

The Rest of God

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?

Mark 4:35-40

This story begins with the phrase, "And the same day." Because no scripture or phrase is in the Word of God by accident, we ask the question, "Which same day?" The same day Jesus taught in parables! Just before this passage, Mark records Jesus teaching three parables, all of them dealing with seed, which represents the Word. Matthew, chapter 13, also gives record of that day. Both of these passages of Scripture record Jesus teaching the Parable of the Sower (who is Jesus) sowing the seed (the Word).

In Matthew 13, when Jesus was finished teaching, He asked his disciples if they understood the parables. Their answer was, "Yes" (Matthew 13:51). The story continues, "And it came to pass, that when Jesus had finished these parables, he departed thence" (Matthew 13:53). Mark 4:35 tells us exactly where it was they went: "Let us pass over unto the other side" (of the Sea of Galilee).

In the Parable of the Sower and the Seed, Jesus explained that persecution and affliction would come for the Word's sake. When the Sower disperses the seed (promises of God), Satan's demons come to take them from our hearts. If they cannot immediately take the seed because our hearts are hard ground, their strategy is to work through trials and pressures of life to cause us to give up the Word through fear.

In other words, if you receive God's Word into your heart, you can count on the

storms of life coming from Satan. He will attempt to steal the Word from you in whatever way he can. After church on Sunday comes the office on Monday! After morning devotions comes the neighbors and relatives. After the lecture comes the lab.

Jesus stood on the shore of the Sea of Galilee with the disciples, who have just assured Him they understand the Parable of the Sower and the Seed. Because they have received His word into their hearts, Jesus will now demonstrate the parable — the Sower will now sow the Word. Jesus tells the disciples, "Let us pass over unto the other side." This promise is enough to take Jesus and the disciples across the water to the land of the Gadarenes, where their ministry will continue. But between the promise and its fulfillment is the area of testing. As the disciples cross the sea, a great storm rises up, and the ship is filled with water. When the disciples look to Jesus for help, the Scriptures tell us a strange thing. Jesus is asleep on a pillow!

I suggest to you that Jesus was resting on more than a pillow. He went to sleep on the promise, "Let us go unto the other side." Jesus was so assured of reaching His destination, He slept through the storm. I believe the ship was not sailing on the *water*, but the promise Jesus had just given. Jesus knew this and went to sleep. Because the promise would not fail, neither would the ship.

Later, in Matthew 14:29, Peter stepped out of the boat to meet Jesus on the same raging sea. He did not walk on water, but on the one Word Jesus had given to him, "Come." Water will never hold you up, but God's Word will! However, in this earlier episode on the Sea of Galilee, the disciples had forgotten the promise Jesus had given and the parable He had taught them. Without the Word to stand on, they quickly panicked.

I heard a story of a young boy who was raised in one of the farming states and had seen very few lakes or ponds in his life. Consequently, he had never learned to swim. One summer, he went to visit his cousins in California, who took him to see the ocean. As he stood on the pier, he was amazed at the vastness of the water. His cousins slipped a jacket around him because it was cold, but never told him it was a life jacket. When it was buckled they pushed him off the pier. He screamed all the way to the water, "I can't swim!"

Once he hit the water, he thrashed and screamed beneath the mountain of spray he was creating. His cousins were laughing uncontrollably as he choked and screamed again, "I can't swim!" When he finally became too tired to fight, he gave up and found to his surprise, he could float. He could not go under if he tried. The life jacket held him up.

This is what the disciples looked like in the boat and what most Christians look like today. They are surrounded with the unsinkable promises of God, yet they continue to wrestle and struggle against the circumstances and challenges of life. They forget that since God's promises cannot go under, neither can they!

The disciples were clothed with the same life jacket that Jesus wore — His promise to go to the other side — but Jesus rested while they panicked. The disciples became fearful as they took their eyes off Jesus' promise and looked to the storm. They woke Jesus up and said, "Master, carest thou not that we perish?"

Of course Jesus cared, but when you learn to rest on God's promises, people will think you are cold-blooded! You can become so established in God's promises that, like Jesus, you look beyond the present storm to the ministry ahead. The peace and calm you walk in can lead other believers to think you are apathetic toward them, that you do not care about the present crisis. They will wonder why you are not agitated, confessing God's Word, binding Satan, loosing angelic forces "calling those things which be not as though they were."

For we which have believed do enter into rest.

Hebrews 4:3

After Jesus stilled the storm, He I chewed out His disciples for their lack of faith. Just His behavior on the ship should have told the disciples there was nothing to be concerned about. If Jesus was not concerned, fretful, and worried, there was no reason for the disciples to be.

WHEN DO WE CONFESS AND WHEN DO WE REST?

To every thing there is a season, and a time to every purpose under the heaven.

Ecclesiastes 3:1

There is a time to confess God's promise and time to rest on it. Every one of us have confessed God's Word during a storm and have seen God's delivering power. But is this God's best? Apparently, Jesus demonstrated that it is not.

The time to study, meditate, and confess God's Word is *before* we leave the shore. Jesus demonstrated this principle earlier in the day when He taught the parables and questioned His disciples on their understanding. By the time Jesus entered the storm. He had already entered into rest. Unfortunately, the disciples allowed the seed to be stolen and entered into fear.

When the storm arises is the time to rest on what we have already learned and received. We must recognize that the trial we face today is Satan's attempt to steal the Word we received yesterday. If we trust and rest in God's Word, it will not be stolen. The Word will prevail in our lives and bring overcoming victory to whatever trial we are facing.

Paul told us in Philippians 4:11, "...for I have learned, in whatsoever state I am, therewith to be content." *Contentment is learned.* Contentment is not a feeling or something we work ourselves into, but a manifestation of what we have learned from the Word of God. Paul's learning came before the trials and problems arrived.

Go to the ant, thou sluggard; consider her ways, and be wise: Which having no guide, overseer, or ruler, Provideth her meat in the summer, and gathereth her food in the harvest.

Proverbs 6:6-8

The ant becomes an example to believers of the life of faith. Just as the ant gathers in time of summer and harvest to survive the long winter ahead, so believers should learn to dig out the promises of God, meditate on them, and confess them in preparation for coming storms and trials. *Soldiers do not prepare in war, but during peace.*

SURROUNDED BY HIS WORD — FUTURE PILLOWS

Today's promises become tomorrow's pillows! What we study and learn today will carry us through the crises and difficulties of tomorrow. What seems unimportant in our study in the morning often becomes a lifesaver by the afternoon or evening. News of lack, crisis, or trouble can be met with God's precepts learned earlier.

Bible researchers say there are over seven thousand promises in the Old and New Testaments combined. Each promise is capable of taking you through the toughest storm Satan can send your way. Now is the time to study them, confess them, and establish them in your heart. Then, having done all to stand, just stand (Ephesians 6:13,14). Rest in God's unchangeable plan. Despite the storms which arise, Jesus' Word to you is still, "Let us go unto the other side."

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