

Leader Guide



Speaker: Casey Scott

Series: Failing Forward

Title: Freak Out and Break Stuff

Primary Texts: Mark 4:35-41

Big Idea: The path away from failure is to trust Jesus in danger or stress.

Sermon Outline

- 1. Intro – “Keep Calm” vs. “Freak Out and Break Stuff”
 - “Keep Calm and Carry On”: British stoicism—calm in adversity.
 - Internet response: “Freak Out and Break Stuff” – how many of us (and the Twelve) actually react in crisis.
 - Mark’s Gospel: Jesus as God’s powerful Servant; the Twelve keep failing forward, and Jesus still uses them.
- 2. Setting the Scene (Mark 4 Context)
 - Long day of teaching from the boat; Jesus says, “Let us go over to the other side.”
 - It’s evening; they’re tired but obeying—obedience put them on the water, not rebellion.
 - Real lake, real storm: “a furious squall” and “nearly swamped” = real danger, not just anxiety.
- 3. Jesus Knows Your Destination (vv. 35–37)
 - Jesus doesn’t say, “Let’s go out and see what happens,” but “Let us go over to the other side.”
 - Obedience doesn’t eliminate storms; it ensures Jesus is with you in them.
 - Storms pressure and reveal our faith: we must let the promise interpret the storm, not the other way around.
- 4. Jesus Will Get You There (vv. 38–41)
 - Jesus asleep in the stern on a cushion—exhausted but present.
 - Disciples’ cry: “Teacher, don’t you care if we drown?”—fear slanders Jesus’ heart.
 - Jesus rebukes wind and waves; instant calm reveals divine authority over chaos.
 - Then He addresses the deeper storm: their fear and lack of faith.
 - They move from fear of the storm to awe of Jesus: “Who is this? Even the wind and the waves obey him!”
- 5. Conclusion – Failing Forward into Trust
 - This story reveals who Jesus is more than it outlines crisis tactics.
 - Big Idea: The path away from failure is to trust Jesus in danger or stress.
 - He knows your destination (“the other side”) and will get you there—ultimately proven in His resurrection.

HEART – “This Is Me”

1. 1. How You Handle Storms: When life gets scary or stressful, what’s your default reaction—freeze, fix, flee, or “freak out and break stuff”? Share one recent example and how it felt in your body and heart.
2. 2. Feeling Let Down by God: Have you ever had a “Teacher, don’t you care...?” moment with God? What was going on, and what did you honestly believe about God’s heart toward you in that season?

3. 3. Fear's Script: The sermon named fear's script: "You're alone. God doesn't care. This is the end." Which line of that script do you hear most loudly in your own storms, and why do you think that is?
4. 4. Destination in the Middle of the Mess: How does it make you feel to hear that Jesus has already named a destination for you ("the other side") even when the middle of your story feels chaotic?
5. 5. From Fear to Awe: When you picture Jesus standing up and commanding the wind and waves into instant calm, what stirs in you—comfort, awe, confusion, skepticism, worship?

HEAD – "This Is What I Need to Think About"

6. 1. Read Mark 4:35–41 slowly. What details show that this is a real, dangerous storm and not just a "teachable moment" with light rain? Where do you see both Jesus' humanity and His divinity in this passage?
7. 2. Destination vs. Forecast: Jesus tells them the destination ("the other side"), but not the weather report. What might this teach us about how God leads us—what He does and doesn't tell us ahead of time? How does that challenge our desire for control?
8. 3. Obedience and Storms: The disciples are in this storm because they obeyed Jesus, not because they disobeyed. How does that correct common assumptions we have about "If I'm doing the right thing, life will be smooth"?
9. 4. Jesus' Question about Faith: Why do you think Jesus asks, "Why are you so afraid? Do you still have no faith?" after calming the storm instead of before? What does that show us about what He's really after in His disciples?
10. 5. Fear as Narrator: In what ways is fear a "narrator" in this story—how does it narrate Jesus' character to the disciples? What competing "narratives" about God are present in this passage (fear vs. faith)?
11. 6. Storms and Resurrection: In the sermon, the sea/abyss imagery is connected to death and Jesus' resurrection. How does Jesus' resurrection (His victory over the ultimate storm) reinforce the idea that He will get us to the destination He intends?

HANDS – "This Is How I Need to Act"

12. 1. Name Your Current Storm: Think of one area right now that feels like a storm—health, finances, relationships, work, inner turmoil. How might you practically acknowledge Jesus' presence in that "boat" this week (prayer, Scripture, silence, journaling)?
13. 2. Pray the Destination: Jesus said, "Let us go over to the other side." What is one specific promise or "destination" from Scripture (e.g., God's presence, His work to make you like Christ, future hope) that you can pray back to Him this week? How will you remind yourself of that when the "waves" feel high?
14. 3. Interrupt Fear's Script: Identify the fear-sentence you most often hear ("I'm alone," "God doesn't care," "This is the end."). What short, truthful sentence could you speak back in those moments that lines up with who Jesus shows Himself to be in Mark 4?
15. 4. Fail Forward with Someone: Followers of Jesus "fail forward" together, not alone. Who is one trusted believer you can share your current storm with this week? What will you ask them to do—pray with you, check in, remind you of truth?
16. 5. Practice Trust in a Small Decision: Choose one upcoming decision or stressful moment where you normally "freak out." What is one concrete way you can practice trust instead—pausing to pray before reacting, choosing not to lash out, or choosing obedience even if the outcome feels uncertain?
17. 6. Group Encouragement: As a group, pick one person's "storm" to focus on this week. How will you as a group "be in the boat" with them—through prayer, practical help, or regular encouragement?