

The Other Side

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Mark 4:35-41 (NASB) On that day, when evening came, He said to them, "Let's go over to the other side." ³⁶ After dismissing the crowd, they took Him along with them in the boat, just as He was; and other boats were with Him. ³⁷ And a fierce gale of wind developed, and the waves were breaking over the boat so much that the boat was already filling with water. ³⁸ And yet Jesus Himself was in the stern, asleep on the cushion; and they woke Him and said to Him, "Teacher, do You not care that we are perishing?" ³⁹ And He got up and rebuked the wind and said to the sea, "Hush, be still." And the wind died down and it became perfectly calm. ⁴⁰ And He said to them, "Why are you afraid? Do you still have no faith?" ⁴¹ They became very much afraid and said to one another, "Who, then, is this, that even the wind and the sea obey Him?"

The focus here seems to be on Jesus calming the storm. However, notice the very first sentence in this story. "On that day, when evening came, He said to them, 'Let's go over to the other side.'" Jesus spoke a direct, personal word to His disciples that they were going over to the other side of the lake. Please pay attention to what I just said. Jesus spoke a very clear direction to His disciples that they were going to the other side of the lake. And, by the way, notice He was going in the boat with them. Jesus knew there was a demon-possessed man over there and He was going to take His disciples to the other side of the lake and minister to this man and set him free. So, he told his twelve men, "WE ARE GOING TO THE OTHER SIDE."

When Jesus speaks personally and clearly like that, He is not kidding. If He said it, He means it and He will do it. Now, on the way over to the other side, a fierce storm blew up on the lake. Picture this with me. The water was actually overflowing the boat. Well, the disciples became very concerned they were going to drown and not make it.

Have you ever felt like that? Has water ever started filling up your "boat" in life?

Of course, Jesus knew what He had already told them and therefore was comfortably sleeping in the stern of the boat. Did the disciples stand on or remember the words that Jesus clearly had given them which were "LET'S GO OVER TO THE OTHER SIDE?" NO! Instead, they started to panic. Those 12 boys got their eyes on their circumstances, their surroundings, and their immediate problem. They took their eyes off His Word and what He said. They actually woke Jesus up and asked Him if He cared that they were perishing.

Jesus promptly asked them, "where is your faith?" Now, here is the key that many people miss and never notice. This key is a major point which the Lord has shown me. It isn't that Jesus was upset that they didn't have faith to calm the storm. What was Jesus really asking them?

He was wondering why they simply didn't have the faith to believe in His initial WORDS on the shore before the trip that THEY WERE GOING TO THE OTHER SIDE. Has the Lord ever spoken something to your heart or done something amazing in your life and you just simply didn't

remember it or think on it? Then, life hits you smack in the face with a storm and it “seems” like God has gone to sleep?

Let me further illustrate this point with a major event in my life which I have walked through for approximately 2 years. I have been a Born Again, Spirit-filled Christian for well over 40 years. During that time, my wife Tammy and I have learned much about God’s Word, His ways, Worshiping Him, and how much Jesus loves us. In January of 2021, I started to have bad swelling in my ankles and legs. I was retaining fluid...bad. I knew something was wrong and felt worried about it. After attempting to hide this from my family with larger, boot cut jeans and larger shoes, my wife saw me coming around the corner of the bed one evening in my shorts and was horrified.

She quickly convinced me to go see our family doctor. What would I do without a loving, caring wife? After some initial blood tests came back with very strange and disturbing results, my family doctor sent me to a kidney specialist who is referred to as a Nephrologist. Honestly, I was nervous and scared, even though I knew the Lord was with me and that Jesus had healed me on the Cross. Quite frankly, I did not want to go through any “medical procedures.” Of course, I listened to my family and my doctor and went to the Nephrologist.

By the way, it is very important for me to mention at this point that doctors and their help to us is from Jesus too. Every good and perfect gift is from the Lord, according to scripture – whether it is supernatural or natural via doctors and medicine.

After much testing, more bloodwork and an uncomfortable kidney biopsy, I was diagnosed with a kidney disease called Membranous Nephropathy. The basic idea is that it is an auto-immune disease in which my immune system viewed my kidneys as an enemy and was attacking them. I found out that if I hadn’t gone to the Nephrologist, I was only a couple of weeks away from losing kidney function and going on dialysis. Well, praise the Lord...Jesus had directed me to see the doctor just in time.

Intense medical treatment began in March of 2021 which included very strong oral steroids, chemotherapy drugs, intravenous infusions of extremely strong steroids, and 2 infusions of a very strong immune-suppressant medication. In addition, I had to take several other medications and practically eliminate sodium from my diet because the disease was negatively impacting my blood pressure, cholesterol, protein levels, and water retention. I lost a tremendous amount of weight, became very weak, and lost much of my hair. In addition, I contracted terrible pneumonia as a result of all this and was very sick. The treatments were very difficult and the uncertainty about my future health plagued my wife’s and my thoughts daily. Honestly folks, this became difficult – for both Tammy and me. I went through moments of fear, worry, tears, & confusion – even though I have been a follower of Jesus for many, many years.

I knew there were promises in the Scriptures about the healing power of Jesus. But I desperately needed the Lord to speak something very personal to my heart, just like He did to His disciples before they got in the boat. I knew that me grabbing ahold of this kind of personal word from Him could change everything. I continued to passionately pursue God about my situation. One day, right around the time of my official kidney diagnosis, I was slowly walking and praying. The Spirit of God whispered to my mind in a still, small voice while I was walking. This is what I thought in my mind and heart that He spoke to me – “Brian, you are fearfully and wonderfully made.” It was a quick thought and I recognized it as a Scripture from Psalms 139. In fact, let’s take a look at it on the screen.

Psalm 139:14 in the NIV reads, “I praise you because I am fearfully and wonderfully made; Your works are wonderful, I know that full well.” I was blessed that this Bible verse came to my mind so strongly and knew immediately that the Lord was speaking to my heart about my physical body. I have learned over the years to speak His Word in order to grab ahold of His promises. So, while walking, I just kept saying, “I am fearfully and wonderfully made, I am fearfully and wonderfully made.” I said it over and over.

When I got home from my short walk, I decided to look up the Scripture I just referred to (Psalm 139:14). I decided to read the other verses which surrounded verse 14. The verse that caught my attention was Psalm 139:13, the verse just before verse 14 which I was quoting during my walk.

Let me read the first few words of verse 13: “For You formed my inward partsⁱ;...” (NASB). I was reading this verse on my phone Bible app and noticed a small italic mark next to the words “inward parts”. Being curious, I tapped on the italic mark and this is what popped up on my phone:

“The literal translation of the word INWARD PARTS is KIDNEYS.”

I was stunned! I was sitting on the couch at the time and began to cry uncontrollably. My wife asked what was wrong. I told her, “Honey – the Lord just spoke something clearly to my heart.”

Had the Lord actually placed a Hebrew Word in the Bible just for me and my condition? Was He trying to tell me that He has formed a perfect kidney for me? Was He speaking a specific word to me like He did to His disciples that “they were going to the other side?”

I could hardly believe that when He spoke to me while I was walking, He would guide me to a Scripture that literally matched my EXACT CONDITION. I have said it many times in the past but now I knew it for sure. There is an answer in God’s Word, the Bible, for everything we face in this life. He has our human condition completely covered. I knew that was a DIRECT, PERSONAL word from God, just for me at that moment. I held on to that scripture with everything I had in me. In fact, I did further research on that same verse and found out that the word “formed” in Psalm 139:13 had a deeper meaning of “to procure.” To procure means to purchase. So, when I

looked at Psalm 139:13 using the expanded definitions I had discovered, God was saying to me “I have purchased for you a kidney.” Where did God purchase anything for me? He did it through His Son Jesus on the cross when He shed His precious blood for me. Hallelujah!

I had discovered that Jesus not only paid for my sin at Calvary but also paid the price (or procured for me) a brand-new kidney with the high price of His blood. I knew that I knew He had spoken directly and personally to me. Did I get to stop my doctor-ordered medical treatments and the difficult medications? NO! But, I knew God had specifically spoken a very clear word to my heart. Additionally, my wife and I came to the realization that the Lord had led me to my specific kidney doctor and that Jesus had me on the road to complete recovery.

By the way, when I just stated that I held on to that Scripture in Psalm 139:13 with everything I had, I mean that I would say this Scripture to myself as many times per day as I thought of it. I even received a gift from a co-worker at the High School where I teach of this leather bracelet I am wearing around my wrist. Psalm 139:13 is inscribed on it. Every morning when I put it on, I read the verse out loud to myself and thank God that He spoke so clearly to me and has healed my kidney.

Along with this disease called “Membranous Nephropathy” comes an antibody which is released into your bloodstream and usually takes 1-2 years for the intense treatment to destroy. This antibody is a strange, foreign substance in the body which attacks the normal kidney function and begins to make other organs malfunction as well. I am here to tell you that after only 2 months of treatment, I had a special blood test performed which detects this antibody.

This rogue, destructive antibody had completely disappeared out of my system – in 2 months. The kidney specialist told me that this rarely goes away so quickly. C’mon. GIVE THE LORD PRAISE WITH ME. We know Who took that antibody away...Jesus did it quickly. I still had to continue my treatment and take medications, but my kidney functions began to improve from then forward and continue to improve as I stand here on this platform and share with you. I just went to the doctor in August. This is about 2 years from the initial onset of the kidney disease.

The doctor’s exact words to my wife and me were “for the first time I have excellent news...this disease is burning itself out.” This is even better than remission. “Burning out” means gone! The doc said that my bloodwork numbers have improved 90-95% from when the original diagnoses was made. And, much of this improvement took place after the medical treatments were over.

God’s Word is totally true. That word He spoke to my heart about my kidneys from Psalm 139 was completely 100% accurate and came to pass. My weight is back, my hair came back, I have my strength back, and I feel fantastic!! My wife and I are so thankful for what He has done.

I now have a new appreciation and compassion for people who have chronic issues they face – chronic health problems, chronic marriage issues, chronic financial problems...just fill in the

blank. I want you to know how I understand how vast and difficult the various needs are which are represented just in this room this morning. However, I want you to know that the Lord has a PERSONAL word for you TODAY. I am not special. The Holy Spirit wants to illuminate the Word of God in your life right now as I am speaking to you. I stand here healthy before you this morning because God very personally spoke to me and I held onto that word with every ounce of faith I had and followed through with everything the doctor said. And God gave Tammy and me the strength to do it. This is Thanksgiving week. And I am so thankful for the peace, grace, and Word of God.

The Word of God has all our answers. How do I know? Because the Bible states that Jesus is the Word and the author of our faith. He wrote His Word, the Bible, to communicate the only TRUTH there is. There are a lot of other messages out there but we need to hear from God and hold onto the TRUTH. The key here is HOLDING ON to this word you receive from Him with everything you have within you, no matter what the storm looks like! Here are the 3 important actions for you to take:

1. **Simply ask Him to speak to you.** (Jer. 33:3, "Call to me and I will answer you, and will tell you great and hidden things that you have not known." ESV)

Have you asked God to speak to you personally? He has already spoken in His Word. But just like the disciples in the boat, we forget what He has said.

2. **Spend time in the Word so He "can" speak to you.** (Ps 1:2, "But they delight in the law [Word] of the Lord, meditating on it day and night." NLT)

If you aren't spending time in the Scriptures, there is nothing in your memory bank for the Holy Spirit to draw out and use to speak to your heart. Your quiver has to be full of arrows. The disciples in the boat spent time with Jesus. They just had to start listening to what He was saying, So we all have to do that too...take the time to get the Word of God into your heart.

3. **Hold on to what He said by rehearsing it over and over after He speaks to you.** (Deut. 6:7, "Repeat them [His Words] again and again to your children. Talk about them when you are at home and when you are on the road, when you are going to bed and when you are getting up." NLT)

Whenever doubt floods your mind in what you are dealing with, say out loud what God has promised you personally! Do you think I never have a doubt? Of course I do...I am human. But, I respond to those doubts with what God has spoken to me personally.

What is "the other side" for you? A healthy body? A saved soul? A family member coming back to Christ? A financial miracle or a new job? A new ministry? A spouse? To get better at

your grades? To get along with your family? To have peace in your mind? God has a personal word for you. GET EXCITED ABOUT IT! Hold on to it! If He has said YOU ARE GOING TO THE OTHER SIDE, it doesn't matter what storm comes your way.... He will get you to the place of new life He has for you. All of you here this morning and those watching online, determine to get ahead of God this morning. He wants to speak very personally to you if you seek Him and listen earnestly with your spiritual ears - He wants to take you to "THE OTHER SIDE."