

APRIL 17, 2020

NEW HOPE BAPTIST CHURCH

WEEK 4 NEWSLETTER

FAITH OVER FEAR

BY DESTINY GONZALEZ

Mark 4:35-41

"On that day, when evening had come, he said to them, "Let us go across to the other side." And leaving the crowd behind, they took him with them in the boat, just as he was. Other boats were with him. A great windstorm arose, and the waves beat into the boat, so that the boat was already being swamped. 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?" 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. He said to them, "Why are you afraid?" Have you still no faith?" 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?"

This story holds a profound lesson challenging our response to fear.

It is important to recognize that the fear in this story was *valid*. This is not a story about irrational anxiety. Notice the language in the text describing "a great windstorm," "the waves beat[ing] the boat" and "that the boat was already being swamped." This was real. The disciples were lifelong fishermen who knew the sea and could recognize genuine danger, and they were convinced they'd die.

This makes the contrast with Jesus all the more remarkable. Look at how Jesus acted: "He was in the stern, asleep on the cushion." Mark paints a picture of serenity, but one surrounded by chaos. I wonder how the disciples viewed Jesus at this moment. He was one of the few in the boat who was not a trained fisherman. Perhaps they viewed his nonchalant attitude as a symptom of ignorance rather than an enduring sign of faith. They faced real danger, one they expertly understood, while their teacher seemed oblivious and out of touch.

It was at that moment Jesus awoke. I like to picture Him slowly sitting up, maybe stretching for a moment and then stepping out to command the waves to "be still!" Instantly, the wind died and seas calmed. At His word. The very word that spoke the sea into existence.

His question is one we must all answer, "Why are you afraid?"

Take a moment and ask yourself.

Fear can be a symptom of a lack of faith. It is human to imagine a worst-case scenario occurring in the future - whether a pandemic, economic collapse, or something else entirely. But, do we remember that God will be with us in that future? Do we see only waves or is our attention fixed on Jesus who still rests in the boat? Fear is a form of thinking in which when we imagine a future in which God will not be present. Even in a "worst-case scenario", Jesus has a funny habit of showing up and transforming it into something else entirely.

This does not negate the reality of human suffering and grief. Jesus repeatedly demonstrates His compassion for those suffering. Furthermore, we should not feel condemned for the fear we feel. It's natural to worry and, no matter how strong your faith, you'll probably still deal with it to some extent. But this does challenge us to lift our perspective so we are not *defined* by fear. No matter what occurs in this life, Jesus - the very Word of God - is still with us. He still has authority over the storm, and He has conquered death itself. We may go through trials, but we live in hope.

It is all-too-easy and all-too-human to let fear grow bigger than God. Like the disciples, we follow Jesus during everyday life, but what happens when a storm appears out of nowhere and threatens to swamp us? How do we view Jesus? As a man who doesn't understand the danger of the situation? Or as a God who reigns over all the earth?

Our perspective changes everything.

Happy Birthday!



APRIL 17
ROSS MCCLLENITHAN

APRIL 21
JAN PLATT

APRIL 22
GAIL BURNETT

APRIL 23
KIMBERLYN JOHNSON

*"The devil
sometimes goes
too far. He drives
us straight into
the Lord's arms."*

RUTH GRAHAM BELL



"Since, then, you have been raised with Christ, set your hearts on things above, where Christ is, seated at the right hand of God. Set your minds on things above, not one earthly things. For you died, and your life is now hidden with Christ in God. When Christ, who is your life, appears, then you will also be with him in glory."

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