

“A Year with Jesus”

Week 15, April 11th, Mark 4:35-41

// Sometimes the difficulty of spending time in the gospel stories is their familiarity. This week we look at Jesus calming the storm. Just reading that description probably conjures images from the well known story along with the obvious application to our personal life storms. Well, there's nothing wrong with familiar stories or obvious points of application, and yes, bringing one of your personal storms to Jesus will be part of this devotion. Yet, it's in these scenarios where picturing the passage and placing yourself in the story can open us to the presence of Jesus. I have no new cultural or linguistic insights to give, only an invitation to sit quietly and enter into the storm tossed boat with Jesus.

// Read Mark 4:35-41

Once you've made yourself familiar with the story, find a place of comfort and prepare to picture and place yourself in the scene. Read through the thoughts below and refer to them as you sit with the story. Don't feel the need to replay Mark 4 exactly as written. Instead, allow yourself to ask some or all of the following questions, observe Jesus, and maybe even hear his response. Take your time! Once you are ready, place yourself on the boat, in the sea, in the storm, in the presence of Jesus, and walk through the story.

- What do you see, how do you feel, when looking at Jesus?
- What do you say to or ask Jesus? Is it the same as the disciples?
- What is his response?
- What is it like to see him calm the storm?
- Take a moment and rest with him in the boat, in the calm sea.
- Does Jesus have a word/question for you? Is it the same as it was for the disciples?

Sit with and journal any thoughts from your time in Mark 4.

The section following is optional. If being in the passage with Jesus is enough, feel free to end your time of devotion.

// Bringing your storm to Jesus

Call to mind a current storm you are facing in your life. Use the questions below to bring Mark 4 into your storm.

- What or where is the presence of Jesus in this storm?
- What question would you ask of him in the midst of the storm? Is there a question of his willingness? His compassion? Don't be afraid to ask these hard questions of Jesus.

- Where in the midst of this struggle do you long for him to speak peace? Present this longing to Jesus.
- The question Jesus asks the disciples isn't simply a questioning of their faith, it's a "why don't you have it yet." Is Jesus asking this of you in this storm (if so, imagine him asking it compassionately, with grace, instead of condemnation)?
- Has he been with you in storms before? Call these experiences to mind. How do they inform your faith in this storm?

Journal your thoughts, prayers, and thanks.