

Lord Over The Wind and Storm

Mark 4:35-41

Introduction

One of the programs which Evangeline likes to watch is *Air Crash Investigations*. Her father may or may not have had something to do with this interest! One of the interest things I've learnt from *Air Crash Investigations* is that pilots sometimes need to do things which are counter-intuitive to save their planes and lives of those on board.

One occasion where pilots need to do something which is counter intuitive is when a plane is losing altitude because the plane is flying too slowly (which will lead to a stall). Although everything in the pilot is likely to be telling them to pull up so that the plane gains altitude pilots need to point the nose down to gain speed which will then allow the wings to generate sufficient lift for the plane to safely climb again.

This morning we're looking at how the disciples were in a difficult situation and Jesus wants them to do something which is counter-intuitive.

Seeing The Physical Problem (vv. 35-38)

So what is the situation? One evening Jesus and his disciples decide to cross from one side of the Lake of Galilee to the other. The Lake of Galilee was nestled like a basin surrounded by mountains. Storms were common on the lake and so it usual practice of fishermen was to begin fishing at night to make the most of the calm weather before storms would blow up in the late morning and afternoon. You can imagine the surprise of the disciples, a number of whom were professional fishermen, when a storm hit late at night. Not only was the timing of this storm unexpected but the darkness made the storm all the more dangerous.

This particular storm is indeed dangerous, "A furious squall came up, and the waves broke over the boat, so that it was nearly swamped." The water is coming into the boat and the disciples and particularly the fishermen would have sprung into action

and be doing what they had done many times before. The actions would likely to have included straining at the oars and bailing water and would have been quite intuitive to the fishermen.

However, in the midst of this very physical problem and the rush of activity there is someone who's not chipping in. Jesus is fast asleep on a cushion at the back of the boat. There is a strong tone of dismay and frustration when the disciples go to Jesus and wake him, "Teacher, don't you care if we drown?"

I mean, doesn't Jesus get it? We're in trouble here! Do something!

The intuitive thing for the disciples, when confronted with a dangerous and difficult situation, is do something. The disciples would do whatever they could to save the boat and the people and they want everyone else to help as well and do something.

I'm not certain about you but I'm pretty sure that I'm like that too. Most of us want to bring dangerous and difficult situations under control as quickly and as smoothly as possible (this is why men don't understand it when our wives just want us to listen!). Normally doing something is the intuitive response and it's the right response, isn't it?

Seeing The Spiritual Problem (vv. 39-40)

We now come to Jesus' response to the wind and the waves. "He got up, rebuked the wind and said to the waves, 'Quiet! Be still!' Then the wind died down and it was completely calm."

At first sight, we might think that Jesus is just like us, he does what he can, it's just that what he can do is so much more than what we can do. However, I want to suggest that there are two ways that Jesus sets an example and calls upon us to act counter-intuitively.

First, Jesus recognises the spiritual dimension of what is taking place. What do I mean by this? Well, Jesus saw that this storm actually had a demonic element to it. Notice how similar the words are that Jesus uses when speaking to the wind and the

waves to when he is speaking to a demon. Back in chapter 1 we saw Jesus' first interaction with a demon-possessed man,

Just then a man in their synagogue who was possessed by an impure spirit cried out, 'What do you want with us, Jesus of Nazareth? Have you come to destroy us? I know who you are – the Holy One of God!' 'Be quiet!' said Jesus sternly. 'Come out of him!' The impure spirit shook the man violently and came out of him with a shriek.

It is counter-intuitive for us, particularly in the Western world, to seek to determine if there is a spiritual dimension to difficult and dangerous situations we face but that is what Jesus did and it is an example for us to do likewise. It is not that we expect to find a demon or spiritual force under every rock but we should consider the possibility of spiritual attack when faced with difficulties and danger.

The second way that Jesus calls upon his disciples to act in a counter-intuitive way is contained in the words he says to his disciples in verse 40, "He said to his disciples, 'Why are you so afraid? Do you still have no faith?'" How is this counter-intuitive? The disciples were getting on and doing things and they wanted Jesus to do things too. They woke Jesus up gruffly because he wasn't getting in and doing what he could to save the boat and them. The disciples wanted Jesus to **do** something. Jesus wanted his disciples to **trust** someone ... namely, him.

It is intuitive for us to do things and that will also often include a desire to control things (or people). Jesus calls upon his disciples, and calls upon us, to do the counter-intuitive thing and that is to trust him. The more we trust the less we fear. The more the disciples knew of who Jesus really was and what that meant, the less they would have to fear from nature, demons, people, or anything else.

Faith Takes Time (v. 41)

I wonder if the disciples remembered Psalm 65 from when it was read during times of worship? I'll read verses 5 to 8 for us.

You answer us with awesome and righteous deeds, God our Saviour, the hope of all the ends of the earth and of the farthest seas,

who formed the mountains by your power, having armed yourself with strength, who stilled the roaring of the seas, the roaring of their waves, and the turmoil of the nations.

The whole earth is filled with awe at your wonders; where morning dawns, where evening fades, you call forth songs of joy.

Jesus really has pulled back the curtain a little on who he truly is as God in human flesh. So then, the disciples, having witnessed an amazing miracle of Jesus and heard his call to have faith, surely they will respond with great faith and not be afraid. Not quite! Have a look at verse 41, “They were terrified and asked each other, ‘Who is this? Even the wind and the waves obey him!’” I’m not sure if the response of the disciples would have made Jesus laugh or cry but I do love the honesty of Mark in writing the real emotions of the disciples.

For many people it is counter-intuitive to be honest about our weakness and short-comings. This is certainly true in the workplace and it can also be true in the church. We want to look like we have it all together. For many Christians they want to think that their faith is unquestioning, their prayer life unceasing and their Bible reading is unwavering. I like this little additional note from Mark because it shows that the process of getting to know Jesus and truly trusting him takes time and that our Father knows us and our weaknesses and is not finished with us.

Conclusion

As we conclude this message, we’re going to have a song to help us reflect on God walking among us as Jesus and then we’re going to come to a time of prayer. In the prayer time that follows I’d ask you to speak to your heavenly father about the difficult and painful circumstances you face and ask if there is a spiritual dimension to them. Whether there is an explicitly spiritual dimension or not to what you’re facing take the time to speak to your father about your concerns and ask for his help to trust Jesus with what you’re facing. Finally, as you pray, be honest about your weaknesses, your desire for control and your fears and ask your Heavenly Father to send his Holy Spirit upon you in a fresh way so that we can follow and trust Jesus more closely.

As you pray about these things for yourself, you may also bring before the Lord the issues we face as a church and as a community as well.

[song followed by prayer time]