a tough day!**

Life can be tough, and Christians aren’t immune. All of us encounter storms. No doubt this is what Andraè Crouch had in mind when he wrote:

I've had many tears and sorrows. I've had questions for tomorrow.  
There've been times I didn't know right from wrong.  
And in every situation God gave blessed consolation  
That my trials come to only make me strong.  
So I thank Him for the mountains. I'll thank Him for the valleys.  
I'll thank Him for the storms He's brought me through.  
For if I'd never had a problem I'd never know He could solve them  
And I'd never know what faith in God could do.

Through it all, through it all, I've LEARNED to trust in Jesus, I've LEARNED to trust in God. Through it all, through it all, I've LEARNED to depend upon His Word.

### **III. Christ in our Storms**

#### **A. Storms Test the Level of our Faith.**

When the disciples woke Jesus, He immediately asked them two questions: **“Why are you so afraid? Do you still have no faith?”** In the previous chapter, Jesus taught several parables about faith and receiving His Word into our hearts. Like any good teacher, Jesus taught the lesson first, and now He’s giving them the test. Will they trust Him during a storm?

### **Here are Three of the Ways God Tests our Faith.**

#### **1. The Pressure Test**

This faith test has one question: **“Where will you find help in time of your greatest need?”** Like a pressure cooker building up heat and pressure, will you explode in anger, or will you keep the lid on and trust God?

## 2. The People Test

This test asks the question, **“Will I love others as Jesus has loved me.”** Sometimes God puts people in your life who will rub you the wrong way, and they seem to find the one exposed nerve you have and grind on it. They aren't hard for you to love, they're impossible for you to love. But you know that Jesus loves them. So, will you patiently love them with the love of Jesus?

## 3. The Persistence Test

This test asks the question, **“Will I maintain my commitments, for the long haul?”** There will be times when you want to give up, but will you keep on believing the words of Galatians 6:9, ***‘So let's not get tired of doing what is good. At just the right time we will reap a harvest of blessing if we don't give up.’***

The Bible says, ***“These trials will show that your faith is genuine. It is being tested as fire tests and purifies gold—though your faith is far more precious than mere gold.*** (1 Peter 1:7 NLT)

### B. Storms Force us to Cry out to Jesus.

There is a painting called, ***“The Storm on the Sea of Galilee”*** by the Dutch Master, Rembrandt van Rijn, painted in 1632. It was displayed for many years in an art museum in Boston until it was stolen in 1990.

In the painting, a tiny boat is tossed and turned by the angry wind and waves. There are thirteen disciples, because Rembrandt painted himself into the picture. There were some disciples who were fighting against the storm, their focus was the storm. But there were some of the disciples gathered around Jesus, their focus was the Savior.

This painting begs the question, “When you face the storms of life, do you **fearfully focus on the storm**, or do you **faithfully focus on the Savior?**”

Have you ever thought or said to God when you’re going through a storm? “God, don’t you care that I’m going through a tough time?” You don’t have to wonder. God does care. The Bible says that you can “**Cast all your anxiety (cares) on him because he cares for you.**” (1 Peter 5:7)

The Bible says God won’t tempt you beyond what you can resist. But when it comes to adversity and trouble, God will allow you to be burdened to the point where you realize that you can’t fix the problem yourself.

Paul understood this. In talking about some of his personal storms, he wrote, “***We were under great pressure, far beyond our ability to endure, so that we despaired even of life. Indeed, in our hearts we felt the sentence of death. But this happened that we might not rely on ourselves but on God.***” (2 Cor. 1:8-9)

You may be going through a desperate time right now. You may be wondering, “What should I do?” My advice is simple: Cry out to Jesus.

In fact, there is a song called “**Cry out to Jesus**” by Third Day. The lyrics say: “To everyone who’s lost someone they love; Long before it was their time. You feel like the days you had were not enough, when you said goodbye. And to all the people with burdens and pain; Keeping you back from your life. You believe that there’s nothing and there is no one who can make it right. There is hope for the helpless; Rest for the weary; And love for the broken heart; There is grace and forgiveness; mercy and healing; He’ll meet you wherever you are.

Cry out to Jesus, Cry out to Jesus. For the marriage that’s struggling just to hang on; They’ve lost all their faith in love; They’ve done all they can to make it right again; Still, it’s not enough. For the ones who can’t break addictions and chains; you try to give up but you come back again; Just remember that you’re not alone in your shame and your suffering. There is hope for the helpless; Rest for the weary; And love for the broken heart; There is grace and forgiveness; mercy and healing; He’ll meet you wherever you are. Just cry out to Jesus.”

## IV. The Calm in the Storm

Let me close this last point by throwing you 3 life-preservers to help you stay afloat in your storms.

### A. Recall the Promises of Jesus

The way the story begins seems rather simple, but it holds one of the keys to what this miracle really teaches. ***"On that day, when evening had come, he said to them, 'Let us go across to the other side.'*** (Mark 4:35, ESV)

Did you hear what Jesus just said to them? He said, 'Let's go to the other side.' That was not just a statement. That was a promise and that was a prophecy. When Jesus told the disciples to cross to the other side there was no way they were not going to make it, because Jesus never tells us to do something He doesn't give us the power to do, and He never makes a promise He can't keep.

The moment that Jesus said, "Let us go across to the other side" that boat became unsinkable. Neither the Roman Empire then nor the US Navy today with all its power could have sunk that boat.

God has a perfect record of keeping His promises. He hasn't broken one in eternity past, and He won't break one now or in the future. If you are in the middle of a storm, remember the promise of Jesus.

Too often we look at the great heroes and heroines of faith, and we get the wrong lesson. The lesson we get too often is - these folks were nothing like me. There was never a chance they'd fail. They were brave and courageous, and I can't be anything like that.

We see Moses standing at the edge of the Red Sea - the armies of Egypt behind him and the unforgiving waters in front of him - and he takes his staff and slams it into the waters... and the waters part.

Or we see David face off against a giant who's a trained warrior and has killed much bigger men than him - and David swings his sling around his head a few times and drops that giant where he stood.

Or we see Daniel standing bravely in the lion's den, calmly facing hungry and ferocious lions without a touch of fear.

Or we see Shadrach, Meshach and Abednego telling the king that they will not bow down his golden idol and then being marched into the fiery furnace.

These great heroes of the Bible... didn't have the script. They had no idea how these things would play out. I love the line Shadrach, Meshach and Abednego give the King: ***"If we are thrown into the blazing furnace, the God we serve is able to save us from it, and he will rescue us from your hand, O king. But even if he does not, we want you to know, O king, that we will not serve your gods or worship the image of gold you have set up."*** Daniel 3:17 18

HOW could they be so brave? Because they all believed: **"the God we serve is ABLE to save us". But even if He doesn't...we trust Him."**

The Bible is very clear about the fact that we're going to have storms in our lives. Jesus told His disciples: **"I have told you these things, so that in me you may have peace. In this world you will have trouble..."** Translation: There will be storms. But during those storms, Jesus says, ***"But take heart! I have overcome the world."*** John 16:33

*Recall the Promises of Jesus, secondly...*

## **B. Rest in the Presence of Jesus**

Mark adds a little detail that is not found in Matthew or Luke. Verse 36 says, ***'And other boats were with him.'*** In other words, they were not the only boat on the sea that day. There were a lot of boats on the water.

Why does Mark add that detail? There was one difference between every other boat and the disciples' boat. Jesus was in their boat! One of the benefits of becoming a follower of Jesus is He gets into your boat. He's in you.

But then, something every one of those disciples least expected happened. 'But soon a fierce storm came up. High waves were breaking into the boat, and it began to fill with water.' (Mark 4:37, NLT)

Remember, neither Mark nor Luke were there when this happened, but Matthew was and the word he used is the Greek word "seismos". A seismologist studies earthquakes. A seismograph measures earthquakes. This wasn't a spring shower, a cloud burst, or even just a hard downpour.

This was an eruption of the sea below and the sky above. That word is only used on two other occasions. Once, at Jesus' death, when the whole earth shook and again at His resurrection when the whole graveyard trembled. In other words, this was the kind of storm that could break that boat apart.

**Story:** I read about a man in Ohio who owned an oil well. When the oil well caught fire he put out an all-points bulletin for help to put the fire out. He offered up a \$100,000 reward to whoever could put out that fire. All the large firehouses from cities around sent their best companies accompanied by the most modern fire-fighting equipment available, but none of those trucks could get within 200 yards of the blaze, because of the intense heat.

There was a volunteer fire department in a little town, called Calcutta, who heard about this problem and really needed that \$100,000 for new equipment. They only had one rickety truck, which was equipped with a single ladder. It only had buckets of water and buckets of sand and a few blankets. The truck was so old it didn't even come with a hose.

When that old truck reached the point where all those other fire departments had stopped because the heat was so great this driver didn't even hesitate. He just kept barreling ahead until he and his crew were right in the thick of that fire. They jumped out of that truck, threw the buckets of water and buckets of sand on that fire and then beat the fire out with the blankets.

That oilman was so impressed by their unbelievable display of courage he wrote them out a check on the spot for \$100,000 and said, "What are you and your men going to do with all that money?" The captain shaking like a leaf said, 'The first thing we are going to do is get the brakes on that truck fixed!'

Sometimes we get thrown into fiery trials through no fault of our own.

Mark adds another detail that Matthew and Luke leave out. ***“Jesus was sleeping at the back of the boat with his head on a cushion. The disciples woke him up, shouting, “Teacher, don’t you care that we’re going to drown?”*** (Mark 4:38, NLT)

I love the fact that Jesus was asleep during the storm. This teaches us several things. First, Jesus was a man who experienced fatigue just like us. But we also see He had such a strong sense of calm that He could sleep through the storm.

God never promised that we’d live a storm-proof life. He just promises to be with us in the midst of the storm. I love the way Eugene Petersen paraphrases Isaiah 43. God says, ***“When you’re in over your head, I’ll be there with you. When you’re in rough waters, you will not go down. When you’re between a rock and a hard place, it won’t be a dead end—Because I am God...I paid a huge price for you...That’s how much you mean to me! That’s how much I love you! So don’t be afraid: I’m with you.”*** (Isaiah 43:2-7 MSG)

***Recall His promises...Remember His presence***

### **C. Rely on the Power of Jesus**

***“...The disciples woke him up, shouting, “Teacher, don’t you care that we’re going to drown?” “When Jesus woke up, he rebuked the wind and said to the waves, “Silence! Be still!” Suddenly the wind stopped, and there was a great calm.”*** (Mark 4:39, NLT) The words ‘Peace! Be still!’ literally means ‘to muzzle or silence.’ What Jesus literally said to that storm was, "Sit down and shut up!"

And the Bible says it was completely calm—there was a great calm. The word is mega. There was a mega calm.

**Jesus did not keep the storm from striking the boat, but He did keep the storm from sinking the boat.**

**Master, don't you care?** The implication was they didn't think Jesus cared about them. Sometimes during a crisis it's easy to forget that Jesus loves you.

Can I tell you something? There are things in this life that you and I are never going to figure out. Bible says, "We look through a glass darkly on this earth."

**God doesn't always give us an explanation for all that happens in our lives, but He gives us continuing revelation of Himself...** His love, grace, mercy, kindness, and care.

Paul says in Romans 8, "For **we know** all things work together." Why do we know it? Because we know that God's on the throne and God's sovereign. But Paul doesn't say you understand everything. Our security isn't what we know. Our security and significance are in Who we know, and whose we are.

And the wind ceased, and there was a great calm. He said to them, "Why are you so afraid? Have you still no faith?" And they were filled with great fear and said to one another, "***Who then is this, that even wind and sea obey him?***"

He is Jesus, God's Son. He's the one strong enough to speak galaxies into existence and hold them together by the very word of His power. He's indescribable. He's incomprehensible. He's invincible. He's irresistible! You can't outlive Him, and you can't live without Him! Herod couldn't kill Him. Death couldn't conquer Him, and the grave couldn't hold Him. He's the Alpha and Omega; the first and the last; the beginning and the end. And there is no other name given among men whereby you must be saved.

He said, 'I will never leave you nor forsake you.' He said, 'Lo, I am with you always.' David spoke of Him when he wrote, "Yea, though I walk through the valley of the shadow of death I will fear no evil." He is Jesus. You can trust Him!

**CONCLUSION:** Now, let's learn the real lesson that is found in this story, because Jesus asked the disciples questions that He asks you and me every time we go through a storm. "**Why are you afraid? Do you still have no faith?**" (Mark 4:40, NLT)

There are two lessons here. There is a lesson about fear and a lesson about faith. Every time you face a storm in your life you will face it in one or two ways. You will either face it with fear, or you will face it with faith. What is the difference? It is very simple. **Fear looks at the storm. Faith looks at the Savior.**

**The reason why Jesus asked these questions was they had no reason to fear.**

In Mark 1, He cast out an unclean spirit. He healed Peter's mother-in-law of a fever. He healed an entire city of disease, cast out demons, and cleansed a leper.

In Mark 2, He gives a paralytic the ability to walk and take his bed home.

In Mark 3, He restores a withered hand.

The lesson about faith is every time you go through a storm, is "Do you trust Jesus or not?" I am going to say something that may shock you, but we need storms, because they force us to remember His promises, to rest in His presence, and to rely on His power.

Did you notice the last thing the disciples asked? They said, ***“Who is this man? Even the wind and waves obey Him?”*** That’s an important question for you to answer today. Who is Jesus to you?

There were two storms present that night. There was a meteorological storm happening outside and there was an emotional and crisis-of-faith storm raging on the inside of the hearts of the disciples. They were filled with fear. Fear can be more destructive than hurricane-force winds.

**Illustration:** Paul Harvey used to tell the story of a chicken farmer in Tennessee who suspected a fox was raiding his hen house at night. He was losing eggs and hens. So, one night he put his loaded shotgun by his bed and stayed awake. He heard a ruckus from the henhouse, so he slipped out into the night wearing nothing but his nightshirt. As he approached the dark hen house fear set in. He began to wonder, “What if that fox attacks me? What if it’s not a fox, but a bobcat or a cougar?” As he stood at the doorway to the henhouse, these thoughts of fear swirled through his mind. It was at that precise moment that his old faithful hound dog, Blue, crept up behind him and cold-nosed him under his nightshirt. Kablam! Nine hens lost their lives that night. But Paul Harvey used to say that it wasn’t the shotgun that killed them, it was fear.

I don't know what storm you are going through right now, what storm you are coming out of, or what storm you may be getting into, but when you do, remember the promise of Jesus; rest in the presence of Jesus; rely on the power of Jesus. You will make it to the other side. **There is no need to fear when Jesus is near. Jesus will either calm your storm or calm you.**