

Preparations



Are you a planner? I know that I am. As an engineer by both disposition and training, I try to plan and prepare all of the details of my life, whether it is my schedule, maintenance on the house or at church, finances, or other life events. For the trip from BVI to Maine in 2003, I planned extensively, including consulting with experienced sailors who had done the trip many times. Ultimately, I shipped two washing machine sized boxes via truck to Miami, and from there via freighter to Tortola, BVI. They arrived exactly on time, one day before our departure from Tortola to Bermuda, and included a life raft, survival suits, an EPIRB, many spare engine parts, and 10 jerry cans for extra fuel. When we left, we carried enough food and drink for four men for two weeks, 160 gallons of water, 70 gallons of diesel, and all of the spares and emergency gear. There was so much gear on board that the boat sat 4-5 inches below her normal water line!

We can get so carried away with our planning that we miss God's leading and direction in our lives. Sometimes, God has other plans for us. Events happen at His timing, not ours, regardless of our preparations. We see this principle in Mark 4:35-36. [God's timing trumps our preparations.](#) Mark 4:35 On that day, when evening came, He said to them, "Let us go over to the other side." 36 Leaving the crowd, they took Him along with them in the boat, just as He was; and other boats were with Him.

Late in the day, after a difficult morning and an afternoon under the hot sun, Jesus finishes teaching and gives the command, "Let us go to the other side." The Greek tense of the verb indicates an urgency to the command, to go NOW, to the other side. As verse 36 says, they took Him in the boat, "just as He was." Jesus has appointments to keep, with the storm that night, and on the next day with a man "demon-possessed" in the land of the Gerasenes. Have any preparations been made for this trip? Probably not, according to the earlier chapter in Mark, the boat had been "standing by" along the shore to rescue Jesus from the press of the crowd. Do they have food and water, is the boat ready, has anyone fixed that leak up near the bow? As a sailor and boat owner for many years, I can tell you that there are always maintenance tasks to be done on any boat (I keep a list), even more so on a first century fishing boat. The trip across the lake may not be long, but the Sea of Galilee is prone to violent storms, and the experienced fishermen among the disciples know this. Prepared or not, Jesus gives them the command to go, NOW. The response of the disciples is instructive. We can see that they listen, and obey. There is no discussion or complaint about the lack of preparation for the trip, they simply set sail for the other side of the lake. God's timing has trumped any preparations that they might desire to make for the trip. They took Jesus, "just as He was" and set sail into the waiting, unforeseen storm. This is a picture of faith in action for us to consider, to put aside our planning, to listen to God for His leading and direction in our lives, and to place our trust in Him as we confront the coming storm.

Comments on the pictures- Here are my boxes of emergency gear arriving in Customs in Tortola, BVI. I was worried about paying duty on all of this expensive equipment, it ended up being less than \$10. Here is our Beneteau Oceanis 361 "Concerto In Sea" at the dock, right before we begin stuffing all of the gear into every locker and crevice on the boat.