

MARK 4:35-41 A NIKE JESUS – OR, OUR FONDEST WHOOSH

³⁵ *That day when evening came, he said to his disciples, "Let us go over to the other side."* ³⁶ *Leaving the crowd behind, they took him along, just as he was, in the boat. There were also other boats with him.* ³⁷ *A furious squall came up, and the waves broke over the boat, so that it was nearly swamped.* ³⁸ *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?"* ³⁹ *He got up, rebuked the wind and said to the waves, "Quiet! Be still!" Then the wind died down and it was completely calm.* ⁴⁰ *He said to his disciples, "Why are you so afraid? Do you still have no faith?"* ⁴¹ *They were terrified and asked each other, "Who is this? Even the wind and the waves obey him!"*

"Jesus, just don't lie there, do something!" That was the cry of the disciples as they faced the peril of the storm. These were experts, they made their living off that very lake, and they knew they were in real trouble. What is a more natural act of faith than to cry out to the One who can save you?

I cannot tell you how many times I have asked why God does things the way he does. Why do I seem to be addicted to certain thoughts and behaviors? Can't God just remove them? If God is sovereign and all powerful and knows all things, then why does he not do a better job of intervening and controlling my life? When I pray for something that I know is consistent with Scripture, good for the kingdom and glorifying to God, why doesn't he immediately answer my prayer? When the enemies of the true church make war on God's people, where is he? I have faith. It is a Nike kind of faith. When I cry out, "Jesus, just do it," I expect Jesus to just whoosh in and perform.

Therein lays my problem and the problem of the disciples in the boat. We don't worship a Jesus in sneakers. That Jesus would be a tool for the satisfaction of our every need and desire. He wouldn't be the sovereign God; he would be our genie in a bottle. In the boat, Jesus rebukes that misconception. "If I am with you, then why are you afraid?" Faith in Jesus is about our relationship with him. Faith is not to be in what he can do and can do for us. Faith is putting our trust in him – no matter the circumstances. Faith is living by the knowledge that Jesus is always with you. "*And surely I am with you always, to the very end of the age*" (Matthew 28:20b).

Jesus, cultivate in me the faith that leads to absolute trust in you. Wean me from my need to have you do something to fix the mess that I see myself in. Help me to know, especially in those times that are beyond my control, that you are with me and that I can rest assured in your presence. Amen.