

You Can Make It

“But none of these things move me, neither count I my life dear unto myself, so that I might finish my course with joy, and the ministry, which I have received of the Lord Jesus...”

(Acts 20:24)

“...endure afflictions...”

(2 Timothy 4:5)

“I have fought a good fight, I have finished my course, I have kept the faith.”

(2 Timothy 4:7)

Life as a Christian can be compared with the story in Mark 4. We hear Jesus say, “Let us pass over unto the other side.” (Verse 35) We often think that the Christian walk is going to be the easy road, free from problems and trials. When we get in the middle of the journey across, we realize that there is a “great storm.” (Verse 37) The winds and the waves begin to beat against our boat. We wonder, like the disciples, “Where is Jesus now? Is He asleep?” When we find Him in prayer, we exclaim, “Master, don’t you care that we are about to perish? Our boat is going down!” Jesus stands up in the midst of our problems and says, “Peace be still!” Once again we are left thinking, “What kind of God is this? Even the winds and the waves of our problems obey Him.”

From the story in Mark 4 we realize a number of things:

- ⇒ Jesus wants us to go over to the other side. (Read John 14:1-4)
- ⇒ He controls the storm.
- ⇒ We won’t drown.
- ⇒ Our boat will not sink.
- ⇒ He is in the boat with us.

“They that go down to the sea in ships, that do business in great waters; These see the works of the LORD, and his wonders in the deep. For he commandeth, and raiseth the stormy wind, which lifteth up the waves thereof. They mount up to the heaven, they go down again to the depths: their soul is melted because of trouble. They reel to and fro, and stagger like a drunken man, and are at their wit’s end. Then they cry unto the LORD in their trouble, and he bringeth them out of their distresses. He maketh the storm a calm, so that the waves thereof are still. Then are they glad because they be quiet; so he bringeth them unto their desired haven.” (Psalm 107:23-30)

Jesus never promised us a trouble-free life. He did say, “These things I have spoken unto you that in me ye might have peace. In the world ye shall have tribulation: but be of good cheer; I

have overcome the world.” (John 16:33) We will have problems and trials but the difference is that Jesus is there and He will help us to overcome them.

“Many are the afflictions of the righteous: but the LORD delivereth him out of them all.” (Psalm 34:19)

“...Weeping may endure for a night, but joy cometh in the morning.” (Psalm 30:5)

The Bible encourages us to “...endure hardness, as a good soldier of Jesus Christ.” (2 Timothy 2:3) In fact “...he that endureth to the end shall be saved.” (Matthew 10:22) Do you remember the advice that Winston Churchill gave? “Don’t ever, ever, ever, give up!”

“...No man, having put his hand to the plough, and looking back, is fit for the kingdom of God.” (Luke 9:62)

Paul looked at the Christian life as running a race (Hebrews 12:1-2). He talked of finishing his course (Acts 20:22-24; 2 Timothy 4:7) and compared it to fighting a fight.

When John wrote to the seven churches in Revelation we repeatedly find, “...He that overcometh...” or “...to him that overcometh...” (See Revelation 2-3) In 1 John 2:13-14 we read “...Ye have overcome the wicked one....”

In Acts 27 we find another story about boats. After they had set out, a strong wind and storm arose. The people on the boat started casting the cargo overboard. The crew on the boat were so fearful that they all were fasting. Paul saw an angel who told him, “Fear not!..” (Acts 27:24) Paul promised the others that the boat would be lost but not the crew if they stayed in the boat. “...Except these abide in the ship, ye cannot be saved.” (Acts 27:31)

You will pass over to the other side (heaven) if you stay in the ship (the church).

Watty Piper wrote an interesting children’s book entitled *The Little Engine that Could*. This book has been a children’s favorite for more than fifty years. Adults can also learn a valuable lesson from this book. A little train wanted to climb the mountain to take toys to the children on the other side. It needed an engine to pull it over the mountain. First a lovely new engine was asked to help but refused because it only pulled passenger trains full of people. Refusing to give up, the little train petitioned a freight engine. The freight engine refused because it pulled trains full of big machines and was tired. The little train, determined to make the journey over the mountain, inquired of a rusty old engine, “Please, kind engine, won’t you pull us over the mountain?” The rusty old engine was exhausted and said, “I’m too old and very tired. I just cannot. I cannot. I cannot!”

Finally the little train saw a little blue engine. It didn't have much strength, but the little train asked anyway, "Little engine, can you help us over the mountain?" To this the little engine replied, "I've never been over the mountain and I do not have a lot of strength. However, I will try!" As the little engine pulled the little train up the mountain he repeated, "I think I can! I think I can! I think I can!" As he slowly went over the top of the mountain he started saying, "I thought I could! I thought I could! I thought I could!"

Those that think "I can!" and those who think "I can't!" are usually both right.

The other engines in the above story had the same disease as ten of the spies in Numbers 13 who said "We cannot!" But other two spies had a different attitude and said, "We can! Let us do it at once!"

The Israelites looked at Goliath and said, "We cannot!" David said, "I cannot, but God can!" (See 1 Samuel 17)

**"I can do all things through Christ which strengtheneth me."
(Philippians 4:13)**

John Maxwell, in his book *The Success Journey*, relates a story that took place in Mexico City in 1968; the year they had the Olympics there. An Ethiopian won the marathon race. The crowd was thrilled and cheered for him as he ran through the finish line. The crowd lingered, waiting for the last of the runners to come through. It was getting dark and one by one they started leaving the stadium. As they were getting up to leave, they heard the sirens and turned to see one last runner of the twenty six-mile race. This runner, from Tanzania, was wounded and had his leg bandaged. He continued limping, in obvious pain. The crowd was overwhelmed and loudly cheered when he passed over the finish line. Reporters asked him why he didn't quit, since he knew that he had already lost the race. He said, "My country did not send me to Mexico City to start the race, they sent me to finish the race."

"...The race is not to the swift, nor the battle to the strong..." (Ecclesiastes 9:11)

Max Lucado relates in one of his books, how he was told that in the filming of *Ben Hur*, the main character had a problem learning how to drive a chariot. This man was expected to drive the chariot in a race. He practiced and practiced but still was concerned. He explained his doubts to his Director, "I think I can drive the chariot, but I'm not sure that I can win the race."

The Director responded, "You just stay in the race and I will make sure that you win."

That is much like it is with Jesus. He expects us to stay in the race, and he will make sure that we win, and reach the other side. In Jesus, we are all WINNERS!

God Said, "Go On."

God said, "Go on! Don't quit!
Your work is not in vain.
I'll always go with you
To strengthen and sustain."

I said, "God, I'm convinced
That I don't walk alone,
But there are days when I
Lack courage to go on."

God said, "Go on! Don't quit!
Remember, I love you;
Victory is just ahead,
AND I WILL SEE YOU THROUGH."
Perry Tanksley

**God Said, "Go On!"
Victory Is Ahead
YOU CAN MAKE IT!!**

Study Questions

1. How can the Christian life be compared to the story in Mark 4? _____

2. What can we learn from this story? _____

3. In Psalm 107 what did those in the ship do to be delivered out of their troubles? _____

4. What does 2 Timothy 2:3 tell us to do? _____

5. How did Paul look at the Christian life? _____

6. When John wrote to the seven churches in Revelation, what did he repeatedly say? _____

