

33 And with many such parables He was speaking the word to them, so far as they were able to understand it; 34 and He did not speak to them without a parable; but He was explaining everything privately to His own disciples.--Mark wants us to know that the parables that he has listed are not an all-inclusive list, but just a sampling. For the tenth time in chapter four, Mark emphasizes the importance of really “hearing”, or “comprehending” Jesus’ parables. “[Jesus] was speaking to them the word, as they were able to hear” because some were able to comprehend Jesus’ words, those who had their hearts open to God, and some were not. Parables enlighten or obscure depending on the ability to hear. When He was teaching the crowds, Jesus made sure to use parables, so that what He said would stick with, and intrigue, and encourage those who wanted to seek Him to find Him. The motive for Jesus’ use of the parables was to allow for the preparation of the heart that must take place in order for them to receive the message of the Kingdom of God. He adapted His teaching to reach “**as they were able to hear it.**” Most of them weren’t ready to accept Jesus’ completely revolutionary new relationship with God in the Kingdom of God as God’s children that He was offering them John 1:12-13 **12 But as many as received Him, to them He gave the right to become children of God, to those who believe in His name, 13 who were born, not of blood, nor of the will of the flesh, nor of the will of a man, but of God.** — they were used to having a relationship mediated by sacrifices at the temple, and based on understanding of the traditions of the elders taught to them by the Pharisees and Sadducees. Parables allowed time for reflection on His teachings, so that hearts who were willing could be prepared to receive His Word. Mark makes it clear that **[Jesus] was explaining everything privately to His own disciples** indicating that they needed help too.

The Calming of the Storm--All of the details in Mark, including the disciples great fear in verse 41, as well as knowing the specific location of where Jesus was in the boat, and the use of nautical terms lets us know that Mark is relying on an eye-witness to these events who understood boats, which makes sense if Simon-Peter, the former fisherman of the Galilee is his source.

35 On that day, when evening came--Mark lets us know that it was in the same day when Jesus was teaching in parables, when evening came that Jesus told them to get into the boat. The idea here is that this was after a long day of teaching—the work for the day was apparently done.

He said to them, “Let’s go over to the other side.”--The first thing to notice is that it is Jesus’ idea to go over to the other side of the sea of Galilee.

36 After dismissing the crowd, they took Him along with them in the boat, just as He was; and other boats were with Him. --It’s likely to be the same boat that Jesus has been teaching the crowds from, since Mark mentions that they took Jesus “**just as He was**” directly from the boat in which he was teaching the crowd (4:1), without his having returned to the shore, and without needing to find a boat. The mention of “**other boats with him**” likely means the additional disciples beyond the Twelve who were with Jesus. This indicates that there were at least 3 boats-full of disciples following Jesus around, so, about 40-60 people or so. But those on the more distant boats didn’t witness the miracle personally during the storm, nor did they understand that it was Jesus who calmed the storm, until they heard it from the disciples in Jesus’ boat—it pays to follow Jesus closely! You get to see so much more of the power of God! Live your life in the presence of Jesus, and you will see many wonderful displays of the power of God. Stay off in the distance, and you will struggle, and question a whole lot more. The choice is yours!

37 And a fierce gale of wind developed, and the waves were breaking over the boat so much that the boat was already filling with water. --The disciples and Jesus launch out eastward across the lake. They included among them at least four fishermen who were experienced sailors, and the multitude was soon left behind as their boat, with others along the shore, moved out into deep water. The reaction of the disciples, says that this was no minor storm, but the “furious squall”.

38 And yet Jesus Himself was in the stern, asleep on the cushion; and they woke Him and said to Him, “Teacher, do You not care that we are perishing?”--This scene of Jesus sleeping during the storm is interesting, since it's the only place in the Gospels where Jesus is described as sleeping—during a storm. The picture is of complete trust in God in the midst of adversity. He had said that they were all going over to the other side of the Galilee, according to God's Will, and that's what was going to happen, so He might as well get some sleep on the way. We see something very similar in Jonah 1:4-6 **4 However, the Lord hurled a great wind on the sea and there was a great storm on the sea, so that the ship was about to break up. 5 Then the sailors became afraid and every man cried out to his god, and they hurled the cargo which was in the ship into the sea to lighten it for them. But Jonah had gone below into the stern of the ship, had lain down, and fallen sound asleep. 6 So the captain approached him and said, “How is it that you are sleeping? Get up, call on your god! Perhaps your god will be concerned about us so that we will not perish.”** So, both the Prophet Jonah and Jesus were asleep in the storm, trusting in God, and the experienced sailors, who were depending on their earthly skillset were finding that their abilities weren't enough to get them through the storm. As in the Jonah story, the disciples, some of them veteran seamen, are terrified by the ferocity of the storm. So, finally, they called upon God. In both of them, there's a bit of accusation from the sailors. Jonah's captain cries out: **How is it that you are sleeping? Get up, call on your god! Perhaps your god will be concerned about us so that we will not perish.** And the disciples cry out, **“Teacher, do You not care that we are perishing?”** in the storm. But, it's pretty much the same cry for help, and the same accusation that God doesn't seem to be caring, or He would have helped them already. God sent or allowed the storm in both cases, and there are lessons to be learned—do not be distracted by the storm, keep your eyes on God, and He will get you through it. But He will also achieve the purposes for which He allowed the storm in the first place—often to increase and build up our faith. Even if, as in Jonah's case, He has to use it to give you an attitude adjustment in the inside of a whale for three days so that He would complete the mission that God had for Him. God has strange ways of preparing us, doesn't He? But, He knows just what we need, and loves us too much to deny us this growth, even if we would pass on the experience, if we could. While Jesus didn't need an attitude adjustment, the disciples did. They had to learn both to trust Jesus, and to understand that He really was the Son of God, and He has power over the wind and the waves.

39 And He got up and rebuked the wind and said to the sea, “Hush, be still.” And the wind died down and it became perfectly calm.--For Jesus, there was never any doubt what He would do. He was following God's Will, unlike Jonah, so this storm was also in God's will. He knew. Like the later miracle with Lazarus, this miracle was not only to build up faith, but Jesus told His disciples that Lazarus' illness was **“for the glory of God, so that the Son of God may be glorified through it”** (John 11:4). The delay in His arrival—two days after the sisters sent word—ensured Lazarus was truly dead, making the miracle unmistakable and a powerful sign of divine authority. By raising Lazarus, Jesus demonstrated that He is **“the resurrection and the life”** (John 11:25–26). This claim went beyond healing sickness; it showed authority over death itself, placing Him in a unique role as the giver of eternal life. His miracle in calming the sea demonstrated His power over nature. This miracle was also a sign to the apostles, designed to strengthen the disciples' belief. With Lazarus, Jesus had said the delay and the worry involved was necessary for their faith, **“I am glad for your sake that I was not there, so that you may believe”** (John 11:15). With the disciples in the boat, He could rightfully have said, I'm glad that I was asleep, for your sake, so that you may believe. The moral of the story is that we can choose to, like Jesus, cooperate with God's plan and play a wonderful part of God getting glory and praise, or we can choose to kick against the goads, and resist, like Jonah, and God will make sure that His purposes are accomplished anyway, while we have to go through a bunch of stuff, maybe be covered with sand and whale vomit, to make us

come around to God's way of seeing things. In both cases, once the purpose of the storm was accomplished, the authoritative word of God, and in this case the spoken word of Jesus '**Quiet! Be still!**' calmed the seas.

40 And He said to them, "Why are you afraid? Do you still have no faith?" 41 They became very much afraid and said to one another, "Who, then, is this, that even the wind and the sea obey Him?" Often in Mark, when the person and work of Jesus are highlighted, so, too, is discipleship. Jesus reveals His power to the disciples, so that they may be enabled to hear, comprehend, and increase in faith. Throughout the stilling of the storm Mark gives clues that the purpose of the miracle is for the disciples. Remember that Mark's first readers were suffering under Nero's persecution of the early Church (A.D. 64–68). Like the disciples, Mark's first readers may have thought God indifferent to their hardship and suffering. This story assured them, as it assures us, that even mighty powers that no man can control are too much for the power of God. The enemy cannot swamp the boat in which he is gathered with his disciples. But, in trials, He asks us, as He asked them "**'Why are you so afraid? Do you still have no faith?'**" ". Jesus does not reproach the disciples for their lack of knowledge, however, but for their fear, the Greek word for which means "losing heart" or "cowardice" (see Mark 6:50–51). The real threat to faith comes not from lack of knowledge but from doubt and fear. But, the dawning realization that in Jesus they are really dealing with the Son of God, and the sheer terror of their un-worthiness of being in His presence begins to dawn on them. Mark concludes the stilling of the storm with a question that is a doorway to faith. Proverbs 9:10, which states, "**The fear of the LORD is the beginning of wisdom, and knowledge of the Holy One is understanding**" The disciples, we are told, "were terrified."—but this time, they were right to be afraid—they were afraid of God. The "fear of the LORD" refers to a deep reverence and awe for God, recognizing His majesty, holiness, and authority. It is not about being terrified as in wanting to run away, but about respecting God's power and moral standards and realizing the need to aligning one's life with His guidance. Yet this fear and consternation produces the one question that makes faith possible: "**'Who then is this?'**" "**'what kind of man is this?'**" It's going to take a while, but there going to find out! And, in our own walk with Jesus, if we follow Him closely, He will show us His power and majesty as well, and if we have any sense, it will also result in both greater faith, and greater fear of the Lord!