

ECHO CHURCH
No Games. No Gimmicks. Just God.

This Was Not My Idea

When the storm arrives while you are obeying God

Worship & Word | Year 1, Month 10, Week 1
Sunday, October 4, 2026

THE ANCHOR TEXT

Mark 4:35 through 41 NKJV

"On the same day, when evening had come, He said to them, Let us cross over to the other side. Now when they had left the multitude, they took Him along in the boat as He was. And other little boats were also with Him. And a great windstorm arose, and the waves beat into the boat, so that it was already filling. But He was in the stern, asleep on a pillow. And they awoke Him and said to Him, Teacher, do You not care that we are perishing?"

"Then He arose and rebuked the wind, and said to the sea, Peace, be still! And the wind ceased and there was a great calm. But He said to them, 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!"

THE HEART OF IT

If the crossing was His idea, the arrival is His responsibility.

The storm can fill your boat, but it cannot cancel your destination.

INTRODUCTION

Some storms we can trace back to our own choices. We know exactly how we got there. But there is another kind of storm, the kind that hits while you are doing exactly what God told you to do. You said yes to the assignment. You moved when He said move. You stepped into the marriage, the ministry, the business, the calling. Then the wind picked up, the waves came over the side, and somewhere in the middle of the night you heard yourself whisper, this was not my idea.

The disciples could have said the same thing. Crossing the lake was not their plan. It was Jesus' idea. And that is the good news hidden inside the storm. Mark 4:35 through 41 opens with a command to cross the sea, moves into a crisis the disciples cannot control, and closes not with a celebration but with a question: who can this be? That question is the theological center of the passage. The storm is not simply something Jesus brings His disciples through. The storm becomes the classroom where they discover that the One asleep in their boat is far greater than they understood.

Mark places this story on purpose. Chapter 4 is a chapter of parables about hearing, seed, and the hidden growth of the kingdom. Chapter 5 will carry Jesus into a graveyard, a crowd, and a dead girl's

bedroom. Between the teaching and the deliverance sits this storm. Before the disciples watch Jesus confront demons, disease, and death, they must first learn that He commands creation itself. If you are in a storm right now, this passage was written with you in mind.

MOVEMENT ONE: THE STORM CAME WHILE YOU WERE OBEYING

Mark 4:35 through 37 NKJV

"On the same day, when evening had come, He said to them, Let us cross over to the other side. Now when they had left the multitude, they took Him along in the boat as He was. And other little boats were also with Him. And a great windstorm arose, and the waves beat into the boat, so that it was already filling."

Mark opens with a time marker, on the same day, when evening had come, tying this voyage directly to the teaching that filled the same day. Jesus has spent the chapter teaching the parables of the sower, the lamp, the growing seed, and the mustard seed. Now the disciples will enter an experience where that teaching must move from theory into trust. And the connection is sharper than it looks. In the parable of the sower, Jesus warned that some hearers have no root, and that trouble exposes them: when tribulation arises for the word's sake, immediately they stumble. They just heard the word would be tested by pressure. Before nightfall they will be tested by pressure.

Jesus says, let us cross over to the other side. Notice what is easily overlooked: crossing the lake was His idea. The disciples did not wander into this storm through disobedience. They entered it while obeying Him. That alone dismantles the theology that says obedience guarantees calm water. Sometimes the storm is not evidence that you missed God. Sometimes the storm arrives while you are doing exactly what God told you to do. Scripture has always placed God's people in water they were told to cross. Israel did not stumble into the Red Sea; God led them there. He said the same kind of word to Joshua: arise, go over this Jordan. The word of crossing comes before the water rises. God does not promise the absence of water. He promises His presence in it.

Then the squall. A great windstorm arose, the Greek *lailaps megale*, not a passing shower but a violent squall. The Sea of Galilee lies roughly seven hundred feet below sea level, ringed by hills that funnel cool air onto the warm lake. Peter, Andrew, James, and John were fishermen who had worked this water for years. When seasoned fishermen believe the boat is going down, the storm is real. And the waves beat into the boat, so that it was already filling. The problem is no longer only outside them. What was around them is now inside the boat. Their skill is no longer enough. Their experience is no longer enough. Every resource they brought with them has run out.

Obedience does not exempt you from the storm, but it guarantees you are not in it alone.

The storm can fill your boat, but it cannot cancel your destination. Do not let the middle of the lake erase the promise of the other side.

MOVEMENT TWO: HIS SILENCE IS NOT HIS ABSENCE

Mark 4:38 NKJV

"But He was in the stern, asleep on a pillow. And they awoke Him and said to Him, Teacher, do You not care that we are perishing?"

Mark gives one of the most startling images in his Gospel. Jesus is sleeping. The stern was the raised rear of the vessel, near the steersman, one of the few places a person could lie down, and Mark even names the cushion. Jesus is tired. He has taught all day, and His body requires sleep. His sleep is real humanity, and it is also the sleep of perfect trust. The body of Jesus sleeps, but the Keeper of Israel does not slumber. The disciples reasoned: we are in danger, Jesus is asleep, therefore Jesus must not care. The problem was not what they saw. The problem was the interpretation they placed on what they saw.

Here the Jonah parallel comes into full view. Jonah was also asleep in a ship during a great storm, and the captain woke him with words that sound strikingly like the disciples' cry. But the contrast is everything. Jonah slept because he was running from God. Jesus sleeps because He rests in His Father. Jonah's presence on the ship caused the storm. Jesus' presence in the boat is the answer to the storm. A greater than Jonah is here.

They wake Him with a question: Teacher, do You not care that we are perishing? Notice the question is not, Jesus, do You know what is happening? It is, Jesus, does what is happening to us matter to You? This is one of the oldest struggles of faith. God's silence is easily read as God's indifference. But Peter, who was in that boat, would later write with the very same word: casting all your care upon Him, for He cares for you. The man who once asked whether Jesus cared spent the rest of his life telling the church that He does.

Then hear their verdict: we are perishing. In their minds the story already had an ending. Jesus said, let us cross over. The disciples said, we are perishing. Two competing interpretations of the same journey. Jesus speaks destination. Fear predicts destruction. It is the same conflict Israel faced at Kadesh, when the spies affirmed the land was good and then turned on one word: nevertheless the people are strong. Fear always tries to write the last chapter before God has finished speaking.

A quiet God is not a careless God. He is just not as worried as you are.

You are not perishing. You are in the middle. And the middle is not the end.

MOVEMENT THREE: WHICH VOICE IS INTERPRETING YOUR JOURNEY

Mark 4:39 through 41 NKJV

"Then He arose and rebuked the wind, and said to the sea, Peace, be still! And the wind ceased and there was a great calm. But He said to them, 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!"

Jesus rises and rebukes the wind. The verb means to reprimand, to issue a forceful command. Then He speaks to the sea: Peace, be still. The force of it is something like Silence, be muzzled. He addresses chaos as though chaos must submit to His voice, and it does. The wind ceased and there was a great calm. There is the word a second time. Verse 37 gave us a great storm. Verse 39 answers with a great calm. A great storm has met a greater authority. Throughout the Old Testament,

the rebuke of the sea belongs to God alone. He rebuked the Red Sea. You rule the raging of the sea; when its waves rise, You still them. In Psalm 107 the sailors cry to the Lord and the Lord calms the storm. In Mark 4 the disciples cry to Jesus and Jesus calms the storm. Mark is doing far more than showing that Jesus can fix hard situations. He is revealing Jesus' identity.

Then Jesus turns to the storm inside them. Why are you so fearful? How is it that you have no faith? The earliest manuscripts read, do you not yet have faith? That small word, not yet, is full of grace. It is a rebuke, but it assumes a future. Jesus is not writing them off. He is telling them they are still in process. And notice what He does not say. He does not say they should have believed there would be no storm. There was a storm. He does not say they should have believed the boat was not filling. The boat was filling. Biblical faith never requires a person to deny reality. Faith is not, there is no storm. Faith is, the storm does not have final authority over this story.

The crisis in the boat was a hearing crisis. Two voices were in that boat. One said, let us cross over to the other side. The other said, we are perishing. Both voices were describing the same trip. Only one of them was telling the truth. You are hearing two voices too. One is the word God spoke over your life. The other is the report your circumstances keep giving you. Faith is not pretending the report is not real. Faith is deciding which voice gets to interpret the journey. So then faith comes by hearing, and hearing by the word of God.

Then the final surprise. The storm has stopped, but the fear has not. They feared exceedingly, literally they feared a great fear. There is the word a third time: great storm, great calm, great fear. But the fear has changed its object. Earlier they feared the storm. Now they are overwhelmed by the realization of who is sitting in the boat with them. Who can this be, that even the wind and the sea obey Him? This is the fear Scripture calls wisdom, the holy awe that comes when a person realizes they are in the presence of God. The same word obey was used when the unclean spirits obeyed Him in Capernaum. Spirits obey Him. Now wind and sea obey Him. The list of what submits to His voice keeps growing.

Stop asking the storm what it is doing to you. Start asking what it is showing you about Him.

The wind was loud. The waves were loud. But neither one of them was louder than Jesus.

CLOSING

The passage moves in three spoken lines. Let us cross over. We are perishing. Who is this? The disciples begin with a word from Jesus, encounter circumstances that contradict what they heard, and through the crisis receive a greater revelation of who He is. The storm exposed the limits of their understanding of Christ. They knew Him as Teacher, Rabbi, Healer, and miracle worker. They had not yet grasped that He is Lord over creation. Had there been no storm, they would have crossed the lake knowing exactly what they knew when they left.

- The Storm Came While You Were Obeying. The assignment and the storm can share the same boat.

- His Silence Is Not His Absence. He is in the boat, in the storm, headed to the same shore He promised.
- Which Voice Is Interpreting Your Journey. Decide which voice gets the last word, and let it be His.

The disciples asked, do You not care? Jesus never answers that question with words. He answers it with authority. And the word He spoke at the start held: Mark 5 opens with them arriving at the other side, exactly as He said. The storm interrupted the journey, but it could not cancel the destination. What Jesus declares at the beginning of the voyage, He accomplishes at the end of it.

A CLOSING WORD

It was not my idea to get in the boat, and that is exactly why I know I am getting out on the other side. Calm water would have left me with the Jesus I already knew. The storm introduced me to the Jesus I needed.

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