

Mark 4:35-41

Pentecost 5; June 27th, 2021

How do you learn? There are a couple of common ways that helps most of us to learn. Some of the most common ways that we learn are through seeing something, hearing something, and good old hands on experiences. Jesus as the master teacher he was used all of these different ways to teach people to follow him.

Let's just take a brief look at these three ways. 1. *Visual or seeing.* There were times that Jesus taught truths by giving visual examples. For example, the disciples once came to Jesus and asked him: "*Who is the greatest in the Kingdom of Heaven?*" How does Jesus respond? **"He called a little child to him, and placed the child among them. And he said: 'Truly I tell you, unless you change and become like little children, you will never enter the kingdom of heaven. Therefore, whoever takes the lowly position of this child is the greatest in the kingdom of heaven. And whoever welcomes one such child in my name welcomes me.'**" (Mt. 18:2-5)

2. *Auditory or hearing.* Great crowds came to hear what Jesus had to say. Once time a couple of the disciples of John the Baptist came to Jesus and asked the question: **"Are you the one who is to come, or should we expect someone else? (Matt. 11:2)"** How does Jesus respond? **"Go back and report to John what you hear and see."** (Matt 11:4) and **"Whoever has ears, let them hear."** (Matt 11:15)

3. *Jesus gave them hands on experience.* There comes a time in every person's life that you have to put into practice what you have learned. **"They went out and preached that people should repent. They drove out many demons and anointed many sick people with oil and healed them."** (Mark 6:12-13) They needed to see what the word of God does in the lives of people.

In our text today, Jesus was going to use all three methods to teach them a lesson on faith. They would see the power that Jesus had in his words. All day they had heard Jesus teach. He would also give them a chance to put their faith into practice in a way that they didn't see coming.

What are you afraid of? You've got your regulars: *fear of heights, fear of flying, fear of spiders, fear of snakes.* Then you fears of failure: *fear of public speaking, fear of not getting accepted in a college, fear of underperforming at work.* Then you've got the financial fears: *fear of not having enough to retire, fear of medical bills that could bury us, fear of taking on more debt.* Other fears are of a social nature: *fear of being alone, fear of losing face, the fear of missing out of something.* That list could continue on and on. They are all real fears that we have.

The fears that the disciples had that night on the Sea of Galilee were real. They were still learning how to teach others about Jesus. In some ways, that was outside of their comfort zone. But when Jesus said to them: **"Let us go over to the other side,"** that they knew. Many of them were experts in sailing on the Sea of Galilee. They knew about the storms that could suddenly arise. They knew how to handle them. But this one caught them off guard. Mark writes: **"A furious squall came up, and the waves broke over the boat, so that it was nearly swamped. Jesus was in the stern, sleeping on a cushion. The disciples woke him and said to him, 'Teacher, don't you care if we drown?'"** If there was ever a time to be fearful, it was now. Then they ask Jesus they ask the question that is at the heart of this account. Our text is not just about how you can weather life's storms. It is not just how you should turn to Jesus during the hard times in life. Even if those statements are true, this is a lesson about faith, not just fear. That's the lesson that Jesus was teaching his disciples that day on the Sea of Galilee. That's the lesson that they needed to learn that day. They needed the answer to the question that they asked Jesus: **"Teacher, don't you care if we drown?"**

If you are a parent, and your child says to you: *"You don't care about me,"* how does that make you feel when you have said "no" to something? Don't you just want to say to them: *"All I do is care for you! I feed you. I give you a safe place to live. I have stayed up with you. I have cried with you. I have laughed with you. How can you possibly say that I don't care about me?"* Yet, don't we say the same thing to God?

Job did tried to say the same thing to God. God don't you care about me? How does God respond? **"Then the Lord spoke to Job out of the storm. He said: "Who is this that obscures my plans with words without knowledge? Brace yourself like a man; I will question you, and you shall answer me. "Where were you when I laid the earth's foundation? Tell me, if you understand. Who marked off its dimensions? Surely you know! Who stretched a measuring line across it?...."**

Ever felt like Job? I think we all have heard and watched and read about the condo building collapse in Florida. I can't even begin to understand how the loved ones of the missing are feeling. Yet, my heart goes out to them. What a tragedy. I would imagine the same thing is being said to God, as it is with any tragedy, *"God don't you care about me."* We don't need to know anyone in that building collapse, but we can understand how people might feel. When Christians are hurting, it seems like Jesus is asleep in the back of the boat. When we cry out to God to fix what is going so wrong in my life, don't we cry out: **"Teacher, don't you care if we drown?"** Even if we don't understand the *why* something happens, we know Jesus cares for us.

Then Jesus opens a sleepy eye and looks at the wind, the waves, the water, the soggy, frightened disciples. And He says, **"Quiet! Be still!"** That's all it takes. One little word and the chaotic waters are calm, and the storm is still. **"Then the wind died down and it was completely calm."** Peace. Silence. Done.

How do the disciples react? **"They were terrified and asked each other, "Who is this? Even the wind and the waves obey him!"** Standing there face to face with the God who made the universe, the God who knows all things, who has power over all things, a moment of fear struck their hearts. They knew they blew it once again. They didn't trust Jesus. They failed. What would Jesus do to them?

Ever felt like the disciples? How do you feel when you fail to trust in God? Then he stands up and says: **"Quiet! Be still!"** Ever have a little fear in your heart? Why did I blow it once again? **"Who is this? Even the wind and the waves obey him!"** Then Jesus reminds us, as he reminded his disciples, that he came to save and not destroy. You want proof? Jesus says look to the cross. There he would show how much he would care for them. There was a much bigger picture that Jesus would want his disciples to see. Jesus had a much greater lesson to teach his disciples that night on the Sea of Galilee. He wanted them to see that he cared for them. He wants us to know that he cares for each one of us here today. As he calmed the storm and brought peace back to the sea, he had a lesson on faith to teach that night. He has a lesson to teach us as well. May God help all of us to learn to live our lives in faith, not in fear. May we always sing the words that we sang this morning in our Psalm:

"Be still, and know that I am God;
I will be exalted among the nations,
I will be exalted in the earth."*

Amen.