

Text: Mark 4: 35-41

Theme: The Victorious King

Sermon delivered by Revd Canon Dele Agbelusi during Healing and Anointing Service on 29/10/2017 at 10.30am

Mark, like all the other writers, Matthew, Luke and John, has as his goal to show clearly that Jesus is none other than God in human form and that He is truly man. That will be demonstrated in the passage that is before us today. Please open to John 4: 35-41. We will see a beautiful portrait of His humanity and a staggering demonstration of His deity.

At this point in His ministry, Jesus was enjoying an incredible popularity. The power of Jesus was present in His teaching and the miraculous works He did. He was like a magnet attracting all sorts of people to Himself. He must have taught all afternoon from a boat which served as his pulpit and if He were to pass through the crowd again, He would have no rest. So, in verse 35, at evening time, the teaching was over; He was weary; He was craving for a period of rest. And so, He bade His disciples to cross the lake, and that is the moment to which our text refers – they took Him even as He was . . . They had not waited till any cloaks were brought. They had not sent a messenger ashore. Weary, and probably hungry, they had taken Him even as He was. (Morrison)

Leaving the crowd, they took Him along with them in the boat just as He was. There were other boats with Him. A furious squall came up, and the waves broke over the boat, so that it was nearly swamped. Frightful sight! The sea of Galilee is notorious for sudden violent storms. "The sea (really a lake) of Galilee is 13 miles long at its longest, and 8 miles wide at its widest. At this particular part it was about 5 miles across." (Barclay).

It will be instructive to take note of the little details we are given in this story. The first I want you to note are Jesus's words to His disciples. He instructed them that they should travel together in the boat to the other side. He didn't say, "Let us go and perish in the middle of the Sea of Galilee." He promised His disciples that they would **cross over to the other side**. They got in and the storms came, and they had to deal with it. Sometimes, when storms arise in our lives, some people are likely to say it is because we are like disobedient Jonah, that is why we are facing such terrible storms. But that is not always the case. A storm is arising in the lives of Christ's disciples because of their obedience to the Lord.

The disciples, many of whom were experienced fishermen were doing all they could to bail out the water from the boat and keep a steady course. But what was Jesus doing, sleeping on a cushion (v.38). Mark must have got this little detail from an eye witness, possibly Peter.

This is a beautiful picture of the truly human Jesus who is exhausted, who is weary. He is the very one who created the water. He is the very one who created the sky. He created the wood the boat was made of. And He goes to sleep in the boat. We see the truly human Jesus who can sleep as a result of tiredness. He is not a Superman. He has taught with all of his strength and he is tired. There is peace in his heart in spite of the pressures and overwhelming needs of the crowds around him. He could worry about his family who came and almost took him away because they thought he was mad or could have a nervous breakdown because he was not resting and taking care of himself. He is aware that at this time, religious leaders were plotting his death and the shadow of the Cross looms large in front of Him. So he could have worried about the disciples he had chosen and also about his future. If I were Jesus, that would keep me awake all night. Many things that keep us awake at night sound foolish compared to the situation of Jesus. But Jesus slept. It was not just a sleep of weariness but also a rest of faith. He could sleep on a pillow as though in his father's bosom, in spite of the commotion around.

The boat was filling with water and the disciples were doing what they thought they could do to keep afloat and Jesus was sleeping. The splashing water and the wind did not wake him. The confused frenzy in the boat and perhaps the arguments of the disciples as to the best methodology to stay afloat did not wake him. But at the cry of his disciple, he woke up. It is like a mother, who can sleep through all the noises around her, but at the cry of her baby, she wakes up. See how responsive Jesus is to the cry of his disciples. Maybe at times you feel that Jesus is asleep while you are going through some storms in your life. "Teacher, don't you care if we drown?" Notice the "**we**." Their idea was, "Hey Jesus, You're in trouble here too. Maybe You had better wake up, get a bucket and start bailing along with us, because **we are perishing!**" We are doing something about it and you can join us. Your life is in danger too. If we go down, you go down too.

The disciples were afraid, but at the same time there were several experienced fishermen among them. They knew they were in jeopardy (Luke 8:23) but probably felt they knew what to do. They worked hard at bailing out the water, at rowing in a certain rhythm, at piloting the boat in a certain direction. They were annoyed that Jesus didn't help them.

We often behave in the same way. We are in certain trouble with the storms of life rocking our boat and we feel we know what to do but the situation does not change. We want Jesus to come and help us. We know what to do and we just want Jesus to come and give a helping hand. When we come to Jesus that way, we are still relying on ourselves and we want Jesus to help us to be more successful in relying on ourselves. The great secret of faith in Christ is to have no faith in ourselves but to trust Jesus absolutely. See how Jesus ministers in this situation.

Jesus ignores their expectation and their gentle rebuke and rose to the occasion. Verse 39. He got up, rebuked the wind and said to the waves, "Hush, be still." No theatrics. No effort. The water and the wind recognized the voice of their Creator, just as He rebuked the demonic spirits to come out and ordered death to release Lazarus, He tells the wind and the waves to obey His will. Both stopped. And Mark says it became perfectly calm.

The whole lake was as placid as a pond. The wind stopped immediately, and the waves flattened out. That wouldn't happen if the wind stopped, the waves would still go, hit the shore, bounce back, collide. That would go on for quite a long time after the winds had stopped. But He stopped the winds and at the same time stopped the water simply by speaking. These men had seen the winds come up and they had seen the water whipped up and they had seen the winds die down and the water continue to boil. But here the wind and the water stop and there is a perfect calm.

The disciples could row and throw out water filling the boat but only Jesus could speak to the winds and the waves. The disciples plan helped only their boat but what about the other boats? But Jesus did something that helped not only their boats but others.

Maybe this was part of satanic strategy to truncate the life of Jesus before he gets to Calvary. But how can that be? God had planned it that Jesus would die on the Cross for the sin of the whole world at God's appointed time and no storms can truncate the plan of God. If you are travelling in the boat of life with Jesus, you can rest assured that you are safe. Storms will come but he is in control.

Now Jesus turns to the disciples. He said: "Why are you so afraid? Do you still have no faith?" He puts fear and faith in contrast. Fear is the great enemy of faith. The storms did not bother Jesus and neither did the splashing of the waves. What bothered him was the unbelief of the disciples.

There are certain situations that will make us fear. It is natural, like the splashing waves and the hurricane winds. It was what they chose to do with the fear that matters. Are you going to trust God or what you think you or the world around you can do? Jesus could say to these men, "Why don't you believe my word?" He had told them in verse 35 that they should cross to the other side together. Was he not able to take them safely to the other side as he promised? They could have chosen to trust his promise. Brothers and sisters, we can choose to trust the promise of Christ in the Scriptures when the waves and the winds are beating hard on us. Romans 8:28, 1 Corinthians 10:13 are useful promises of the Lord to His children.

Jesus could also say they had no faith because they accused Jesus of lack of care. When we say that Jesus does not care for us, it shows we do not have faith because Jesus cares even when we are undeserving. I know it takes faith to trust in a seemingly sleeping Jesus, but we must trust Him even when it does not feel like it. That is the type of trust Jesus wants to build in His disciples. Where is your faith?

Have you forgotten the big picture? Did they think God will allow his Messiah, the chosen One to perish in a boating accident in the sea of Galilee? How will it sound? The great miracle worker, the great teacher, got in to the boat with his disciples and they all perished. How will that news sound in the ears of the religious leaders and what picture will it paint of God and His character? Why don't you have faith in him? You have seen his great works. You know that he died on the Cross for your sins and he gives you the promise of eternal life with God. Why don't you have faith in him?

They now asked each other: "Who is this? Even the wind and the waves obey him! There's no reason for Mark to answer that rhetorical question. There's only one possibility. Only God controls the elements and He does it at His own discretion. And in this case, for the protection of His own disciples and Apostles. They needed to know that the Lord not only was God but that the Lord was their protector.

We shouldn't be surprised about that since we hear the testimony of John in John 1:1, "In the beginning was the Word," meaning Christ, "and the Word was with God, the Word was God. He was in the beginning with God. All things came into being through Him and apart from Him nothing came into being that has come into being." That is to say that Christ, the Word, is the Creator of everything that exists. If He has the power to create it, He has the power to control it.

In Hebrews chapter 1 it speaks of God's Son who is appointed heir of all things, verse 2, "Through whom also He made the world." And then in verse 3 He upholds all things by the Word of His power. Here we are told that God made the world through the agency of Christ and Christ sustains it by His power.

In Colossians chapter 1, there is a similar testimony from the Apostle Paul where it tells us in verse 16, "By Him," that is by Christ, "all things were created both in the heavens and on earth, visible and invisible. All things have been created through Him and for Him. He is before all things and in Him all things hold together. He is the Creator and the sustainer of the creation." That is the testimony of Scripture. And those are only samples of the kind of testimony that is repeated in the New Testament regarding Christ.

We all have storms in our lives. Some of us may be going through some pretty rough storms right now. Some of us are trying to bail out our boat and its filling up faster than we can bail; we have already lost our paddles and are being tossed to and fro not knowing if we are on course or not. We are in survival mode just trying to keep afloat.

If your boat is being tossed and turned every way, remember you're not in the boat alone, Jesus is in the boat with you. Call on Him let him calm the storms.

When you realize Jesus is in the boat with you and you don't have to ride out the storms of life alone it helps us not to fear them as much. The storm may still be there but you realize that everything is going to be alright because Jesus is in the boat and he can control the wind and the sea. You reflect on the storms he's already brought you through and realize that your ship isn't going to sink because Jesus is on board.