

The numbers of reports of people using 5-minute STS stories in the market place of life are astounding. This phone story detailed below gives you an idea of how God uses his Word to touch people when they most need Him.

Phone Story Travels

A heart-warming example of what we LOVE to see God do through conversational use of His Word occurred at our headquarters.

About a year ago, one of our staff met a Christian businessman over the phone in the US. He is a friend of an STS lead instructor, and had heard some STS stories done in a family setting by that instructor. Based on that experience, and what the businessman read on our STS site, he decided to help host a workshop.

Because of this, he and the staffer were getting to know one another during various phone calls as he arranged to host. Interestingly, he had been very slow over time to get back to us. Finally, on a call, he spilled out why. It seems this very committed Christian had been hit with multiple family deaths and a series of personal disasters in that past year, each enough to bring a person down.

His most recent disaster was due to a negligent landlord who had not paid taxes on the buildings he owned (and this businessman rented one of his buildings!) Because of that, this business man was going to lose one of his best stores. As well, a business partner had embezzled a large sum from this struggling businessman. So bank auditors were due in 5 days, probably coming to close down everything!

After this battle-weary believer shared all of his past year's struggles over the phone, including the most recent financial challenges, the staffer was stunned. Certainly, the staffer had no solutions, but she knew God did. She told the man on the phone a few verses in detail out of the story from Mark 4.

“What you just told about reminds me of the time when Jesus asked the disciples to take Him and their boat over to the other side of the Sea of Galilee. Then a bad storm came up, the boat was filling with water and Jesus was asleep in the back of the boat with His head on a pillow! Then the disciples came and woke up Jesus.

“And the Bible story goes exactly like this. The disciples asked, ‘Master, don't you care that we are dying?’ Then Jesus got up, reprimanded the storm, and said to the sea, ‘Peace be still.’ And the wind ceased, and there was a great calm. Then Jesus asked the disciples, ‘Why are you so afraid? How is it that you have no faith?’ Then the terrified disciples talked among themselves asking, ‘What kind of a man is this that even the wind and sea obey him?’”

Then, she asked this businessman multiple questions, to which he responded each time. These are questions she asked:

"You remember in this story, when the boat was filling with water, how Jesus questioned the disciples saying, 'How is it you have no faith?' Wait, I have a question. How dangerous is this situation?"

"So, if you say it is life threatening, I am just wondering. What are the disciples supposed to have faith in?"

"Jesus,' you say?"

"So do they know Jesus can't drown? Or could Jesus have drowned? Come to think of it, was Jesus capable of dying?"

"Right. Agreed. I guess we can even see in the story that it wasn't God's plan for Jesus to die then, because Jesus didn't die then. I am thinking that the disciples wouldn't have known that. Well, that is really strange. The disciples are about ready to drown! What in the world were they supposed to have faith in?"

"Yes, I see that too. This is unusual."

"By the way, did you see the disciples viewing Jesus as any kind of a resource when the storm came up? I mean, do you see them acting like Jesus can do anything to help them?"

"Yes, I would agree with you on that, when you say they didn't call on Jesus to help sail or bail. But then, did they call on Jesus to do some miracle, like lifting the boat up and putting it at the shore or stopping the storm?"

"No? Right, I see that too. So Jesus commands the wind to stop, and the waves to be calm. Okay, here's a thought. Maybe we can figure something from what the disciples said after Jesus stops the storm. Remember how they asked each other, 'What kind of man is this, that the wind and sea obey him?' Do you think that might indicate what they do and don't think of Jesus? Do you see something there?"

"Hey, that's good. You say that the disciples didn't think of Jesus as someone who could help as a seaman, but then when Jesus stopped the storm, they were surprised and terrified."

"In the story, with Jesus being asleep with His head on a pillow in the back of the boat when they were in trouble, could that sort of show how much He was helping?"

"Yes, I see that too. It sure doesn't look like Jesus is doing anything."

"When the disciples asked, 'Master, don't you care that we are going to die?' does that indicate what the disciples thought Jesus was doing by sleeping?"

"Well once again, I agree. They seem to be thinking that because Jesus wasn't doing anything, that it seems like Jesus is not caring. So are we getting a feeling about what the disciples think of Jesus?"

“Yes, I see that. It seems like they are followers of Jesus, but they are not sure about His care and what He can do. But, wait a minute, by the end of the story, what kind of concern, and what kind of power does Jesus show?”

“Oh wow. You are right! That is good! Jesus did help, and in a way that showed power beyond what the disciples could comprehend. I am just thinking. The crossing of the sea in this story began when Jesus said to the disciples, 'Let's go to the other side.' So, I am wondering. Could that statement have anything to do with other ways the disciples could have approached Jesus when they woke him and asked, 'Don't you care?' And said, 'We are going to die.'”

“Totally. I see that! The disciples could have remembered that Jesus had said they were headed to the other side. So they could have asked, and as you said, could have asked sooner and not been so sure they were going to die. Oh by the way, had Jesus abandoned the disciples? I mean were they alone?”

All along, up to this point, the businessman had been easily talking about the story and seeing a lot in it about the disciples. But all of a sudden, there was silence on the phone line. Notice. The staffer had only been talking about the story. No personal applications had been suggested. But she sensed that God was delivering His message to the businessman.

The man spoke. “Just because I do not see what God is doing, does not mean I am alone. Jesus told the disciples, 'Let's go to the other side.' They had something to go on, Jesus' Word! He's gonna take me through this. I may lose the business, but I will make it, and He is with me.”

She responded, “Well that was around a 5-minute STS. It is amazing how God gave you something from the story and I didn't really say that application. It's like that with God's Word. They talked a few more minutes and that was the end of the call.”

Afterwards, all of the office staff prayed about the upcoming audit. We couldn't stand it. Two days after the scheduled audit, the staffer phoned the man to see what had happened.

“No results yet,” he said. But he shared how during the audit, the wife of the bank president came into the store and made a huge purchase, and it was done in the sight line of the auditor and bank officer! “But that's not the miracle,” he explained. “It's that the five days before the audit have been the most peaceful days of my life. Jesus is with me. He will take me to the other side, whatever that is.”

We did hear later that the audit was favorable, and he is still in business.

That was two months ago. Yesterday on the phone, the businessman gave an update. “You don't have to convince me on STS. Through that little bit of a story, God touched me to the core. You don't know how many times I have told that story like it was told to me, and then I told people what happened to me. I know I do not know how to do STS; I am looking forward to that.”

“But I have told that overseas, and to my family, and in church, and to everyone I could.

“Just last week I told it to a pastor on the phone and he started crying and said 'I have to hang up now. I have to talk to God.’”

The staffer commented, “If God spoke and the world came into existence, then we need not be surprised that just a few verses from God's recorded Word, listened to well, can touch the lives of many today.”

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