

Mark 4:38

Authorized King James Version (KJV)

And he was in the hinder part of the ship, asleep on a pillow:
and they awake him, and say unto him, Master, carest thou
not that we perish?

Analysis

Contrast intensifies: 'he was in the hinder part of the ship, asleep on a pillow.' While disciples panic, Jesus sleeps peacefully. The 'hinder part' (πρύμνη) was stern, slightly elevated—common sleeping place. 'Asleep on a pillow' (καθεύδων ἐπὶ τὸ προσκεφάλαιον) shows deep sleep despite violent storm—evidence of humanity (exhaustion) and deity (peace amid chaos). Disciples wake Him: 'Master, carest thou not that we perish?' The question reveals fear and implicit rebuke—'don't you care?' Their crisis exposed insufficient faith. They knew Jesus' power (miracles) but doubted His care. The question 'carest thou not' shows they expected action.

Historical Context

The 'pillow' (προσκεφάλαιον) was likely leather cushion used by steersman or sandbag ballast—not luxurious but functional. Sleeping during storm demonstrates either complete exhaustion or supernatural peace (or both). Fishermen's panic shows genuine danger—they faced death. Ancient world understood divine sleep during crisis: Jonah slept during storm (Jonah 1:5), contrasting faithful trust with prophetic rebellion. Jesus' sleep contrasts human fear with divine peace. Early church saw this as Christological testimony: fully human (tired, sleeping) yet fully divine (peaceful, authoritative). The disciples' rebuke shows familiarity and trust, even if faith wavered.

Related Passages

1 John 4:8 — God is love

1 Corinthians 13:4 — Characteristics of love

Study Questions

1. How does Jesus' peace during your storms demonstrate His trustworthiness and sovereignty?
2. What does the disciples' question 'carest thou not' reveal about doubts that arise during trials?
3. How can you cultivate Jesus' peace—resting in God's sovereignty despite surrounding chaos?

Interlinear Text

καὶ ἦν αὐτῷ ἐπὶ τῇ πρύμνῃ ἐπὶ τὸ
And **he was** **him** **in** ^{G3588} **the hinder part of the ship** **in** ^{G3588}
G2532 G2258 G846 G1909 G4403 G1909

προσκεφάλαιον καθεύδων καὶ διεγείρουσιν αὐτῷ καὶ
a pillow **asleep** **And** **they awake** **him** **And**
G4344 G2518 G2532 G1326 G846 G2532

λέγουσιν αὐτῷ Διδάσκαλε οὐ μέλει σοι ὅτι
say **him** **Master** **not** **carest** **thou** **that**
G3004 G846 G1320 G3756 G3199 G4671 G3754

ἀπολλύμεθα
we perish
G622

Additional Cross-References

1 Peter 5:7 (Parallel theme): Casting all your care upon him; for he careth for you.

Hebrews 4:15 (Parallel theme): For we have not an high priest which cannot be touched with the feeling of our infirmities; but was in all points tempted like as we are, yet without sin.

Matthew 8:25 (Parallel theme): And his disciples came to him, and awoke him, saying, Lord, save us: we perish.

Luke 8:24 (Parallel theme): And they came to him, and awoke him, saying, Master, master, we perish. Then he arose, and rebuked the wind and the raging of the water: and they ceased, and there was a calm.

Isaiah 64:12 (Parallel theme): Wilt thou refrain thyself for these things, O LORD? wilt thou hold thy peace, and afflict us very sore?

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