

A STORM [TRAINING](#)

Mark 4:35-41

Key Verse: 4:40

"He said to his disciples, 'Why are you so afraid? Do you still have no faith?'"

In the last passage we learned the obvious truth that a lamp should be placed on a table. Furthermore, we must send the light to the whole world. We should not hide the light under a bowl, which is the same as a toilet in the ancient times. We must not put it under our [sleeping bed](#). If we do so, we may have a danger of burning our beds. We must accept the light of Jesus and proclaim it to the whole world. In light of this parable, we learn that once America sent over one million missionaries to almost all the corners of the world. In this way, she pleased God, and her descendants were abundantly blessed. We also learned the parable of the growing seed. If the seed of the word of life is sown in our hearts, it grows day and night and day by day. Thus it grows unceasingly by the work of God, not by our own effort. Therefore, we must have faith in the word of God. Then God will grow the word of life in our hearts. The third parable was the parable of the mustard seed. Our existence is comparable to a mustard seed. But when the word of life is planted, we can grow to be a giant tree and a giant man, and furthermore into a man of blessing so that many people will be blessed by our faith in the promise of God. May God make you a giant, both humanly and spiritually. Today's passage is an obvious picnic story about Jesus and his disciples on a boat. Through this story, we learn that Jesus is God, and that his disciples must overcome their fear in order to be useful servants of God.

I. Jesus started his ministry after baptism and temptation

Up until now, Jesus was a junior carpenter to support his family. But as he turned 30, he was baptized and began to serve God. It is interesting to know that Albert Schweitzer studied until he was 30 years old and then served our Lord Jesus Christ in Lambarene, Congo, Africa. Here, Jesus' baptism means God's [ordination](#). God declared that Jesus is the Savior of the world. At the moment God ordained him as the Savior of the world, heaven opened and multi-million doves flew in the sky, though invisible. And from heaven there was the voice of God, "You are my Son, whom I love; with you I am well pleased" (Mk 1:11). Jesus was

baptized by John. John came to this world six months before Jesus. But he came as the forerunner of Jesus to prepare the way for the Lord. Isaiah 40:3 says, "A voice of one calling: 'In the desert prepare the way for the Lord; make straight in the wilderness a highway for our God.'" Even though John the Baptist was nothing but his forerunner to prepare the way for Jesus, King of kings, Lord of lords, Jesus received baptism from John the Baptist to take over messianic ministry from him. After that, Jesus began to minister to the crowd of people by healing the sick and teaching the word of God. His ministry was so intensive-sometimes all day long, sometimes day and night, sometimes only at evening time-that his disciples frequently had no time to have a bite to eat or to have a siesta as they had done before. It was marvelous for his disciples to see what Jesus was doing. After he was baptized and defeated Satan, Jesus' ministry was powerfully going on.

Jesus healed the sick. Jesus healed a paralytic who was very fatalistic. Jesus opened the eyes of the blind. Jesus touched a man with leprosy. At that time, a blind man was known as cursed by God. And no one had ever healed a blind man. But Jesus, with the almighty power and Spirit of God, healed a blind man and made him see the beautiful world which God made.

However, the most marvelous work of Jesus was driving out the devil. Sometimes we see a boy or a girl. They look so nice and they study so well. But what they do behind the scenes is horrible. They grieve over themselves because of their double lives. There have been so many people who had a pure heart but committed suicide because they could not overcome their prick of conscience. Sometimes we wonder why such a boy who lives in a mansion house and who has his own sports car commits suicide. It is a riddle to figure out. But when we look at the Bible, it is not a riddle; it is the work of the devil. Jesus healed one who was possessed by the devil. The Pharisees, who were threatened by the healing power of Jesus, watched over him on a Sabbath day. But Jesus did not mind their watching over him. Jesus spoke to the demon-possessed man. "Be quiet!" said Jesus sternly. "Come out of him!" Then the evil spirit shook the man violently and came out of him with a shriek (Mk 1:25-26). The Bible mentions evil spirits, and sometimes the devil, and sometimes Satan. They are like an army. Satan is the commander-in-chief. The devil is the chief in each division. Evil spirits or demons are comparable to foot soldiers in the world of Satan. People of the world use

many kinds of medicine. Their children are demon-possessed. They try to heal them with medicine. But they only make a pharmacist and his pharmaceutical company rich. There are many things in the world. But the name of medicine might be the most respected. People want to heal the demon-possessed with medicine. It is a sign that this generation does not recognize the power of Satan and the devil and demons and evil spirits. If their sickness is a stomach ache, it can be healed by medicine. But those whose minds are possessed by the devil can be healed only by the power of God. Therefore, as the shepherds of this nation, we must receive from God the power to drive out demons. There are many people who think that this world is only morning and noon and evening. In the morning time they drink a cup of coffee, and at noon they eat a peanut butter sandwich. In the evening, they eat a big dinner and sleep and gain weight little by little. There is a physical world. But this is not all. There is also a spiritual world. We must not be deceived by demons or the devil. This is why, when Jesus began his ministry, as of first importance, he drove out an evil spirit from a man who was torturing himself day and night because of demon possession. Jesus' order to the one who was possessed by the evil spirit was very stern and absolute.

Jesus also taught the word of God. Especially in the first part of chapter 4, the parables of Jesus that explain the kingdom of God are so exquisite and mysterious. Even non-Christians memorize them and would like to put them into practice. But they have no power to do so.

II. The hilarious vacation of Jesus' disciples (35-36)

The time of Jesus' ministry was not so long. His disciples were very ordinary people before becoming his disciples. They ate three meals a day and went to the restroom several times and slept and ate and worked and slept again. In short, their lives were very simple and regular. But Jesus was very irregular in eating and sleeping, and his working hours were so intensive and overwhelming, since he was surrounded by the thronging people. His disciples did not do much. Instead, they were hanging around Jesus and watching what Jesus was doing. But they were extremely tired. Jesus knew that they could not hang around him any further. So one day when evening came, Jesus invited them to a picnic by boat to rest up and eat some. His disciples shouted, "Yahoo! Wahoo! Wow!" From Jesus, they never expected a vacation by boat to rest and eat, leaving the crowd behind. They

felt really good. They saw Jesus as great, even more than when he was healing a man with leprosy. Their joy was so great that they began to sing a song. In order to go over to the other side of the lake with their good Jesus, leaving the crowd behind, they got into the boat. They began to sing. I don't know what they sang. Anyway, they sang. Some shouted. Some played rock-n-roll on the boat. Actually, rock-n-roll is a kind of dance that came from fishermen and from Africa. The boat was gliding smoothly. As their joy was growing, the sun was setting in the west. The western horizon was, for the time being, red, and it was getting dark. Some of Jesus' disciples were fishermen. So they enjoyed even more the smooth and quiet night sea. They did not eat anything. But they felt like they ate everything and they felt a kind of fantasy, the beauty of nature, and the compassion of Jesus in their hearts. They were happy, and they were happy again.

III. Jesus gives his disciples a storm training (37)

Suddenly a storm broke. Look at verse 37. "A furious squall came up, and the waves broke over the boat, so that it was nearly swamped." This one verse tells us that they were at the verge of drowning. They were really afraid of the rolling and billowing sea in the darkness. They were even more afraid of their death by drowning. Those who had a fisherman's background pictured their bodies being torn when sharks came and ate them. Fear captured them. They could not do anything. They were totally useless because of their fear. The disciples expected at least a one day vacation. But their vacation was stopped in fifteen minutes. Such a beautiful boat gliding over the gentle sea and hilarious disciples were all together in trouble. What is more, his disciples were completely overwhelmed by fear.

Why did Jesus give his disciples storm training instead of a full day of vacation? Jesus thought that fifteen minutes of hilarious boat riding was enough for them. Jesus was always ready to train his disciples. On the way to the shore Jesus gave them storm training. It was because Jesus knew that they had increased their labor power hanging around him. But they were still full of fear about the Pharisees, who were the authorities of the times. They were full of fear about day to day and hand to mouth existence. Ultimately, they were full of fear because they were young and had to think about their future and future security problem. So Jesus gave them terrible storm training to overcome their fear by

believing in Jesus.

What is fear? Fear is the antonym of faith. Therefore, people in the world who do not have faith are all swimming in the sea of death. Swimming in a pool is good. But swimming in the sea of death is terrible because of fear. How does fear come into our hearts? These days many people are overpowered by fear. There was a Jewish boy who was 23 years old. But he could not finish junior college because he had too much money. He lived in a lakeshore mansion apartment. He enjoyed everything he wanted to enjoy. And he was a basketball champion. His team won the victory because he made many baskets. He went around to more than 100 restaurants in the Chicago area. Everybody thought he was happy because he had much money as a Jewish boy. Everybody thought he lacked nothing. But one night he jumped down from an eight-story apartment to the cement ground and committed suicide. His cause of death was his fear that he was not going to finish junior college until age 40, and that he would not marry because he would not finish his four year college course. This small fear grew and grew. Finally it swallowed him and he cracked down bloody on the cement ground in front of the apartment building.

The fear of losing pleasure might be the most difficult problem. However, God has given people a conscience in their hearts. Their pleasure-seeking desire and their conscience are in battle all the time and they are not happy, even though they enjoy their pleasure-seeking habit every day. Many a man sometimes wants to quit his pleasure-seeking and come to God and become a holy saint. But right the next morning, he is again overpowered by his pleasure-seeking desire. He is again in a war between his conscience and his pleasure-seeking desire. He enjoys pleasure-seeking, but he is not happy. The only way to appease his prick of conscience is by immoral behavior and drinking and doing heavy drugs.

Another problem of people which comes from fear seems to be no commitment to anywhere because of their pleasure-seeking mentality. There was a medical student. He attended one of the UBF conferences. He came to his shepherd and cried a long time with a loud voice, "Never again will I be a person like I was before. I want to be a new person. I will give all my heart and all my soul to God and live for the glory of God." It was unbelievable. He was changed so drastically. Then, just the next day, he didn't appear at the prayer meeting in the afternoon. Even after one month he didn't appear. It was very difficult for him to quit his desire to enjoy pleasure. Many young men who want to go as missionaries to Africa or

Siberia or China have the same problem. They cannot commit to a holy mission. One student wanted to commit to his girlfriend. But his pleasure-seeking desire to have another girlfriend made it impossible for him to commit. He cannot commit even to himself or to his girlfriend, who has been hanging around him for the last twelve years. Both of them have passed the prime age of childbirth.

Thus far, we thought about those who are fearful people. Now we want to think about those who overcame fear and became great servants of God. We know St. Peter. He was the top disciple of Jesus Christ. He was arrogant because he was known as the top disciple of his master. James and John were very intellectual. But they could not open their mouths before Peter because Peter looked very strong as a man of the sea. So they just left him alone. But they were looking for a chance to get rid of him. Our Lord Jesus Christ thus far taught them that he is God and the Messiah of the world through his common life together. His disciples all looked very smart and strong. But they were full of fear. They needed to overcome their fear problem. Otherwise, they would be useless to God. We are the same. Those who have overcome their fear problem can overcome the world and do something great. As we know well, when Jesus once talked about his death and resurrection on the third day, Peter took him aside and rebuked him. "You master, don't do that! You know what I mean?" Jesus also rebuked him back, "Get behind me, Satan!" (Mk 8:32,33) Once Jesus suggested that he was going away and his disciples could not come with him. Then he taught them a new commandment: "Love one another. As I have loved you, so you must love one another" (Jn 13:34). Simon Peter only heard that Jesus was going away and they could not come. Simon Peter asked him, "Lord, where are you going? Lord, why can't I follow you now? I will lay down my life for you!" (Jn 13:36,37) Peter was humanly a very bold and courageous man of the sea. So he said to his master, "I will lay down my life for you." When Jesus was arrested and tried, Peter was also in the courtyard. A little cute servant girl said, "You are one of them" (Jn 18:17). Then he denied it, "No. You little girl, shut up!" A man asked, "Aren't you one of his disciples? You speak with a Galilean accent." Again Peter denied it. A relative of the man whose ear Peter had cut off challenged him, "Didn't I see you with him in the olive garden?" Again Peter denied it (Jn 18:25-27). Peter didn't want to do that. But he denied his master three times. So he went out to the courtyard and cried

with a loud voice (Mk 14:72). This was the first and last cry of Peter. At that time, the rooster began to crow, as Jesus predicted his denial.

Peter saw that Jesus was arrested and tried all night at the Sanhedrin. Finally he was sentenced to death. He also saw that Jesus was carrying a heavy cross and falling down on the road many times. He also heard Jesus' last words, "Father, forgive them, for they do not know what they are doing" (Lk 23:34a). Peter completely despaired and went back to being a fisherman at the Sea of Galilee. He tried all night but he caught nothing. Then the Risen Christ visited him and cooked a delicious breakfast (Jn 21:12). He was hungry so he and his fellow coworkers ate everything Jesus cooked. After that, he saw the Risen Jesus. The Risen Jesus forgave all his sins and gave him the Spirit of God. Then Peter participated in the remaining suffering of Jesus and proclaimed the gospel beginning in Jerusalem all the way to Rome. When Peter was arrested and crucified, he said to the executioner, "Our Lord Jesus Christ was crucified upright. Why don't you crucify me upside down?" He was very happy to be crucified following in the footsteps of Jesus. He was fearless. If we go to Rome, we can see the beautiful St. Peter's Cathedral. But we don't see any hint of the Roman Empire in Rome or in Alexandria.

We would like to think also about St. Paul. They say that he was a short man. But he was very ambitious and wanted to be a number one political man in his community. He persecuted the early Christians who were like sprouting grass and blossoming flowers. One day, he was driving a three-stallion chariot and was on the way to Damascus to eradicate all the Christians in Damascus. On the way, the Risen Christ called him, "Saul, Saul, why do you persecute me?" (Ac 9:4) At the moment he heard the Risen Christ's voice, he dismounted and fell down on the muddy ground. He was also blinded because he was not worthy of looking at the holy Risen Christ. He was an ambitious man. And he was a great sinner because he persecuted the early church of God.

But the Risen Christ forgave all his sins and gave him a holy mission to become an apostle to the Gentiles. At that time, Jewish people did not associate with Gentile people. They had a great pride in being a chosen people. And they thought Gentile people were the same as speaking animals. No Jewish person wanted to evangelize the Gentile people, especially the Romans. After Paul rose up, he went to the Christian community and proved that he was a forgiven sinner

and a changed man by the Risen Christ's forgiveness. He also said he was commissioned as an apostle to the Gentiles. During the time of his ministry, he traveled around the Roman world three times. Sometimes he was hungry. Sometimes he was beaten up. Sometimes he met a stormy sea. Finally he came to Rome and wanted to teach the Bible to the Gentiles. But he could not teach anyone except prison guards. However, his courage in overcoming hardship and his heart to conquer the world with the gospel of Jesus Christ shows that he had no fear problem.

Now we are studying Mark's Gospel. It is good to know who Mark was. He lived in Jerusalem. So he was not a country man, but a city man. He had a house. He was very intellectual. And he had a deep spiritual desire to do God's work. So he stayed up three nights and finally decided to follow St. Paul and Barnabas' missionary journey. On the way he was caught by fear. Furthermore, he missed his mother too much. So he said to himself, "I am fearful, Mommy. I am terribly fearful. Mommy, come and take me home." During the journey, he disembarked and ran back to Jerusalem to see his mom. For the second journey, Barnabas wanted to take him along again, but Paul did not want to take this cowardly person. Finally Paul and Barnabas parted from each other because of cowardly Mark. But later Mark repented and became a secretary of St. Paul, following after him. Now we see that he wrote the gospel of Mark, which is the shortest gospel, but includes the most events. We call the gospel of Mark the standard gospel. Mark was fearful and a man of easygoing mentality. In addition, he was a mommy boy. But when he overcame fear by the grace of our Lord Jesus Christ, he became a secretary to St. Paul and Mark's Gospel's writer.

One time, St. Paul really wanted to look for his successor. But no one was fitting. Finally he decided to make Timothy his successor. But he had a fear problem. And because of his fear problem, he occasionally had a stomach problem. So Paul encouraged him in 2 Timothy 1:7, "For God did not give us a spirit of timidity, but a spirit of power, of love and of self-discipline." In light of Christian history, Timothy did not do much. But he was known as the successor of St. Paul. It was because he overcame fear with the word of God.

A young man was in the battleground when Korea was in an internecine war, with Koreans killing each other ruthlessly. After the war was over, this young man became deeply downcast and did not speak. By chance, he read the Bible, especially Ephesians 2:10. It says, "For we are God's workmanship, created in Christ Jesus to do good works, which God prepared in advance for us to do." He wanted to be a servant of God. An American woman missionary talked with him to co-work together. She was dismayed at his speechlessness and small size. So

the missionary asked one of his Korean friends, "Can he speak Korean properly?" After hearing what the American missionary said, he quietly smiled and said, "Let's see. Maybe she doesn't know about Napoleon Bonaparte." The young man was fearless, changed by Ephesians 2:10. He was also very ambitious to conquer the world with the gospel of Jesus. At that time, Korea was full of despair and full of beggar mentality and a thought of helplessness captured them. He changed many students into courageous men of God. He planted the self-supporting missionary vision. He is now with us somewhere in this worship service. God wants us to be courageous men of faith. God wants us to overcome fear, for it is the potent weapon of Satan, and become a powerful man of God. Are you a fearful person? Or courageous men and women of God? This is the reason God gave his disciples a storm training. Now we can say, "Thank you, Jesus, for a storm training."

IV. Jesus is the King of peace (38-41)

Look at verse 38. "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 disciples were terrified and they were at the brink of drowning. They were even more terrified by the sound of big waves swamping their boat. They were trying hard to save themselves. They did not know where Jesus was. Finally, in the course of struggling to save themselves, they found Jesus. He was in the stern sleeping on a cushion very peacefully and sweetly. This scene shows us that Jesus is God. Jesus is the God of peace. Later on, his disciples were troubled and sorrowed when they sensed that Jesus was leaving. But Jesus said to them, "Do not let your hearts be troubled. Trust in God; trust also in me. In my Father's house are many rooms; if it were not so, I would have told you. I am going there to prepare a place for you. And if I go and prepare a place for you, I will come back and take you to be with me that you also may be where I am" (Jn 14:1-3). Jesus also said, "Peace I leave with you; my peace I give you. I do not give to you as the world gives. Do not let your hearts be troubled and do not be afraid" (Jn 14:27). King David was a shadow of Jesus. He was known as a king of peace.

Jesus is also the Ruler of man and nature. 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." The sea was no more angry. It was like quiet waters of a pond. If we go on a picnic at a lake shore or a seashore, we are only amazed at who made such a beautiful and big lake shore and seashore. Especially when

we go to Italy and travel around the south part, there is a lake called Santa Lucia.

It doesn't look like a part of nature. It looks like a picture. But we learn that this lake is a real lake when we carefully look at the other side and see people moving around like ants. Who made the heavens and the earth? Jesus made them. John 1:3 says, "Through him all things were made; without him nothing was made that has been made."

After quieting the rolling sea with his word, Jesus looked at his disciples. They suffered so much because of fear. They looked like a lamb before the slaughter with frightened big eyes. Because of fear they were melted. Nobody could think of them as normal men.

Look at verse 40. "He said to his disciples, 'Why are you so afraid? Do you still have no faith?'" Here we learn that Jesus wanted to give them a storm training which they could not bear. But by Jesus' grace they were saved from drowning even though they were afraid because of the storm. Humanly speaking, it was not a good picnic or a good vacation. It was a terrible picnic. But spiritually speaking, to the tired and fearful disciples, this storm training gave them true rest and a true vacation. As long as we have fear in our hearts, we are not happy. Even if gourmet food is given to us, the food is not delicious because of fear in us.

Here we learn how to overcome fear. We cannot overcome fear by fighting with the rolling sea and speedy winds and swamping water in the boat. We must have faith in Jesus. Read verse 40 again. "He said to his disciples, 'Why are you so afraid? Do you still have no faith?'" There are many kinds of fear: fear of death, fear of getting old, fear of getting a kind of cancer, fear of not much pleasure-seeking. Fear is, in essence, sin to God. Those who are full of fear in their hearts are not normal to God. We must look up at Jesus and hear his word, "Why are you so afraid?" How can we overcome fear? There is a beautiful story in the Old Testament. Numbers 21:4-9 talks about the bronze snake. The people of Israel traveled from Mount Hor along the road to the Red Sea to go around Edom. But the people grew impatient on the way. They spoke against God and against Moses, saying, "Why have you brought us up out of Egypt to die in the desert? There is no bread! There is no water! And we detest this miserable food!" Then the Lord sent venomous snakes among them; they bit the people and many Israelites died. The people came to Moses and said, "We sinned when we spoke against the Lord and against you. Pray that the Lord will take the snakes away from us." So Moses prayed for the people. The Lord said to Moses, "Make a snake and put it up on a pole; anyone who is bitten can look at it and live." So Moses made a bronze snake and put it up on a pole. Then when anyone who was bitten by a

snake looked at the bronze snake, he lived. Likewise, the world is full of poisonous snakes that can bite you to death. The world is real and full of poisonous snakes to swallow you moment by moment. We learn from this story that we must look up at God, even when many poisonous snakes are about to bite us to death. Wow! What a difficult thing it is to have faith! But faith is to believe in God and not to be afraid of snakes; it is to trust in God's love and salvation. One staff shepherd was afraid of a student's parents. He was afraid of rebellious sheep. He was afraid of his parents' persecution that he was not making money, but only doing something in the church. He was sorry that his parents did not recognize him as a servant of God. More than that, he was sorry that his poor and pure life as a servant of God had no prospect to get married. But he overcame and looked up at God. He had faith in God. This is the reason, when Jesus' disciples were very proud but had no power at all to overcome their hungry feelings, he said to them, "Have faith in God. Then you can move the mountain and throw it into the sea." There are many fearful problems and events. But when we have faith, there is no problem at all. When we have no faith, we are attacked by fear, and we become like an octopus that was beaten up too much and became smooth and was torn apart into eight legs in an attempt to run away somewhere. Let's listen to Jesus' rebuke, "Why are you so afraid?" If you are fearful again, listen to Jesus again, "Why are you so afraid?" Usually when we get up in the morning we feel good, but at the same time we are full of anxiety or fear in our hearts. This is the reason we must have daily bread in the early morning and hear Jesus' voice, "Why are you afraid? I am here with you."