



## Sermon, Sunday June 30, 2024 “Jesus Calms the Storm”

**SCRIPTURE: Mark 4:35-41** <sup>35</sup> On that day, when evening had come, he said to them, “Let us go across to the other side.” <sup>36</sup> And leaving the crowd behind, they took him with them in the boat, just as he was. Other boats were with him. <sup>37</sup> A great windstorm arose, and the waves beat into the boat, so that the boat was already being swamped. <sup>38</sup> But he was in the stern, asleep on the cushion; and they woke him up and said to him, “Teacher, do you not care that we are perishing?” <sup>39</sup> He woke up and rebuked the wind, and said to the sea, “Peace! Be still!” Then the wind ceased, and there was a dead calm. <sup>40</sup> He said to them, “Why are you afraid? Have you still no faith?” <sup>41</sup> And they were filled with great awe and said to one another, “Who then is this, that even the wind and the sea obey him?”

### **Introduction: The Cross, Resurrection, and Jesus’ Public Life**

Today is the sixth Sunday after Pentecost. Jesus spent most of his short public life in Capernaum, a fishing village on the Sea of Galilee, and Jerusalem near the Dead Sea. Peter, Andrew, James, and John, who lived as fishermen on the Sea of Galilee, became disciples of Jesus.

According to Mark 4:1, when Jesus was teaching on the shore of the Sea of Galilee, so many people crowded together that he got into the boat. As day fell, Jesus decided to get into a boat with his disciples and cross to the other side of the lake. This is the story of today's text.

According to verse 37 of today's text, a strong wind suddenly arose, and the boat was on the verge of being wrecked. Cold winds from Mount Hermon, 5,400 ft (1646 m) north of the Sea of Galilee, mixed with warm winds from the Sea of Galilee, caused frequent gusts on the Sea of Galilee. At that time, Jesus was asleep in the back of the boat. The disciples woke him up and said to him: **‘Teacher, do you not care that we are perishing?’** He woke up and rebuked the wind, and said to the sea, **‘Peace! Be still!’** Then the wind ceased, and there was a dead calm. This story also appears in the Gospels of Matthew and Luke.

What did you think after hearing the story in today’s text? Some people may have thought that because Jesus is the Son of God, he could perform supernatural miracles. Some people may have thought it was a made-up story for a spiritual lesson. What is clear is that the story in today's text contains both a fact-based part and the disciples' religious confession.

It is a clear historical fact that Jesus often went on a boat with his disciples. This is because many of Jesus' disciples were fishermen, and Jesus also lived in Capernaum on the shore of the Sea of Galilee for a long time. In today’s text, we also see the disciples’ religious confessions. The disciples confess that Jesus is a very special being who controls the wind and the waves of the Sea of Galilee with supernatural power.

It is not that the winds and waves calmed down with just one word from Jesus that is important in understanding today’s text. In fact, the reason the disciples were able to confess that Jesus, who calmed the wind and waves, was a special being was because they later experienced Jesus as the Son of God and the Christ.

This means that to properly understand the text, we must illuminate and interpret Jesus' public life through his cross and resurrection.



## **Body: Faithless disciples and the question ‘Who is this?’**

The early church had long thought of a boat as a metaphor for the church community. The early church always faced religious difficulties and challenges. The disciples were very embarrassed after Jesus died on the cross. Peter, who was called the greatest disciple of Jesus, even denied that he was a disciple of Jesus. After Jesus' death, most of the disciples dispersed. From then on, the early church suffered the same fate as a small boat in a storm due to persecution from the Roman Empire and Judaism.

In this crisis, the disciples and Christians of the early church find a way to overcome the challenges they face in verse 40 of today's text. According to verse 40 of today's text, when the wind and waves calmed, Jesus said to his disciples: **‘Why are you afraid? Have you still no faith?’**

The disciples must have been heartbroken upon hearing these words of Jesus. In fact, they often heard similar words from Jesus. Jesus told his disciples, **‘If you have faith as small as a mustard seed, with faith as small as a mustard seed, you can move mountains’ (Matthew 17:20)**. And, he said, **‘when the Son of Man comes, will he find faith on the earth?’ (Luke 18:8)**.

How do you hear Jesus' words in today's text, **‘Why are you afraid? Have you still no faith?’**

Does this mean that if you have faith, you can live life without fear or worry? In principle, yes. This is like when young children are not afraid in any situation when they are near their mother or father. However, as we become adults, we lose all the trust we had in our parents as children, and we carry worries into our lives.

However, there is a clear difference between Christians and people without faith. It means that Christians clearly know the direction in which they should move in life. This means that even if Christian's experience trial and error in life and are shaken by small faith, they can overcome problems because they have a clear direction to go.

So, Apostle Paul confesses in **Philippians 3:12-14**: **‘Not that I have already obtained all this, or have already been made perfect, but I press on to take hold of that for which Christ Jesus took hold of me. (v.12) Brothers, I do not consider myself yet to have taken hold of it. But one thing I do: Forgetting what is behind and straining toward what is ahead, (v.13) I press on toward the goal to win the prize for which God has called me heavenward in Christ Jesus. (v.14)’**

In fact, a firm direction in life is not given just because our living conditions are better than those of others. Those who have experienced Jesus do not fall into self-pity and do their best to get closer to God, even if it is economically or conditionally difficult compared to others, the lives of these people bring me great comfort.

The most important thing in becoming clear about the direction of our lives is the experience about Jesus. This is because when we experience God's absolute power through Jesus, we can be free from the relative things of the world.

In verse 41 of today's text, the disciples said: **‘They were sore afraid and said to one another, ‘Who then is this, that even the wind and the sea obey him?’**. In this passage, the disciples' question, **‘Who then is this?’** is the key. This is the confession of faith of the disciples who experienced Jesus' death on the cross and resurrection. To the disciples, the Jesus is the Son of God the Creator of the world.

Dear brothers and sisters in Christ! Many people at the time of Jesus had only a superficial knowledge of Him. They did not realize that Jesus was the Son of God. So the people in Jesus' hometown thought of Jesus only as someone from their neighborhood. Also, to the Pharisees, Jesus was a person who did not properly follow the law. Furthermore, to the members of the Sanhedrin, Jesus was a blasphemer.

However, to his disciples, Jesus was a special being who could not be understood through worldly experience, making even the wind and the sea obey him. Even though the existence of Jesus did not change,



each person's experience and understanding of Jesus was completely different. So, who is Jesus to us? And how intensely have we experienced Jesus in our lives?

Many people today are more sensitive to worldly interests and the desire for recognition from the world than to the desire to experience Jesus. Furthermore, they are absorbed in the fun and entertainment that the world has to offer. Of course, we also need fun and entertainment. However, because we are overly immersed in it, even though life appears glamorous on the outside, it is poor on the inside.

**Conclusion: A life of longing for Jesus, the source of life**

Dear brothers and sisters in Christ! Now let's summarize today's message. What does the confession mean in verse 41 of today's text, **'And they were filled with great awe and said to one another, "Who then is this, that even the wind and the sea obey him?"'** The disciples' awe mentioned in this verse is not fear, but extreme reverence for an absolute object. In this passage, the disciples are not surprised because Jesus calmed the wind and waves.

The Synoptic Gospels express this fact in several ways like these: 'Jesus existed in the beginning as the Logos', 'Those who saw Jesus saw God', 'Jesus is the way, truth and life', 'Jesus is the first fruit of resurrection', 'Jesus is the last of the world.'

Jesus is also expressed as 'the one who will come again', 'the only son of God', and 'Christ'.

In today's text, when the disciples' question, 'Who then is this?' it is not a question of doubt about Jesus. This is an expression of the earnest desire to know Jesus, the source of life.

Dear believers, I hope that you will not be at the level of memorizing the catechism but will become people who are amazed and awe of the very existence of Jesus at the depth of salvation, like the disciples in today's text. This is meeting and experiencing Jesus anew every moment. I hope that through Jesus' experience, you can enjoy the full mystery and grace of faith. Amen!

