

Mark 4

Jesus teaches

Previously...

Jesus has revealed his authority by healing on the Sabbath but he is misunderstood by crowds and his family but recognized by unclean spirits. In consequence to this and severe criticism by religious leaders, Jesus chooses and authorizes 12 disciples and identifies those who are truly related to him. The following overview helps illustrate how Mark introduces Jesus teaching through parables - and a miracle:-

- **Jesus tells his first parable – about a sower** 4:1-9
- **Jesus records the purpose of parables, and of the sower, in particular** 4:10-20
- **Jesus uses other parables to teach about...**
 - **sharing** 4:21-25
 - **the development of the Kingdom of God** 4:26-34
- **Jesus calms a storm** 4:35-41

Read chapter 4 before exploring the following verses which represent key elements in understanding main themes of the chapter.

Jesus calms a storm (4:35-41)

This story is also told in Matthew and Luke but Mark's account is the longest. Mark's Gospel was the first to be written, Matthew and Luke taking advantage of what he had recorded although they sometimes add to and subtract from his narratives in order to express truths more relevant for their readers. We are left not with contradictory but complementary accounts of the same event, each writer seeking to teach his particular readers about Jesus and discipleship.

Stilling the Storm

Compare the three accounts below:-

Matthew 8: 23-27	Mark 4: 35-41	Luke 8:22-25
<p>²³ And when he got into the boat, his disciples followed him.</p> <p>²⁴ And behold, there arose a great storm on the sea, so that the boat was being swamped by the waves; but he was asleep.</p> <p>²⁵ And they went and woke him, saying, "Save us, Lord; we are perishing."</p> <p>²⁶ And he said to them, "Why are you afraid, O you of little faith?" Then he rose and rebuked the winds and the sea, and there was a great calm. ²⁷</p> <p>And the men marvelled, saying, "What sort of man is this, that even winds and sea obey him?"</p>	<p>³⁵ On that day, when evening had come, he said to them, "Let us go across to the other side."</p> <p>³⁶ And leaving the crowd, they took him with them in the boat, just as he was. And other boats were with him.</p> <p>³⁷ And a great windstorm arose, and the waves were breaking into the boat, so that the boat was already filling. ³⁸ But he was in the stern, asleep on the cushion.</p> <p>And they woke him and said to him, "Teacher, do you not care that we are perishing?"</p> <p>³⁹ And he awoke and rebuked the wind and said to the sea, "Peace! Be still!" And the wind ceased, and there was a great calm. ⁴⁰ He said to them, "Why are you so afraid? Have you still no faith?"</p> <p>⁴¹ And they were filled with great fear and said to one another, "Who then is this, that even the wind and the sea obey him?"</p>	<p>²² One day he got into a boat with his disciples, and he said to them, "Let us go across to the other side of the lake."</p> <p>So they set out, ²³</p> <p>and as they sailed he fell asleep. And a windstorm came down on the lake, and they were filling with water and were in danger.</p> <p>²⁴ And they went and woke him, saying, "Master, Master, we are perishing!"</p> <p>And he awoke and rebuked the wind and the raging waves, and they ceased, and there was a calm. ²⁵ He said to them, "Where is your faith?"</p> <p>And they were afraid, and they marvelled, saying to one another, "Who then is this, that he commands even winds and water, and they obey him?"</p>

1a. Provide a list of the key aspects of the story as recorded by all of the writers. These aspects of the narrative are so important that each of the writers record them; they form the skeleton of the story. Notice the subtle differences in Mark's account.

1b. Identify which of these elements of the story personally speak to you and why?

Imagine if you had been one of the disciples. How might you have been feeling?

What is your perception of Jesus after exploring his remarkable authority?

If you are experiencing a personal storm, or you know someone who is, ask Jesus to help you/them.

Verse for Meditation

4:41b - ...*“Who then is this, that even the wind and sea obey him?”*

SPEAK	the verse out loud, three times, slowly
PRONOUNCE	each word, one at a time
PARAPHRASE	the verse by putting it in your own words
POSE	questions of the verse – why, what, how...?
APPLY	it personally and practically

Personal questions

What lesson do I learn from these verses?

What truth concerning Jesus can I apply to my life this week?

Prayer:

Jesus, you are my teacher as well as my Saviour. Thank you for inviting me to know more about your Kingdom. Please help me to remember that you are sovereign over all – not just the wind and the sea but also over all aspects of my life. Help me as I follow you to trust you – the more I know you, the more secure I feel.

Practical Application

Undertake one of the following in order to creatively apply the message of the chapter. Bring your work and share it with your friends.

- **Write a short poem or prose reflecting an aspect of the chapter**
- **Creatively re-tell an aspect of the story, writing it in less than 50 words**
- **In less than 12 words, capture a personal lesson that resulted from the study together**
- **Paint or draw an aspect of the passage explored**
- **Bring or create some music that related to the study**
- **Share an answer to prayer that related to the passage studied**
- **With one or two others, act a scene of the story, re-telling it graphically**