



eLesson 027

Text: Mark 4:35-41

Subject: Fear

Fear or Faith 2

In preparation. It would be helpful for you to read Mark 4:35-41 before continuing in this lesson. In addition, you might benefit from a quick review of the first part of this teaching in lesson 026.

Jesus awoke. He rebuked the wind. He said to the sea, *"Hush, be still."* Mark 4:39. Stop the film in your mind right at that moment. What do you imagine that Jesus did as He first woke up? What did He do before He spoke to the storm and sea? Did He sit up and extend His arms to stretch as many people do? Did He rub His eyes? Did He yawn? Did He run His fingers through His hair or stroke His beard? Were the Disciples impatient with His slowness to react? What do you think they thought when Jesus spoke to the storm and sea? As the scene continues ... at the command of Jesus, the wind immediately died down, and the sea became perfectly calm. The wind and sea obeyed Jesus. The Disciples had seen a miracle. Did they all cheer? Were there high-fives all around? Did one say to another, *I knew He could do that?* Did anyone say, *I was never really afraid?* We do not know the answers to questions like this. However, we do know what Jesus said. He said to them, *"Why are you afraid?"* Mark 4:40. The Greek word translated *"afraid"* in this verse is that big word for fear. The Disciples had gone through their *fear or faith* test ... and had failed. Jesus asked them, *"Why are you so cowardly?"* (My paraphrase). He also asked, *"How is it that you have no faith?"* Their fear displaced their faith. How did they feel at that moment of rebuke? If you were on that ship hearing His two questions ... how would you feel? They must have felt such guilt, shame, and disappointment in themselves. They had failed the test.

Jesus knew that they would fail. God knows the outcome of all of our tests before they come upon us. Our response to a test never surprises Him. God uses the storms to teach us and to build our faith. After the storm, the Disciples had a different kind of fear. *"They became very much afraid and said to one another, 'Who then is this, that even the wind and the sea obey Him?'"* Mark 4:41. This was not the fear of verse 40. This was not the big and sinful fear that paralyzes. This was the good fear ... the reasonable fear that all of us should feel in the presence of the Almighty. We should be fearful as we sense the presence of the awesome, immense, immeasurable, all-powerful God. The Disciples experienced both the good fear and the bad fear in that little boat. Have you experienced the bad fear? Did you learn the good fear as Jesus calmed some storm in your life? Another test, another storm, may be coming your way ... how will you respond? Jesus could have prevented the storm from ever coming. He could have stopped it much earlier. I am sure that they would have preferred a smaller and shorter storm. However, Jesus knew exactly how strong and how long the storm needed to be. To shorten it or to reduce its strength would have done a disservice to them. *"Consider it all joy, my brethren, when you encounter various trials, knowing that the testing of your faith produces endurance. And let endurance have its perfect result, so that you may be perfect and complete, lacking in nothing."* James 1:2-4.

Let us keep imagining that we are with Jesus and the Disciples during those days. Let's imagine that it is two days after the storm. We have walked with Jesus for those two days on solid ground. Let's imagine that Jesus then tells us to get back into the boat to return to the other side of the lake. Would you be afraid? Would you say, *No, I won't go back out on that lake ... I am too afraid?* Of course not! You would not be afraid. You might even hope for another storm ... maybe even a bigger storm. I really like the instant replay films in sports. I like to see the great plays a second and third time. If you were getting back into the boat, wouldn't you hope for an instant replay? Wouldn't you encourage Jesus to take another nap? Wouldn't you be pleased as you saw dark clouds racing across the lake toward your little boat? Moreover, what would you think as the waves broke over the bow and the boat started to fill with water? Wouldn't you wait a little longer to wake Jesus than you did two days earlier? You and I would not be afraid because we had seen Jesus calm the previous storm! I have seen Jesus calm storms in my life. Should I be afraid in the next one? Of course not! Have you seen Jesus calm storms in your life? Have you any reason to be afraid in the next one? Of course not! However, so many times fearful Christians look to Jesus and say, *"Teacher, don't you care that we are perishing?"* In the storms of life we should faithfully pray, *"Lord, save us ... we are perishing"*. Many storms will engulf your life. Will you respond in fear or in faith?

Faith conquers fear. Small faith opens the door to big fear. Bigger faith produces smaller fear. However, if you have not personally been born again you should have great fear. Stated another way ... if you have not personally believed in Jesus (not just about Jesus, but in Jesus) you should be terrified because you are headed toward an eternity away from the presence of God. There is no decision in life more important than the decision each person must make about Jesus. Until that first step of faith is taken, there is no other important decision. Only Jesus can conquer this eternal fear for you. If you are not sure about your relationship with God ... please click here: www.911GOD.org. The principles in this lesson are meaningless until you have received Jesus as your personal Savior. This lesson is for those of you who have already believed in Jesus. After you have been born again, you should not be afraid. As a believer, you need active faith to conquer fear. How are you doing in your storms? Are you fearful or faithful?

Use the weapon of His Word. *"Your word I have treasured in my heart, that I may not sin against You."* Psalm 119:11. Fear is sin. Acknowledge that as a fact. Treasuring God's Word in your heart prevents sin ... prevents the sin of fear. What does His Word tell us to do when we have sinned? You know the answer. It is written, *"If we confess our sins, He is faithful and righteous to forgive us our sins and to cleanse us from all unrighteousness."* 1 John 1:9. If you are guilty of the sin of fear, you should confess it to God. He will forgive and cleanse you. Some Christians do not believe that fear is sin ... and they deny that they have sinned when they have feared. Unconfessed sin is very dangerous. Do you think that 1 John 1:10 might apply to them? There are some very important verses that you should treasure in your heart to conquer fear.

"When I am afraid, I will put my trust in You. In God, whose word I praise, in God I have put my trust; I shall not be afraid. What can mere man do to me?" Psalm 56:3-4.

"The Lord is my light and my salvation; whom shall I fear? The Lord is the defense of my life; whom shall I dread? When evildoers came upon me to devour my flesh, my adversaries and my enemies, they stumbled and fell. Though a host encamp against me, my heart will not fear; though war arise against me, in spite of this I shall be confident." Psalm 27:1-3.

"The Lord is for me; I will not fear; what can man do to me?" Psalm 118:6.

"The fear of man brings a snare, but he who trusts in the Lord will be exalted." Proverbs 29:25.

These are just a few of the many verses that make it clear that active faith displaces fear. Faith paralyzes fear. Is a storm engulfing your life? Is a great shaking storm tempting you to fear? Is your faith being tested? Then you should write these verses on a piece of paper and carry them with you. Read them aloud when the storm waves break over the bow of your life. It would be an even better idea to memorize these verses.

One of my favorite passages about the faith that conquers fear is Jeremiah 17:7-8 ... *"Blessed is the man who trusts in the Lord and whose trust is the Lord. For he will be like a tree planted by the water, that extends its roots by a stream and will not fear when the heat comes; but its leaves will be green, and it will not be anxious in a year of drought nor cease to yield fruit."* In your fight against fear, you will be victorious if your foundation is the Lord ... and if you actively trust Him during the storms. The roots of your faith must go deep into His Word. Then storms will not cause you to wither. Sometimes one rainless day runs into another and another until a season or year of drought is upon us. In the same way, one storm after another may rage through our lives producing a season or year of storms. If you have a strong, active faith in the Lord, you will not be anxious or fearful in a season or year of storms. Fear produces flight and barrenness. However, faith produces fruitfulness in and after the storm. Do not be afraid. Trust in the Lord. Trust in the Lord and you will be like the tree that *"will not fear when the heat comes; but its leaves will be green, and it will not be anxious in a year of drought nor cease to yield fruit."* Jeremiah 17:8.

The final use of the big word for fear can be found in the words of Jesus. He said, *"Peace I leave with you; My peace I give to you; not as the world gives do I give to you. Do not let your heart be troubled, nor let it be fearful."* John 14:27. Jesus does not want you to be afraid in the storms of life. You are not alone. He is with you. He knew that your storm was coming before you knew. He knows where ... knows when ... and knows why. Trust Him. He is there in your boat in the center of your storm. He is saying to you, *"Do not let your heart be troubled, nor let it be afraid."* Do not be afraid. Trust Him. *"The Lord is my rock and my fortress and my deliverer, My God, my rock, in whom I take refuge; my shield and the horn of my salvation, my stronghold."* Psalm 18:2. The Mighty One is our God ... why should we fear? Several years ago, my young granddaughter Hannah was with me in a little boat on a lake that must have looked very big to her. Some waves caused the boat to rock harshly from side to side. I was sure she would be afraid as she held on to the sides of that little dingy. But then she said aloud, *"I am not afraid ... God is with us in this boat!"* Will we be like the Disciples or like Hannah when the waves cause our boats to rock?

(This lesson is the end of a two-part eLesson)



Study Questions Answers at end of lesson.

1. What did Jesus say to the sea?
2. What did Jesus say to the Disciples?
3. After the storm, they became afraid in a different way ... how?

Personal Reflection

No answers provided for these questions.

1. If you were with the Disciples in that boat, what would you have thought when the wind and sea obeyed Jesus?
2. How would you react in your present fears, if Jesus asked, *Why are you so cowardly?*
3. Have you considered your trials to be joy? Why?
4. How will you respond to future trials? Why?
5. Are you letting endurance have its perfect result?
6. How will you let endurance have its perfect result?
7. Are you completely sure that you should not fear eternity?
If not, please visit www.911GOD.org.
8. Which of the verses on fear in this lesson mean the most to you? Why?
9. When will you memorize them?
10. In your future storms, will you be more like the Disciples or like Hannah?



Answers to Study Questions

1. What did Jesus say to the sea? *"Hush, be still."*
2. What did Jesus say to the Disciples? *"Why are you afraid?"*
3. After the storm, they became afraid in a different way ... how? *They were afraid because the wind and sea obeyed Jesus.*
4. How should we react to various trials? *We should consider them joy.*
5. What sequence of benefits can come out of trials? *Endurance ... made perfect ... lacking nothing.*
6. What can we do to prevent us from sinning against God? *Treasure His Word in our hearts.*
7. What is the right response to present fear (include verses)? *Remember His words about fear, Psalm 119:11 ... actively chose to trust Him, Psalm 56:3-4.*
8. What does the fear of man bring? *A snare.*
9. What eight things happen to the one who trusts in the Lord? *Fear goes away, Psalm 56:3-4 ... he will be confident, Psalm 27:1-3 ... he will be exalted, Proverbs 29:25 ... he will be blessed, not fear when the heat rises, will grow (green leaves), will not be anxious, and will be continually fruitful, Jeremiah 17:7-8.*
10. Paraphrase the end of Jesus' words in John 14:27. *DO NOT BE AFRAID!*
11. Psalm 18:2 states that God is seven things to us ... what are they? *He is our rock, fortress, deliverer, refuge, shield, horn of salvation, and stronghold.*
12. Who is in your wave-tossed boat in the midst of your storms? *God is.*

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