

BIBLE STUDY LIVE

Mark 4: 35 – 41

Does God Really Care About People?

In this particular passage of scripture in Mark's gospel, we are confronted with the question that given the reality of the existence of so much mayhem, destruction and suffering in world- does God really care about the condition of people? After all how are we to explain to a faithless person that despite all of the suffering in the world; God really does care?

Is God Restricted In How He Responds?

Some have suggested that maybe God is either all loving or he is all powerful; but not both. So then, if God is just all loving; then, he would like to do something about all the suffering in the world but simply does not have the power to do so. But, on the other hand, perhaps God is just all powerful and could use his power to address the suffering in the world but just chooses not to. This question can be answered simply by looking at the Calvary experience. At Calvary Jesus proved that he was all loving – “for God so loved the world he gave his own Son...” So we are certain that God is all loving. But what about the question of God being “all powerful?” Again, we need only to travel back to the Calvary experience and see that early Sunday morning Jesus came out of the grave, resurrected from the dead and declared that “all” power was in his hand!

The Disciples' Question

Many of Jesus' disciples were experienced fishermen and had experienced storms at sea in the past. The very fact that this storm evoked so much fear in these seasoned seamen, tells us that this storm must have presented much greater peril than those they had previously experienced. Trouble has a way of intensifying itself and the weight of trials and burdens can accumulate until they feel altogether like a crushing mass. Having exhausted all their options trying to fight off a watery death, Jesus' disciples must have realized that Jesus had been in the rear of the ship sleeping. **QUESTION:** What do you feel the disciples must have thought once they discovered that Jesus had been sleeping while all the time they have been struggling with the elements? Why do you think Jesus wasn't disturbed by the storm as his disciples were? What might have provoked the disciples to ask Jesus the question “Do you care if we perish?”

In the Absence Of God

There is a teaching called “Clock-work Theology”- that suggests that our universe does have an intelligent creator but that the creator simply created all the worlds and walked away from this creation leaving it to fend for itself. This is kind of like some making a clock, winding it up and placing it on a shelf and leaving along to run without any other interaction. In a sense, this is what Jesus' disciples were concluding about him. We should take note of what they didn't ask Jesus. They didn't ask Jesus, “Can you calm this storm?” or “Can you save us from the raging sea?” – they simply wanted to know if Jesus cared about them. **QUESTION:** Why might they not have asked any of these other questions?

How Do We Know that God Cares?

First we know God cares because WE HAVE HIS PROMISE

Heb 10:36 For ye have need of patience, that, after ye have done the will of God, ye might receive the promise. KJV

He had spoken the word to his disciples in Mark 4:35 “let us pass over unto the other side.” With this his disciples launched out into the deep believing that would accomplish the voyage to the other side just as Jesus has said. **QUESTION:** What should such a promise mean so us in the time of our life’s storms?

We know God cares because WE HAVE HIS PRESENCE

Heb 13:5 Let your conversation be without covetousness; and be content with such things as ye have: for he hath said, I will never leave thee, nor forsake thee. KJV

Ps 46:1 God is our refuge and strength, a very present help in trouble. KJV

Again in Mark 4:35 Jesus says “Let US, pass over unto the other side.” Jesus didn’t dispatch his disciples on a solo mission but came along with them and was present with them in the storm. Our God is not a God that has to be summoned or fetched from their slumber or sought after over some long distance; or searched for in the time of our need.

QUESTION: How might the presence of God provide comfort even while the storm is raging all around us?

We know God cares because WE HAVE HIS PEACE AND HIS POWER

Mark 4:39 And he arose, and rebuked the wind, and said unto the sea, Peace, be still. And the wind ceased, and there was a great calm.

It must be emphasized that the storm didn’t wake up Jesus – his disciples did. It was his love and compassion for his beloved brethren that caused him to awaken from his rest. It is the love of God and his compassion that moves the Lord to acts of grace and mercy towards us. With the word “peace” Jesus addressed the alarm on his disciples.

What If The Storm Doesn’t Cease?

Matt 14:25 And in the fourth watch of the night Jesus went unto them, walking on the se KJV

In this passage in Matthew’s gospel, these same disciples encounter another furious storm while in the sea but this time Jesus didn’t cause the storm to cease. The bible does tell us that Jesus though not physically in the ship with them, was aware of the perilous situation and their unproductive toiling. Around 3 a.m. Jesus came to them walking on the waters of the stormy sea. As he approached his disciples the storm was still raging a full force. But Jesus cries out to them “be of good cheer, it is I!” It may be concluded that even if Jesus doesn’t calm your storm right away, -the Jesus will join you in it!