

### FAITH THAT OVERCOMES THE STORMS

Mark 4:35-41 (Key Verse 40)

*“He said to his disciples, “Why are you so afraid? Do you still have no faith.”*

In today’s passage we are going to learn from Jesus how to overcome the storms of life. One way or the other as we live in this world, we come across various storms, in the same way the disciples in this passage will be faced with a great storm while in a boat after Jesus had told them to go to the other side. The storm filled the disciples with great fear that they thought they will die. Jesus on the other hand was not shaken by the storm, rather he was in deep and relaxed sleep. How could Jesus not be affected by this storm which filled even experienced fisherman with great fear? Through this passage we will learn why? We will also learn how the disciples and us can remain unshaken, like Jesus when we face the storms of life. From the key verse we can deduce that the storms of life affect badly because of fear, and this fear has something to do with our faith. I pray that God may have mercy on us to receive one word, to learn faith that overcomes all kinds of storms of life.

The passage today begins after Jesus had been talking with his disciples and the crowds about the kingdom of God, he had been speaking in parables and explaining many things. After having gone through such a busy day, it would make sense for Jesus to take some rest. Now what happened after this busy period? Let us look at **verse 35-36**: *“That day when evening came, he said to his disciples, “Let us go over to the other side.” / Leaving the crowd behind, they took him along, just as he was, in the boat. There were also other boats with him.”* In the previous passage we learnt that Jesus was teaching the crowds together the disciples from the boat, so that day when evening came Jesus did not get off the boat to look for a resting place. But rather what we see here is Jesus instructing his disciples saying to them, let us go to the other side. Knowing Jesus and his ways we can be sure that this decision did not just come out of the blue, we know that he prayed about it and God’s direction is that they must go to the other side. So, told the disciples that they must go to the other side. And the disciples took Jesus along as he was to cross over to the other side.

As they were on their journey to the other side, a serious problem arose. Let us look at **verse 37-38**: *“A furious squall came up, and the waves broke over the boat, so that it was nearly swamped. / 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?”*” The sea of Galilee was very well known for its sudden violent storms. In this case it was so severe that the disciples thought they are going to drown. The disciples were very experienced fisherman, but when they met by this storm which broke over the boat so that it was nearly swamped, they remained helpless. Jesus on the other hand was in the stern, sleeping on a cushion. How could Jesus remain asleep while the boat was amid this great crisis? First this shows us that Jesus was really exhausted from the long hours of teaching and explaining the words God to the people and his disciples. But you and I know that no matter how tired we might be, when we are faced with a problem such as the storm that Jesus and disciples faced, we will wake up instantly. But why did Jesus not wake up?

Jesus did not wake up because he trusted in the protection of God, he had faith in the promise of God. When they started the journey, Jesus promised the disciples that they will get to the other side, that is the wisdom that God gave him, so when he was faced with the storm he continued to rest in his sleep, for he was certain that they will get to the other side even amid the storm. The disciples on the other hand ran to Jesus, woke him and said: *“Teacher, don’t you care if we drown?”* The disciples came to Jesus with this question because they thought he is not concerned about them including himself. They were frightened and were doing everything they could, such as clearing the water out of the boat with buckets, and they wanted Jesus to help as well or even give them some moral support and the likes as their leader. They asked Jesus this harsh question because they thought they will die, the thought they will not make it.

In the same way, today as well, we too when we face storms of life can be filled feelings that Jesus does not care, why is he not helping us when we are clearly suffering and helpless. Sometimes we can even think because of our sins, Jesus does not care about us. Actually, Jesus always cares, he cared for the disciples and gave them a promise that they will get to the other side. Just as Jesus was unbothered and was sleeping through the storm, the disciples were also supposed to remain unbothered and not be overcome by fear for Jesus promised that they will get to the other side. To overcome the storms of life, we need to remember the promise of Jesus, that we will get to the other side. Before Jesus breathe his last on the cross, he said it is finished, meaning the power of sin and death is no more, our sins are forgiven. We no longer have to live in fear, when we are confronted with great sin, great storms of life that threaten our spiritual being, we should not think for a minute that Jesus is far from us or does not care. Rather we should remember his promise, our strength before storms is the promise of God. Yes, for moment it might look like the storms are getting their way, but Jesus promised we will get to the other side.

During this week I was hit by some huge spiritual attack, my mind was filled with so many things, I was filled with a great sense of unworthiness to be a servant of God because of my sins, I questioned my ways of serving sheep in God's ministry, I was paralyzed by idleness and could not pray and could not sleep very well at night. I became like this, because I focused on the storm and forgot the promise of God. It is God who called me to be a Shepherd, he did not say let us test and see, but he called me to be a Shepherd for his sheep and promised to use me through his word in **John 12:24** saying: *"Very truly I tell you, unless a kernel of wheat falls to the ground and dies, it remains only a single seed. But if it dies, it produces many seeds."* What I needed to do is to remember the promise and obey his word.

The disciples were overcome by fear and the storm because they did not remember and obey the words of Jesus, they took the promise of Jesus for granted. How could they do this? What was their problem? First their problem is that they did not know who Jesus truly is. And so, Jesus revealed to them who he truly is, let us look at **verse 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."* Jesus is not just an ordinary teacher, he is the Son of God, with power and authority over all things. With just his word, he could command the storm to be quiet and still, and the storm immediately died down and everything was calm on the sea of Galilee. When Jesus rebuked the storm to die down, he said: *"Quiet! Be still!"* These are the same words he used when he commanded the impure spirit out of the man in Capernaum in **Mark 1:25**. Jesus using the same rebuke shows us that there was an impure spirit in the storm, the storm was a spiritual attack and this time it came in a form of natural disaster. The devil used the storm to plant fear in the hearts of the disciples, to plant doubt on the promise of God, doubt that we will make it to the other side. Actually, that is all the devil can do, plant fear that we will die, doubt that we will not make it. The devil has no power to kill anymore, Jesus has overcome, it is finished, Jesus has risen.

Today as well, the devil likes to use various storms to plant doubt in the promise of God in our lives, to plant doubt in the love that God has for us. These storms come in our daily practical lives in various ways, it could be storms in our studies, having great difficulty to pass, it could be storms in our work, going through a hard time to provide for our growing families, it could be storms in our relationships with our families and friends. It could even be conflict in ministry. Whenever we face any storms we should bring them to Jesus, for they are not just storms but spiritual battles. We should bring them to Jesus for he is the Son of God, with power and authority to rebuke all kinds of storms to calmness.

Furthermore, the disciples were overcome by fear and the storm because of their lack of faith. Let us look at the **key verse 40**: *"He said to his disciples, "Why are you so afraid? Do you still have no faith?"* Here Jesus diagnosed that the disciples were afraid when the storm hit them because they lacked faith, their problem

was faith. Jesus wanted the disciples to have personal and independent faith in God. Faith that God loves them, cares for them and watches over them. Jesus also wanted the disciples to trust in him as well, that he loves them and cares for them. And so, when he saw their lack of faith, he rebuked them. The disciples' lack of faith was revealed through their fear and powerlessness. And this is not what Jesus wanted for them, he wanted them to be man of faith that overcomes all kinds of fear and storms.

In his rebuke, Jesus first wanted to help the disciples to overcome their fear, by revealing to them that the kind of fear that they had was not from God. But rather it was from the devil, the devil has no power to take away the promise of God, but he can use fear blind us from seeing the promise of God. Many students today out of fear of failing, decide to miss Sunday worship service or a conference, and if one visits their room, you will find them sleeping or watching a TV series. In the same way those who are working can compromise Bible studies and testimony writing because they are busy and have deadlines at work. Making such decisions hinders one from growing, drives one away from God. The devil planted fear in the hearts of disciples and kept them running around emptying the water in the boat with buckets. The devil planted fear and kept the disciples busy and hindered them from trusting in the promise of God that they will get to the other side. So, fear is not a small matter, it is the most effective weapon that the devil uses to drive us away from Jesus. When the devil planted fear in the hearts of the disciples, they lost trust in Jesus, they questioned his love and care for them.

And so, Jesus, asked the disciples, why are you so afraid? Do you still have no faith? Jesus wanted the disciples to overcome their fear by having faith. Furthermore, in this question Jesus wanted to help the disciples to experience the power of God through exercising faith in their practical life. Jesus' question was not just a rebuke but an encouragement to learn the power of faith amid a storm. Now what is faith? Faith is not just an idea or theory, but it is to trust God and his great power. When we have faith in God, we can overcome all kinds of obstacles, instead of fear we will experience the power and miracle of God. In **Mark 11:22-23** it says: *"Have faith in God," Jesus answered. / "Truly I tell you, if anyone says to this mountain, 'Go, throw yourself into the sea,' and does not doubt in their heart but believes that what they say will happen, it will be done for them."*

When the disciples were in the boat, the devil brought the storm planting fear in the hearts of the disciples and because of this fear the disciples began to doubt the promise of God, they thought they are going to die and will not get to the other side. To help them, Jesus encourages them to have faith, when we have faith, we can overcome fear and doubt, we can remain trusting in the promise of God. I pray that God may have mercy on us, and help us to keep the faith, to trust God above all things, above our own strength, above the promises of our studies, our work, and relationships. I pray that God may help us to have faith in him, that he loves us and cares for us.

### **Conclusion:**

From today's passage we have learnt that the storms of life that we go through are spiritual attacks from the devil to plant fear in our hearts, make us lose sight of the promise of God, and drive us away from God. We have learnt that when we face storms of life, it does not mean that Jesus does not care about us. Even though we might have sinned greatly before God, Jesus always cares for us, and he will not forsake us, he will fulfill the promise he made to us when we believe in him. We have also learnt that we can trust in Jesus for he is the Son of God, we can trust in him for he has power and authority over all kinds of storm. We have also learnt that overcoming the storms is not a simple thing, it is Satan's greatest weapon which has tormented many souls, planting fear and doubt in people's hearts. We have learnt that to overcome these storms we need to have faith in God, with our strength we cannot overcome our storms. Even though it might look like money will take us out of our storm, we need to know that that is just the devil's deception, to overcome our storms we need faith in Jesus Christ, the Son of God, the creator of the heavens and earth. Jesus cares, and loves us, when we come to him by faith he will calm the storms in our lives. Amen. Key verse.