

SERMON TRANSCRIPT

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SPEAKER

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Finding Peace

PART

2

TITLE

Finding Peace In Moments Of Chaos

SCRIPTURE

Mark 4:35-41



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Well, good morning, Providence family. I'm thrilled that you have joined us. I also want to just say very special welcome to our guests. We're thrilled that you have joined us, and I pray this time will be really encouraging to you. And then last, I want to say thank you to all of our partners, all of our partners in America and outside, those that we have the opportunity to support and pray for. We are so grateful for you. We're grateful for your ministry, and we pray that God gives you peace during this time.

Peace is something that we all long for. There's a great proverb. It's Proverbs 12:25. It says, "Anxiety in a man's heart weighs him down, but a good word makes him glad." And I know that there are many of us in the world right now, there's many of us here in Raleigh, who feel anxious and who feel weighed down. Weighed down either because of our finances, or because of a sickness, or because of a loss, or because of insecurity, uncertainty in the world. We feel weighed down. And yet, God has a good word, and I pray this morning that you will be made glad.

So let me pray for us. Father in heaven, we thank you. We thank you that you have not left us without necessary help. You have given us your son. You have given us your spirit to live within us. You have given us your word written down in the Bible that we might be able to know who you are, and we are, and how to live in your world. We recognize that you are the creator. You are our sustainer. And that you who created us, if you have the power to create, you have the power to control, and to heal, and to help. So we look to you in faith and pray now that as we look into your word and as we read a few verse from your word that you would open up our eyes and help us to find them to be live-giving, that you would cause our hearts to be made glad. I pray, Father, that you would open up our eyes to see amazing things in your word. I pray for the miracle that would take place in particular in family rooms right now with little children in the room. I pray, Father, for just a curiosity in their hearts and a calmness within their spirit, Lord, to be able to listen and to absorb something from you. I pray for each one of us, in particular those who are perhaps far from you. I pray for those who know that they are far from you. I thank you that you have brought them to this time to listen, and I pray, God, that you would pique their curiosity to wonder what you might be able to do in their life, to give peace, and hope, and forgiveness of sin. So we look to you in faith would you speak through weakness and bring glory to your son and our savior, Jesus Christ. Amen.

If you have a Bible with you, I want to ask you to look with me at March chapter four. In a moment, we're going to start reading in verse 35 about a great storm. We're in a series that's called Finding Peace. Last week we looked about finding peace in moments of anxiety, which we all feel. What we want to look at here this morning is this idea of how do you find peace in moments of chaos, particular when that chaos is riddled and filled with fear. We're all familiar with fear. Fear tends to crawl into our heart, and then it begins to chew away at the ties that give us confidence and hope. And then what happens is when chaos comes into our life, we reach for those ties that we typically have reached for for hope and confidence and we find them missing. And it's at that moment that fear looks us into the eyes and says, "It's just you and me now."

It's a terrifying place. In fact, you've seen it. Is there anything more terrifying than to see somebody's face or their eyes when they're literally in the grip of fear? It's a terrifying thing. It's a dreadful thing when you see it in the life of a little child, but it's even worse in the face of an adult, a face that is typically composed, and poised, and suddenly is given away to those eyes becoming so big and terrified, and their body shaking, their lips quivering. What used to be a person with such poise and dignity and honor is given away to do things and to say things and to think things that are uncharacteristic of that person.

I want you to know that when you see a terrified person this is not how God created us to look. So we want to ask the question and seek to answer it is, how do we find peace in these moments? How do you find peace when you have to give your first speech and you're terrified? How do you find peace when you hear that diagnosis from the doctor about you or your husband or wife or child or parent? How do you find peace when you are on your own deathbed or at the grave site of somebody that you love? How do you find peace when you walk out of your boss's office and you are now unemployed?

Well, Mark chapter four certainly does not tell us all of the answers. But what we do know is this, is what we find in Mark chapter four is a portrait of what God is doing, can do, and wants to do in our life in order to still the storm within us. And this is what he says. Starting in verse 35, Mark writes, "On that day when evening had come, he said to them, 'Let us go across to the other side.' And leaving the crowd, they took him with them in the boat just as he was. And other boats were with him, and a great windstorm arose. The waves were breaking into the boat so that the boat was already filling, but he was in the stern, asleep on the cushion. And they woke up and said to him, 'Teacher, do you not care that we are perishing?' And he woke and rebuked the wind and said to the sea, 'Peace. Be still.' And the wind ceased, and there was a great calm. He said to them, 'Why are you so afraid? Have you still no faith?' And they were filled with great fear and said to one another, 'Who then is this that even the wind and the sea obey him?'"

Mark is writing on behalf of Peter. You see, Peter was one of the men who was in the boat and Peter wanted to record his account of the life of Jesus and so Mark became his scribe. Peter was there that day. Peter was one of the men who were crying. Maybe it was Peter himself that said, "Do you not care that we are perishing?" What we find here in this passage is really three remarkable truths about the authority and sovereignty of Jesus himself. The first is this, is that Jesus rules the calm before the storm. He rules the calm in life before the storm. You notice in verse 35 it says, "On that day." Now, this is an amazing day.

In fact, if you look at Luke chapter eight, and if you look at Matthew chapter eight, and then if you look here at Mark chapter four, these three accounts, they actually describe the same day. And if you look at all of what took place in those three chapters, in particular on this day, it was an absolutely loaded day. Jesus was exhausted by the end of the day. He heals a person of illness. And then all of a sudden he has this tension, this crisis with his family. His brothers and sisters don't believe in him. And it actually says that they came in order to have an intervention with him to seize him, drag him home because they thought that he was out of his mind. From that moment, then all of a sudden, there's another tension that breaks out. And that is

that the religious leaders of the day, they begin accusing him of being possessed by a demon.

Then we get to chapter four of Mark where the day continues, and we find that throughout Mark he's writing down some of the things that Jesus taught. There was this enormous crowd that gathered, and Jesus began teaching them through parables and instructing them about who he is, and who we are, and how to leave in his world. There was such an enormous crowd, and the crowd continued to grow larger and larger and larger that the crowd actually pushed him to the water's edge. So he entered into a boat and he went out just a little bit from shore. And there he used not only the water, but he used even the hillside as a natural amphitheater. There he poured out his heart and his energy to these people for the entire day.

Then it says, "On that day when evening came." So you have to know that he's tired. He says, "Let's go to the other side." Now, we need to understand that he wasn't just looking for a nap. He was also going with purpose. You see, when this story is over and Mark picks it up in chapter five, verse one, it says, "And they came to the other side." And verse two says, "When Jesus had stepped out of the boat, immediately there met him a man who came from the tombs who had an unclean spirit." In other words, Jesus was being led by God the Father because Jesus did everything that God the Father told him to do. He was on one side of the lake. He had a ministry. He was encouraging people. He was helping people. But there was somebody on the other side of the lake, and he needed to get there.

So he's already in a boat. So when he says to his disciples, "Let us go across to the other side," you notice that it says that they took him with them in the boat just as he was. In other words, he didn't get out of the boat, go get some food, change clothes, sort of get refreshed. No, they just said, "Okay, it's time. Let's go." And it says that there were many boats. So there was this flotilla that was moving from one side of the Sea of Galilee to the other.

Now, these boats, they were equipped with two different mechanisms for movement. One was oars, and another was a mast and a sail. So if there was no breeze, there's no wind, well, they always had oars in the boat that they could move themselves. But if by chance there was a nice breeze or wind that could propel them along the way, well, they would set sail. Well, Luke's version of this same story in verse 23 says, "As they sailed," which meant that when they began there as no storm over their head but there was a nice breeze. So they put down the oars, and they set sail and began moving forward and Jesus fell asleep.

This is an amazing verse that speaks about the humanity of Jesus. He was tired. The creator of water and water displacement in a boat, and breeze, and wind, and sleep now employed each one of them for his own benefit in order to get some rest. But what I want you to see here, when I talk about Jesus ruling the calm before the storm is that Jesus was at rest, but I want you to notice that it was Jesus himself who led them into the storm. You see, this is the truth that's sometimes hard for us to internalize, and so I wrote it down for you. It's this, sometimes we're in a storm because of disobedience, and other times because of obedience. There are some times that we enter into a storm because of sin. And that sin may be our sin or it may be somebody

else's sin who we just happen to be close to.

You remember the story of Jonah? He sinned against God. God told him to go to this city. He runs away. He gets on a boat, and there happens to be sailors on that boat. And those sailors found themselves in a storm because another man's sin. Sometimes this happens in our life, and we all know that. Some of you right now, you're in a storm, and it's really deep, and it's because of your poor decisions. You knew what God said. You wanted to do it anyway, and so you did. And now all of a sudden there's consequences. There's a storm, and that storm can be terrifying. Some of us today are in a storm, and we're feeling the raindrops because someone else made a disobedient choice.

But then there's also times. There's also times that we see right here. That his disciples, not only were they not sinning, they were actually obeying the voice of God himself. Jesus, the son of God, said, "Let us go to the other side." They could've rebelled and said no. They could've jumped out of the boat and sinned against him. But instead, they yielded to who Jesus is and what Jesus said and they said, "Well, if you want to go, then that's where we'll go." And it was their very obedience that led them into this storm.

You see, one of the things you find as you continue to walk with the Lord is that there are certain things you can only learn about God when you're in a storm. And He cares so much about us that He's willing for us to go through temporary pain in order to learn more of who He is so that we can grow.

Years ago, my senior year in college, I felt like the Lord saying, "Brian, I want you to go overseas for a period of time." So in between my junior and senior year, I spent six weeks in Zimbabwe, Africa. It was an amazing experience that totally changed my life, so much so that I felt like this compulsion that I wanted to spend a little bit of extra time. So I went and was there for six months. It was an amazing experience. But let me tell you something, I was shocked at how many storms that I experienced doing what I believed God said I should do.

The very first four weeks of that six months that I was there, I was with 15 college students from my college. It was an amazing time. Have you've ever been on amazing mission trip where it just feels like the Lord just descends, and He's with you, and you're having such amazing experiences, and it's so much fun, and you're with your friends, and you're creating all of these memories? Well, that was the first four weeks. It just seemed like people kept trusting Christ. We kept having these amazing experiences and worship and amazing experiences, just having fun with the team and with the people. And then it was time. It was time for them to get on an airplane.

I remember putting them on the airplane, walking back out to the car for the very first time. It was stunning to me that I knew why I was there, and I wanted to be there, which is why it was so confusing to feel what was this stifling, overwhelming sense of loneliness. I remember driving back to the little place that I had to stay, and I was there six months. Many of those days were very busy doing ministry, but even in the busiest of days I had hours early morning and night where there was nothing to do. There was no television. There was no social media. There was no internet. There was nothing. I didn't have a book. I had this book, the only one.

And it's amazing what took place over that six months. I'll never regret. I felt such heaviness so frequently. And yet still to this day when I feel that stifling loneliness, I go back to the central lesson that I learned in Zimbabwe, and that is that God is near. And for those that will draw near to Him, He will draw near to us. You see, He is sovereign over the calm, before the storm.

The second thing I want you to see is that Jesus rules the calm during the storm. He rules the calm during the storm. It's amazing that he's asleep. But before we get to him sleeping, let me describe what happened in this storm. You see, the Sea of Galilee is an amazing body of water. It's 600 feet below sea level, and it's surrounded by mountains on every side between 1,500 and 3,000 feet up into the air. So the Sea of Galilee, is actually ... It's like a bowl. It sits in a bowl. In fact, I believe it's the lowest fresh water lake in the whole world.

And it's amazing in that because it sits in a bowl and because it's surrounded by these mountains, it's notorious for its storms, so much so that scientists literally for decades have studied this body of water. Why is it that it experiences such storms? What happens is these cooler winds, they actually cascade off of the mountains, through the crevasses. They come down. They collide with the warm air over the water. And all of a sudden the sea begins to churn. Those winds, they continue to cross because it's not very far. The whole thing is 64 square miles. And all of a sudden, that wind slams into the other side of the mountain, bounces off, and then it sends its way back. So what you have heard is wind is bouncing back and forth off of the mountains and in between that wind is this water, this water that becomes so whipped up.

Perhaps the best way to sort of explain this is to think about those red party cups, those little plastic cups, okay? So let's just say we have a cup, and we lay it on the ground. Then I go out into my garage and I get my high-powered blower. I crank it up. And as you can imagine what would take place is that if I put that nozzle down into that cup and I gave it all of its strength, what would happen to the cup? Well, it would go ... Well, it would spin, and then it would fly away. But the Sea of Galilee can't fly away because it's made of rock and earth. It can't move, but it has water that can.

So imagine our little red cup halfway full of water. Then let's imagine that we want to put some boats in there. So we go and we get a little twig and we break off a few pieces, little tiny pieces of twig, and we put it down in the water in the cup, and then we crank up the blower. And now the cup is secured similar to the Sea of Galilee. Now all of a sudden just imagine what would take place if we put the nozzle down into that cup and we gave it all of its force. Well, the cup would move because it's secure. But imagine how much movement

would take place with the water and with those little twigs that represent the boats.

Well, this is what happened. Mark says that a great windstorm arose. The word here for windstorm is our word hurricane. He literally says, "It was an unusual storm." Matthew's account, in Matthew 8:24, he describes with these words, *megas seismos*, a seismic mega storm. So one gospel writer compares it to a hurricane, the other to an earthquake. In other words, if this was today, all of us know Jim Cantore, right? If you don't, this is him. This is a storm that Jim would go to. We always send Jim to the worst places in the world, the worst storms in the world. This is where he would be if he was alive.

I want you to think about this. It was nighttime so they're on the water during this storm in the dark. It says that waves were breaking into their boat and the boat was filling up with water. So they were out of a choices, and they wake Jesus up. And their terror now removes all of their poise. And they say, "Don't you care that we are perishing?" Have you ever said that? Ever prayed that to God? God, don't, you care? Don't you care about my marriage or my kids? Don't you care how I'm going to pay these bills?

Don't you care is actually something that the Psalms writes frequently. Psalm 44:23, "Awake! Why are you sleeping, O Lord? Rouse yourself. Do not reject us forever." Jesus was fully man, which means that he slept like you and me. But it's interesting that this is the only recorded episode in the New Testament of Jesus sleeping, and it happens to be in the worst storm.

You see, in absolute total control, ruling the calm during the storm. Jesus was like the calm in the eye of a hurricane. Even today, no matter what you're going through, I want you to know that Jesus is not shaken. He is not in heaven wrangling. He's not reeling. He's not overwhelmed. He is in control. He knows what's happening. He sees it all. And he's ruling the storm even while we're going through it.

There's a third thing we find here, which is ... In some ways it's really ironic, and that is that Jesus rules the storm after the calm. It may sound like a misspeak, so let me explain it, then you'll understand what I'm saying. It says that Jesus woke up and he rebuked the wind. This is an amazing thing. I've never rebuked the wind. I've rebuked people. We rebuke someone, not something. I don't rebuke my mower, or my blower, or my house. I don't rebuke a tree or wind. Jesus is speaking to nature like he knows it. And then he says to the water, to sea, "Peace! Be still." And knowing their creator's voice, the wind cease and there was a great calm. You see, whoever has the power to create wind and water has the power to control wind and water.

In Colossians 1:16-17, it says, "All things were created through him," that is Jesus, "and for him. And he is before all things." Meaning before there were any things like wind and water there was Jesus. And in him, in Jesus, all things hold together. He is the creator and the sustainer.

The sea is now calm. And then Jesus speaks again. He turns, and he looks at his disciples, and he says, “Why are you so afraid? Have you still no faith?” What a remarkable thing to be addressed this way by the son of God. Jesus is saying, “After all you have seen in me and after all you have experienced with me, why did you put your faith in the storm, supposing that it determined your destiny when I am sitting in your boat? Why?” What’s interesting that Jesus’ calming of one storm only created another. You see, these were Jewish men, and Jewish men knew the scriptures, and these Jewish men knew that only God commanded the water and the wind.

Psalm 107:29 says that he made the storm be still. That is God. God made the storm be still and the waves of the sea were hushed. So what’s more frightening than a storm outside your boat? The only answer might be having God in your boat when you’re not right with Him.

You remember that this is really Peter’s account of what’s taking place, and there was another day on the water. Peter was a professional fisherman, and one day he had fished all night, caught no fishes. He was cleaning out his net. He was exhausted. Jesus comes by and there’s another crowd. They want him to teach. So he gets in Peter’s boat, and he says, “Hey, can we push off just a little bit so that I can teach?” And he’s exhausted, but he says okay, and they go out. He finishes his sermon, and he looks at Peter and he goes, “Take that net that you just cleaned and throw it on the other side.” And Peter’s like, “You’re pretty good at the whole teaching thing, but I’m a professional fisherman. I’ve done this all night. It’s not the time to catch fish.” “Peter, just throw it out.” “All right. Whatever.” Throws it out, and it says he caught so many fish his boat was almost sank.

While he’s trying to lug in all of these fish, the greatest fishing day of his entire life, he remembers in that moment that there’s somebody in his boat. Can’t you see him dropping the net, turning around. It says he drops to his knees in the boat, looks at Jesus and he says, “Depart from me, for I am a sinful man.” He says, “The thing is I’m not a good man, and clearly you are. I just need you to leave.” Jesus says, “No. No, I’m not going to leave. I got a plan for your life.”

And here they are again, and it says that they were filled with a great fear. Now, the Greek is really fascinating here. It actually says they phobied a great phobia. In other words, they feared a great fear. That doesn’t sound so great in English, and so we translate it, oh, they were filled with a great fear. Just imagine they feared a great fear. But something happens that’s so interesting. This time Jesus does not rebuke them for their fear, for now their fear was no longer misplaced.

This is what I mean by he rules the storm after the calm, is that sometimes we come to him and we see that he’s wholly different than we are. You see, you’re going to fear something today. You have no choice. The question is, what are you going to fear? Who do you believe is determining your destiny? That’s who you fear.

Jesus is laying this before us in order to teach us a very important lesson, and that is don't attribute authority and power to things that I'm controlling in the world. If your fear is directed toward something to fear, something that's determining your faith and your destiny, then let that fear land on me because I control everything. They respond what asking what every one of us should ask every day of our life. Who is this man? It's the most important question you can ask every day of your life.

What am I going to do with Jesus? Jesus is the pivot point for all humanity. It is Jesus that is the separation point between people who are in heaven and people who are in hell. It's not good people and bad people. The Bible says we're all bad people. It's with Jesus and without Jesus. It's always Jesus. So I wonder, who do you say Jesus is? Who do you believe today Jesus is?

On the basis of what we've just seen, let me encourage you with a few things. This is all about trust. So first, let's trust Christ as our savior. Trust him as savior. I know some of you right now you don't go to Providence. This may be the very first time you've ever even heard a story about Jesus Christ. And I want to encourage you today, if you're far from God and you do not have a relationship with Christ, I beg you today to put your faith in Him. You see, the Bible says we are all in a storm, that the cold winds run down the crevices of our fallen heart and they create chaos in all of our relationships, in all of our responsibilities. And in the end, that sin creates a storm that leads to death.

The wage of sin is death. And God is offended by this. His wrath is real. The insult to Him is real. When we sin against God, we are maligning His character. All of His instructions are backed by His goodness. In other words, God comes to us and he says, "On the basis of my faithfulness and my care for you, I give you this instruction. So when we ignore the instruction or intentionally violate the instruction, we're not only disobeying, we're slandering Him. And he feels it all. His wrath is real, but the Bible says that His mercy is real.

And in mercy God sent His son, Jesus Christ, to this Earth. One of his names is Emmanuel, which means God with us. And he lived on this Earth. He sat in our boats, and he did so without any sin whatsoever. And yet after just over three decades of living, he took all of our sin, your sin, my sin, upon himself and he went to a cross and there he died for it. But he didn't stay did. You see, Jesus had authority over everything, and so he wanted to demonstrate even his authority over our greatest enemy, which is sin and death, and so he died for sin and then he rose from the grave. And he extends to us an invitation that if you will trust in him he will forgive you. And he will then enter your boat and you will have somebody more powerful than the storm.

You see, you have to fear somebody. In Isaiah chapter eight, Isaiah's absolutely terrified. God comes to him and He says, "Wait a minute. Everybody's terrified. You can't fear like those people are fearing. You need to honor me as holy." Then He says this, "Let Him, Let God be your fear, and let God be your dread, God will become a sanctuary." And then he says, "And a stone of offense." Why does he add that, a stone of offense? Because Jesus Christ is the pivot point of all humanity. You will either find Jesus to be an offensive stone over which you trip or he will be the safe cornerstone on which you build your life.

Acts chapter four, once again, we find Peter again. He's preaching to people who at one time intimidated him, who had so much sway over Peter. And they say, "we don't want you preaching about Jesus rising from the dead anymore." Peter says, "Listen to me, this Jesus is the one that was rejected by you, the builders, which has become the cornerstone." See what he says? You were offended by him, but other people are building their life upon it. "And there is salvation in no one else, for there is no other name under heaven given among men by which we must be saved."

So I pause and make an appeal to you today. If you have never trusted Christ, if you have never admitted that you were in need of a savior to be in your boat, if you have never placed your faith and trust that Jesus is that savior, confessed your belief in him that God raised him from the dead, if you've never confessed him as Lord of all, would you do that right now? You can pray to him right now. You say, "God, I believe. I believe I'm a sinner, and I believe in Jesus. I give you my life. I confess you as Lord. Forgive me of my sin." Jesus will enter your boat. He'll be with you in your heart forever. So trust in the savior.

And second, let's trust Christ the sovereign. That means that Christ is in control. In his sovereignty, he gives us the ability to have freedom to make choices. And yet Ephesians chapter one says that even when we're making our choices that they all fit together according to the purpose of His will, to the praise of His glorious grace. He's sovereignty. And it may absolutely surprise you what I'm about to say, but you need to know that within the pages of scriptures we have this clearly stated that Christ's goal in life is not to fix this earth. I know that's so hard for us to imagine. It is not his mission to fix this earth. His mission is to rescue people from this earth and bring them to heaven. That's why he came. That's why he's called us. That's why he's called us out. That's why we're at church. That's why we go tell people about Jesus because we want to participate in the rescue mission.

You see, one day the Bible says, one day that Jesus Christ is going to cause this earth to melt, and he will create a new heaven and a new earth in which we will live with him forever. So take note of this. God has clearly called us to care for his creation. But no matter how skilled our care might be, we will not make this planet last one second longer than Jesus has determined that it will last. So give your life to a greater cause, a kingdom that will never be shaken. Tell somebody today about Jesus. This week, let's look for somebody who does not have hope. Jesus is not in their boat. And let's tell them where to find hope.

I want you to know that when we do, storms will arise. You see, after Peter says, "I want you to know there is no other name," oh, they get all uptight and they say, "We demand that you stop preaching Jesus." Acts 4:19 says, "Listen, whether it is right in the sight of God to listen to you rather than to God, you're going to have to make that decision. But we cannot help but speak of what we've seen and heard." You may have somebody not like you telling them that Jesus can give them hope. Fear Jesus more than them.

The last thing I want to encourage us to do is to trust Christ as friend. You see, if you know Jesus as your savior, I want you to know he's never going to leave your boat. He's never going to leave you. He's never going to forsake you. So stop your fretting, and your complaining, and your blaming, and your intoxicating of your body and run to Jesus. Run to Jesus who has the power to save.

Jesus said in John 16, "In the world you will have tribulation. But take heart, for I have overcome the world." This is why on Wednesday night at 7:00 we gather, even in this time, this crazy time, in order to sing to Christ and to pray to Christ because we're praying to somebody who has authority but also someone who is our friend, who said, "Lay your requests before me." Our prayers, they do not have to be free of fear or frustration. They only need to be sincere. So I urge you to pray to Him, to see Him as your friend. And I want to do that for us now. So if you would, let's bow. Let's pray.

Father in heaven, we thank you for your grace in our life. We thank you for your kindness that leads us to repentance. We thank you, Father, that you have the power over the storm and you have the power even in heart to be able to settle the storm within. And I pray for those this morning who may have trusted Christ, the savior and Lord. I pray, Father, by your grace that you would give them courage to reach out to us. Would you give them courage to continue to walk with you, God? Would you help settle their feet? Would you bring somebody into their life if someone's not there already that would be able to encourage them and explain more fully what they have received?

I pray, Father, for your people, God, that you would help us to be reminded that even in times of chaos that you're the sovereign one over the storm. So Father, as we sing to you now, we believe you're the rock that is higher than our head. And so we look to you and ask, God, that as we lean upon you that you would prove yourself strong on our behalf. And we pray all of this in Christ's name. Amen.



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