

## Mark 4:35-41

Have you ever been at sea during a storm and huge waves? My Victor has. In the Navy the good ship Midway went through a typhoon. He had moving pictures of the event and this huge aircraft carrier buried itself into the swell of a wave. The aircraft carrier was 60 feet over the sea. Frightening. Another time was when we were on a cruise ship going around the Cape of Good Hope. Summer time...peaceful time...NOT! The waves were so high the captain told us to stay off of the open areas for fear we would be blown and swept off the ship. Both of us wondered how Magellan sailed these waters with a small ship 500 years ago.

So here is Jesus sleeping on a small boat that they disciples are convinced is going to sink because the waves are so high.

Very often we associate this gospel to the crises of life compared to the stormy seas. They come upon us whether we like it or not. They terrify us. They knock us around and threaten to destroy all our stability and security. We don't know whether we can survive them. And we don't know how long they will last. At least, that's how a storm at sea would be for most of us. For Jesus, it was just a chance to grab 40 winks.

As Mark tells the story, the disciples were terrified that the boat was going to break up and everyone would die. But Jesus was asleep, on a cushion no less, adding to Jesus' tranquility and the disciples' panic, apparently oblivious to their pending doom. They roust him and cry...teacher don't you care if we drown. Of course, Jesus quiets the storm with a word but then he chides the disciples, why are you so afraid. Do you still have no faith?

Some of the lessons in the story are obvious. Jesus has power over the storms of life, experiences them alongside us, loves us, saves us from them and wants us to trust him more than we do.

Let's look at a lesson that might not be so obvious. Storms don't worry Jesus. He's right there with us during them, but he's perfectly calm about them. He isn't terrified; he isn't impatient; he isn't worried. In fact, he's so calm, he's asleep. To us, he seems to be asleep at the switch. We wonder why on earth he doesn't get up and do something. We start to wonder whether he even knows the trouble we're in. Whether he cares. Whether he even can do anything about it. Whether he's really all he's cracked up to be.

Like the disciples, we believe he's there. In the disciples' case they could actually see him lying there asleep. We don't have that luxury. We believe he's there, but most of the time he seems just as asleep as he was during the storm that day on the Sea of Galilee. The psalmist had the same lament in Psalm 44 "Awake, Lord! Why do you sleep. Rouse yourself! Do not reject us forever. Why do you hide your face and forget our misery and oppression?"

Maybe that's why Mark included this story. The not-so-obvious lesson is that Jesus was just as much in control, and the disciples were just as safe in his hand, while he was asleep as while he was awake. Most of the time life seems like a relentless voyage from one storm to the next. At least it does for me, and I expect it's the same for you. One thing I've learned about myself is that during storms I'm usually a scared rabbit just like Jesus' disciples were.

But I'm also learning that I can take heart in knowing that Jesus isn't scared, and he isn't depressed. He might be asleep, or he might not be,

but either way, like the song says, “He’s got the whole world in his hands.” Even if he doesn’t wake up and quiet the storm, I’m safe with him. And if he does wake up and quiets the storm, he’s probably going to say: “Why are you so afraid? Do you still have no faith?”

And I can live with that. AMEN