

“Faith Over Fear”

Mark 4:35-41

Introduction

In this week’s sermon, we have been challenged to put faith over fear. Circumstances of life may be difficult and cause us to feel anxiety or to be afraid. Even so, we have a choice to rest in God’s person, power and provision instead of focusing on the storms that life will bring.

In Mark 4, Jesus taught crowds of people principles of the Kingdom of God. When evening came, He told the disciples, “Let us go to the other side” (v. 35). But as Jesus and His disciples made their way across the water, a fierce storm rose up (v. 37) and caused the disciples to feel very afraid. These were fishermen! They had experience being out on the waters. They surely had experienced a storm before, but this storm was different. It apparently was violent enough to cause the disciples to doubt that they would make it out alive.

Like the storm that the disciples faced, life’s storms often come out of nowhere and bring with them difficulty, discouragement and doubt that we will remain intact. The current life storms surrounding the global pandemic, have impacted everyone in some way. It has affected health, finances, community and so much more. It can be tempting to think that if hard times come in life that we did something to cause it or that we are at fault in some way, but the disciples were in the will of God! They were with Jesus going with Him to the place He had indicated He wanted to go.

It is possible to be in the will of God and still find yourself in the middle of a storm just like it’s possible to be a good student and still have to take tests. If we can understand why all students (good and bad students) are tested, we can perhaps then understand why all people (people inside or outside the will of God) can be tested too! Even if you are smack dab in the middle of God’s will, that doesn’t mean that it will never rain.

Because the disciples were afraid, they decided to wake Jesus, who had gone to sleep. Jesus was silent even while the disciples experienced paralyzing fear. They wondered if Jesus even cared if they were afraid (v. 38). Even today, Jesus’ followers can feel like God is quiet and be surprised or even shocked at this reality when they have faithfully walked with God. Jesus does wake up and rebuke the storm (v. 39). He commands the storm to be still. He spoke to nature, and immediately, there was a calm that the disciples didn’t expect. This is what happens when the peace we seek comes from God. We can experience a peace that surpasses all understanding.

After the storm was calm, Jesus asked the disciples why they were afraid. It was evident that the external challenge had caused this fear. Still, Jesus was pointing out that they had believed their circumstances more than they had believed His Word. We have to decide before the tests of life come, whether or not we will believe God’s Word. We must commit to put more stock into what God says than in what we see.

It’s time to pass the test. Instead of allowing the storms of life to rock your faith, see the tests as what they are: challenges that can grow you. While you can’t always stop fear from coming, you can keep fear from making its home in you. God wants you to fear him more than you fear your circumstances so you can stand strong during difficult days, having faith and acting like God is telling the truth.

Getting Started

1. Pastor introduced this week’s sermon by reminding us that in school, we all had to take tests. These tests were designed to show whether or not we are ready for the next level. As a way to begin this week’s discussion, and just get to know your group better, share what subjects or classes you struggled with while in school. Is there a time in high school or college when you had a marked level of difficulty in doing well on the exams?
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2. We were reminded this week to focus on the character of God rather than in the characteristics of our current circumstances. Take a few minutes to share your thoughts about who Jesus is based on your knowledge of God's Word. Rehearse what you know about him to be true.

Let's Get Personal

1. After listening to the teaching from Dr. Evans this week, identify the area or areas in which you are currently experiencing a storm.
2. As you have walked through this season of a global pandemic, have you sensed God's nearness or have you wondered why He is so silent regarding that which concerns you? If you have been relatively calm in recent months, have you ever felt like Jesus didn't care that you were in the middle of terrible circumstances? In either case, what condition were you in that left you feeling alone and unseen.
3. God will retest us as many times as we fail so that we can learn a lesson. What tests have you struggled to pass? What tests have you been able to pass successfully?

Take the Next Step

1. Pastor Evans described the three types of storms. Share those three storms in your group discussion and then identify with the kind of storm you have experienced most recently and what the circumstances were that caused the storm to begin with.
2. Based on this week's sermon and small group discussion, what truth about God will you choose to believe in despite your circumstances? Who do you believe Jesus to be despite what you see happening around you? What will you do this week to walk in faith and instead of walking in fear? Share your plans to live by faith this week.
3. Want to go deeper? Take a look at the following passages: Mark 4:35-41; 9:23-25; John 11:21; Philippians 4:6-7; Hebrews 11:1

Renew Your Mind

"And He said to them, 'Why are you afraid? Do you still have no faith?'"
Mark 4:40
