

DECEMBER 17, 2017

JESUS RULES

Mark 4:35-41

As a rule, the Bible should be interpreted as plainly and as literally as possible. Bible students must always be warned against using *allegory* as a means of explaining the Scripture. Simply put, allegory assumes that certain objects or events in the Bible are not necessarily real, but *symbolic* and offer lessons for real life situations. The story for this week is absolutely true and really happened. But at the same time, there are very clear (although admittedly a bit symbolic) applications for us today.

The storms of life will come (vv. 35-37). All is calm when Mark 4 begins, and all will be calm when Mark 4 ends. But in the between time, the disciples found themselves fearing for their lives. The shore of Galilee was a well-known site at this point in Jesus' ministry. The Lord called His first disciples there, and He was teaching His parables to the large crowds who gathered there. But the Sea of Galilee is also known for its sudden and violent storms. It was in the midst of one of these storms—out in a boat—that this drama unfolds. The fierce wind pushed the rolling waves into the boat, and the disciples thought they would die. The suddenness of the storm caught them by surprise. The lesson here is that the storms of life DO come; and often without warning. If the disciples—Jesus' closest companions—faced the storm, why would we think we could escape?

There is someone who cares for us in the midst of the storm (v. 38). So where was Jesus when the storm struck? He was right there with them. And He was asleep! The question they asked was as natural as it was ridiculous, "Teacher, don't You care that we're going to die?" Of course, Jesus cared! In fact, it was Jesus who put them in that situation to begin with! Verse 35 says it was His idea! That Jesus was asleep does not indicate indifference, but rather confidence. The storm may catch us off guard, but it never catches HIM off guard. The lesson for us is that when the storms of life do come, there is indeed someone who cares! 1 Peter 5:7 reminds us to cast our cares upon Him, "for He cares for you."

The One who cares for us has the authority to calm the storm (v. 39). At this point Jesus arose, rebuked the wind, and spoke to the sea. The wind immediately stopped and the sea went dead calm. The demonstration of power had an immediate effect. First, it showed that, yes, Jesus did indeed care about His disciples. Second, it showed what sovereign lordship really looks like. To be Lord of all means having authority over all; and that includes creation. That He commands the natural world should not be surprising. After all, He made it! "For everything was created by Him, in heaven and on earth" (Col. 1:16). The lesson for us is that Jesus has all authority. There is no storm of life that Jesus is not aware of and in control of.

The One who calms the storm wants you to know Him (vv. 40-41). The words of Jesus to His disciples should not be taken as harsh, but rather thought-provoking. He wanted them to replace their fear with faith; and He wants us to do the same. James reminds us that the storms of life produce character qualities like patience, perseverance, and wisdom (James 1:2-3). The apostle Paul echoes those thoughts and adds hope to the list (Rom. 5:2-5). The key to weathering the storms of life is to have close fellowship with the One who controls those storms, and understanding that He is right there...in the same boat! The lesson for us is to trust the Lord to see us through. He wants to replace our fears with faith.