

RTS Women's Study: The Gospel of Mark

#9: Mark 4:35-41: The Return of the King: To Rule Over Creation

Intro: A Fallen World Can Be a Scary Place

I. The Disciples Had the Wrong Expectations about Following Jesus (v.36-37)

- A. Disciples May Not Have Expected a Storm at All
 - It is Jesus who wanted to cross the sea: "Let us go across to the other side" (v.35)
 - They took Jesus "just as he was"—no preparation, no supplies
- B. Disciples Certainly Did Not Expect a Storm of Such Severity
 - It was night time: "evening had come" (v.35)
 - A "great windstorm" refers to unexpected squall on the Sea of Galilee (v.37)
 - Ancient fishing boats could be easily swamped: "the boat was already filling" (v.37)
- C. We Need to Get Our Expectations Right About Following Jesus
 - Why do most Christians expect a storm-free life?
 - Having the right expectations is the basis for peace
 - Be careful of an "overly realized eschatology"!
 - Embracing the fallenness of the world can be liberating and peace-giving

II. The Disciples Had the Wrong Interpretation of the Sleeping of Jesus (v.38)

- A. The Disciples assume Jesus must not care
 - "Do you not care that we are perishing?" (v.38)
 - We often wonder whether God cares when we are suffering through storms
- B. But the Disciples Have Missed A Few Things
 - Jesus was in the boat with them!
 - Jesus linked his fate with the disciples' fate; what happened to them happened to him
 - Jesus' presence is a picture of how God will never abandon or forsake us
 - Jesus was physically exhausted
 - Jesus was a real human being, who needed to rest from his weariness
 - Later this same human would calm the wind and the waves!
 - Jesus may have a plan for their suffering
 - Does God ever seem "asleep" at other times his people have suffered?
 - Why does God do this?

III. The Disciples Had the Wrong Identification of the Person of Jesus (v.39-41)

A. Misunderstanding Jesus

- It's not clear what they expected Jesus to do; but they didn't expect him to do what he did! "Who then is this that even the wind and waves obey him?" (v.41)
- They may have believed he was a prophet, or a teacher, or a man of God
- But believing Jesus is special is not enough

B. Jesus Reveals His Divinity

- In the ancient world the sea represented darkness, chaos, and evil
 - The ocean represents the "fallenness" of a world cursed by sin
- Thus, the OT often describes God as controlling the wind and sea
 - Job 26:12 describes God: "By his power he stilled the sea."
 - Psalm 104:7: "At your rebuke [the waters] fled."
 - Psalm 107:28: "They [the sailors] cried to the Lord in their trouble, and he delivered them from their distress. He made the storms be still, and the waves of the sea were hushed."
- Moreover, Jesus performs this miracle by the spoken word
 - Throughout the OT God performs his miracles by speaking
 - The created world was formed by him speaking

C. Responding to Jesus the King

- Take comfort and do not fear
 - "Why are you so afraid? Have you still no faith?" (v.40)
 - The essence of the Christian life is not fearing because of who Christ is
 - "If God is for us, who can be against us?" (Rom 8:31)
- Be uncomfortable and do fear!
 - "They were filled with great fear" (v.41)
 - Their fear did not stop, it simply shifted from the storm to Jesus!
 - "It's a fearful thing to fall into the hands of the living God" (Heb 10:31)
 - Remember, Jesus is *both* Lion and Lamb!

Discussion Groups

1. How do you think you are doing in regard to having accurate expectations of the Christian life? Share with the group about whether you might struggle with having an "overly realized eschatology". How does this passage help you?
2. Do you ever feel like God is "asleep" in regard to your life, leaving you to suffer in danger? Share about any time where you feel like God didn't care or wasn't listening. Does this story help change your perception of God?
3. Do you think you have an accurate picture of Jesus as both Lion and Lamb? Why is it so important that we remember he is both?