

We need both saving faith and sanctifying faith. Saving faith is needed for salvation, in which we personally hold onto Christ and believe that He alone is able to save us from our sins. Sanctifying faith is exercised by believers (those who are saved already) as they go through life's journey trusting God through the different trials in their life. In Mark 4:35-41, the disciples failed to exercise their sanctifying faith. Like them, we too will sometimes fail to exercise our faith in God. However, we must still strive to always exercise this God-given faith.

1.     The Test of Faith (Mark 4:35-37)

In Mark 4:35, Jesus told the disciples, “*Let us pass over unto the other side,*” i.e. to the other of the Sea of Galilee. He deliberately put them in that situation so that they would experience the storm, but He also chose to be present with them on the ship during the storm.

Tests can come in the form of difficulties or troubles, sickness or loss. To pass, we must trust God amidst those difficulties. God orchestrates the troubles that we have to go through. In the process of passing the test, our faith is strengthened and we can be drawn closer to God. Just as our physical bodies need to be exercised, we need to exercise our faith in order to be strengthened spiritually. While we go through the tests, we must remember that God is with us in the midst of the troubles, and that He will never leave or forsake us. When going through troubles, let us pause and see our tests from God's perspective. Let us not murmur or complain. Let us not sin in order to avoid the troubles God sends.

2.     The External Response of a Lack of Faith (Mark 4:38-40)

When the storm came, instead of trusting Jesus, the disciples accused Him of not caring for them. They knew who Jesus is. But they could not reconcile what they were experiencing around them with what they knew about Him. They interpreted their experience (the storm) without God in the picture. They failed to see that the Creator of the Universe was with them in the ship. Mark 4:39 says, “*And he arose, and rebuked the wind, and said unto the sea, Peace* (i.e. hush, be silent), *be still* (i.e. muzzle/close your mouth). *And the wind ceased, and there was a great calm.*” The disciples saw the winds and waves obeyed Jesus immediately.

Jesus rebuked His disciples, “*Why are ye so fearful* (i.e. timid, feeling dreadful as a result of faithlessness)?...” (Mark 4:40). Their expressed/outward fear was a result of their inward faithlessness.

Like the disciples, we also complain and fear when we experience trials. And we may even think we do not deserve to experience trials.

3.     The Result of a Lack of Faith (Mark 4:41)

The disciples knew Christ's power mentally, not experientially. After seeing His power, they feared Him greatly. If they had this realisation before or during the test, they would have passed the test and be blessed. Instead, they lost the opportunity for their faith to grow, and be drawn closer to God.

God will bring tests every day as we go through life's journey. As we pass the tests that God sends into our lives, we will grow in our faith. We will be drawn closer to Him as we experience Him helping us out of our difficulties, in ways we least expect. We must not be blind to the presence of God in our lives.

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