



# 44B - PENTECOST 4 - BIBLE STUDY WEEK LITURGY

Big questions

## Abstract

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

Mark 4:40-41 (NIV)

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## GOSPEL

### *Mark 4:35–41*

<sup>35</sup> That day when evening came, he said to his disciples, “Let us go over to the other side.” <sup>36</sup> Leaving the crowd behind, they took him along, just as he was, in the boat. There were also other boats with him. <sup>37</sup> A furious squall came up, and the waves broke over the boat, so that it was nearly swamped. <sup>38</sup> 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?”

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

<sup>40</sup> He said to his disciples, “Why are you so afraid? Do you still have no faith?”

<sup>41</sup> They were terrified and asked each other, “Who is this? Even the wind and the waves obey him!” <sup>i</sup>

*respond*

For the word of the Lord

**Thanks be to God**

## 44B - Pentecost 4 - Bible Study week Liturgy

### Big questions

SUNDAY, JUNE 20, 2021 | AFTER PENTECOST PROPER 7 YEAR B

#### *Old Testament & Psalm, Option I*

*Old Testament* (1 Samuel 17:1a, 4–11, 19–23) 32–49

*Psalm* Psalm 9:9–20

*or*

#### *Old Testament & Psalm, Option II*

*Old Testament* 1 Samuel 17:57–18:5, 18:10–16

*Psalm* Psalm 133

*or*

#### *Old Testament & Psalm, Option III*

*Old Testament* Job 38:1–11

*Psalm* Psalm 107:1–3, 23–32

*New Testament* 2 Corinthians 6:1–13

*Gospel* Mark 4:35–41<sup>ii</sup>

Jesus leaves the crowds after a full day of teaching to get some rest. Jesus sleeps in the boat while the boat becomes engulfed in a storm. Because of the location of the Sea of Galilee, storms occur quickly and violently. The disciples are astonished that he is not alert to the circumstances and their fear. When they eventually wake him, he calms the storm and questions their lack of trust in God.

Perhaps the biggest faith question there is the one that the disciples ask of Jesus when he is asleep: 'do you not care that we are perishing?' Our big questions may be different, but it is important to feel heard as we wrestle with challenges of life in general and in following Jesus.

This week we explore being heard in the storms of our lives.<sup>iii</sup>

### Opening Prayer

Loving and sometimes silent God,  
we come into your presence,  
thankful to quieten our hearts and to wait for you to speak.  
We bring our joys, our challenges, and our questions.  
We open our hearts honestly to you,  
and we wait in that space beyond questions  
to feel you hold us in compassion.  
Amen.

### Reading

Gospel Mark 4:35–41

respond

For the word of the Lord

**Thanks be to God**

## Bible notes

The Sea of Galilee is surrounded by hills, except for a valley dip at one end, which can act like a funnel for the wind. This means that the water can go from glassy calm to choppy white horses very quickly, as the wind whips up the water. As seasoned fishermen on this large freshwater lake, this will not have been the first time that the disciples have experienced this phenomenon, but this time it was particularly severe. Their complaint to Jesus is about the apparent mismatch between their peril and his continuing nap: they do not cry, 'Help!' or 'Do something!', they question whether he cares. This is not a theoretical argument about whether he could (or should) intervene miraculously; it is not like the moment when the synagogue leaders stand at the sidelines to see whether he will heal someone on the sabbath. This is not a theoretical question about power at all. It is a cry from the heart, an exasperated rebuke from friends who feel abandoned: 'Teacher, do you not care that we are perishing?' Perhaps all they expect is another pair of hands to join in bailing out the boat. Instead, Jesus changes the vast space of the inland sea simply by speaking. Jesus' questions to them – 'Why are you afraid? Have you still no faith?' – underline that they still only have a sketchy picture of who he is. The miracle affects the disciples more than the storm did.

## Reflection

'Now is the day of salvation.' The time to engage with life and faith is now. Faith is not theoretical. If we are not to accept the grace of God 'in vain', we need to respond with faith to what we find at this particular moment in our lives. We need to greet the grace of God with an open heart and innovate on our plans with courage. Then we will develop the character to cope with sleepless nights, hard work, afflictions and baseless accusations. We won't escape from suffering and storms, but we will learn to recognise the presence of God in each moment.

## Questions for reflection

Being heard in a crowd

- When do you struggle to feel 'heard'?
- In what situations is it more difficult to feel able to 'cry out'?
- When/how did you experience 'being heard' during the COVID-19 pandemic?



## Go with God 24/7

Take time to listen to someone who is wrestling with something (do not advise or try to fix – it is their space and time to use; remember the last line of the song is simply: 'I am near you').

## A prayer to end the Bible Study

Go in peace.

May the whisper of God's wisdom

go with you today

into all your relationships.

Amen.

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<sup>i</sup> Revised Common Lectionary. (2009). Bellingham, WA: Faithlife.

<sup>ii</sup> Revised Common Lectionary. (2009). Bellingham, WA: Faithlife.

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