

**Sermon or Lesson: How Jesus Interacted With His Disciples, Part 4** (NIV based)  
[Lesson Questions included]

TITLE: Teaching Within Intentionally Great Adversity Situations

PASSAGES: Matthew 14:22-33; Psalm 107:24-30; Mark 4:35-41

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INTRO: Have you ever gotten into a great adversity situation? A dangerous or life-threatening situation? A mentally totally-overwhelming situation? A physically exhausting situation? If you can remember, what was your regard for God and your faith during the time you were in that great adversity situation? After the great adversity situation was over, were you able to look back and identify any spiritual lessons you learned?

Today, in this study of how Jesus interacted with His disciples, the focus is going to be on studying the dynamics of Jesus teaching within great adversity situations He intentionally placed His disciples into.

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READ: Matthew 14:22-33 of Jesus walking on water, cross-referencing with Mark 6:45-52 and John 6:15-21

[Lesson Question: In chronological order, list each aspect of what is occurring in this event, particularly noting Jesus' actions, the weather conditions, and time.]

SECTION POINT: As part of His teaching technique, Jesus intentionally allowed and even caused Peter to get into a dangerous life-threatening situation.

In chronological order, a list of each aspect of what is occurring in this event, particularly noting Jesus' actions, the weather conditions, and time includes:

- - Jesus instructs the disciples to go to the other side of the lake (v.22), which they proceed to do in the evening (v.23; c.f. John 6:16-17).
- - Their boat was way out from shore in the evening (vv.24,23); in the middle of the lake (Mark 6:47); 3.5 miles out (5.6 kilometers) (John 6:19).
- - The wind was strongly against the boat, buffeting it with rough waves. (v.24; John 6:18)
- - Jesus saw them straining at the oars. (Mark 6:48)
- - Jesus waits until the fourth watch at night, sometime between 3-6 o'clock a.m. (in the morning), to walk out in the dark on the water to them. (v.25)
- - Jesus was walking past the disciples in their boat, close enough for them to see Him in the dark. (Mark 6:48)
- - Jesus waits to announce his approach until after the disciples had seen Him, became terrified, and cried out in fear. (v.26)
- - Jesus calls out in identifying reassurance, and converses with Peter (vv.27-29) while the wind and waves continue (v.30).
- - Jesus extends supernatural power to Peter, who probably could not swim, to get out of the boat and likewise walk on the water, out toward Jesus. (v.29)

- - Jesus rescinds the supernatural power for Peter, who then begins to sink into the water. (v.30)
  - - Jesus immediately physically rescues Peter and then rebukes him for his doubt and lack of faith. (v.31)
  - - Jesus escorts Peter into the boat, and then the wind dies down. (v.31)
  - - Their boat then immediately reaches the shore of their destination. (John 6:21)
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READ: Psalm 107:24-30

[Lesson Question: What can be concluded about Jesus' activities in this event in light of what is declared in Psalm 107:24-30?]

SECTION POINT: Jesus intentionally manipulated the environment of the situation His disciples were in so that as part of their training they would experience significant adversity in several forms.

Conclusions about Jesus' activities in this event in light of what is declared in Psalm 107:24-30 are:

- - Jesus was covertly causing and manipulating the weather conditions and timing to be adverse for the disciples.
  - - Jesus set up the disciples to strain all night rowing against the strong wind and rough waves, probably causing all of them to be quite exhausted by early morning.
  - - Jesus' action of walking on the water in the dark caused the disciples to be terrified.
  - - Jesus' actions of waiting all night and then walking on by them portray no sense of urgency to relieve their adverse situation.
  - - Jesus does respond "immediately" when asked, but only remedies specifically what He was asked. (Matthew 14:31)
  - - Jesus ends the adversity apparently only after all of the lessons had been experientially taught.
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READ: Mark 4:35-41 of Jesus calming the storm, cross-referencing with Matthew 8:23-27 and Luke 8:22-25

[Lesson Question: Again, in chronological order, list each aspect of what is occurring in this event, particularly noting Jesus' actions, the weather conditions, and time.]

SECTION POINT: During the training of His disciples, Jesus repeatedly placed them in extremely dangerous life-threatening and terrifying situations, and He took no action to remedy their adverse situations until He was asked.

Again, in chronological order, a list of each aspect of what is occurring in this event, particularly noting Jesus' actions, the weather conditions, and time includes:

- - In the evening, Jesus gives instructions for He and His disciples to go to the other side of the lake. (v.35)
- - They were sailing, presumably with the wind. (Luke 8:23)

- - Other boats were with them. (v.36)
- - Jesus fell asleep in the stern of the boat on a cushion. (v.38)
- - A furious squall came up (v.37) (or down on the lake (Luke 8:23)) without warning (Matthew 8:24) and was swamping the boat while Jesus was still asleep (vv.37,38) and apparently not getting splashed upon or wet from underneath.
- - The disciples were in “great danger”. (Luke 8:23)
- - The disciples awaken Jesus, declare they are going to drown, and assert that He does not care if they are about to drown. (v.38)
- - Jesus gets up and verbally rebukes the wind and the waves to be quiet and still, which occurs (v.39). (Note: This is very much like God’s technique during creation as recorded in Genesis 1 that “God said, “Let there be ... and there was ...””.)
- - Jesus questions why they are afraid and still have no faith. (v.40)
- - The disciples were terrified (v.41), and in fear and amazement discuss the question of Jesus’ nature (Luke 8:25).

[Lesson Question: What can be concluded about Jesus’ activities in this event?]

Conclusions about Jesus’ activities in this event are:

- - Jesus was again covertly causing and manipulating the weather conditions and timing to be adverse for the disciples, even to the extent of placing them in terrifying great danger of drowning.
- - People in any other boats probably were likewise placed in great danger of drowning.
- - Jesus’ conduct appears to be so unconcerned about the disciples’ plight that they even comment to Him about it when they are forced in desperation to wake Him.
- - Only when Jesus is asked, He does respond right away and ends the adverse situation.
- - At the end of this danger experience, Jesus draws a spiritual lesson within a rebuke of them for their slowness in relying on faith to negate fear.
- - It seems that Jesus fulfilled the description in Psalm 107:24-30 in these two events with His disciples.

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**BIG IDEA:** From these two accounts, a reasonable conclusion is that on occasion and for teaching purposes, God can and does intentionally place His disciples in great dangerous, terrorizing, or exhausting situations.

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**IMPLICATIONS:**

- - Being a disciple is no guarantee that God will always shelter the disciple from exposure to adversity, danger, stress, prolonged labor, exhaustion, and etc.
- - The reason(s) that motivate God to expose His disciples to adversity may or may not become clear, and may or may not involve discipline for prior personal sin.
- - God does intend for adversity to build spiritual character. (see Romans 8:28; James 1:2-4)
- - God holds each disciple accountable for the amount of spiritual knowledge and training they each have been exposed to.

- - God does not approve of failures to tests when adequate spiritual knowledge and training have been previously learned.
  - - God can remain inactive and refuse to relieve or end adversity for His disciple, even if God is the cause of it and the adversity brings terror, exhaustion, or great danger of death.
  - - God expects those in adversity to entrust their situation to Him, and not react with fear, doubt, panic, terror, and etc. (see 1 Peter 2:23)
  - - As demonstrated by the crucifixion of Jesus, God Himself is not exempt from intentionally being placed in great danger or suffering situations.
  - - God has a history of placing His disciples in great danger situations, such as Job (see Job 1:6-2:10) and Paul (see 2 Corinthians 11:23-27) for examples.
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#### APPLICATIONS:

- - How do you respond in great adversity situations?
  - - Do you maintain unshakeable faith and cry out to God for relief?
  - - Or do you panic, or quit, or get terrified, or accuse God?
  
  - - Do you look for spiritual lessons God may be trying to teach you in the midst of great adversity situations?
  - - Do you then apply those learned lessons to your life or instead do you ignore them and go on with life?
  
  - - Do you hold a faulty theological perspective in which you refuse to acknowledge the reality that God does on occasion intentionally place His disciples in dangerous or great adversity situations?
  - - In light of these passages just studied, are you going to continue to hold on to this faulty theology or are you going to correct it - now?
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#### Works Cited:

Bible. "The Holy Bible: New International Version." *The Bible Library CD-ROM*. Oklahoma City, OK: Ellis Enterprises, 1988.

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