



**A BETTER
WORD**

THE GOSPEL OF MARK

A Study Through the Life of King Jesus | with Pastor Nick Gatzke

In the Struggles and Storm

Mark 6:45–56

THE BIG IDEA

In the storms of life, cling to Jesus, because he has the divine power to see you through.

SERMON SUMMARY

Three weather systems converged on the Andrea Gail in 1991, and none was remarkable on its own. That is how storms work, and none of us is immune. Here Jesus makes his disciples get into the boat while he dismisses a crowd that wanted to seize him and make him king, then goes up the mountain to pray. By evening the wind has turned. They are three miles out, sails down, rowing hour after hour and making headway painfully. Notice how they got there: they were obeying. Sometimes obedience is the very thing that puts you in the storm.

He comes at the fourth watch — between three and six in the morning — which means he could have come sooner and did not. And he does three things only God can do. He walks on the sea, where Job says God alone treads. He says “It is I” — ego eimi, the self-revealed name of God. And he means to pass by them, as God passed before Moses at Sinai and Elijah at Horeb. Then Mark tells us why the storm happened at all: they did not understand about the loaves, and their hearts were hardened.

DIGGING DEEPER

1. Verse 45 says Jesus “made” his disciples get into the boat, and John 6:15 tells us the crowd was about to take him by force and make him king. Why send everyone away — and what does it tell you that his response to pressure was to go pray?
2. The disciples ended up soaked, exhausted, and terrified because they obeyed. How do you tell the difference between a storm you created and a storm your obedience carried you into — and does the difference change how you should respond?
3. Jesus watched them struggle for hours before coming. He could have come earlier; he didn’t. What might he intend for someone to learn in a struggle he could end at any moment?
4. Trace the three claims Mark is making: he walks where only God walks (Job 9:8), he takes God’s own name in “It is I,” and he “meant to pass by them” as God passed before Moses (Exodus 33:19–22) and Elijah (1 Kings 19:11). What is Mark asking you to conclude?

5. Verse 52 gives the reason for the whole ordeal: “they did not understand about the loaves, but their hearts were hardened.” They saw the miracle and missed the miracle worker. Where have you seen God work and still not adjusted how you live?

LIVING IT OUT

Eugene Peterson noticed that when an injury stopped him running, the running magazines piled up unread — because reading was an extension of something he was actually doing. He concluded that the most important question is not “What does it mean?” but “What can I obey?” Where you turn in the middle of a crisis reveals who you actually trust.

Heart Check: When the wind turned last time, where did you turn first? Is there an obedience you have been avoiding because you can see the storm it would put you in — and are you choosing short-term comfort over long-term gain?

This Week: Name the one act of obedience you have been postponing and take the first concrete step toward it this week. When the struggle comes, tell God plainly that you are depending on him rather than on your own rowing.

REFLECTION & PRAYER

“But immediately he spoke to them and said, ‘Take heart; it is I. Do not be afraid.’”

— **Mark 6:50**

Ask God to soften whatever in your heart has grown hard toward his Son — then ask him for the endurance to keep rowing until he comes, and the faith to believe he will.

Your Prayer:

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