



September 28, 2025
"Questions in the Storm:
Who is this Man?
Mark 4:35-41; Job 38:1-4
Pastor Ken Stoesz

Good morning. Please open your Bibles to Mark 4. This morning, we conclude our series 'Questions in the Storm,' looking at the story where Jesus is on a boat with the disciples and they are caught in a huge storm. We are looking at the questions that come out of this storm:

1. Jesus, do you not care we are going to drown?
2. Why are you so afraid? Do you have no faith?
3. Who is this man that even the winds and waves obey him?

"If God were small enough to be understood, he wouldn't be big enough to be worshipped." Evelyn Underhill

There is a point in the Christian's life when you discover that God is beyond your capacity to understand. Life throws a curve ball, and you need more than just compassion, empathy and encouragement—you need to be delivered, to be saved, to have a God that is bigger than your storm. It's the moment when you discover how frail and vulnerable you really are and all you can do is cry out for mercy and help, hoping that God is able (and willing) to save you. Have you ever encountered God like this?

Somewhere in the mid-Atlantic ocean in the spring of 1748, the slave trader John Newton had an experience that forever changed him. He says: 'That 10th of March is a day much to be remembered by me; and I have never allowed it to pass unnoticed since the year 1748. For on that day the Lord came from on high and delivered me out of deep waters.'

He was on a ship sailing back towards England when a furious storm arose and soon the ship was filling with water. Since he was a teenager, John Newton had walked away from Christ and chosen a life pursuing pleasure and wealth, not taking God seriously. His conscience was not pricked as he transported hundreds of slaves out of Africa; it was not pricked because it was hard. Yet, this would be the man who would write 'Amazing Grace': *how sweet the sound that saved a wretch like me, I once was lost, but not am found, was blind but now I see.*

On March 10, 1748, God woke him up to show him how lost he was. As the boat was ascending the troughs of the sea and then crashing down, Newton saw how helpless he was and that outside of the mercy of God, he was doomed. He cried out to God for mercy. Here are his words: "I could not utter the prayer of faith. I could not draw near to a reconciled God and call him Father. My prayer for mercy was like the cry of the ravens, which yet the Lord does not disdain to hear." He survived...a new man.

At the end of the story in Mark 4, we have a quiet scene of the disciples with Jesus in a boat on a calm sea...but the scene is filled with tension. The disciples, moments earlier, were crying out for help, believing they would die—and Jesus was sleeping as the storm was raging. They cry out to Jesus; he wakes and then commands the storm to be silent and calm—and it obeys. Sally Lloyd Jones writes, ‘When he spoke, the wind and the waves recognized his voice because it was his voice that created them in the first place’...and then all was calm. But another storm erupts in their minds as they ask—who is this that even the winds and waves obey him?

They are waking up to the reality that Jesus is more powerful than the storm that almost ended their lives. They are realizing for the first time that their fear was misplaced. John would later write about Jesus that before everything was made, He was. That everything that is made, was made by and through him. They did not know this kind of Jesus. Up to this point, he was a good teacher, he could heal people. This was a new level...and they were terrified. ‘The Fear of the Lord is the beginning of wisdom.’

“If God were small enough to be understood, he wouldn’t be big enough to be worshipped.” Evelyn Underhill

And it is worship that we are commanded to do—to worship the Lord with our heart, soul, mind and strength. It’s so often that in our storms we want sympathy and help. God is an ever-present help in times of trouble, yes, BUT...what I want us to grasp this morning is that our Lord is also the captain of the storm, he is sovereign, in control and able to use storms for His purpose—our call is to worship and trust.

Joseph:

In the story of Joseph from the book of Genesis, we see a God who knows the storms before, during and after they happen. How else could Joseph claim these words, ‘What you meant for evil, God meant for good’?

Maybe you know the story of Joseph; much of the later portion of Genesis is dedicated to him. We first see him as a spoiled teenager, his father’s favourite and hated by his older brothers. He is a bit flighty and has dreams of grandeur. But the next 15-20 years of his life are marked by suffering. It changes him and is used for a great purpose.

It begins one day when his father sends him out to find his brothers, who are feeding the sheep. He wanders all over the land, then bumps into someone who points him to ‘Dothan’—much further than expected. Eventually he finds them. When they see him coming, they make a plan to kill him but selfishly decide rather to sell him to some slave traders to make some money. Their plan succeeds and they tell their father that Joseph was killed by a wild animal. The secret is safe. Joseph is taken to Egypt as a slave—gone.

He begins work for a government official, Potiphar—but pretty soon, Potiphar’s wife is infatuated with him. He keeps refusing her advances, so finally she cries ‘rape’ and Joseph is thrown into a dungeon for something he never did. This seems like the end of

the road for him—he'll be given hard labour and will likely die young. But, as it happens, a curious thing occurs. There are two men in prison who worked for the king: the cupbearer and chief baker. Both were in the dungeon at the time of Joseph, and they each had a disturbing dream. In time they tell Joseph their dreams and he interprets them perfectly. Events turn out exactly as Joseph interpreted.

Joseph sees this as a possible ray of hope. He says to the cupbearer, 'When you get out of here, remember me!' But he is not remembered. Two more silent, plodding years go by.

But then another event happens: Pharaoh (the king of the land) has a dream that deeply disturbs him. He cannot find anyone to interpret or help—but then the cupbearer remembers Joseph and says, 'There is a man who can do this.' Joseph is brought from prison, shaved, cleaned up and then given the problem. With God's help, he interprets it and gives advice to the king. The dream is a warning from God that a massive famine is coming on the land and will starve much of the known world. Pharaoh has seven years to prepare and seven years after of famine. The king was so impressed with Joseph that he made him a high official and gave him authority to direct the agricultural affairs of Egypt.

Things go as Joseph said: seven years of plenty and then the years of drought follow. Two years into the drought, a curious event occurs. Eleven brothers, dusty, hungry and desperate, show up on Egypt's door, asking to buy food for their families. It's Joseph's brothers who sold him so many years ago! They don't recognize him, but he recognizes them. He puts them through a series of tests and questions—they believe God is punishing them for their actions against Joseph so long ago...and the situation is getting very tense. Finally, Joseph does reveal himself, taking off the garments of the Egyptians, washing his face, like taking off a mask. He stands before them and says, 'I am Joseph!' **Genesis 45:3 "But his brothers were not able to answer him, because they were terrified at his presence."**

Now listen to Joseph's response. They are two years into the "storm" of famine and five more years are coming. Here is how he is interpreting the events of his life: **Genesis 45:5,7-8 "And now, do not be distressed and do not be angry with yourselves for selling me here, because it was to save the lives that God sent me ahead of you... But God sent me ahead of you to preserve for you a remnant on earth and to save your lives by a great deliverance. So then, it was not you who sent me here, but God."** Then a few chapters later he tells them these famous lines, **'What you intended for evil, God intended for good.'**

That takes some hard thinking. He's saying that the "storm" his brothers sold him into was actually divinely guided to bring about a great deliverance! But no one knew that at the time—how could they?

Tim Keller, in his book, *Walking with God through pain and suffering* observes the amount of ‘coincidences’ in Joseph’s story, that if one of them did not happen...maybe he doesn’t end up saving them.

Consider—

What if Joseph’s father doesn’t send him to find his brothers? What if Joseph doesn’t bump into that fellow in the fields to get directions? Or that the Egyptian caravan didn’t come by at just that moment? Or what if Reuben (the oldest brother who wanted to save Joseph) actually succeeded? Or what would have happened if Potiphar hadn’t bought Joseph? Or if Potiphar had a better marriage? Then Joseph wouldn’t have gone to prison.

Or what if the cupbearer and baker didn’t displease the king? They would not have been in prison...everyone would have died. What if Joseph got out on good behaviour before the two years were up, and they couldn’t find him? The point is that God knows details of the storm in ways that if he were to show us, we would be stunned and say, ‘Who is this that even the events of life obey his voice?’ Isn’t he God? Keller notes, “If the brothers had not betrayed Joseph and sold him into slavery, the family would not have been saved from disaster and death.” It all came through series of small and big storms, through suffering.

This is such good news—when we face storms, we have a God who is greater than the storms! It is also good news because when we look at our lives and feel we have made a mess of it all, Keller remarks, **“We must also never think we have really ruined our lives, or have ruined God’s good purpose for us.”** You meant it for evil, but God meant it for good.

Or what about Job? For 37 chapters he pleads his case before God yet receives no answer. His family dies in a tragic disaster, his wealth is stolen, most of his employees are killed, yet right after this he says, **Job 1:21b “The Lord gave and the Lord has taken away, may the name of the Lord be praised.”** He actually worships! But then he develops a severe skin disease and his wife, the only precious person left, says, ‘Curse God and die.’ Three friends come to visit him, and they spend the time grilling Job about all the ways he must have done something to deserve this kind of treatment; no one who is righteous and innocent suffers, they reason. That is not the law of the universe, but rather the unjust and the wicked suffer while the righteous go on in peace. But now, not only is he deeply grieved and sick, now he is condemned by his friends. And the book sits in that tension for nearly 37 chapters—it’s hard to read.

Job maintains his innocence and that he had nothing to do with causing the storm—and he comes within a hairsbreadth of blaming God for all that has happened.

The book of Job ends with 4 chapters of God speaking. It says, ironically, **“Then God answered Job out of the storm.”**

We have questions in the storm; God is answering out of the storm. His answers are not what we would expect—but they are what we need.

Job 38:1-4 “Then the Lord spoke to Job out of the storm. He said: “Who is this that obscures my plans with words without knowledge? Brace yourself like a man; I will question you, and you shall answer me. “Where were you when I laid the earth’s foundation? Tell me, if you understand.”

What a question! ‘Where were you...?’ This goes on for about four chapters. In all of it, God is not just putting Job in his place but rather putting Job’s storm in its place. We are not called to understand but we are called to worship. As D.A. Carson notes, “They (people) assume that God Almighty should be more interested in giving us explanations than in being worshiped and trusted.”

You see, this was Satan’s wager on Job: that he only loved God for what God gave him. Satan believed that if all the pleasures of life were taken from Job, then he would turn his back on God. So that is our challenge in our storms: do we love him only when all is calm and peaceful, or can we trust him and love him in the storms? That is hard question, I know, but it needs to be considered. Our storms are perhaps our greatest test and most refining moments.

Job’s answer is, ‘I repent’...not ‘I understand’...that is the response of someone who says, ‘Who is this man, that even the wind and waves obey him?’ Who am I to ask him to explain his actions...it’s the other way around; I am to explain my actions, my choices, my attitude and my response.

I know we all want our storms to stop, but whether you are in one, coming out of one or likely going into one—can you grasp that what is more important than surviving a storm is that you and I take advantage of the opportunity to find comfort, grace and deliverance with the Lord in the storm? To actually worship in the storm.

As big as the storm is—God is bigger. As strong as the winds blow, he is stronger. As chaotic as the storm erupts, he is unfolding his plan. And all he asks is, ‘Trust me; I am good, my plans are good.’

The challenge for us is that we so desperately want to understand, but we are called to worship a Holy Sovereign God. That is enough. That is good.

A plan was formed a long time ago that Jesus would take on human flesh and walk among us. Wherever he would go, the kingdom of God would advance, and he would bring a calm and a peace where sin had brought chaos and storm.

He determined to end the curse of sin by becoming a curse for us. He went to the cross willingly, according to plan, scorning its shame...to die for you. Not just to give you a better life and one with hope, but to bring you to a place of worship, submission and to

recognize, 'Who is this that the winds and waves obey him?' He is the Lord God; your life is in his hands. Your life was purchased on the cross. You owe him your life.

Psalm 139:1-6 "Such knowledge is too wonderful for me; it is high; I cannot attain it."

Your life sits in the power of Christ—no power of hell, no scheme of man can ever pluck you from his hand—till he returns or calls you home, here in the power of Christ you stand.

End the service with sitting quietly before God—

Are you in a storm, coming out of a storm or entering one? Have you been fighting God all along, demanding answers and understanding?

Need time to choose to worship, choose to sit quietly before a holy God and submit to His will. Ask Him to teach you to trust Him.