

Strengthened through the Storm

Mark 6: 45-52

Our text follows another very busy day of ministry for Jesus and the disciples. He had just multiplied the bread and fish of a little boy's lunch, and the disciples distributed the meal to several thousand people. The day is coming to an end, but there is yet another teaching moment in store for the disciples.

This is an account most Bible students know well, but it is often looked at from Matthew's perspective. Mark doesn't record Peter walking on the water, but his brief walk of faith took place during this journey. John also provides some interesting details of this encounter. Following the miraculous feeding of the multitude, the people were ready to take Jesus by force and make Him their newly anointed king. [John 6:15 – When Jesus therefore perceived that they would come and take him by force, to make him a king, he departed again into a mountain himself alone.](#) Jesus knowing His time had not yet come, and this would not fulfill redemption's plan, departed from the multitude.

This passage deals with another storm in the lives of the disciples. While they didn't enjoy them any more than we do, this particular storm would prove beneficial for them. Like the disciples, we must learn from our difficulties and draw closer to Jesus through them. I want to examine the [facets](#) of this encounter as we discuss: [Strengthened through the Storm](#).

I. Their Submissive Obedience [\(45-46\)](#) – Here we discover not only the obedience of the disciples, but also the submission of Jesus to His Father. Consider:

A. The Directive [\(45\)](#) – [And straightway he constrained his disciples to get into the ship, and to go to the other side before unto Bethsaida, while he sent away the people.](#) Prior to Jesus sending the multitude away, He constrained the disciples to get into the boat and make their way across the Sea of Galilee once again to Bethsaida. It is interesting to note that this has the idea of "*forcing them into the boat.*" It is apparent that the disciples had no desire to leave Jesus, and yet He forced them to sail to the other side without Him. This was likely done for several reasons: He needed to send the multitude away; Jesus had planned to spend some quality time with the Father; and the disciples needed another teaching moment. I am convinced Jesus allowed and even purposed the disciples to encounter another storm in order to strengthen their faith.

- We have discussed many times that storms are never enjoyable, but there is usually some benefit in them. The Lord does allow trials and storms to come into our lives to strengthen us and bring about spiritual maturity.

B. The Devotion (46) – [And when he had sent them away, he departed into a mountain to pray.](#)

Having sent the disciples away on their journey and dispersing the crowd that followed them, Jesus departed into a mountain to pray. He needed this time of solitude with the Father. His life and ministry had been quite demanding and Jesus was committed to spending time in prayer. It is evident that He closely guarded that time and made provision to engage in prayer. (This serves as another reminder of our need for prayer. If Jesus saw the need to pray, literally making time in His busy schedule to do so, how much more should we desire and make time to pray?)

II. Their Persuasive Experience (47-50) – Here we come to the heart of the passage, another great learning experience for the disciples. Notice:

A. The Separation (47) – [And when even was come, the ship was in the midst of the sea, and he alone on the land.](#) Mark intentionally revealed that Jesus had not yet been reunited with the disciples. They were in the midst of the sea and Jesus remained alone on the land. The storm would arise during this time of separation.

- This does not imply that Jesus will desert us when we are facing great adversity, but it does reveal that we too must learn to trust Him even when it appears we are all alone. Unlike the disciples, we have never seen Jesus face to face. We must walk by faith, trusting His unseen hand. We must remember what Jesus was doing during that time of separation – He was praying to the Father. No doubt He was interceding for them. We have comfort knowing our Lord also intercedes on our behalf. [Heb.7:25 – Wherefore he is able also to save them to the uttermost that come unto God by him, seeing he ever liveth to make intercession for them.](#)

B. The Observation (48a) – [And he saw them toiling in rowing; for the wind was contrary unto them.](#)

Although they were separated physically from Jesus, they were never beyond His watchful eye. As Jesus spent time in prayer, He was aware of their struggles in the midst of the sea. This too had become a desperate situation. They were struggling to stay afloat, toiling in rowing against the wind and waves. These men were terrified by the storm they encountered.

- It is comforting to know that we are never alone in the journey of life. Like the disciples, we are never beyond the watchful gaze of our Lord. He is continually aware of where we are, what we face, and the many needs we have.

C. The Confusion (48b-50a) – [and about the fourth watch of the night he cometh unto them, walking upon the sea, and would have passed by them.](#) ^[49] [But when they saw him walking upon the sea, they](#)

supposed it had been a spirit, and cried out: ^[50a] For they all saw him, and were troubled. Here we find another interesting aspect of the passage. We don't know exactly what time the disciples started their journey, but it is now somewhere between 3:00 am and 6:00 am. Likely they had been rowing for at least six hours and remained in the midst of the sea. In the midst of their turmoil, Jesus came to them, and almost passed them by. This was not done in anger or punishment, but as a means to test their faith. As they saw Jesus walking on the water, they were terrified, assuming Him to have been a spirit. This caused all of them to cry out in fear.

- We tend to be judgmental of their lack of faith, but we likely would have responded the same or worse. They had toiled all night and it was in the early morning hours. In the midst of a storm comes a figure of a man walking on the water. Certainly not physically, but spiritually we have reacted in much the same way. There have been seasons in our lives when we faced desperation and were completely unaware that Jesus was near to us. We often focus on the trial, and have so little faith, that we cannot recognize Jesus when He is in our midst.

D. The Conversation (50b) – And immediately he talked with them, and saith unto them, Be of good cheer: it is I; be not afraid. Jesus immediately spoke to them, affirming His identity, and revealing there was no need to fear. Can you imagine the joy and peace this brought to their hearts at that moment? The storm that threatened their lives continued to rage, but Jesus had come!

- There is nothing like a comforting word from the Lord when we are in the midst of a trial. It often comes through His Word, but can be revealed through a reminder from a friend. I will never forget the day the Lord spoke to me through the Holy Spirit, revealing my need and offering grace unto salvation! I was toiling in a sea of sin and Jesus brought deliverance!

III. Their Reflective Confidence (51-52) – Although reluctant at first, the disciples recognized Jesus and placed their confidence in Him. Notice:

A. The Alteration (51a) – And he went up unto them into the ship; and the wind ceased. As Jesus stepped into the boat with the disciples, the wind ceased immediately. The storm was over and they experienced a great calm. The Lord had met their need and they were safe within His care.

- The Lord doesn't always respond immediately, or in the manner we thought He would, but He possesses all power. He is more than able to calm our storm and provide deliverance in our times of need.

B. The Amazement (51b) – *And he went up unto them into the ship; and the wind ceased: and they were sore amazed in themselves beyond measure, and wondered.* The disciples were filled with wonder and amazement at the power of Jesus. They stood in awe of Him, admiring His ability to calm the raging sea.

- Many are critical of the disciples, and yet I realize we need to regain our sense of awe and wonder regarding our Savior. He is Lord and Master of our lives. He spoke the world into existence and sustains it by the word of His power. He provided the means of our salvation, defeating Satan, sin and death. He has conquered every enemy we could face in life. He is worthy of our adoration and praise!

C. The Admonition (52) – *For they considered not the miracle of the loaves: for their heart was hardened.* How quickly we forget, allowing adversity to hinder our faith and divert our focus. Just a few hours prior, they had experienced a great miracle, and now they feared for their lives with little faith. They allowed the intensity of their current situation to create doubt and fear in their hearts.

- Again, I am sure we would have responded much the same, but a lack of faith is never pleasing to our Lord. Like the disciples, we have experienced the Lord's power and provision, and yet we are quick to forget. We often allow circumstances to hinder our faith and create an attitude of fear and doubt. We must continue to trust the Lord, believing in faith, regardless of the situation.

Conclusion: Mark doesn't say, but John revealed another important aspect regarding this journey. *John 6:21 – Then they willingly received him into the ship: and immediately the ship was at the land whither they went.* This provides great comfort for us as we journey through life. We will face trials and storms along the way, but we are going to make it to the other side! The saved are secure in His mighty hand.

Are you facing a storm in life, filled with doubt and fear? If so, look to Jesus. He is nearer than you realize. He stands ready to meet your need, providing the courage and strength to endure. If you are yet unsaved, you do not have the promise of safe passage to eternal life. Respond to the offer of grace and be saved today!