

FAITH FOR THE JOURNEY

Mark 4:35-41, And the same day, when the even was come, he saith unto them, Let us pass over unto the other side. And when they had sent away the multitude, they took him even as he was in the ship. And there were also with him other little ships. And there arose a great storm of wind, and the waves beat into the ship, so that it was now full. And he was in the hinder part of the ship, asleep on a pillow: and they awake him, and say unto him, Master, carest thou not that we perish? And he arose, and rebuked the wind, and said unto the sea, Peace, be still. And the wind ceased, and there was a great calm. And he said unto them, Why are ye so fearful? how is it that ye have no faith? And they feared exceedingly, and said one to another, What manner of man is this, that even the wind and the sea obey him?

When people travel out of the United States to a foreign country they are often given a list of things they must have. The list identifies things the traveler will need for necessity and comfort. A traveler will need a certain amount of money to provide for daily living. They may be informed to take certain personal items that are not available in the areas they visit. One important item is a passport. Without a passport one would not be permitted entrance into some countries. The travelers are told to be sure they have all they need, so they will not run short of necessary items on their trip. As we journey through life there are many things we need to help us live. We need food, and water. We need shelter, and we need clothing. One of the most important things that is needed in life is something that is often not given a high enough priority by life's travelers. It is something that if people do not have, or do not have enough of, will cause trouble, and failure. It takes faith to travel through life. Faith in God is a necessity for people to have a successful life. A person just cannot have too much faith. Jesus emphasized the need for a strong faith. AS WE TRAVEL THROUGH LIFE WE NEED FAITH IN GOD TO HANDLE LIFE'S CHALLENGES.

Mark 4:40, And he said unto them, Why are ye so fearful? how is it that ye have no faith?

The disciples had just faced one of life's challenges, and they did not have enough faith. Jesus took his disciples across the Sea of Galilee. Did you notice verse 35? And the same day, when the even was come, he saith unto them, let us pass over unto the other side. Did you notice that it was Jesus who caused them to cross the water? Now, let me tell you, when we decide to cross over to

the other side we'd better be ready for trouble. Just decide to cross over to the other side, and you will see what I mean. It may be a room. It may be a road. It may be a country, but when you decide to pass over to the other side just look out.

I have found out when you decide to do something, especially for the Lord, just look out. The devil is hiding in the bushes out there just waiting to pounce on you. He has some mean old person just waiting to give you trouble. He has some friend who will get mad at you, or will get hurt over something you do. He has people who just don't think you should. He has some way to hurt you. Believe me, the devil is waiting for you to cross over, and when people try to do things without faith the old serpent just loves it. But I want you to remember, it was Jesus who told the disciples to pass over. Jesus told his disciples to cross the water. You see, that should have taken all the fear out. This was not their idea. This was the Lord leading them to pass over to the other side. That should have taken all the fear away. Jesus was with them.

Listen, if we are in God's will, we can be sure things will work out right. I didn't say everything would go smooth. I didn't say we would not get hurt. I said, if we are in God's will, we can be sure things will work out right. Paul and Silas were missionaries. They were in a place called Philippi. See, here we go. They were missionaries. They decided to cross over. They were trying to do right. Paul and Silas were preaching the gospel, and trying to help people. The old devil was hiding in the bushes. He had a man who was making money off of a poor girl that was possessed with a spirit of divination. Paul, in the name of Jesus Christ, commanded the evil spirit to leave the damsel, and it did. When the man found out he couldn't make money from using that poor girl, of course, he got mad. He lied, and got Paul and Silas thrown in jail. Now I can hear you say, they were missionaries, and they are supposed to suffer. That's the way some people think, but I have news for you. All Christians are supposed to suffer. What did you say preacher? That is what I said, II Tim. 3:12 says, Yea, and all that live godly in Christ Jesus shall suffer persecution.

That is what the Bible says. No, that does not mean we are supposed to want to suffer. It means if you are really a Christian, I mean you live a holy life, and you decided to cross over the devil is hiding in the bushes waiting to pounce on you. Now, If you are not a dedicated Christian, you don't have to worry. The devil already has you. But guess what? He torments you all the time. Anyway, Paul and Silas came out alright. They were in the Lord's will. I told you, when you are in the Lord's will, things will work out right. You know what happened. The Lord sent an earthquake. Paul and Silas got to lead the jailer, and his

family to the Lord, and the magistrates had to eat crow, and personally set Paul and Silas free. You see Paul and Silas had packed some faith in Christ in their bag. They had faith for the journey! The disciples should have had a little more faith in Jesus. He told them to cross over, and He went with them. The devil is going to attack us, but when we go where Jesus tells us to go, and we have Jesus with us he can't beat us.

Listen, I'd rather be in a lions den full of big ferocious hungry lions, and be where God wants me doing what God wants me to do than be on some ocean liner on a big vacation, dining sumptuously, and protected by the best security of man. I wouldn't want to be somewhere God didn't want me to be, doing something the Lord didn't want me to do. What I mean is, the safest place in the world is in God's will. As we travel through life there are going to be challenges. The disciples found themselves in a great storm. It was dangerous, and it was scary. It was probably getting dark. The wind was blowing hard. The waves were high. Water was coming into the ship. They knew that in the past other ships had sunk in a storm like that on the Sea of Galilee. Let me tell you. Life is dangerous and life is scary. There are times we will all face danger. We will all have troubles. Life is full of disease, war, poverty, heartache, and death. The question is, are we going to face it alone, or are we going to let God help us.

Let me tell you sinner friend. I would not have wanted to be in that little ship out there in that great storm on the Sea of Galilee without Jesus! But, that is the way many people try to face the storms of life. And do you know what happens to them? They sink! Oh, they may fight, and struggle, and survive a while, but without God they sink! Oh, you can disagree all you want to. You can say, "I don't need Jesus. I don't believe that stuff is for me." You can say, "not me. I can make it on my own." Go ahead. You will run into a storm you can't handle one of these days, and without God you will sink. You will go to Hell and take some others with you! Now that is plain hard preaching, and I don't mean to be hard. I just want people to get saved. I want to get them in the boat with Jesus so they will be safe.

Oh! Christian let me tell you. Put your faith in Jesus. Believe the Bible! Believe all of it! There will be people who will try to get you to doubt. They will study, and some of them will seem to be ever so smart. They will say what about this, and what about that. Listen! Just believe in Jesus, and believe all the Bible, and trust in The Lord. Let others doubt. Doubt never saved a soul. Doubt never built a church. Doubt has never won a battle. Doubt has never won the victory. Faith is what works. Let the scholars go around saying this old King James

Bible has errors. See what they get for it! The Lord won't bless that kind of stuff! You just believe it, and let God bless you, and He will! If the disciples had known Jesus better they would not have been so afraid. More faith comes from knowing the Lord better!

Oh Christian, are you in a storm? Just get a little closer to Jesus, and work a little harder. He will help you. I like the Shunammite woman in II Kings chapter four. Remember, how she loved the Lord? She provided a place for Elisha to stay. She was a kind lady. She and her husband were faithful godly people, but her son died, and she went to Elisha. Now, this was one of the greatest challenges of her life. She loved that boy with all her heart, and he got something wrong with his head, and just died. But let me tell you this lady had packed in a lot of faith for the journey. How close to God was she? She said, it shall be well. Wow! Wow! Wow! I hope I can have that kind of faith! She didn't go to asking why, she didn't get all frustrated, and upset. She just reached into her little bag, and pulled out a big handful of faith in God, and said, it shall be well! And bless your heart God honored her prayer, and things turned out great. Listen, we need faith in the Lord for life's journey. We need to be close to God. AS WE TRAVEL THROUGH LIFE WE NEED FAITH IN GOD TO SHOW US THE RIGHT ROAD.

Mark 4:36 says, And when they had sent away the multitude, they took him even as he was in the ship. And there were also with him other little ships.

The disciples did have enough faith to do one thing right. They obeyed the Lord. Jesus went to the other side, and they went with Him. Now, notice what happened. A storm arose, and they were in trouble, and they went to Jesus. Jesus rebuked the storm. Let me ask you a question. What if they had refused to go with Jesus, and trouble had come along? We don't think about that when we decide not to obey the Lord do we? When we decide it is not necessary to live holy, and have Bible standards. When we decide to not listen to the preacher, or the church. When we just want something so bad we don't listen to God's word, or we just don't obey the Lord in some other way, we don't think about being in a storm without Jesus, do we? If the disciples had refused to go with Jesus, and trouble had come along they would have not had God's protection. Oh, how the devil must love for Christians to step out of God's will. Then he can really give them trouble. No, I am not saying a person who does that is lost, although it could lead to that. What I am saying is when Christians don't obey the Lord they go through storms they would not have to, and they get hurt. A lot of prayers are not answered, because we stepped away from Jesus back down the path. He wanted us to go one way, and we decided it was not

necessary.

Oh the grief we cause ourselves when we resist the Holy Spirit and don't obey the Lord. When we listen to the world we leave ourselves wide open for the devil's attacks. You see, the Lord knows where the devil is setting up his ambushes for us. If we listen to the voice of the precious Holy Spirit we will be spared so much. If we tremble at God's Word we will be kept from so many problems. Let me tell you, there are a lot of different roads in life. There are a lot of decisions to be made, and many of them are beyond our understanding. How can we know the right road? Let me give you a rule that will never fail. Obey God's Word! Obey the Lord, and go the way of faith.

We need to ask ourselves four questions when we make a decision: 1. Have we prayed it through? (James 1:5-8) 2. Are we choosing the right way over the wrong way according to the Bible? (Ps. 119:105, Prov. 1:10) 3. What is the spiritual thing to do or which choice will glorify Jesus the most? (Mk. 8:34-38, I Cor. 6:20) 4. Have we chosen the way of faith rather than the way of fear? (Is. 7:10-13) Of course we need to consider all the information according to Luke 14:31-33 and Prov. 18:13. When possible we should always seek advice from spiritual people (I Kings 12:1-15, Prov. 12:15).

Now, write these things down and put them where you can review them often. Don't forget them. Memorize them, so when you have a decision to make you will remember how to make it. Look these verses up. Don't just pass over these Bible references. Look them up and memorize them. Decisions are often difficult, but through prayer and these principles of faith we can make the right choices! Which college? Who to marry? Which job? Who to date? What decision to make in business? You see, the disciples had weak faith, but they were in the right boat. They were on the right road! If we stay on the right road, God will help us.

Be like Thomas. John 11:16 says, "...Let us also go, that we may die with him. Jesus was going to Bethany. Thomas knew that was dangerous. He knew the Pharisees wanted to kill Jesus. He didn't have much faith, but he believed in Jesus. He thought if they went with Jesus they would all die. But Thomas had enough sense to stay on the right road. He knew he should stay with Jesus. I can almost hear the cogs in Thomas' brain turn. He thought, "this is not good. This is crazy, but if Jesus is leading I am following. I'll probably die if I go with Him, but I am going to stay with Him." Oh give me a church full of Thomas's. He didn't have a lot of faith, but he loved Jesus. If you love Jesus at least you will stay on the right road.

I knew about a woman one time. She wasn't the smartest person in the world. She had made a lot of mistakes in life. Most of us have. Well she was not the sharpest knife in the drawer. Most of us aren't. She had to have a lot of help. Most of us do. She got saved. There were a lot of issues in her life. She had problems from her past. She kept causing her own problems. She wasn't a Bible scholar. She could barely read. She didn't know a lot of Bible, because she couldn't read very well. Before we all go looking down on people we should ask what is our excuse? Anyway, the old devil just kept after her. She made a lot of mistakes, but I think I can say she knew one thing. She wanted to please Jesus. She was not a woman of great faith, but she had enough faith to stay on the right road. When she fell off the right road she repented and got back on.

Come to think of it I wish a lot of people had as much sense as that poor lady had. Just enough sense to know they need to be on the same road with Jesus. Oh let me tell you. We need faith for the journey of life. We need faith in Jesus to face our family troubles. We need faith in Jesus to face our job troubles. We need faith in Jesus to overcome the temptations of lust and lasciviousness. Get you a dictionary and look it up. It will do you good. We need faith in Jesus! You say, "oh preacher, I just don't have a great faith." Well, do you have enough to stay on the right road? Do you have enough, that if you slip, and fall off, which you should not do, do you have enough to know you are in trouble, and get back on the right road with Jesus? Do you have enough to get rid of your stubbornness, and rebellion, and let Jesus run your life? AS WE TRAVEL THROUGH LIFE WE NEED FAITH IN GOD TO ACCOMPLISH GREAT THINGS.

Mark 5:1 says, And they came over unto the other side of the sea, into the country of the Gadarenes. The disciples accomplished a great thing that day. They passed through a great storm and made it to the other side. They went on to preach the gospel, heal the sick, and raise the dead, all in the name of Jesus. Let me ask you, what would they have become without their faith in God? Listen young person! When you set out on life's journey don't leave your faith in God behind! You will never accomplish what you should without doing it God's way.

Jane Wyman was a famous movie actress. She was married to an actor named Ronald Reagan. Jane Wyman was becoming very popular. She decided her husband was not going to be a big enough star to help her in her acting career. She got a divorce, which is never God's will. So many people make that

mistake. They get married, and then after a while they get to thinking they can do better. They fail to see they are no bargain themselves. Anyway, Jane Wyman denied God's word, went her own way, and was going to set the world on fire. She just didn't follow God's plan. Today everyone knows what happened. She could have been the first lady of the United States. She lost out, because she was struck on her self, and her own plan. When people leave God out they always lose. It may take a while, but believe me, they lose out.

Faith comes from putting our hope in the Lord, and obeying Him. No, a person cannot have faith, and disobey the Lord. Disobedience is doubt. Doubt and sin cancel out faith. I mean a person cannot say I have faith, and say, I love the Lord, and run around in rebellion very long. Listen if you will just put your faith in Jesus you can accomplish great things in life. You might be another J. C. Penny. You might be another Isaac Newton, or John Ashcroft. You might be a Susannah Wesley, or another Harriet Beecher Stowe, or Gail Riplinger. You might be a common everyday person who is faithful to the Lord, has a great home, raises godly children, works faithfully in your church, wins souls, and lives a holy life. There will be more of those kind of folks in Heaven than any other. Those are the people who really change the world for Jesus. They are the people all the famous people depend on. Whatever road the Lord wants you to travel in this life, you will be successful, and you will accomplish a lot, if you have faith for your journey. AS WE TRAVEL THROUGH LIFE WE NEED FAITH IN GOD TO FACE OUR LAST ENEMY.

I Cor. 15:26, The last enemy that shall be destroyed is death.

So many people live empty lives. Oh, they have the things of this life, and they may seem to do well, but when it comes to death they have nothing to die for. Christians have faith. They are on their way to Heaven. Christians not only have something worth living for, they have something worth dying for. They killed Jesus, but he didn't stay dead. The world may persecute us, and even kill us, but we won't stay dead either! That is Jesus promise.

John 11:25,26 says, Jesus said unto her, I am the resurrection, and the life: he that believeth in me, though he were dead, yet shall he live: And whosoever liveth and believeth in me shall never die. Believest thou this?

I am sure there were plenty of doubters at the cemetery that day, but Jesus called, and Lazarus walked out of the tomb-----Alive! Oh that old cancer is awful stuff. That old Parkinson's is awful. Alzheimer's is terrible. Death is an awful enemy. It destroys mind and body. It has no mercy, and it robs the best of

people of all their dignity. It reduces all the hopes of man to rubble. Death is the stalker that takes a man in the flower of youth, or creeps up in the night, or meets a man on the highway. Awful death! Death is the last enemy we must face in this life. Not the last enemy for those who are lost. They will spend eternity with themselves, wishing they had been different. But, all of us have an appointment that we don't want to keep with awful death.

What will we do when we come to our last breath? I'll tell you what we who know the Lord will do. We will reach into our little bag, and pull out a handful of faith in Jesus, and throw it in the devils face, and watch him run. We will be like an old saintly woman who had followed Jesus. She had lost her husband, and lived as a widow. She lay on her deathbed. She looked death in the eye, and through faith she looked at the beautiful gates of Heaven. She saw the holy angels waiting impatiently to welcome her home, she saw Isaiah, Peter, Paul, and all the saints of God dancing around the throne of God, and then she saw Jesus standing at the Fathers right hand holding out His nail scarred hands to her. Then she turned that old grey head to one sitting next to her and said, "When I die that will be the greatest day of my life." That is what we will do. We will understand that with all its suffering, and tragedy death has no power over us. We have Jesus! We have faith for the journey.

We will cry out in our spirit, O death, where is thy sting? O grave, where is thy victory? (I Cor. 15:55) Oh, I can just see the old devil standing there with his head hanging down. He can't do anything with this poor sinner, because the blood of Jesus protects the child of God. When it comes time to die, by the grace of God, we will face death man to man. We will face death like we have faced all the storms in life. We will reach into our bag, and get a handful of faith. Then, we will die! And just like that, we will come to the other side, and set our feet on the streets of gold! Hallelujah! If you don't know Jesus you need come, and accept Jesus as your Lord and your Saviour! You'd better kneel down, and get you some faith for the journey, because let me tell you. You need Jesus!