

*'And you're going to tell me,' he said at last, 'that as a result of your prayers you got better without having to undergo the surgery?' The Minister smiled as he shook his head. 'Oh, no,' he murmured. 'I had the surgery . . . but as a result of prayer, God gave me the courage to endure.*

## CONCLUSION

The story ends with the disciples being filled with awe. They had discovered that even in danger, Jesus can deliver. We have all been in the most terrible danger. We have sinned and the wages of sin is death. On the cross Jesus was our deliverer. Because of that we are safe. We are safe for now and eternity.

## GREAT THINGS HE HAS TAUGHT US GREAT THINGS HE HAS DONE When the Wind ran out of Breath Mark 4:35-41

### INTRODUCTION

*Not long after leaving Port Canaveral Sunday, the 4,000-passenger ship apparently encountered winds much stronger than forecast, which caused the ship to list. That in turn sent dishes sliding off tables and chairs flying. Passengers were told to return to their cabins, and those who didn't make it held on to whatever was bolted down.(Florida Today)*

We have a storm story; a story of danger, discovery and deliverance. Great things Jesus has taught us, great things he has done.

### DANGER

The Sea of Galilee is only 8 miles wide, so it does not seem a dangerous undertaking to cross it. The lake is 700 feet below sea level but is surrounded by mountains 3 – 4 thousand feet above sea level. Around the lake the climate is tropical but in the mountains the night air is cold. When the warm tropical air meets the cold air the result is a turbulence that stirs up great waves, making boating treacherous. Jesus had been teaching the crowds, using a boat as a pulpit. Now at evening he asks to cross to the other side of the lake. One of the sudden windstorms, funneled down the valleys through the mountains to the lake stirs up the water until huge waves begin to swamp the boat and it is in danger of sinking. Even the seasoned fishermen, who must have experienced such storms before, are afraid. It must have been a severe storm.

*Two Coast Guardsmen were preparing to engage in a rescue attempt of two fishermen lost in a storm. Someone shouted out to them: "Don't go out there. You may never get back." One of the guardsmen replied, "We don't have to get back, but we have to go."*

Storms blow up and threaten us all. Like the disciples, Jonah had to face a literal storm at sea. Far from blowing him off course, it set him on the right course. Moses was all set for a life of a high born prince when the storm of his identity belonging to the Hebrew slaves, his confrontation with pharaoh and his leadership of the Israelites changed the direction of his life. He faced constant danger. David had to live as an outlaw, hunted by Saul who was out to kill him. Responding to God's call, following Christ does not give immunity from the storms of life. Listen to what Paul went through.

*2 Cor 11:24 - 27* <sup>24</sup>Five times I received at the hands of the Jews the forty lashes less one. <sup>25</sup>Three times I was beaten with

rods. Once I was stoned. Three times I was shipwrecked; a night and a day I was adrift at sea; <sup>26</sup>on frequent journeys, in danger from rivers, danger from robbers, danger from my own people, danger from Gentiles, danger in the city, danger in the wilderness, danger at sea, danger from false brothers; <sup>27</sup>in toil and hardship, through many a sleepless night, in hunger and thirst, often without food, in cold and exposure.

## DISCOVERY

*In a storm a ship was caught off a rocky coast, threatening death to all on board. When terror among the passengers was at its worst, one man more daring than the rest, making the perilous passage to the pilot-house, saw the pilot lashed to his post with his hands on the wheel, turning the ship little by little into the open sea. When the pilot beheld the ghastly white, terror-stricken face of the man, he smiled, and the man rushed to the deck below shouting, "I have seen the face of the pilot and he smiled. All is well." The sight of that smiling face averted panic and converted despair into hope.*

The disciples were so frightened they even thought Jesus did not care. They were still getting to know him. They had asked him to explain the parable of the sower. They had seen his healing miracles and his ability to cast out evil spirits. But now they were in a life-threatening situation and Jesus was asleep.

When we sense that someone does not care what happens to us relationships suffer. If we feel one whom we thought a friend does not care what we are going through, we question if that person really is a friend at all. What if we feel God does not care? That can corrode our spiritual life. It can cause us to doubt. Mark's first readers were facing persecution. It was Nero's Rome and a dangerous place for Christians. Quite likely Peter and Paul met their deaths at this time. Did God not care?

Does God not care when a child is killed by a drunken driver? Does God not care when your business crashes? Does God not care when, despite all your efforts, you cannot find a job? Does God not care when your teenage children make bad friends are drawn into crime. In the storms of life, does God not care? Elijah once mocked the prophets of Baal when Baal did not send fire to light the sacrifice.

*1 Kin 18:27* <sup>27</sup>At noon Elijah mocked them, saying, "Cry aloud! Surely he is a god; either he is meditating, or he has wandered away, or he is on a journey, or perhaps he is asleep and must be awakened."

And now Jesus was in the stern, asleep on the cushion. When even a smile from the pilot would make all the difference, but it is not there for

no-one cares, it is time to abandon hope. That is what Jesus' first disciples felt that night in the storm-tossed boat. **They woke him up and said to him, "Teacher, do you not care that we are perishing?"**

## DELIVERANCE

*Mark 4:39* he told the wind to pipe down and said to the sea, "Quiet! Settle down!" The wind ran out of breath; the sea became smooth as glass.

Jesus did care. They were safe. Jesus had been asleep, not because he did not care, but because he knew his Father and knew they were all safe. The disciples would have known or known of healers and exorcists. To still a storm is an act of God alone. He who is the Creator also controls. We see not only Jesus' care, but his full deity. Only God can command the wind and the sea. Then Jesus speaks to his disciples. Why? Why this fear? Why this doubt? Where's your faith? Already the disciples have seen and heard so much that they should be more believing. **Have you still no faith?** So he says to us who have been his disciples, his followers for years. Where's your faith? How much longer? Shouldn't you be demonstrating more mature faith? What is this faith? It is faith in God's saving power, present and active in Jesus. God does care. He answers our prayer and our cry for help. Often it is in his own time and own way. This story of Jesus stilling the storm assures us that he does do it.

*Mr Williams was very worried. One evening he called to see the Minister. He explained the difficulty in which he found himself. 'You see,' he said, 'I've been with the firm over twenty years, and I've had nothing to complain of until this last year or so. When the old man retired and his son took over, everything was different. I think the younger man resents my presence. He's always finding fault; always making things difficult for me. My position's become intolerable; but I simply daren't leave until I've another job to go to .... I've an invalid wife to think of as you know .... '*  
*'Ever tried praying about it?' asked the Minister. Mr Williams was taken aback. 'No,' he admitted. 'It seems to me the sort of thing you've got to handle yourself. The Minister nodded. 'Let me tell you about my surgery,' he said, very well aware that his visitor was not at that moment interested in that topic. 'It was years ago. The doctor said there was nothing else for it; and, as it happened, I'd always dreaded having to go through surgery. Most people are afraid, but I'd a horror of it. I was ready to receive any kind of treatment; ready to take any number of drugs, but surgery . . . ' Even as the Minister spoke he shuddered. 'And so,' he went on quietly, 'I prayed about it. I asked God to spare me such an ordeal. You may think I was foolish, but that's what I did. And my prayer was wonderfully answered. For a moment there was silence in the room. Mr Williams shuffled uneasily in his chair.*