

# When God Slept

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LEE'S SUMMIT, Mo.—Faith sometimes takes a strange shape. One time early in Jesus' ministry He and His disciples boarded a ship on the Sea of Galilee, when a windstorm blew and buffeted the ship unmercifully. Several of the disciples were seaman and surely had weathered such storms that frequent that sea, but this apparently was worse than most. The boat was filling with water and was in danger of sinking.

But, through it all, Jesus was in the stern of the ship, fast asleep. They cried, "Teacher, do you not care that we are perishing?" (Mark 4:35-41).

I find it easy to identify with the disciples' reaction. Like them, I know that Jesus is the Christ. I have seen Him doing His work in others' lives and my own. He tells me that He will never leave me nor forsake me. I understand that there is a grand purpose in this scheme called life and for this planet called earth.

Yet, often when I am beaten about by the storms of life, I feel I must wake Him from a sleep and ask Him why He doesn't seem to care that we are perishing. Why does He seem to be asleep when the storm is at its worst?

And make no mistake. It does seem sometimes that He is sleeping in the stern while my ship is going down. But maybe, His calm in the midst of the storm shows something more profound than potential indifference.

Jesus knew the end from the beginning in the matters of his life. He knew that His life on earth had a certain destination that would end with a bright light in a garden tomb three days and three nights after Golgotha. He knew that the storms surrounding Him and His disciples would not alter that destiny. And so He slept in the faith that God would see them through.

In fact it almost seems like a rebuke when He asks His disciples, "Why are you so fearful? How is it that you have no faith?" (Verse 40).

They believed Jesus enough to wake Him for help, but not enough to know that the storm could not halt the march of history.

So here we have two examples of faith.

■ We have Jesus' perfect faith, echoed in Hebrews 11:1, which says, "Faith is the substance of things hoped for, the evidence of things not seen." Jesus knew where things would lead and had the faith in his Father to bring it about.

■ And then there is the faith of the disciples, which is very much like my own. I know what Jesus says, but my nature fails to grasp the evidence of things not seen. In my weakness I doubt, but I have faith enough to rouse Jesus from His apparent complacency and cry, "Lord, do you not care that I am perishing?"

That's faith too, but of a different kind. And it's a kind that He still honors.