



September 14, 2025
"Questions in the Storm:
Lord, do you Care?"
Mark 4:35-41
Pastor Ken Stoesz

Good morning. Thank you, Jess, for sharing. This morning, we begin a new series for 3 weeks looking at one story in the Bible. The story records three questions—these are the questions in the storm:

Lord, do you Care? Today
Where is your Faith? Next week
Who is this Man? In 3 weeks

I've heard it said that people are either in the middle of a storm, coming out of a storm or just about to go into a storm, and so this topic is relevant for all of us. I also realize that every storm is different and very personal. My prayer is that this series comforts you in the storm, prepares you to face a storm and helps make sense of a storm. This series won't answer all your questions—impossible! But I hope it moves us closer to trusting the Lord even when our questions remain unanswered. I believe this first question, "Lord, do you not care?" raises 3 other questions:

- 1. God, are you indifferent to our pain?**
- 2. God, are you good?**
- 3. God, are you in control?**

Are you indifferent to our pain?

The problem with storms is they usually come out of nowhere. This year, 250,000 people will be told they have cancer—these are all people with plans, hopes and dreams. Five people today will lose their lives in a car accident—over 2,000 people a year die in car accidents across Canada. In 2004, shortly after I started pastoring, nearly 300,000 people were swept out into the ocean in the massive tsunami that hit south Asia. One of the folks I was working with, her son was on the beaches of Thailand at the time, and he died. He lost his life. His remains were found three months later.

Then there are the storms of the affair, the child who runs away, the loss of a job, the furnace that broke down, the grinding conflict with a family member or colleague... Sometimes storms don't just lash out for a night, but for a decade.

These storms come quickly; we're not prepared, not ready and not expecting it. The disciples were seasoned fishermen. They knew the sea of Galilee. They were not rookies—yet this storm terrified them.

In the midst of the storm, as the disciples are bailing water or trying to keep the boat afloat, it must have shocked and angered them to see Jesus peaceably asleep! He's asleep! Indifferent.

Psalm 44:23-24 “Awake O Lord! Why do you sleep?...Why do you hide your face and forget our misery and oppression?”

It's not only the disciples who felt this! Philosopher Simone Weil wrote that suffering makes God appear to be silent — is He? Does He care? If you are in a storm, you understand this feeling. If not—be prepared. You might have the most watertight theology of suffering and pain but until you get slapped in the face by it, you can only brace yourself.

But is God indifferent (unconcerned, no sympathy?) This might be our greatest fear: that he sees us struggling and hears our cries...but doesn't care, is not moved to sympathy. Again, back to the Psalms. If you haven't found comfort in the Psalms, I encourage you as much as possible, go back to the Psalms when you're in storms. The first 90 Psalms are in essence calling out to God for help. I'm in a storm. Help me. Rescue me.

Psalm 31:9-10

**Have pity on me, O Lord, because I am in distress.
My eyes, my soul, and my body waste away from grief.
My life is exhausted from sorrow,
my years from groaning.**

Do you remember the last time you prayed a prayer like that? An honest prayer—‘**my life is exhausted from sorrow...I'm wasting away from grief.**’...Is God indifferent?

Psalm 34 “The Lord is close to the brokenhearted, He rescues those whose spirits are crushed.”

Psalm 23 “Even though I walk through the valley of the shadow of death I will fear no evil”—why? Because you are with me! His rod and his staff, they comfort me.

God hears, He sees, He knows, and He rescues. This is an ongoing storyline of the Bible onward from Genesis 3. As humanity goes its own way, God hears and he sees. It's exactly what he says to them when they're in Egypt. I have seen your misery. I've heard your cries. I'm coming to rescue you and deliver you out of slavery. It's the story of the Bible.

What about Isaiah chapter 43? This is a passage often read and visiting folks in care homes or towards our final days. We don't have to wait till our final days to hear these words:

Isaiah 43:1-2

**But now, this is what the Lord says—
he who created you, Jacob,
he who formed you, Israel:**

**“Do not fear, for I have redeemed you;
I have summoned you by name; you are mine.**

**When you pass through the waters,
I will be with you;
and when you pass through the rivers,
they will not sweep over you.
When you walk through the fire,
you will not be burned;
the flames will not set you ablaze.**

What about Jesus’ own words? He knows we are dust; He counts the hairs on our heads. He knows when a sparrow dies and says, "You are far more valuable than a sparrow."

What about the classic passages when He talks about anxiety? If God cares about clothing the flowers of the field, how much more will He clothe you? You of little faith.

He is not indifferent. Yet we come and ask, ‘Do you not care?’

Which leads to the second question:

Is God good? Jesus is sleeping in the boat while the storm rages on...panic is swelling with the waves and Jesus is not moving. Isn’t this one of the objections to the Christian faith? If God is all powerful and good, then why does evil exist?

Dr. Paul Brandt was a surgeon who worked with lepers in India for much of his life. Leprosy is a deadly disease by which the nerve endings no longer tell the brain that there is pain and so you keep hitting, cutting, burning your hands. He observed that pain is a gift, without pain you continue to hurt yourself—God’s gift of pain receptors keeps us alive, tells us to take our hands off the stove.

But the argument here is that because we experience pain and sorrow that God is not good. It was Dr. Brandt who returned to the US and saw that in our culture the pursuit of pleasure and personal freedom are our primary goals in life and because of that, suffering is traumatic.

We live in a culture where we cannot recognize the value of human life—of those with dementia and Alzheimer’s, ALS. We fill up the docket on MAID, seeing that there is no value to society in caring for the sick, the old, the weak.

Yet is that not one of our mandates as Christians? To care for the widow? The fatherless, to bind up the sick, the brokenhearted? To defend the cause of the poor?

Why? Because that is what God does—why does He do that? Because He is good.

1 John 1:5 “This is the message we have heard from him and proclaim to you, that God is light, and in him is no darkness at all.”

Deuteronomy 32:4 “He is the Rock; his deeds are perfect. Everything he does is just and fair. He is a faithful God who does no wrong; how just and upright he is!”
Nahum 1:7 “The Lord is good, a strong refuge when trouble comes. He is close to those who trust in him.”

Psalm 140:12 “I know that the LORD secures justice for the poor and upholds the cause of the needy.”

He is good.

Lastly then—is He in control?

Storms are terrifying because they feel like they take control. When the doctor says, ‘There is nothing more we can do.’ When the feeling of despair creeps in to suffocate—it’s all screaming—we’ve lost control! It’s the feeling the disciples had in the boat. It’s the feeling you and I have when the storms erupt.

Tim Keller in his book, *Walking with God through Pain and Suffering* observed, “When pain and suffering come upon us, we finally see not only that we are not in control of our lives but that we never were.”

One of the big deceptions in our lifetime is that we believe we can control our lives. Diets, exercise, fads, investments, RRSP’s—these things are not bad in themselves—they are responsible. But many do them to control their lives. “If I do this, then bad things won’t happen,” we think. Yes...most of the time. But you’re not in control.

Recall the new song we just sang, ‘I am not my own, but belong body and soul to the Lord Jesus Christ.’

A very important but difficult question is—who initiated this boating event? Jesus did. ‘Let’s get into the boat and go to the other side.’ Did Jesus know this storm would occur? **John 1:3 “Through him all things were made; without him nothing was made that has been made.”**

The weather patterns, the water molecules: He made them. The heat from the ground and the cold in the air that combine to create these terrible wind/rainstorms—He created that.

Colossians 1:15-17 “He is the image of the invisible God, the firstborn of all creation. For by him all things were created, in heaven and on earth, visible and invisible, whether thrones or dominions or rulers or authorities—all things were created through him and for him. And he is before all things, and in him all things hold together.

He says...*let's go out into that sea.*

I had the privileged opportunity to go on a canoe trip this past week into Ontario. Some of the places we went I saw massive 'white pines'—so big my friend and I couldn't put our arms around the tree. I had no way of seeing the whole tree...only the foot or two of bark in front of me.

The disciples felt the storm. But Jesus said, "Let's go to the other side." What was on the other side? They didn't know; they couldn't see. But Jesus did. There was a man, bound in chains, living in tombs, crying out...believing no one heard, no one cared, no one loved him. Mark 5 (right after this story) is where they are going. Jesus is in complete control of this whole event, but He is divinely heading to reach someone who has cried out for much of his life, "God, do you care?"

That is the God of the Bible. He hears, He sees, He knows...He loves.

If there is any great definition of this, it is at the cross. Jesus—the one who calmed the storm—walked into the storm of death for you. He took the storm of sin that separates you from God onto himself and killed it. Destroyed it. Finished its power. Disarmed the ruler of the air, Satan, so that you do not need to live in fear anymore.

Romans 5:8 "But God demonstrates his own love for us in this: While we were still sinners, Christ died for us."

Storms in life want to convince us that God does not care or love us, that all has gone wrong. But the greatest storm ever was sin—sin stained every relationship, twisted every heart and removed us from God's presence. Jesus walked into that storm on the cross when he cried out, 'My God, My God why have you forsaken me?' Martin Luther has said that these are the most important words in Scripture. Why? Jesus was forsaken so that you would not be. He died and rose again defeating death. He is not indifferent; He is good and sovereign.

We're going to talk more about this in the next couple weeks from a Christian perspective. How do we view storms and suffering? How do we make sense of them? Is there a purpose? So, please come back next week, when we will dive into that.

But I want to ask you this morning, have you have felt for a long time that Jesus is asleep in the boat of your life? Do you feel like he's asleep, not paying attention, that He's indifferent? Have you felt that? The psalmists felt it. Surely you and I feel it. And we experience it for various reasons.

And the disciples cry out to Jesus, "Wake up." It's not Jesus that needed to wake up. It was the disciples that needed to wake up. It's not our Lord and Savior who needs to wake up. It's you and I that need to wake up.

John Newton, the guy who wrote “Amazing Grace,” a former slave trader, writes to a younger pastor in one of his journals. He says, “The ship was safe when Christ was in her. He is wide awake, and his eyes are in every place.”

He knows. He cares. He's in control.

I'm going to end the service in just a moment. For the next three weeks, there will be a couple of stations at the front of the church for prayer. If you would like prayer for anything, there will be a few of us up here who would love to pray for you. Maybe you need a reminder that the Lord knows your name and that the fire you're walking through...that He is walking through with you.

Remember in Daniel 3, the three friends thrown into fiery furnace because they would not bow down to Nebuchadnezzar? And when Nebuchadnezzar looks into the furnace, he doesn't see three but four people—and the fourth is like a Son of Man. They were not harmed. Maybe you need prayer this morning so that you could see this Son of Man walking with you in the storm. Maybe you need prayer today for healing, for comfort, for guidance and hope. Maybe you're in a storm and you need someone to come alongside you to pray, take advantage of this opportunity.

You've been carrying the weight and the pressure of doing it all on your own—you need someone to pray for you. You need to be reminded that God is not indifferent; He is good, and He is in full control.

So, I'm going to read from Colossians once again, and then this will serve as our closing in Colossians chapter 1.

Now may you be strengthened with all power according to his glorious might for all endurance and patience with joy. Giving thanks to the father who has qualified you to share in the inheritance of the saints in light. He has delivered us from the domain of darkness and transformed us from the kingdom of his beloved to the beloved of his beloved son in whom we have redemption the forgiveness of sins.