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Calming Our Fears



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Calming Our Fears

“Let us pass over to the other side...”

It took only three small words to change everything. Despair gave way to hope. Fear dissolved into peace and the angry waves and howling wind became silently calm. *“Peace be still.” (Mark 4:39)*

Jesus calming the storm has been a comfort to the believer. *“...even the wind and the sea obey him!”(Mark 4:41)* However, this is not all that captures our attention in this account recorded in Mark 4. Another curious observation is - How could Christ sleep through the storm? I do not suppose Christ found a dry spot on the boat to lay his head. I cannot image the storm that made experienced sea men conclude they were perishing would have provided ideal sleeping arrangements. No, the waves that were filling the boat had to be sloshing Jesus. Rain soaked his pillow. Only two reasons could allow a man to sleep through such conditions. Either He did not care or He knew something no one else knew.

Before entering the boat with His disciples, Jesus exclaimed, *“Let us pass over unto the other side.”(Mark 4:35)* This command, like the other, is powerful. So powerful, in fact, it allowed Jesus to sleep through the crashing waves and clapping thunder. It was this command from the Savior that was either forgotten or not truly believed by His men and earned them a stern rebuke. *“Why are ye so fearful? How is it that ye have no faith?” (vs 40)* If Christ said they were going to the “other side”, could they possibly perish in the middle? Not a chance.

Fear and worry are part of the human experience. In varying degrees, we all struggle with these emotions. Understanding the natural progression from our thoughts to our actions provides an important window into the matter of our anxiety. Anxious thinking leads to anxious feelings, which in turn gives rise to anxious behavior. Consider the disciples-they thought they were going to sink, thus, fear rose in their hearts, which gave way to waking the Savior.

Philippians 4:6-8 speaks to the connection between our thoughts and our worries. *“Be careful for nothing; but in everything by prayer and supplication with thanksgiving let your requests be made known unto God. And the peace of God, which passeth all understanding, shall keep your hearts and minds through Christ Jesus. Finally, brethren, whatsoever things are true, whatsoever things are honest, whatsoever things are just, whatsoever things are pure, whatsoever things are lovely, whatsoever things are of good report; if there be any virtue, and if there be any praise, think on these things.”* Do not be troubled with many cares, Paul says. God’s peace aligns our minds in Christ as our thoughts rehearse those things that are right and true.

Consider the following skills for calming your thoughts and settling your mind:

- Avoid catastrophizing (ruminating on worst-case scenarios).
- Review comforting Scriptures.
- Sit quietly and meditate on the promises of God.
- Enjoy God’s creation.
- Listen to hymns and calming music.
- Reduce unnecessary noise and distractions in your home and work environment.
- Exercise
- Eat healthy.
- Breathe deeply.
- Practice good sleeping habits.

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The account of Jesus calming the sea is one of the foremost illustrations of the power in Christ's commands. If Christ has said you are going to the other side, then do not fret the storm. You are not going to perish. What peace and calm result from remembering and believing what the Lord has said.

- *“Fear thou not; for I am with thee: be not dismayed; for I am thy God: I will strengthen thee; yea, I will help thee; yea, I will uphold thee with the right hand of my righteousness.” Isaiah 41:10*
- *“And we know that all things work together for good to them that love God, to them who are the called according to his purpose.” Rom 8:28*
- *“And if I go and prepare a place for you, I will come again, and receive you unto myself; that where I am, there ye may be also.” John 14:3*
- *“Being confident of this very thing, that he which hath begun a good work in you will perform it until the day of Jesus Christ:” Phil 1:6*

Moreover, when you reach the “other side”, as Christ said you would, you will ask in wonder as the disciples did, *“what manner of man is this?”* (vs 41), that, at His Word, I could endure such a storm.