

**INTRODUCTION:** Been to a waterfall & felt wind? *Proximity*

We see these stories as great victories, which they are, but we might miss the darkness that the disciples had to pass through.

**MAIN IDEA:** God will take us through dark places for great good. How do we navigate those dark places? By considering our proximity to Jesus, to the devil, and to other people.

**I. First, consider our proximity to Jesus. (4:35-42) He's with us**

A. storms may arise even though we're following Jesus (35)

1. threatening our welfare (water in boat, 37)
2. causing us fear (of drowning, 38)
3. causing us frustration...*I'm doing what You asked*
4. causing us doubts: *Did I hear Him right? Has He abandoned me? Have I sinned?*

B. **He is right there with us**...*sleeping in bow, Holy Spirit*

C. when we call on Him, He *will* do something... such as give peace, instruct, calm the storm, or require us to wait

**NOTE:** He uses storms to test our faith (40), grow our faith (41), and glorify Himself (41, *phobeo*).

**ILLUSTRATION:**

**II. Second, consider our proximity to the enemy**

A. might be indicated by a "storm"

1. although not all-knowing, devil knows a lot

**Ephesians 6:12, NLT:** For we are not fighting against flesh and blood enemies, but against evil rulers and authorities of the unseen world, against mighty powers in this dark world, and against evil spirits in the heavenly places.

2. "Be still!" in Greek means to "to muzzle"; same word used in Mark 1:25, when Jesus commanded demon in a man, "Be quiet! Come out of the man."

B. might be suggested by someone's behavior

**NOTE:** Often *possession* occurs because of sin...seeking demonic presence, using drugs, occultic activities. *Oppression* can occur because of sin...giving devil a foothold (Eph. 4:27).

1. we might see bizarre behavior (naked, cutting self, howling), superhuman strength
2. we might feel repulsion, fear, "something is off"

**NOTE:** Mental illness is a real thing, but that fact does not negate demonic activity. (D.I.D. & suicidal ideation are examples.)

C. we must remember our proximity to Jesus...

1. He is with us, empowers us & leads us
2. He has authority to deal with it...and He will
3. He has given us authority in His name (Mark 16:17)

**NOTE:** The demoniac was not delivered the first time Jesus spoke but after a struggle...6-8, 10-13

**ILLUSTRATION:**

**III. Finally, our proximity to others (5:18-20)**

A. those with us in the dark places...

1. we can encourage them (criminal on cross)
2. we can seek Jesus together...*wake up!*

B. those we are "traveling" to

1. we might not even know they lie ahead
2. we can't know how God will use our dark place for someone else down the road

C. our reach is extended by the people we "touch" for Jesus

1. they witness to their families
2. they witness to people in their area, culture

**ILLUSTRATION:**

**CONCLUSION:**

**ALTAR:**