

3

JESUS RULES



What's the craziest weather you've experienced?

QUESTION #1

#BSFLJesus

THE POINT

You can trust Jesus in the storm.



THE BIBLE MEETS LIFE

My son Rig loves being pushed in a swing. When we go to the park, he runs straight to the swing set, and he begs me to follow quickly. He'll let me push him every way possible in that swing—twisting, turning, flying through the air, or stopping on a dime—all while laughing his head off!

But one day the babysitter took him to the park. She told me that when she pushed him in the swing, he tensed up and hung on for dear life. It's not fun to swing when you are in the hands of someone you don't know.

In the Gospel of Mark, we see the disciples on a proverbial swing. A violent storm twisted and turned their boat. And, like my son, the disciples tensed up with fear. However, they soon learned they needed to trust Jesus, the One who “pushed the swing”—the One who ruled over the storm.

The One who rules over the weather is the One we can trust in any and every storm.

WHAT DOES THE BIBLE SAY?

Mark 4:35-37

³⁵ **That day when evening came, he said to his disciples, “Let us go over to the other side.”**

³⁶ **Leaving the crowd behind, they took him along, just as he was, in the boat. There were also other boats with him. ³⁷ A furious squall came up, and the waves broke over the boat, so that it was nearly swamped.**

Notice it was Jesus who initiated the trip across the Sea of Galilee—and notice the disciples were obedient to follow His instruction. These men had just heard Jesus spend a good part of the day teaching, even if they didn’t fully understand it all. They’d previously seen Him drive demons out of people and heal people with a touch. (See 1:21-34,39-45.) They’d responded to a personal call from the Messiah, the Anointed One from God, and they had the opportunity to learn from Him directly. (See 3:13-19.) Life was great!

Then the storm came.

Many times we find ourselves in a similar situation. We feel our relationship with Jesus is growing stronger by the day, and we see Him working in our lives and in the lives of those around us. But smooth sailing in the present is no guarantee that things will remain smooth. When we surrender our lives to Christ, He does give us rest from our burdens. He said, “my yoke is easy and my burden is light” (Matt. 11:30), but that doesn’t mean the journey before us will always be easy and light. We’ll know moments of calm, but we’ll still experience storms. We’re not exempt.

Mark painted a vivid picture of the desperate situation the disciples were in. These were seasoned fishermen who felt overpowered and terrified of the storm. It’s noteworthy that following Jesus’ command did not exempt the disciples from experiencing this trying situation. In fact, setting out in the boat at Jesus’ command was precisely what put them there.

Why are we often surprised when we encounter difficult circumstances?

QUESTION #2

Mark 4:38-39

³⁸ Jesus was in the stern, sleeping on a cushion. The disciples woke him and said to him, “Teacher, don’t you care if we drown?”

³⁹ He got up, rebuked the wind and said to the waves, “Quiet! Be still!” Then the wind died down and it was completely calm.

One of the hardest truths for us to wrap our brains around is that Jesus is both fully God and fully man—*at the same time*. When we talk about God coming down to earth in the form of a man, remember Jesus wasn’t just putting on a show for humanity: God physically became a man. This doctrine is known as the “incarnation”; the Creator of the universe wrapped Himself in human flesh and come to earth as a created being.

With the incarnation, Jesus chose to willingly depend upon the Father, just like us. So when Jesus was sleeping on a cushion, He wasn’t faking it so the disciples could learn a lesson about trust. The Lord was so weary that He slept soundly even in the midst of the lurching boat, howling wind, and crashing waves.

Notice that Jesus didn’t have to teach the disciples He is human, yet He constantly emphasized the truth that He is God. We have the opposite problem. Many of us look at Jesus as “all God,” but we have a difficult time remembering His humanity.

With the storm raging all around them, the disciples rushed over to Jesus and asked Him a strange question: “Teacher, don’t you care if we drown?” In his Gospel, Matthew included their plea for help: “Lord, save us! We’re going to drown!” (Matt. 8:25). Do you hear the contradiction? “Lord, save us!” is the language of faith. “We’re going to drown!” is the language of fear. Faith and fear cannot exist at the same time; they are spiritual opposites.

But let’s give credit to the disciples for one thing: they may have been deathly afraid, but they came to Jesus. They may not have fully understood who Jesus is, but they did call to Him.

When have you felt like God was unaware or uninterested in your distress?

QUESTION #3

TRUSTING JESUS

Use the acronym below to record different reasons why you can trust Jesus even during the storms of life. (An example has been provided.)

He **T**ook away my sin.

R
U
S
T

When did you first make a decision to trust Jesus in a significant way?

Jesus calmly got up and said, “Quiet! Be still!” He wasn’t talking to the disciples; He was speaking to the wind and waves. Immediately, Mark wrote, “it was completely calm.” The boat stopped tossing and the water went back to gently lapping against the sides. The Creator merely spoke, and the wind stopped, the waves ceased, the air cleared, and the water became like glass.

When we encounter storms and trials, we should be like the disciples—we should run straight into the arms of Jesus. And we should trust Him to take it from there.

Mark 4:40-41

⁴⁰ He said to his disciples, “Why are you so afraid? Do you still have no faith?” ⁴¹ They were terrified and asked each other, “Who is this? Even the wind and the waves obey him!”

Mark loved writing about Jesus’ authority. In the first four chapters alone, he mentioned Jesus’ authority numerous times: His authority over both animals and angels (see 1:13), His authority to teach (see 1:22), His authority over the devil and demons (see 1:34), His authority to forgive (see 2:10-11), His authority over the law (see 2:28), His authority to grant authority (see 3:14-15), and His authority over nature (see 4:39).

The disciples still didn’t get it, but their misunderstanding didn’t affect Christ’s sovereignty. He is sovereign even when we don’t understand.



What evidences of Jesus’ power have increased your trust in Him?

QUESTION #4

But Jesus was doing something bigger than demonstrating His sovereignty over nature: He was proving something about His identity. These disciples, being devout first-century Jews, would have known the Old Testament well.

- ▶ “God is our refuge and strength, an ever-present help in trouble. Therefore we will not fear, though the earth give way and the mountains fall into the heart of the sea, though its waters roar and foam and the mountains quake with their surging” (Ps. 46:1-3).
- ▶ “You rule over the surging sea; when its waves mount up, you still them” (89:9).
- ▶ “Then they cried out to the LORD in their trouble, and he brought them out of their distress. He stilled the storm to a whisper; the waves of the sea were hushed” (107:28-29).

Jesus’ display of authority over the sea and the weather should have brought these familiar Scriptures to mind. It’s no wonder, then, that Jesus asked them: “Why are you so afraid? Do you still have no faith?” *Don’t you guys understand who I am? Haven’t you seen My power? You’ve heard My teaching, seen My compassion for others, witnessed My miracles, and you still don’t understand?*

Jesus can be trusted—and not simply because He proved over and over He has power and authority. He can be trusted because He’s proved over and over again He is God.

The cowardly fear Jesus had rebuked in the disciples turned to awe. They were awestruck—“terrified.” They thought they knew the One they were following, but Jesus’ latest demonstration of authority led them to ask: “Who is this? Even the wind and the waves obey him!” In that moment, they finally understood why Jesus had been sleeping in the back of a rocking boat during a storm. He was the One “pushing the swing.”

You might feel like you’re in a storm right now. If money is tight, your family is tearing apart, school or work is overwhelming, you’re discouraged at church, or you feel lonely and isolated, remember this: Jesus, the One who can calm a literal storm, can calm any storm in your life. So trust in Him.

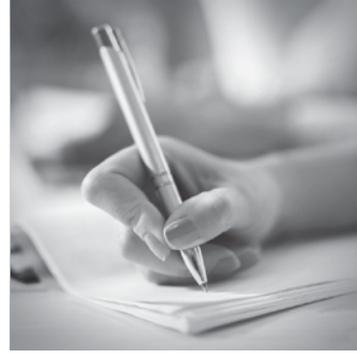
What lessons can we learn from Jesus’ calming of the storm?

QUESTION #5

LIVE IT OUT

How will you actively demonstrate your trust in Jesus this week? Consider the following suggestions:

- ▶ **Trust.** Jesus is able to handle the storm—any storm. Trust Him. Express your trust as you pray each day, and then act on that trust whenever possible.
- ▶ **Look back.** Make a list of previous difficulties you've gone through and identify the ways Jesus strengthened you and got you through those storms.
- ▶ **Get in the boat.** Help someone see Jesus' powerful presence. As a Christ-follower, get in the boat with someone who's going through a storm. Be Christ's representative, encouraging the person to trust Him.



It's probably been a long time since anyone pushed you on a swing, but we all get into situations that are over our heads from time to time. We all need help—which means we all need to learn what it means to trust Jesus in the midst of our storms.

My thoughts

Share with others how you will live out this study: **#BSFLJesus**