

Psalm 107:1 and 8

¹ Give thanks to the Lord, for he is good; his love endures forever.

⁸ Let them give thanks to the Lord for his unfailing love and his wonderful deeds for mankind,

John 6:16 - 21 Jesus Walks on the Water

¹⁶ When evening came, his disciples went down to the lake, ¹⁷ where they got into a boat and set off across the lake for Capernaum. By now it was dark, and Jesus had not yet joined them. ¹⁸ A strong wind was blowing and the waters grew rough. ¹⁹ When they had rowed about three or four miles, they saw Jesus approaching the boat, walking on the water; and they were frightened. ²⁰ But he said to them, "It is I; don't be afraid." ²¹ Then they were willing to take him into the boat, and immediately the boat reached the shore where they were heading.

***Images of Ships** - You will see on the left showing a ship with calm sea and on the right showing a ship in the middle of a storm. Life is a like ship...there are days where we face the calm water and there are days where we face stormy weather. Our Father knows that we will be faced with storms in our lives and through the disciples' stories in four gospels we can learn how to overcome the storms in life.

1. Accept Jesus Christ

As we look through today's scripture, the first thing we must do to overcome the storm is to accept Jesus Christ as our savior.

John 6:21

²¹ Then they were willing to take him into the boat, and immediately the boat reached the shore where they were heading.

Mark 6:51

⁵¹ Then he climbed into the boat with them, and the wind died down. They were completely amazed,

The same story is mentioned in John 6 and Mark 6. Twelve disciples with years of experiences as fishermen couldn't fight the storm. Similarly, America is one of the strongest countries around the world, but the chaos we went through last year shows power and knowledge are not enough.

The Seven Churches of Revelation were seven major churches of Early Christianity, as mentioned in the New Testament Book of Revelation. All of them were located in Asia Minor, present-day Turkey. According to Revelation 1:11, on the Greek island of Patmos, Jesus Christ instructs John of Patmos to: "Write on a scroll what you see and send it to the seven churches: to Ephesus, and to Smyrna, and to Pergamum, and to Thyatira, and to Sardis, and to Philadelphia, and to Laodicea." When we look at chapter 3, Jesus Christ asks the Church of Laodicea to be earnest and repent. Same for all of us, He asks all of us, our families, our churches, and this nation to truly accept the Lord and believe in Jesus Christ the Almighty Power.

Revelations 3:20

²⁰ Here I am! I stand at the door and knock. If anyone hears my voice and opens the door, I will come in and eat with that person, and they with me.

*Story of Takeo Iwahashi - While Takeo Iwahashi was attending Waseda University for Science and Technology, he lost his eyesight. While facing this storm, he tried several attempts to commit suicide. Each time he attempted suicide, he was found by his mother or sister. Both his mother and sister had deep faith and tried to comfort him by introduced him to the Lord. He felt the love not only through his family but through the Lord. He went back to school for the blind and became a professor at Kanseo University. After that he received a doctorate at Edinburgh University. He gave his testimony at Soongsill University in 1934 - "I can't see you nor the hall I am standing currently. I only see darkness. However, inside me there is a light. This light came to me when I found Our Father and His Son Jesus Christ.

2. Pray

Aside from accepting Jesus Christ as Our Savior, what must we do to overcome the storm? Let us look at the scripture again.

John 6:19a

¹⁹ When they had rowed about three or four miles, they saw Jesus approaching the boat, walking on the water; and they were frightened.

Matthew 14:23

²³ After he had dismissed them, he went up on a mountainside by himself to pray. Later that night, he was there alone,

In the middle of the storm, what do the disciples do? They row...but not one of them called out to Jesus. Jesus was about 3.5 miles away to pray in the mountainside and had to come to the disciples to save them. This teaches us - when you are in the middle of the storm, don't just row but pray and cry out to the Lord.

There are three different types of people when they are faced with life's storm:

- They row only
- They pray only
- They pray and row at the same time

If you are sick, which would be better?

- Just take medicine and see what happens
- Just pray to Jesus for healing
- Take the medicine and pray to Jesus that the medicine will help heal quickly

When we are in the middle of the storm, we tend to panic and just row. We need to stop and ask ourselves, "Have I just been rowing?" As we reach out to the Lord, He as Our Father will listen and answer our prayers.

*Story of Widowed Mother and Six Children - There was a mother of six children who recently lost her husband. She was feeding her kids the last loaf of bread for dinner. The next morning, they sat around the table with empty plates. They started to pray to the Lord for something to eat. Few moments later, there was a knock on the table. A baker was stuck due to the heavy snow. He needed play to stay to keep him warm. They allow him to come into the house. He sees the empty plates and asks, "Do you need bread?" The mother says, "Yes, but I don't have any money to buy bread." The baker heads back to his truck and brings seven loaves of bread. As they were sitting down to eat, one of the children says to the mother, "I prayed to God for bread and God heard my prayer!" The rest of the children said, "I prayed to God for bread also!" Just like these children, we too are sons and daughters of God and when we pray...He will hear us. The Lord will find a way to help you.

*Story of Welder - There was a welder living in Massachusetts. He was working at one of construction sites to install sewer pipes. One day, while working alone, the soil collapsed and he was completely buried. Fortunately, he was wearing his welding mask so he was able to breathe. However, he knew the sun would fall soon and there is no way he will survive the night. He started to pray, "God save me..." The welder's friend came back from his job as a truck driver and all of sudden started to get worried about his friend. The friend went to check the construction site and didn't see anyone...but all of sudden he sees a hand sticking out of soil pile. He reached out and pull his friend out of the soil.

When we are faced with a storm, we start crying and can't fall asleep. Remember that God is always there for us and will protect us. We are His children and He is Our Father who will hear us when we cry out to Him.

3. Believe

As we go back to the scripture, when the disciples were in the middle of the storm, it states that they were all frightened. Why? Because they believed they were left alone in the middle of the storm. They were afraid no one would come to rescue them. Just as young children cry when they do not see their parents, they crying because they were afraid. Hearing their cries, Jesus came to them and said following:

John 6:19b - 20

¹⁹ *When they had rowed about three or four miles, they saw Jesus approaching the boat, walking on the water; and they were frightened.* ²⁰ *But he said to them, "It is I; don't be afraid."*

Matthew 8:26

²⁶ *He replied, "You of little faith, why are you so afraid?" Then he got up and rebuked the winds and the waves, and it was completely calm.*

Matthew 14:31

³¹ *Immediately Jesus reached out his hand and caught him. "You of little faith," he said, "why did you doubt?"*

Mark 5:36

³⁶ *Overhearing what they said, Jesus told him, "Don't be afraid; just believe."*

My brothers and sisters, know that you are NOT *alone*. So do NOT be *afraid*. When we look at Act 12, we see Peter getting captured by King Herod and sent to prison. While in prison, instead of crying or being afraid...he is able to sleep. Why? He believed in Jesus Christ and reached out to Him...most importantly he believed in the Lord that he will be saved. The Lord gave him the strength to stay strong while in prison and is able to escape.

*Story of An Elder - A small church was under construction to provide a new place for worship. It took the church members entire day to prep the base structures. All of sudden black clouds came over and looks like rain will start to pour down. The pastor and church members started to get worried. One of the elders came back from home and brought small futon. He laid the futon in the middle of the site and started to pray to the Lord. What happened? That night the rain didn't fall and the site was perfectly fine. All the church members believed that this was due to the elder who prayed all night. My fellow brothers and sisters, whatever the storm may bring...know that God loves you and you must believe in Him.

*Story of A Couple - There was a young couple on a boat. An unexpected storm arrives and starts to shake the small boat. The frightened wife turns to her husband who was not bothered by what was happening. She asked him, "Aren't you scared?" He replied, "No." The wife, not understanding her husband, pulled out a small knife, and asked him again, "Aren't you scared what I might do with the knife?" He replied, "No..." He went on saying..."Yes, I would be scared if the knife was in the hands of a thief. But the knife is in the hands of someone I love. I know you will not hurt me. I deeply believe that this storm is in the hands of Our Father who loves us. After hearing this, the wife held his hand and returned a smile.

Just as it is written in **Mark 5:36**... *"Don't be afraid; just believe."*

In Summary

To overcome the storm, we must...

1. **Accept** *Jesus Christ as our savior*
2. **Pray**
3. **Believe** *and do not be afraid*