

SIGNS AND WONDERS

WEEK 2 – STILLING THE STORM

MONDAY – Jesus is in control



Mark 4: 38 *The disciples woke Him and said to Him, 'Teacher, don't you care if we drown?'*

Few experiences produce as much suspense, uncertainty and sheer panic as being on the deck of a ship in the middle of a storm, like in the scene from Mark 4. Perhaps this imagery stirs up memories of experiences you've had. The vast ocean, like the circumstances and situations of our lives, can change rapidly without much warning. Our boat is completely rocked, taking on water, while we desperately try to keep our footing to steer toward safety.

Jesus asked the disciples to sail to the other side of the Sea of Galilee. This was His mission they were on when they were caught off guard by a sudden storm. They scrambled to manage the situation on their own, which makes sense, since there were experienced fishermen in this group. They thought they could

manage with enough strength and skill. Take note of their question to Jesus, "Don't You care about us?"

Their panic reveals two lies we might also believe: This storm is not only out of our control but out of God's control; He must not care about us. In the moment, it is sometimes impossible to entertain anything other than lies like these. The disciples likely believed these lies because their eyes were on the size of the waves and the strength of the storm.

They forgot who was in their boat. When our focus is on our circumstances, no matter how overwhelming or dangerous, it can be easy to forget that Jesus is right there with us. As the storm disappeared with just a word from Jesus, the disciples realised that He was sleeping because He was in complete control the entire time.



Prayer: Even in the midst of storms in my life, You are in control Lord! AMEN

TUESDAY – Following Jesus no matter what



Mark 4: 35 *That day when evening came, He said to His disciples, 'Let us go over to the other side.' Leaving the crowd behind, they took Him along just as He was, in the boat.*

There are two things we tend to experience amid fear: We feel alone. We feel stuck. Fear makes us feel unable to live out our faith. It keeps us from standing boldly in our convictions. Sometimes we lack the confidence to share our faith, or we say “no” when God is calling us to say “yes”. While we Christians are not immune to feeling afraid, God has provided everything we need to move from a life of fear to one of courage.

Jesus wishes to sail to the other side of the lake to meet people the average Jew has never met. They immediately take him on the boat despite the fact that some of them are experienced sailors knowing the dangers of sailing on the lake in the dark. Their courage should also be ours: He will be with us

wherever we go. So why remain stuck in fear?

The Bible reminds us how to move from fear to faith. When we remember that our Lord is in control, that He is with us and that He has called us to keep moving forward, then our fear fades and courage grows. We cannot conquer fear on our own, but God has given us everything we need through His Spirit, who can help us choose to act in faith even if we still feel afraid.

In all things, God is with us. We need to remind ourselves that we are not alone but have the sovereign God of the universe by our side and this will help make us brave.



Prayer: Lord Jesus, we know that any courage we have comes from You. AMEN

WEDNESDAY – God promises hope out of despair



Isaiah 41: 10 *"So do not fear, for I am with you; do not be dismayed, for I am your God. I will strengthen you and help you; I will uphold you with My righteous right hand."*

These words inspire confidence and faith in the mighty God, whom we serve, in our moments of despair. They are promises which will equip us for any battle or storm. These promises were first delivered to God's people, Israel, and now we too are the beneficiaries of these promises. We need these promises because we can become fearful of things happening around us; we are sometimes even fearful of things which are yet to happen.

We are never alone because God is always with us. There is no place on this earth where God cannot be with us. Because He is our God, we should keep our eyes fixed on Him. God's promises give us every reason not to be anxious,

which is very easy to do in any crisis.

When God strengthens us, He makes us courageous by giving us the strength to face up to the battles we will face. God doesn't just make us courageous, He sends us into battle with everything we need, and He is with us. He provides us with His divine help. God helps us at our point of need. When we need His help, He will be there.

Left to ourselves, we would easily fall. It is God who personally upholds us. Take the time today to worship and adore Him; He who is gloriously above all things, and yet is also among us and within us.



Prayer: Thank you Lord that You were always with me and always will be with me. AMEN

THURSDAY – God controls everything



Mark 4: 41 *They were terrified and asked each other, "Who is this? Even the wind and the waves obey Him!"*

There are many of us who enjoy going on holiday and spending time in nature. It was during a holiday at the Kgalagadi National Park situated about 150 kms North of Upington where my wife and I encountered the blessing of watching God's complete control of nature. The days were very hot, the veld was dry and the sandy ground, dry river beds, and dunes produced little grass for the browsers.

To obtain a glimpse of wildlife one had to sit at the watering holes provided by the Parks Board. While you waited to see something special, you became aware of the presence of about a 100 types of birds, 9 types of reptiles, lots of insects, and 40 types of mammals ranging from lions to mice. All surviving in a desert!

The first day or so you start to wonder how you are going to survive the boredom of looking for something big to happen. You spend long periods of time with a family of predators ranging from males, females and young ones. You witness raptors catching other birds, snakes and small mammals. You see how creepy crawlies go about their survival in the arid region. But then in the stillness you become aware of the balance and harmony and provision of God.

In this kaleidoscope of survival and quiet abundance of life, you become aware of the magnificence and creativeness of our creator God. You start to feel and see His presence in every creature or natural occurrence around you. Yes, God is present and in control of any sphere and natural event on this earth and in the universe.



Prayer: Dear Lord, thank you that You command all forces of nature. AMEN

FRIDAY – A prayer of praise to God for His presence with us



Mark 4: 39 *He got up, rebuked the wind and said to the waves, 'Quiet! Be still!' Then the wind died down and it was completely calm.*



Prayer: We praise You, Jesus, for Your presence with us in the middle of any storm we may encounter today and in the future. We are so thankful that the same Jesus who stilled the Sea of Galilee is the same Jesus who is with each of us right now, wherever we are, that You are with us and You have authority over all creation, You have authority over the wind and the waves, You have authority over disease, You have authority over sickness, You have authority over everything. You have authority over death. You have conquered death. You have all authority in heaven and on earth.

We're prone to ask the same question that the disciples were asking, "Don't you care? Don't you see what's happening around

us?" And we trust You do see. We trust You, not only see, but You promise to sustain and strengthen us through the storm and eventually to bring us through it, whatever that might be, but ultimately into Your presence in eternity.

And we look forward to the day when all the storms are over. We pray, hasten the coming of that day. Jesus, come quickly, we pray and help us, help us today and tomorrow, the next day, and whatever storms come around the corner, help us to trust You in the middle of the storm as we wait for the day when storms will be no more. We praise You for the hope we have in You and for the strength and peace that we possess through Your presence with us. We pray all these things in Jesus 'name. AMEN