

3

Jesus Rules



*What's the craziest weather
you've experienced?*

QUESTION 1

#BSFLjesus

You can trust Jesus in the storm.



THE BIBLE MEETS LIFE

My son Rig loves being pushed in a swing. When we go to the park, he runs straight to the swing set, and he begs me to follow quickly. He'll allow me to push him every way possible in that swing—twisting, turning, flying through the air, or stopping on a dime—all while laughing his head off!

But one day the babysitter took him to the park. She told me that when she pushed him in the swing, he tensed up and hung on for dear life. It's not fun to swing when you are in the hands of someone you don't know well.

In the Gospel of Mark, we see the disciples in a proverbial swing. A violent storm twisted and turned their boat, and, like my son, the disciples tensed up with fear. However, they soon would learn they needed to trust Jesus, the One who "pushed the swing"—the One who ruled over the storm.

The One who rules over the weather is the One we can trust in any and every storm.

WHAT DOES THE BIBLE SAY?

Mark 4:35-37 (CSB)

³⁵ On that day, when evening had come, he told them, “Let’s cross over to the other side of the sea.” ³⁶ So they left the crowd and took him along since he was in the boat. And other boats were with him. ³⁷ A great windstorm arose, and the waves were breaking over the boat, so that the boat was already being swamped.

At the beginning of Mark 4, Jesus “got into a boat on the sea and sat down, while the whole crowd was by the sea on the shore” (v. 1). When we come to verse 35, we see Jesus was still in the boat. For the moment, Jesus was through teaching the crowds, but He was not through with the boat. “Let’s cross over to the other side of the sea” (v. 35).

These men had just heard Jesus spend a good part of the day teaching, even if they didn’t fully understand it all. They had previously seen Him drive out demons from people and heal people with a touch (1:21-34,39-45). So when Jesus wanted them to cross the lake, could any place have been safer than in that boat?

But then the storm came.

Many times we find ourselves in the same situation as the disciples. We feel as though we’re doing everything right. We feel our relationship with Jesus is growing stronger by the day; we see Him working in our lives and in the lives of those around us. We may even get the sense that all is as it should be and that this business of following Christ is going to be smooth sailing.

Smooth sailing in the present is no guarantee that it will remain smooth. When we surrender our lives to Christ, He does give us rest from our burdens. He said, “My yoke is easy and my burden is light” (Matthew 11:30), but that doesn’t mean the journey before us will always be easy and light. We will know moments of calm, but we will still experience storms. We’re not exempt.

Why are we often surprised when we encounter difficult circumstances?

QUESTION 2

Mark painted a vivid picture of the desperate situation the disciples were in. "A great windstorm arose, and the waves were breaking over the boat, so that the boat was already being swamped" (v. 37). These fishing boats were not seafaring masterworks; they had low sides and were adequate to fish from, but they were not designed for this kind of weather. Anyway, who fishes during a storm? Considering that many of the men in the boats were seasoned fishermen, it truly must have been a terrible storm. They were not just overpowered; they felt like they were sinking.

Following Jesus' command did not spare the disciples from experiencing this trying situation; in fact, setting out in the boat at Jesus' command was precisely what put them there.

Mark 4:38-39 (CSB)

³⁸ He was in the stern, sleeping on the cushion. So they woke him up and said to him, "Teacher! Don't you care that we're going to die?" ³⁹ He got up, rebuked the wind, and said to the sea, "Silence! Be still!" The wind ceased, and there was a great calm.

One of the hardest truths for us to wrap our brains around is that Jesus is both fully God and fully man—*at the same time*. What happened next demonstrates both sides of this truth.

When we talk about God coming down to earth in the form of a man, we should remember that Jesus was not just putting on a show for humanity. God physically became a man. This doctrine is known as the incarnation: the Creator of the universe wrapping Himself in human flesh and coming to earth as a created being.

With the incarnation, Jesus chose to depend willingly upon the Father, just like we are to do. So when Jesus was sleeping on a cushion, He wasn't faking it so that the disciples could learn a lesson about trust. The Lord was so weary that He slept soundly even in the midst of the lurching boat, the howling wind, and the crashing waves.

When have you felt like God was unaware or uninterested in your distress?

QUESTION 3

What evidences of Jesus' power have increased your trust in Him?

QUESTION 4

Jesus did not have to teach the disciples about His humanity. They knew He was human—they could see it daily with their own eyes. What He was constantly teaching them was that He is God. We have the opposite problem. Many of us look at Jesus as “all God,” but we have a difficult time remembering His humanity.

With the storm raging all around them, the disciples rushed over to Jesus and asked Him a strange question: “Teacher! Don’t you care that we’re going to die?” (v. 38). In his Gospel, Matthew included their plea for help: “Lord, save us! We’re going to die!” (Matthew 8:25).

Even though the disciples’ circumstances were grim and their faith was dwindling, one important factor remained constant. The dire situation didn’t change the faithfulness of the One who can command the wind. The disciples’ doubt and the waves’ strength did nothing to take away from the reality that Jesus was present and with them in the midst of the storm.

Jesus calmly got up “and said to the sea, ‘Silence! Be still!’” (v. 39). He wasn’t talking to the disciples; he was speaking to the wind and waves! Immediately, Mark wrote, “there was a great calm” (v. 39). I imagine nobody moved as the sudden silence surely was deafening. The boat stopped tossing and the water went back to gently lapping against the sides of the boat. The Creator merely had to speak and the sea could do nothing but become perfectly calm. The wind stopped, the waves ceased, the air cleared, and the water became like glass.



Mark 4:40-41 (CSB)

⁴⁰ Then he said to them, “Why are you afraid? Do you still have no faith?” ⁴¹ And they were terrified and asked one another, “Who then is this? Even the wind and the sea obey him!”

Jesus was doing something bigger than demonstrating His sovereignty over nature: He was proving something about His identity. These disciples, being devout first-century Jews, would have known the Old Testament well. Jesus’ display of authority over the sea and the weather should have brought familiar Scriptures recounting God’s power and authority to mind. No wonder, then, that Jesus asked them, “Why are you afraid? Do you still have no faith?” (v. 40).

Jesus can be trusted—and not simply because He proved over and over He has power and authority. He can be trusted because He proved over and over again He is God.

The cowardly fear Jesus had rebuked the disciples for turned to awe. They were awestruck—“terrified” (v. 41). They thought they knew the One they were following, but Jesus’ latest demonstration of His authority led them to ask, “Who then is this? Even the wind and the sea obey Him!” (v. 41). In that moment, they understood why Jesus had been sleeping in the back of a rocking boat during a storm. He was the One “pushing the swing.” Jesus held power over the wind and the water; they began to grasp the depth and breadth of Jesus’ authority.

You might feel like you are in a storm right now. If money is tight, your family is tearing apart, school or work is overwhelming, you’re discouraged at church, or you feel lonely and isolated, remember this: Jesus, the One who can calm a literal storm, can calm any storm in your life. Because of this, He can be trusted.

What lessons can we learn from Jesus’ calming of the storm?

QUESTION 5

"Jesus can be trusted because He proved over and over again He is God!"

ROBBY GALLATY

CHOPPY WATERS AHEAD



***In what area(s) of life are you currently facing a "storm"?
Check all that apply.***

- Work
- Finances
- Relationship
- Decisions that impact my future
- Home/ Family
- Other: _____

What can you do this week to fully entrust this situation to Christ?

LIVE IT OUT

How can you obey God's Word this week? Consider doing one of the following:

- » **Trust.** Jesus is able to handle the storm—any storm. Nothing comes against you that He has no power over it. Where are you facing a “storm” in life right now? Place your trust in Him and rely on His presence in the boat with you to get you through it.
- » **Look back.** Consider previous difficulties you have gone through and identify the ways Jesus strengthened you and got you through the storm.
- » **Get in the boat.** Help someone see Jesus' powerful presence. As a Christ-follower, get in the boat with someone who is going through a storm. Be Christ's representative, encouraging the person to trust Him.

The forces of nature are powerful, but Jesus is more so. And, He is present with His followers in everything we face. **The Lord over all creation is with us, and He invites us to trust Him.**



My thoughts