



**Asking Where is God in the Storm- Mark 4:35-41**  
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As a part of my old job before I became a minister, I used to fly all around the country. Many years ago, one of the places I had to fly frequently was Cheyenne, Wyoming. Now there is no simple way to get to Cheyenne. You either take a very small commuter plane from Denver or you drive a road that can be especially treacherous in the winter. One time, in the middle of winter, I was flying to Cheyenne. I went and found my very small commuter airplane, the kind of plane that maybe seats six people.

As I was walking onto the plane I glanced into the cockpit and saw the pilot who looked perhaps sixteen years old. I found my seat and buckled in and heard said sixteen-year-old pilot open his little window and yell down to the ground crew, 'does anyone know what this button does?'. Words that you just don't want to hear from your pilot!

Well sixteen-year-old pilot got us up off the ground and we were almost to Cheyenne when we hit an air pocket. Now those little planes are at their highest maybe twelve thousand feet off the ground. When we hit that air pocket, we dropped out of the sky like a lead balloon. We plunged over ten thousand feet in that freefall.

But somehow, sixteen-year-old pilot pulled that little plane out of that nosedive and landed us safely in Cheyenne, something that to this day I am unsure how he pulled it off. It was the most afraid I have ever been in my life. And it is that feeling of raw and visceral fear that I imagine that those disciples from our story experiencing.

I imagine the disciples' in their boat, bone weary, exhausted from trying to cross the water, unable to use their sail because of the wind. I imagine them soaked with rain and I imagine them filled with fear by the storm raging around them. I imagine the wind blowing more and more water into their small boat and I imagine the sense of powerless against the unrelenting storm. Most of all I imagine their fear, raw and visceral heart pounding fear.

And while this terrible scary storm has raged, Jesus has been fast asleep on a cushion in the back of the boat. Not only is he seemingly unafraid of the chaos that is storming around him, he's sleeping, soundly. That was probably not funny to the frightened disciples. They wake him up and ask if he doesn't care that they are all going to die! It's a reasonable question, right?

And then miracle happens. Jesus says to the violent storm, 'Peace, be still!' and the wind ceases and a great calm descends around them. And the disciples are filled with great awe.

When my kids were little, they would ask, is that story true? I would tell them that it depends on what they were asking. Did it really happen? I don't know. Maybe the question to ask isn't, 'is it true?' but instead maybe the question to ask is 'where is there truth in this story?'

Because I do believe there is truth in this story. The truth that flow from this story for me, lives in the powerful emotion of fear that is found in this story and the powerful model that is shown for dealing with that emotion.

In this story, the disciples are trying to cross the Sea of Galilee. They are caught in a storm, circumstances beyond their control. They cannot control the storm; this is happening to them-not with them, not by them...to them. The disciples were present with fear that came from a situation of that which they couldn't control.

Sound familiar? The storm is happening to them, they're not in control. That sort of describes the last eight weeks. The fear grows as the storm escalates, fueled by the lack of power, the lack of control as the storm grows. Fear builds from situations beyond our control, situations that we don't understand. That is the breeding ground of fear.

Most likely over the past few weeks, we've all known fears. Fears that are unique to each of us, born out of our own individual life stories and social locations. Fears that we hold tight and private, maybe not even sharing with our deepest confidants. I know these fears. I carry these fears. I imagine I am not unlike each of you. Something I have learned about fear though, fear grows in shadow and darkness. Fear lives and breeds in aloneness.

But this story isn't about being alone with our fears. This story isn't about being afraid in the shadows or the darkness. This story is about God being present with us and with our fears. This

is a story is about God bringing peace and calm to our fears, even the fears of that which are beyond our control. In this story, Jesus says, 'Peace, be still!' to the storm and calm returns.

On Monday as I was preparing this sermon, I received a call from a former colleague. She wanted me to know that someone that I had worked with and cared deeply for, had died by suicide over the weekend. This woman, Margaret, was brilliant and charming and an amazing photographer. The world is a little dimmer without her presence in it this week.

I don't know what storms Margaret was facing, what fears she walked with at the moment where there appeared to be no sense of peace or calm or presence. I do know though the stakes are very high right now for us each to find truth and peace and miracles, wherever we can.

Me, I find truth and peace and miracles in this story. This story where Jesus calms the storm. We are in hard times my friends. Fear is all around us. I will put out a plea in honor of the life of Margaret...if your fear becomes so large that it blocks out all light or hope, reach out. If you haven't heard from someone in a bit and are concerned, reach out to them. If you or someone you know is in this place of darkness and fear, please hear this, dear one, you are not alone. God is with you. God sees you. God knows what you are experiencing. And God intends a new beginning for you in this life. There is a corner to turn. There is peace to be had.

We are in this together and this I know to be true...we are never alone.

I believe with all my being that we are accompanied by a God who remains, through all our times, especially our hard times.

I believe with all my being that we are loved by a God who can bring peace, can bring calm, through all our times, especially our stormy times.

I believe with all my being that there is no fear that is too big for our God to not bring light and comfort. And I believe with all my being that there is no storm too big for our God. There is peace to be had.

Regardless of how big the storm gets; we never, ever face it alone. This I believe, this I trust.

Amen