

Daily Bread with Brother Hwa-Chi (Not review by the speaker, for personal use only)

Mark 04: 35-41

Peace, brothers and sisters; this is Hwa-Chi. Thank God, it's time to read the bible again. Today, we'll continue to read Mark chapter 4, verses 35-41.

The Gospel of Mark records Jesus' earthly ministry. Mark's account is very concise and clear, and is generally in chronological order. So, from the Gospel of Mark, it is easier for us to restore Jesus' discipleship. In chapter 3:13-19, Jesus chose the 12 disciples, afterwards, according to Mark's accounts, we can list the first phase of the discipleship lessons that Jesus has planned for them. First, it is to have a proper understanding of the general environment: As it turns out, to expand the kingdom of God is to plunder the house of a strong man. It is a spiritual warfare, and it is inevitable that the enemy will come to resist us. Second, it is the knowledge of ourselves: we need to know those who do God's will is our brothers and sisters. And the relationship between brothers and sisters is spiritual, is life, and is eternal; it exceeds the blood relationships we have on earth; and we have to be prepared to face well-intended opposition from our relatives.

With these two understandings, in expanding the kingdom of God, Jesus trained His disciples with these four steps: First, to sow generously: Some of them will fall into good soil, and these will grow naturally and will bear fruits: thirtyfold, sixtyfold, or a hundredfold. Second, for those who bear fruits, there must be a living testimony; we need to help them to expand their witnesses from under the bowl, to under the bed, to be on the lampstand; that is, the fruits they bear to increase thirtyfold to sixty and to a hundred. And the ability to increase the fruit bearing depends on the extend of your living testimony. From simply enjoying the provision of God's grace, to our whole person can be fully developed by the grace of God, to be able to overcome our own limitations, we are willing to be broken, or empty by God, and then be reconstituted by God with His own riches, so that we can bear fruit a hundredfold. And lamp should be placed on the lampstand and become a beautiful testimony for the church. Third, after having a testimony, we should

actively go out to freely share, to provide what we know and what we enjoyed and experienced to others as sowing the seeds. This way then the more you give, the more will be given to you; the more you provide, the more abundant you'll be. Fourth, we must know, if it's out of life, it will root naturally, and it will sprout, spike, and finally bear fruit, and when it ripe, there will be abundant harvests. This happens naturally, as a natural result of living life. We need to beware of unhealthy, abnormal development: don't let the world enter into the church life, we cannot allow Satan have a place in the church.

In the Gospel of Mark, Jesus taught by doing, and the disciples watched and learned by practicing. After Jesus had completed His first phase discipleship, He took them out into the field. In the Gospel book of Mark, we see that Jesus took His disciples and go out traveling and preaching three times. All three times they departed from Capernaum and returned to Capernaum.

Jesus' first traveling ministry is recorded in Mark 4:35-5:43, and it was Jesus' first traveling mission trip. He did not travel far but He did cross the Sea of Galilee, reached the region of Gadara, on the east side of the Sea of Galilee, and then returned back to Capernaum by boat. During this trip, Mark recorded only four events: first, to calm the storms of the Sea of Galilee, second, to cast out demons in Glassen, third, to heal the bleeding woman, and fourth, to heal Jairus' daughter. Today we will look at the first event, which is recorded in 4:35-41.

Verse 35: "That day when evening came, He said to His disciples, 'Let us go over to the other side.'"

'That night', let's look at 4:1, that day Jesus began to teach by the sea, and He had a really busy day by the sea the whole day. On the one hand, He spoke to the multitude in parables about the kingdom of God, which the multitude heard but did not understand. On the other hand, He explained His parables to His disciples in detail, so that they could hear and understand. Jesus had been busy all day, and in the evening, when Jesus was tired, He told His disciples to leave Capernaum and go to the city of Glasson, on the eastern shore of the Sea of Galilee.

Verse 36: Leaving the crowd behind, they took Him along, just as He was, in the boat. There were also other boats with Him.

Then the disciples went ashore and dispersed the crowd, while Jesus remained in the boat. When Jesus came to the earth, His main ministry was to preach the Word, but what the people wanted to see was Jesus casting out demons and healing the sick, and they often overcrowding Him. Perhaps people thought crowding Jesus as their own qualifications even as something to brag about. But Jesus deliberately wanted to stay away from the crowd; Jesus was more concerned about the one or two who really needed healing, especially those one or two who were truly seeking.

Dear brothers and sisters, we also need to ask ourselves if we also are proud to have attended Christian conventions or proud to have heard the messages from some famous preachers? If so, were you the crowd, or were you really getting spiritual help and growth? You have participated, you have encountered, and they may become your qualifications, but if they do not bring out the real growth of life, these qualifications will not only be useless, but will also become a stumbling block for you to move forward. I suggest that we appreciate more of the saints who accompany us every day, who provide for us spiritually every day, which is the strongest foundation for our spiritual growth. To deal with the crowd, Jesus leaves it over to His disciples: the disciples dispersed the crowd and some other ships went with them.

Verse 37: “And a great windstorm arose, and the waves beat into the boat, so that it was already filling.”

Suddenly there was a storm, and a tidal wave was raised. The Sea of Galilee is more than 200 meters below sea level, and the air pressure is already low, when the wind blows from the north to the south, and in the north the terrain is high, the wind is usually strong. Blowing south, it will pass through the canyon with great speed, like a hurricane, gusting into the Sea of Galilee, and immediately setting off giant waves. The disciples' boat was a fishing boat, poorly equipped, and the waves broke over the boat. There was no time to scoop the water out, and soon the boat was full of

water, starting to sink. Several of Jesus' disciples: Peter 、 Andrew 、 James 、 and John were all seasoned fishermen fishing in the Sea of Galilee. They must have been very experienced but this time the storm was so great that even they couldn't do anything about it.

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?'"

Jesus fell asleep in the stern of the boat with a pillow on His head. In this picture, we see a strong contrast: first, the ship was in the midst of stormy seas, up and down, swaying from side to side, almost sinking. Second, the disciples were busy steering the boat and scooping the water, and they were all panicking. Third, Jesus slept peacefully on His pillow on the stern of the boat. For Jesus, we see His humanity 100%. He was busy all day, got into the boat in the evening, and told the disciples to go to the other side, leaving the disciples to take in charge so He could rest. He really needed to rest, because He was 100% human. While He was resting, the storms and waves of nature could not disturb Him, nor could the panic of the disciples.

Dear brothers and sisters, are you often unable to sleep at night peacefully? You can try to take an account of your day before you go to sleep, ask yourself if there is anything to confess, if there is anything you need to surrender to the Lord? At this time, your conscience is clear, your mind is empty, your emotions are at peace, and then you surrender your will to God, and maybe you can sleep peacefully in the stormy waves like Jesus. But we saw that the disciples were so frightened, and they went to the stern of the boat and woke Jesus up and said, "Teacher, do you not care that we are perishing?"

We know that these 12 disciples, some followed Jesus longer than others; the knowledge they had of Jesus some deeper than others; the faith they had also some greater than others. But when encountering a difficulty, it is usually the least matured one took the lead, because the flesh is always ahead of the spiritual. I

don't know who woke Jesus up and said to Him, 'we are perishing', this 'we' should have included Jesus in it. They had seen Jesus cast out demons and healed the sick, and they knew that Jesus had supernatural powers, but the power of nature was so great that they were not sure if Jesus could control the nature. But if the ship sinks then everyone will die, it will be too late.

Besides Jesus had just begun to lead them to continue to carry out His earthly ministry; there were still so many cities they had not visited yet, and so many people needed to hear the Words, and there was such a great need that they needed to accomplish. Therefore, although not sure of Jesus' power, it is always necessary to try, which is probably the mind of the disciples. And what about Jesus Himself? He could rest in the stormy wind and raging waves, and He could rest in the panic of the disciples, but when the disciples came to call Him, He woke up immediately; this is very special. It was as if the disciples' voices had a special frequency that was able to touch Jesus' heart at once. I believe that sisters who have been mothers will probably have a similar experience, that is, when you first have a newborn baby, the baby's every move, every sound, and every expression can touch the mother's heart. What others cannot see, mom can see, what others cannot hear, mom can hear, and Jesus is the same with His disciples.

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."

When Jesus woke up, the disciples probably thought that Jesus was going to join in the rescue of the fishing boats. Jesus may have a new way to hold the swaying boat in the storm. However, Jesus woke up and did something very special: He rebuked the wind. If the wind is just the flow of air in nature, from high pressure to low pressure, the method Jesus used should be to balance the pressure difference so that the wind no longer flows. But Jesus didn't do that, Jesus rebuked the wind as if it were an entity, and entity that could be defined. This is very special because Jesus knew that behind the wind was the spiritual forces of evil in the air. As Paul said in Ephesians 6:12, "For we do not wrestle against flesh and blood, but against

principalities, against powers, against the rulers of the darkness of this age, against spiritual hosts of wickedness in the heavenly places.”

They knew what Jesus was going to do on the other side of the Sea of Galilee, although the disciples didn't know it yet, Satan knew, so he came to stop Jesus. Jesus first rebuked the wind, or more accurately, the demons behind the wind. Then He said to the sea, “Quiet, be still!” Sea is the dwelling place of the evil spirits, and when the demons raise up the wind in the air, the evil spirits stir up the waves in the sea, and they work together to stop Jesus from going to the eastern shore of the Sea of Galilee. Jesus said to the sea, or more accurately to the evil spirits of the sea, ‘Quiet, be still!’; which is similar to Mark 1:25, when Jesus first cast out the evil spirits by saying, “Be quiet!” Jesus always told the evil spirits to be quiet and silent, and the same was true to the evil spirits of the sea. When Jesus had finished speaking, the wind stopped and the waves subsided. The Gospel of Mark specifically adds, “great calm”. Notice the adjective “great” which indicate a huge contrast.

Verse 40: “He said to His disciples, ‘Why are you so afraid? How is it that you have no faith?’”

Jesus calmed the wind and the sea before He spoke to His disciples. The disciples were all panicked because of the violent windstorms and raging waves, and Jesus first addressed the difficulties of the environment before speaking to them. When Jesus resolves the challenges of the environment: Jesus rebuked the wind, He calmed the sea: He spoke harshly, non-negotiable, imperative, and He was exercising His authority. On the other hand, when He came to speak to His disciples, He gently asked them two questions: “Why are you so afraid?” and “How is It that you have no faith?” First question: “why are you so afraid?” Why are you so fearful? You should know that with Jesus you can face everything, and with Jesus you should not be afraid, you should not be timid. The first is a question of why and the second is a question of how. “How is it that you have no faith?” Didn't I tell you to go to the other side? God says and it will be done, and God's word is the foundation of

our faith. Hear God's word and do it accordingly, and it will be done. How is it that you have no faith? Could it be that you have not really acknowledged God's Word? You have not really known God's Word? God created everything in the universe by speaking, and what God says will be done, and we should hold onto God's word as the foundation of our faith.

Verse 41: "They feared exceedingly, and said to each other, 'Who can this be, that even the wind and the sea obey Him!'"

Here we see a great fear, and in verse 39, a great calm, and these two 'great' actually has the same Greek word. The wind and the sea received Jesus' commands with authority, and even Jesus' rebuke, and as a result they were greatly calm. On the other hand, when the disciples heard Jesus ask softly, "Why are you so afraid?" and "How is it that you have no faith"? The disciples feared exceedingly. Jesus' questions to His disciples actually are the questions He often asks us today: First, why, why are you so afraid? Why are you worried, why can't you rest, why can't you surrender, why can't you let go, and why can't you forgive, etc. All these are situations that we encounter all the time. Jesus first asks us why: with Jesus, we should be able to face all these situations. After asking why, Jesus asks how. Didn't God already give you the word? When you have experience with God's word, hasn't God's word strengthened your spirit? Hasn't God's word provided you with life? When you have the word of God, you should have faith.

When we are asked why and how, we often reacted just as the disciples did, we will be frightened. Not to be afraid of God, but fear God, which is a healthy kind of being afraid. Because in Jesus' questions, we also learned two things: First, who is this person? That is, we don't truly know Jesus: we underestimated Jesus, we see Jesus as an ordinary man. We must go one step further to really know Him. We must fear the Lord since we don't know Him enough. And the second reason to fear Him, even the winds and the sea obeyed Him, so why can't we obey Him? We seemed to know many things, and we also have God's words, but we can't obey God's

words, we can't overcome our natural preferences, our natural concepts, or our natural desires.

Dear brothers and sisters, we must know that the winds and waves outside are not frightful, but the winds and waves in our hearts are truly frightful; the circumstances we encounter are not terrifying, we should be terrified if we don't know Jesus; the surroundings are not dreadful, but it is dreadful if we don't obey God and don't follow God's commands. May God adds to our faith in everything we do, help us to know Him better and help us to obey Him more.

Let's pray: Lord, through the example of You calmed the winds and the sea, help us to know You better. We know that You are the Creator of the universe, and that nothing is impossible in You. When we fall into all sorts of emotions in ourselves, remind us again that You are not only the mighty Creator, but also the Lord who loves us. You are willing to help us and sustain us in all things. What shall we be afraid of when we have You with us? At the same time, help us to submit to You, and to follow Your words. Your word is the foundation of our faith. Increase our faith, help us so to stand on the assurance of Your word, so we can overcome the stormy circumstance and even the storms in our hearts, and to walk on the path You have designed for us. May God bless my life, pray in Jesus' name.