

TOPIC: A DISCIPLE IN THE MIDST OF A STORM

SPEAKER : SP Daniel Foo

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SUMMARY OF MESSAGE

Mark 4:35-41

In this world, there will be storms but in Jesus, we will have perfect peace (John 16:33b). The questions that often arise in the midst of these are, "Is this the judgment of God?", "Did God cause it?" Yet, from the totality of scriptures, such has nothing to do with God but has everything to do with the fallen nature of Man (Romans 3:23, 6:23a).

In Exodus 33:19, there are four things God proclaimed:

- 1) Goodness of God
- 2) Mercy of God
- 3) Grace of God
- 4) Compassion of God.

The reason why we are not experiencing His goodness is because we have fallen short. The believer whose faith is shaken and chooses to abandon God, will in turn forfeit the grace of God.

God has placed **laws/principles** of life on earth which He himself will abide by. These laws are **perfect and complete** in and by themselves, and do not require God to intervene. These laws of life, health and finance affect the both the believers and the unbelievers. Man will reap what he sows (Galatians 6:7). With this understanding, we see that the current global financial turmoil and meltdown has nothing to do with God. It happens because of excessive borrowing. It is also a consequence of greed and covetousness that has come with the availability of easy credit. The market will find itself locked in positions of over-selling or over-buying.

God is **not the source** of all wickedness and calamities. E.g. He does not allow us to contract cancer to make us learn a lesson. The judgment of God already fell on Jesus at Calvary. What happens on earth now is simply the principle of sowing and reaping. Everything we sow, we reap. We are living in the dispensation of grace, not of judgment (John 5:22). Jesus Himself came not to judge the world but that the world might be saved through Him (John 12:47-48).

In the last days, there will be increased disasters and lawlessness in the world, as foretold by Jesus in synoptic gospels (Mt 24, Mk 13, Luke 21). On earth, there will be distress of nations and the powers of the heavens will be shaken (Haggai 2, Heb 12). Just as what is not of God will be shaken, everything not anchored in Him will also be shaken. The rains will fall, the floods will rise; some will struggle while others will drown. These apply to both the believers and the unbelievers.

What defines a disciple?

He is a learner and a follower of the Lord Jesus Christ. A disciple seeks to learn, obey and apply the Word of God into his life.

What must a disciple do?

1. Pray!

Recognize that God only intervenes when His people pray because. God has given Man responsibility over his earth. We are to pray that God may send His angels to give us the ideas to tackle the situations facing us. Our prayers are the altar in which we connect our earth (health, savings, issues etc) to God.

2. Connect!

It is important to **connect** with the Living God before, during and after the storm. The true test in discipleship is our response in times where we are subjected to trials and storms. We need to anchor ourselves in the Word so that we will stand firm in these times of shaking. God will not forsake those who hold on to Him.

3. Release anxieties!

A disciple will face anxiety, and he has to go to God directly to find his peace (Phil 4:6, 7). The Word of God is either a reality or mere theory to us. The Lord has called us not to worry but to cast our cares on Him. This is where the rubber hits the road - *Are we willing to release our burdens to Him? Or do we still worry and hold on to our fears?*

4. Seek wisdom!

In every situation, the disciple must seek the **wisdom** of God for that **specific** situation. E.g. wisdom on how and where to cut losses, what to do with issues in marriage and lifestyle choices, etc. Regardless of the situation, each of us needs to make wise decisions. A disciple also needs to seek the **favor** of God so as to have a clear mind. As King David had his counselors, we too are to pray for God to send his Hushais into our lives.

What is a disciple called to be?

1. Blessing.

God has given us the two things that we might reign and rule in Christ:

- (a) The gift of righteousness. Whenever we feel guilty, our faith leaks and we might end up shipwrecked. Hence, we need to appropriate His righteousness so as to have confidence in having a right standing in Christ.
- (b) The abundance of grace. As His grace is bountifully given, we need to stretch out and receive it.

2. Light.

A disciple will shine in the midst of darkness around him (Mk 5:16). We can shine through acts of kindness, by being able to offer counsel, a word in season, a prayer or by sharing the gospel.

3. Salt.

3 things about being 'salt' to others:

- (a) to **preserve** the harmony
- (b) bring **peace** to the troubled soul
- (c) **strengthen** the hands of the feeble and needy.

In Mark 4:35, Jesus wanted to cross over to the land of the Gerasenes. Despite a storm that ensued during His journey out at sea, it did not deter him from reaching the place and immediately restoring a man to sanity. This man then went about telling others what Jesus did for him. Similarly, a disciple needs to have his eyes fixed on the Lord's assignment, in spite of storms and deterrents. He has to stay focused on his ministry and destiny.

In the end times, the love of many will become cold but he who perseveres to the end will be saved. Jesus is looking for disciples who will finish well. Given that there will be storms, what do we do and how are we to respond when they come?

4) A disciple of Christ is to be a blessing to others. This week, on the practical side, you may want to bless someone in some tangible ways. It may be a visitation, a call, an email/ sms offering encouragement, a helping hand or simply a prayer for someone. Think of 3 people you may like to bless this week.

5) Open sharing. Share other things that you might have gleaned from the message.

No condemnation, no comparison, no competition but only encouragement...