

THE PRAYER THAT IS ALWAYS ANSWERED

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SCRIPTURE READING: *(Mark 4:35-41)* “And the same day, when the even was come, he saith unto them, Let us pass over unto the other side. **36** And when they had sent away the multitude, they took him even as he was in the ship. And there were also with him other little ships. **37** And there arose a great storm of wind, and the waves beat into the ship, so that it was now full. **38** And he was in the hinder part of the ship, asleep on a pillow: and they awake him, and say unto him, Master, carest thou not that we perish? **39** And he arose, and rebuked the wind, and said unto the sea, Peace, be still. And the wind ceased, and there was a great calm. **40** And he said unto them, Why are ye so fearful? how is it that ye have no faith? **41** And they feared exceedingly, and said one to another, What manner of man is this, that even the wind and the sea obey him?”

Introduction (Questions)

Are there times when God does not answer prayer? One might argue that God always answers prayer. It’s just that sometimes the answer is, “No”. The Bible says, “If I regard iniquity in my heart, the Lord will not hear me.” **And in James 4: “3**Ye ask, and receive not, because ye ask amiss, that ye may consume it upon your lusts.” **And in James 1:5-7,** we read, **5** “If any of you lack wisdom, let him ask of God, that giveth to all men liberally, and upbraideth not; and it shall be given him. **6** But let him ask in faith, nothing wavering. For he that wavereth is like a wave of the sea driven with the wind and tossed. **7** For let not that man think that he shall receive any thing of the Lord” So we may conclude that it is possible for someone to pray and for his prayers to not be answered. But there is one prayer that is always, always answered, and I mean with a “Yes”. Would you like to know what it is? Stay tuned.

Bible Text (Jesus Calms the Storm)

Let us turn to Mt 8:23-27 **23**”And when he was entered into a ship, his disciples followed him.

24And, behold, there arose a great tempest in the sea, insomuch that the ship was covered with the waves: but he was asleep.

25And his disciples came to him, and awoke him, saying, Lord, save us: we perish.

26And he saith unto them, Why are ye fearful, O ye of little faith? Then he arose, and rebuked the winds and the sea; and there was a great calm.

27But the men marvelled, saying, What manner of man is this, that even the winds and the sea obey him!”

We read the same story in Mark 4:35-41 which _____ read for the scripture reading.

Mark tells us that when evening came, at the end of a long day of ministry, after Jesus and his disciples had spent hours ministering to the needs of people, after giving and giving and giving of themselves for the needs of others, it was Jesus himself who said, "Let us go across to the other side." No doubt his disciples were glad to hear that word because they were very tired. Mark 4:1-2 says that such a large crowd gathered to hear Jesus teach that he had to get in a boat and teach them while they pressed to the edge of the water. It had been like that everywhere they went. Crowds came to hear the Master. Sick people came to be healed. The confused came to find hope. On and on they came, day after day, wanting to hear Jesus, desperately wanting to be near him. Jesus said, "Let us cross over to the other side of the lake and rest." They had to get away from all of the people for awhile. But the Bible mentions other boats. Apparently other people were following Him. DA states, "There were other fishing boats lying near the shore, and these were quickly crowded with people who followed Jesus, eager still to see and hear Him." It's no wonder Jesus fell asleep in the boat. Perhaps he knew that he wasn't going to get much rest on the other side. The people kept coming to Him. All day long He had labored for them. So they set off to cross the lake. It was probably a nice day when they set out.

But as every Christian comes to know, traveling in the boat with Jesus is not always smooth sailing! No sooner than you jump in the boat with Jesus, storms will hit. Often people get the false impression that as soon as we turn our lives over to Christ, all of our problems will be solved. But He never promised us that it would be easy. In fact, when we turn our lives over to Christ, the Devil gets angry and begins to attack us. But as we learned from Pastor Bob last week, we are well able to overcome, through the power of Christ. It's a matter of trust. Isn't that so? For "greater is He that is in you than he that is in the world." 1 John 4:4

The winds were howling and the waves were raging loudly pitching and tossing the boat..."But Jesus was in the stern asleep." Imagine sleeping under those conditions. Now there are 3 ways to wake up a person. Noise, shaking, water. All three of these elements were present. It was noisy, the boat was shaking, and the water was splashing into the boat. That just goes to show you how very exhausted Jesus must have been. It also shows you His peace; how trusting he was of his Heavenly Father. The disciples should not be panicking. Why not? Where is the safest place in the world to be? Right there in the boat with Jesus! Although it may not seem so, they were in the safest place in the world because they were right there with Jesus.

What do storms represent? Storms represent circumstances that are out of our control. Storms have a tendency to make people feel afraid. When I was young, I lived in Kansas where there were periodic tornadoes. We were living in a trailer house, so our whole family would have to go and sit in a storm shelter. And as a little boy, I was afraid. But the disciples were tough. They were expert fishermen. They were not afraid. At least not at first. When a problem arises, how often we think we can handle it on our own. We become self dependent. But God is in the business of humbling us when we think that we are something. Without Him, we can do nothing. The storm reminds us who is in charge. As we go through life, we typically go through a lot of "storms", that is, circumstances that are beyond our control. I guess we need a lot of reminders about who

is really in control. And it's not us. Ezekiel tells us, "The Lord brings down the high tree, exalts the low tree, dries up the green tree, and makes the dry tree flourish." Ezekial 17:24 Just when you think that you are something, Watch out! Because you are about to find out that only by the grace of God were you even got out of bed this morning. "Nothing is apparently more helpless, yet really more invincible, than the soul that feels its nothingness and relies wholly on the merits of the Saviour. "MH182

And so after trying desperately to save themselves, the disciples finally realize that this storm is more than a match for them. They are desperately fighting to get the water out of the boat to keep it from sinking. And as they are scooping the water out, the waves are splashing more and more in. The boat is rocking. The water is rushing in. Now they are afraid. It seems as though they had actually forgotten that Jesus was in the boat with them. And I ask you today, "Have we forgotten that Jesus is in the boat with us?" I hope not. Suddenly the lightning flashes and they in amazement see Jesus there asleep at the stern of the boat. Finally as a last resort, they prayed. Talking to Jesus is prayer. Have you ever wondered if your prayers go any higher than the ceiling? The Bible says, "If I regard iniquity in my heart, the Lord will not hear me." But the only way I can get iniquity out of my heart is if the Lord will hear me. Well there is one prayer that is always, always answered.

"Lord, save us! We perish!", they call. The book Desire of Ages tells us, "Never did man utter that cry unheeded." This is the one prayer that is always, always answered. "Lord, save us! We perish!" The disciples were finally ready to admit that this storm was out of their control, which is the very first of the 12 basic steps to Christ and also the first step in Alcoholics Anonymous – admitting that we have a problem and that we are helpless to do anything about it. The storms of our lives may be out of *our* control, but they are NOT out of *Christ's* Control.

And the disciples asked him a question that to us may seem rude or disrespectful, but it is one we have all probably asked in moments of desperation: "**Do you not care that we are perishing?**"

Have you ever asked a question like this?

Lord Jesus, don't you care that my child is sick?
Don't you care that my marriage is falling apart?
Don't you care that my friends have deserted me?
Don't you care that I have no money?
Don't you care that I feel so alone?
Don't you care that I want to give up?
Don't you care that my husband has died?
Don't you care that I lost my job?

We have probably all asked that question in various ways at various times. We never question the Lord's compassion when things are going well. *But God's compassion is not measured by our circumstances nor is his kindness limited to our understanding.* God cares just as much when the tempest is raging as when the seas are calm and the sun is shining.

And how do you get the faith that enables you to survive the storms of life? *The only answer I know is to get in the boat with Jesus and ride with him wherever he wants to go.*

Well you know the story. Jesus simply stood up and said to the wind and the waves, "Peace! Be still! And it was immediately calm.

Jesus says, "I can of Mine own self do nothing." John 5:30. He trusted in the Father's might. It was in faith--faith in God's love and care--that Jesus rested, and the power of that word which stilled the storm was the power of God.

As Jesus rested by faith in the Father's care, so we are to rest in the care of our Saviour.

DA 336 "How often the disciples' experience is ours! When the tempests of temptation gather, and the fierce lightnings flash, and the waves sweep over us, we battle with the storm alone, forgetting that there is One who can help us. We trust to our own strength till our hope is lost, and we are ready to perish. Then we remember Jesus, and if we call upon Him to save us, we shall not cry in vain. Though He sorrowfully reproves our unbelief and self-confidence, He never fails to give us the help we need. Whether on the land or on the sea, if we have the Saviour in our hearts, there is no need of fear. Living faith in the Redeemer will smooth the sea of life, and will deliver us from danger in the way that He knows to be best."

I'd like to read a related passage from the Psalms, Ps 107:23-31 **23**They that go down to the sea in ships, that do business in great waters;

24These see the works of the LORD, and his wonders in the deep.

25For he commandeth, and raiseth the stormy wind, which lifteth up the waves thereof.

26They mount up to the heaven, they go down again to the depths: their soul is melted because of trouble.

27They reel to and fro, and stagger like a drunken man, and are at their wit's end.

28Then they cry unto the LORD in their trouble, and he bringeth them out of their distresses.

29He maketh the storm a calm, so that the waves thereof are still.

30Then are they glad because they be quiet; so he bringeth them unto their desired haven.

31Oh that men would praise the LORD for his goodness, and for his wonderful works to the children of men!

"Peace, be still!" Jesus said. Imagine the reaction of the disciples! They said, "Who is this that even the wind and waves obey Him?" The Bible tells us that there were also other boats in the water around them who were probably were trying to follow Jesus so they could hear more of those precious words such as, "Come unto me all ye who are weak and heavy laden and I will give you rest." Or perhaps some of them were trying to carry their sick relatives to Him who worked so tirelessly to heal. They also saw the storm suddenly become calm. They must have seen Jesus standing there in total command of the situation. They must have been in awe as well. Well, eventually they crossed the lake. There they encountered another kind of storm, the kind of storm that rages in a man's heart when he is under the control of the enemy of our souls. It was the

Demoniacs of Gerasene. A storm raged within them, internally. A legion of demons caused an internal storm that drove them mad. But not even this kind of a storm is a match for Jesus. Jesus cast out the demons and they became His disciples.

I am convinced that though things seem out of control during a storm, and we are tempted like the disciples to say "*Lord, don't you care?*". When we turn to Jesus, **He does hear, He does care, and he does act for our good.** But events in life are not always as we would expect. I find Christ to be one who speaks peace to my storms whether they are external and out of my control, or internal; whether they are natural, or supernatural.

Jesus said, "Peace! Be still!" It's interesting when you look at that in the Greek text. James Dobson used to say, "I know a little Greek and a little Hebrew. The little Greek runs a meat market in Las Angeles and the little Hebrew runs a clothing store in New York." Now I don't know any Greek or Hebrew, but I understand that if you look at the original Greek text, the word Jesus uses to address the wind and the waves is the very same word used to describe Jesus' words to the demon- possessed man in Luke 4:35 "Be calm"! "phimoo" Luke 4:35 And Jesus rebuked him, saying, Hold thy peace, and come out of him.

Have you ever heard the saying "There is no rest for the wicked?" There is a lot of truth in that, isn't there? In fact, it's a verse found in the Bible, Isa 57:20 There is no peace, saith my God, to the wicked." Isa. 57:20, 21. Sin has destroyed our peace. While we let our selfish nature rule, we can find no rest. The masterful passions of the heart no human power can control.

We are as helpless as those disciples to calm the raging storm. But He who spoke peace to the storm speaks peace to every soul. DA reads, "However fierce the tempest, those who turn to Jesus with the cry, "Lord, save us," will find deliverance. His grace, that reconciles the soul to God, quiets the strife of human passion, and in His love the heart is at rest."

I want to give you 2 things to Remember: If you are with Jesus:

- 1) "The boat will not sink, and**
- 2) and the storm will not last forever."**

Between these two narratives, the calming of the Storm and the calming of the demon possessed wild man there are parallels too obvious to be incidental.

1. There is the howling sea, which corresponds to the raging fury of the demoniac who cannot be tamed by the strongest of chains.
2. The stillness of the wind and the sea after Jesus' word corresponds to the peace of the healed man who sits peacefully at the feet of Jesus clothed and in his right mind.
3. The disciples fear after the calming of the storm, is parallel to the fear of those pig herders who were so afraid of Jesus after he calmed the man and healed him.

The point is, that Jesus can break the bonds that are out of your control. It doesn't matter whether it is external circumstances beyond your control, or a storm raging within you, whether it is natural or supernatural, Jesus has the power to restore peace to our lives.

Where there are no storms, there is no danger.
Where there is no danger, there is no fear.
Where there is no fear, there is no testing.
Where there is no testing, there is no learning.
Where there is no learning, there is no growing.
Where there is no growing, there is no faith.

Ellen Whites boat experience:

One time a very Godly woman by the name of Ellen White had an amazing experience in a boat during a storm. When she began receiving visions, she was often accused of having somehow been mesmerized.

I'll share with you this account taken from the The Review and Herald, July 21, 1851

She writes, "In 1846, while at Fairhaven, Mass., my sister and my brother and myself started in a sail-boat to visit a family on West's Island. It was almost night when we started. We had gone but a short distance when a sudden storm arose. It was so dark that we could see nothing around us. It thundered and lightened and the rain came in torrents upon us. My brother had more than he could well attend to, to manage the boat. He tried to anchor, but the anchor dragged. Our little boat was tossed upon the waves, and driven by the wind, while it was so dark that we could not see from one end of the boat to the other. It seemed plain that we must be lost, unless God should deliver. Soon the anchor held.

I knelt down in the boat, and began to cry to God to deliver us. And there upon the tossing billows, while the water washed over the top of the boat upon us, the rain descended as I never saw it before, the lightnings flashed and the thunders rolled. I was taken off in vision, and saw that sooner would every drop of water in the ocean be dried up than we should perish, for I saw that my work had but just began. After I came out of the vision all my fears were gone, and we sung and praised God, and our little boat was to us a floating Bethel. The editor of the "Advent Herald" has said that my visions were known to be "the result of mesmeric operations." But I ask, what chance was there for mesmeric operations in such a time as that?

My brother at last called for help. There were but two houses on the Island, and it proved that we were near one of them, but not the one where we wished to go. All the family had retired to rest except a little child, who providentially heard the call for help upon the water. Her father soon came to our relief, and in a small boat, took us to the shore. We spent the most of that night in thanksgiving and praise to God, for his wonderful goodness unto us.

Notice that it was when she cried out to God for deliverance that she received the assurance in vision that sooner would every drop of water in the ocean be dried up than

they should perish. I couldn't help but to be reminded of this story as I was studying about Jesus and the disciples in the storm."

The story of Jesus calming the storm also reminds me of a song I'd like to share with you. It's called "Peace, Be Still" by Twila Paris. Listen carefully to the words.

Twila Paris song

Conclusion

Jesus is the Lord of the wind and the waves.
When he calls us, we get into the boat.
When he sleeps, we toil on.
When the storm comes, we cry out to him.
When he awakes, he calms the storm.
When the storm is over, our faith is stronger.

Are you in a storm at this very moment? You are not there by accident but by your Father's design. He does not intend to hurt you even though you feel like screaming because your pain is so great. *You are not alone though it feels that way now.* You may have lost everything, but you have not lost the Lord. He is still with you though you cannot see him or sense his presence.

Fear not. Keep believing.

The Master of the sea is by your side. When the time has come, he will say, "Peace, be still," and the storm will run out of breath and the sea will become like glass. Eventually the day will break and the sun will shine again. And when you look back, you will see that your faith has grown stronger by the storm you passed through.

Jesus said to the storm, "Peace, be still!" and the waves were quiet, Jesus says to your heart and mine "Peace, be still!" God's Word assures us that "The work of righteousness shall be peace; and the effect of righteousness is quietness and assurance forever." (Rom. 5:1; Isa. 32:17.) Do you want that kind of peace in your life? Let's remember to rely not on our own strength, but upon Jesus, our Savior.

Let us stand and sing our closing hymn, #466.

CLOSING HYMN: 466 "Wonderful Peace" 331 in the Spanish Hymnal

PRAYER: Shall we pray.

Dear Father in Heaven,

You know the storms that each one of us faces. Please speak Peace to our hearts and give us help us to find that rest that Jesus spoke about when He said, "Come unto me and I will give you rest." We acknowledge that you are in control of all of the storms and

complicated situations of life. Thanks you for the peace and rest that only You can give.
In Jesus name, Amen.