

THE STORM OF LIFE

John 6:16-21

Key Verse: 6:20

"But he said to them, 'It is I; don't be afraid.'"

This passage is entitled, "Jesus walks on the water." This title claims that Jesus is the Son of God who can rule and overrule nature. But there is more in this passage. This passage tells us that Jesus gives his disciples a storm training so that they might experience victory over the storm of life and become future leaders.

I. The storm of life without Jesus (16-19)

First, Jesus sent them ahead of him. After feeding the 5,000 people with five loaves and two fish, the disciples picked up twelve basketfuls of leftovers. But still, the people didn't want to leave Jesus. So Jesus stayed over there somehow to dismiss the crowd. Since the sun was hanging on the western horizon, Jesus urged his disciples to slip away from the crowd first. So they got into the boat and set off across the lake for Capernaum. By now it was dark, and Jesus had not yet joined them. They were sailing toward the seashore of Capernaum, while Jesus was caring for the sheep who were still there. Here we learn that Jesus cares for the flock of God's sheep to the end. We learn why Jesus stayed over when we refer to Mark's gospel. Mark 6:45 says, "Immediately Jesus made his disciples get into the boat and go on ahead of him to Bethsaida, while he dismissed the crowd." Jesus was very mindful of the flock of God's sheep. The crowd was greatly satisfied after eating the food Jesus had distributed out of the five loaves and two fish. Now, Jesus was greatly worried about how they would go back to their own places when the sun was setting in the western horizon. Jesus is like a mother who worries about her children day and night. Jesus is like the mother who wakes up during the night several times to take care of her children. Mark 6:34a says, "When Jesus landed and saw a large crowd, he had compassion on them, because they were like sheep without a shepherd." Jesus thought that they were in that miserable situation, not because they were wrong, but because they had no shepherd. Of course, they ate a lot through the event of feeding the five thousand with five loaves and two fish. But Jesus worried again how they would provide the next meal for themselves. Mark 8:3 says, "If I send them home hungry, they will collapse on the way, because some of them have come a long distance." There was a grandfather who was old and tired and was burdened with many tasks. His grandson sensed that his grandfather was sorry about something. While his grandfather was sitting on a sofa, he immediately put two pillows behind his grandfather's head, one pillow under his feet, and folded two blankets and put them under his grandfather's two arms. His grandfather was greatly restored from his sorrow. It is obvious that God gave human beings mindfulness, and mindfulness is compassion.

It is indeed amazing that Jesus fed the crowd of 5,000 people with Andrew's five loaves and two fish. This miracle shows us Jesus' great shepherd heart. He had no bread to feed them, but out of his compassion he fed them because he wanted to feed the flock of God's sheep. After feeding the crowd of 5,000 people he must have been very tired. He

understood that his disciples were also very tired, so he sent them away by boat. But he remained to take care of the flock of God's sheep.

Jesus also stayed over there [to pray](#) to God on the mountain during the night (Mk 6:46). In reality, Jesus had no quiet time to [pray](#), because all day long he had to take care of crowding people. On his way somewhere or during eating time he taught his disciples. So he had no private time to [pray to God](#). But here we see that Jesus prayed. Jesus could do everything, whatever he wanted. But he did not. Jesus did everything by the strength of God through prayer. He prayed, overcoming his exhaustion. Jesus' prayer was the time to report to God what he had done. Jesus' prayer was the time to fill up his spiritual strength in God. Jesus did everything through prayer. Jesus did everything with the strength of God. Jesus did everything for the glory of God through prayer. Jesus did everything in obedience to God through prayer.

Second, the storm of life without Jesus. Geographically, they were at the north end and the lake was no more than four miles across. The disciples had rowed three or three and a half miles. So they were almost at the shore of Capernaum. They almost hugged the shore of the land. But at the end of their rowing, a strong wind began to blow and the water grew rough. When they had rowed three or three and a half miles, they saw Jesus approaching the boat walking on the water; and they were terrified. They were even more terrified because they saw Jesus as a ghost (Mk 6:47b). At this point, the disciples did not have spiritual insight to see that Jesus is the Son of God.

We cannot forget the story of a four-star Admiral, Admiral Boorda. When he was 16, his parents' marriage was troubled. So he came to the conclusion that, "reducing the amount of pain I suffered every day was important to me." In the initial stage of his parents' divorce, he was deeply wounded and rejected by them. He was 16, but he joined the navy, telling a lie that he was 18. According to Newsweek magazine, he was a very disciplined and friendly person. Even though he was a four-star admiral, remembering his own sailor's time he was like a friend to the sailor class of navy people. So he was known as the friend of sailors. He joined the Vietnam War two times and received many medals. Newsweek magazine dug out whether or not he had the privilege of wearing the highest two medals. Then his pride was greatly hurt. He thought he was an exemplary four-star admiral. But the journalists began to investigate him. His storm of life was a sense of rejection. He felt a sense of rejection caused by his parents' divorce. And suddenly he felt that his loyalty was rejected. It was Satan's prank. Anyway, he committed suicide by shooting his gun at where the medals decorated him. His problem was not a sense of rejection; his problem was that he did not live for the glory of God.

The best example might be our ancestor of faith, Jacob. Jacob wanted to be somebody. So he cheated and took away the birthright of his older brother. Thus he became the older brother to his older brother. Because of this, he had to be a wanderer. He stayed at his Uncle Laban's house and worked for 14 years for a wife, Rachel, and for himself another 6 years. Finally, God helped him to have four wives and eleven sons and one daughter and two huge groups of animals. But he had a great anxiety. His storm of life was meeting his older brother

Esau. He thought Esau would kill him and all his children and animals. This anxiety had been his storm of life for the last 20 years. Jacob lived in this storm because he did not believe the promise of God given to him at Bethel.

Mencius (390-305 B.C.) said, "If heaven wants to use a man greatly in human history, heaven distresses his heart unbearably and almost melts his bones. Heaven makes his body experience hunger and the continuation of a poor life. Heaven also frustrates whatever he does. In this way, heaven makes him unlimitedly patient and produces noble character in a man." As Mencius said, many people wanted to be great and wanted to be somebodies in the world. According to Mencius, Admiral Boorda could become somebody in the world. But Admiral Boorda could not overcome his storm of life.

II. The storm of life with Jesus (20-21)

First, "It is I; don't be afraid." Look at verses 19-20. "When they had rowed three or three and a half miles, they saw Jesus approaching the boat, walking on the water; and they were terrified. But he said to them, 'It is I; don't be afraid.'" After prayer, Jesus came to his disciples, walking on the water. The disciples were struggling to save themselves from the turmoil of the lake water. They were terrified at first. But realizing that it was Jesus, they welcomed him. Verse 21 says, "Then they were willing to take him into the boat, and immediately the boat reached the shore where they were heading." The disciples did not see Jesus as a ghost anymore (Mk 6:47). They acknowledged that Jesus who walked on the water was their master. So they were happy and welcomed him. Immediately, the boat reached the shore where they were heading. This event shows us that they were in the storm of the sea and were struggling to row and row, not to perish in the lake water. Right before reaching the shore of Capernaum, the storm of the sea was their storm training in order to become the future disciples of Jesus. They needed this kind of training. With their own strength they were only perishing. But when they welcomed Jesus, everything went well. We cannot escape the storm of life. At the time of a storm of life, we must hear Jesus' voice, "It is I; don't be afraid."

Second, those who overcame the storm of life in Jesus. When Jesus began his earthly messianic ministry, he was mainly healing the sick and preaching the kingdom of God. And at the same time, from the beginning, he chose his disciples as future leaders and successors of his ministry.

There was a man called Levi the tax collector. He was in the storm of life because of his blind selfishness. At that time, the Israelites were under the rule of the Roman Empire. The Israelites were suffering and bleeding. They had to pay taxes, as much as Roman authority demanded, when they had no income at all. The suffering of the people of Israel was more than one can say. In this situation, the people of Israel tried to keep their identity as a chosen people. But one young man named Levi became a tax collector and extorted money from his own suffering people. He became a puppet of the Roman Empire. He also became rich by extorting tax money. He gave 40% to the Roman government, and kept 60% in his pocket. His people called him

"quisling." After making money, he found that money could not make man happy. What was worse, people were all running away from him. He was always by himself, because people were disgusted to be around him. His wife had run away a long time ago. His children had all disappeared. So he spent his time mostly in his tax booth, because of his selfishness. Because of his selfishness, he became a lonely man. Lonely men are comparable to a man with leprosy. Human beings are social animals. This is the reason those who do not have family members buy a dog and name it "Mike" or "Caesar" and live with it. When Levi regretted his wrongdoings, it was too late. He was about to commit suicide by starving to death because he could not eat due to his upset stomach. Then Jesus visited him and commanded him, "Follow me." When he was selfish, he was a suicide candidate. But when he was with Jesus, he became the teacher of all human beings who have ever lived. His storm of life was a lonely life, which tempted him to commit suicide. But when Jesus was with him, he overcame his storm of life and became a great servant of God.

Let's think about Mark. Mark was not a disciple of Jesus. He was a city man, and a man from a well-to-do family. So he was an intellectual hedonist. He loved the truth but could not practice it. He wanted to commit his life in God, but he always did something undesirable. Once, he was a disciple of Paul during the time of Paul's missionary journey. Journey means travel. The word "travel" came from the word "trouble." Paul's journey was full of hardships and sufferings. So Mark left Paul in Perga in Pamphylia to return to Jerusalem where his mommy was (Ac 13:13). He was a man of uncommitment. He was literally an intellectual hedonist. He wanted to do many good things each day. But to the contrary, he was directed by his own sinful desires. He was like a spoiled boy from a rich family. But he met Peter and learned how to serve God from Peter. His life was changed from an intellectual hedonist to a servant of Jesus Christ. His storm of life was his intellectual hedonism. But he wrote Mark's gospel, which is the shortest but includes the most events. We call his gospel the standard gospel. In his gospel he emphasized that Jesus is the servant (Mk 10:45). In the storm of life of his intellectual hedonism he came to God. He became the most beautiful servant of Jesus Christ. He summarized the life of Jesus in Mark 10:45, "For even the Son of Man did not come to be served, but to serve, and to give his life as a ransom for many."

Luke was a Gentile. He was not one of Jesus' twelve disciples. He was a physician and historian. He was introduced to Jesus by St. Paul. He lived as a personal physician to St. Paul. He was with St. Paul when he was in a Roman prison. He was also a secretary to St. Paul. Luke's gospel describes the perfect man and perfect God, Jesus. Luke's gospel explains why Jesus is the Savior of the world. Gentiles were mostly eating and drinking, and died when they were old. Luke's storm of life was meaninglessness. But in his storm of meaninglessness, he was saved when he met Jesus through Paul.

John was one of Jesus' disciples. John and James were brothers and sons of one mother. They were fishermen. But they were very ambitious, and fire was burning in their hearts. Once, Jesus was passing by the people of Samaria. The people of Samaria didn't accept Jesus and his company. Then John asked Jesus, "Lord, do you want us to call fire down

from heaven to destroy them?" (Lk 9:54) John also persuaded his mother to help them obtain the seats of Prime Minister in the messianic kingdom he thought Jesus would establish (Mt 20:20). He was a politically-minded person. In short, he was a very harmful person and a first-class liar. But he was changed after the crucifixion of Jesus Christ and his resurrection. His storm of life was political ambition. When he was changed, he could see the divinity of Jesus. He also saw the broken shepherd heart of Jesus. So he described Jesus in John 10:11. "I am the good shepherd. The good shepherd lays down his life for the sheep." He also received eternal life from Jesus and said in John 3:16, "For God so loved the world that he gave his one and only Son, that whoever believes in him shall not perish but have eternal life." Such a corrupted, politically-minded John was changed into a most excellent spiritual man who wrote John's gospel.

It seems to be boring to write about saintly men only. Let me tell you the story of a beautiful woman. There was a little girl who looked like a Sharon Rose. She was loved by all her village people, even by many barking dogs. The village people all wanted to have sons. But since a girl like a Sharon Rose was born and grew among them, they all wanted to have daughters. But one day, something bad happened to her. Suddenly she became blind. She was no more a beautiful Sharon Rose to the village people. Her two eyes seemed to be only holes to shed many tears because of her sorrows in being a blind woman. One day she heard the story of Jesus from her mother. Her mother told her that Jesus is the one and only Son of God, but he came to this world to become the Lamb of God to die on a cross for the sin of the world. Then she saw the light of life. After that, she began to write hymn songs. There are several tens of thousands of hymns. But her hymns have been most widely accepted. Among them, "I am thine, O Lord, I have heard thy voice, And it told thy love to me," is the most famous. Her storm of life was her sudden blindness. But when she was with Jesus, she became a hymn writer.

Thank God who gave the disciples storm training on the way to a vacation spot. We don't know if they had a good vacation after storm training. But God wants us to receive storm training and become changed servants of God.