

It Happened Here

Nof Ginnosar

by Katrina Rolan

Introduction

A few days before writing this devotion, I was doing chores in my horse paddock. The sky was dark, and I knew there was a storm coming. I wanted to move some things into the barn before the storm hit. As I was working, the sky suddenly became even more ominous, wind started howling, lightning cracked, and thunder boomed. Before I had a chance to run the few yards to the barn, hailstones the size of quarters started flying sideways through the air in the whipping wind. It felt like an all-star pitcher was throwing rocks at my head. I tried my best to hide under the hay trough, but the hail was not falling perpendicular to the earth, it was flying sideways at my head (and the rest of me too), so getting under the trough did not protect me. I finally had to grit my teeth, take my lumps, and run for the barn as fast as I could.

The storms on the Sea of Galilee can blow in very suddenly, just like hailstorms in the desert. The topography surrounding the lake makes for some wild weather. The Golan Heights, to the east of the lake reach more than 2500 ft above sea level, while the lake itself is about 700 ft below sea level. When the wind blows the cool mountain air down through the warm air over the lake, it can produce violent storms very quickly.

Digging In

Read: Mark 4:35-41



Digging Deeper

Unexpected storms can wreck our courage rather quickly. The disciples were terrified. The storm was so severe that the disciples truly thought their lives were in danger. The context of this story really highlights just how quickly our faith can falter. Not long before this story, Jesus had given the disciples some remarkable assignments that clearly required a significant amount of faith. Mark 3:13-19 describes the calling of the 12 disciples. It says, “he appointed twelve, that they might be with Him and that He might send them out to preach, and to have power to heal sicknesses and to cast out demons” (NKJV). Yet when a storm that seemed totally out of control struck, these men who had been given the power to cast out demons suddenly became almost paralyzed by their fear. However, they knew where to turn for help. What did the disciples do when they feared they might die in the storm?

Even though they instinctively knew to turn to Jesus for help, their response to His power over the storm showed that their faith was not yet completely mature. Review Mark 4:41. What was the disciples’ response to Jesus calming the storm?

Application

Can you remember any spiritual storms in your life that seemed to come out of nowhere and shake your faith? Write a little bit about how you felt during that storm.

How did you get through that storm? Did you turn to the Bible? To a wise friend or family member? How did your faith grow through that experience?

More Background

As Pastor John explained in his video teaching, the story in Mark 4 is not the only time Jesus calmed the waves

on the Sea of Galilee. Immediately after He fed the 5000 with just a few loaves and fish, He sent His disciples across the Sea of Galilee. This time He stayed behind to go up on a mountain to pray. When He was ready to join His disciples, once again, there was a storm.

Digging In

Read: Matthew 14:22-33.

Digging Deeper

We often focus on Peter in this passage. It is certainly extraordinary that he was able to walk on water at all, even if he did start sinking when his faith faltered. But, how much more so do we have another beautiful description of Christ's control over all of creation. Let us turn our attention to the last verse though—read verse 33 again. Now go back and review Mark 4:41. How did the disciple's response to Jesus calming the storm change?

Application

In the first passage we studied, Mark 4:35-41, fear seemed to be the overriding emotion for the disciples. They were afraid of the storm, so they woke Jesus up. When He calmed the storm, and stilled the waves, then they were afraid because He had demonstrated such power over creation. In the second storm incident, the disciple's reaction was very different. Once they recognized their Lord, they demonstrated great faith. They worshiped Jesus and proclaimed Him to be the Son of God. We have all had storms in our lives. I suspect if we look back to our personal storms, each one has had the power of God running through it, even if we did not recognize it at the time. Jot down some of the examples of how God has worked through your storms to strengthen your faith in Him.

Prayer

God is known by many names throughout the Bible. One is El Shaddai, which means "God Almighty," describing His power over all creation. Pray for His continued power over the storms in your life and ask for peace in the midst of your storm, even as it rages around you. Thank Him that even when you feel alone and scared, He is there with you. He sees you, and He is for you.

Does this give you hope that when you face storms in the future, He will be there to calm the waves?

Matthew 11:28-30 invites us to come to Jesus when we feel overwhelmed and overburdened. He will give us rest and peace. Although scripture assures us in many places that we will have trouble in this life, we can return to Matthew 14, jump in the boat with the disciples and find peace and hope because truly, He is the Son of God. The Sea of Galilee and all its storms are subject to His authority, and so are the storms of our lives.

