

18th November 2018

Storms, ghosts, you and Jesus

Mark 4:35-41

Mark 6:45-51

1. The things that work against us in this life

Mark wrote in verse 48: *'the wind was against them'* - almost as if the wind was an entity.

Youngs' Literal Translation says, "**harassed them**". The Holman Bible says, they were "**battered**". One translation says that they were "**tormented**".

There are indeed invisible forces, spiritual entities, working against our lives.

2. We are limited in and of ourselves to deal with such things

"They were straining at rowing" - They were struggling with exhaustion. Most of the disciples of Jesus were young men, fishermen by profession and obviously used to rowing but this time they were struggling.

With all the effort of rowing for 9 consecutive hours they hadn't reached the other side. In fact, they were still in the middle of the sea. **John 6** tells us that they had rowed only 3 or 4 miles (8km at most). That was not much considering that they had left at sunset and now it was already the fourth watch of the night (3-6 o'clock in the morning). They probably felt stuck and frustrated.

They had just been through another storm in Mark 4. The other storm had also been unusual. It happened just before Jesus ministered to a man possessed by a legion of demons. I am sure that they must have thought whether this storm was also of a spiritual origin.

At least in the other storm Jesus was in the boat. But now Jesus is faraway in the mountains.

Suddenly, they see a man coming towards them walking on the waters. Their suspicions are confirmed: it is a ghost!!

AMP verse 49-50: *"but when they saw him walking on the sea, they thought it was a ghost, and raised up a deep throaty shriek of terror. For they all saw Him and were agitated (troubled and filled with fear and dread) ..."*

As if it was not bad enough to be in a storm, exhausted, disoriented and fearful, now a 'ghost' was coming to meet them.

So, we need to be aware of the fact that there are invisible forces working against our lives, secondly that in and of ourselves we are no match for what come against us. However, that's where Jesus come in! - Jesus always comes into our storms.

3. We need to grow in our revelation of who Jesus is

Mark 4: 40-41 - *“why are you so fearful? How is it that you have no faith? And they feared exceedingly and said to one another, “who can this be that even the wind and the sea obey Him?”*

Mark 4 is the question, Mark 6:50 is the answer: *“It is I”* - it is Jesus.

Mark 6:50: *for they all saw Him and were troubled. But immediately He talked with them and said to them, “Be of good cheer! **It is I**; do not be afraid.”*

The preceding verses of chapter 6 describe their problem but verse 50 reveals their solution: Jesus – “It is I”. It is Jesus now. He is on the scene and when He comes, things change.

- a) The **first** thing that had to change was the belief system of the disciples: they responded with fear and not faith.

They saw Jesus, they knew what Jesus looked like, but they associated the power of walking on the waters to a ghost and not Jesus.

V.50 says that *“immediately He talked with them”*. The very first thing Jesus did was to talk to them. In Mark 4 Jesus spoke to the elements, here He spoke to their hearts first.

Faith comes by hearing and Jesus spoke a word of encouragement into their hearts first.

Yes, there are invisible forces against us, however, we are not alone in the storms and our faith needs to be in Jesus. We need to focus on Jesus – not in the storm, not in any ghosts. It is Jesus who walks on the waters.

It is interesting to see that later on, even after the resurrection of Jesus, His disciples were still at a point of underdeveloped faith. They were still thinking of ghosts:

Luke 24:36-39 - *³⁶Now as they said these things, Jesus Himself stood in the midst of them, and said to them, “Peace to you.” ³⁷But they were terrified and frightened, and supposed they had seen a spirit. ³⁸And He said to them, “Why are you troubled? And why do doubts arise in your hearts? ³⁹Behold My hands and My feet, that **it is I** Myself. Handle Me and see, for a spirit does not have flesh and bones as you see I have.”*

- b) The **second** thing that changed was the very thing that had slowed them down, and tormented them:

V. 51 *“He went into the boat and the wind ceased”*

- The wind ceased immediately
- **John 6:21** says that *“immediately the boat was at the land where they were going”*

They had put so much effort into crossing that sea. After 9 hours of hard rowing they were still in the middle of the lake, they were going nowhere fast, they had no momentum or forward motion. They were stuck, exhausted and disoriented.

What a contrast with Jesus:

- He came walking on the waters,
- He was so quick that *'He would have passed them by'*
- When He went into the boat, it covered 8kms instantly.

I felt the Lord speak to my heart that we are coming into a different season and that 2019 is going to be a year of acceleration! Things are going to speed-up and you will find momentum for your life again. It won't be in your strength, but we will all learn what it is to rely on His strength and His grace.

Conclusion

Storms, ghosts, you and Jesus - the focus definitely needs to be on Jesus. Hear what he says to people in the storm, grow in faith and grow in the revelation that He is greater than any storm and any enemy!