

Worship guide

Scripture

Focal text

Mark 4:35-41

Supplemental texts:

2 Corinthians 3:17-18

Psalms 107:1, 23-32

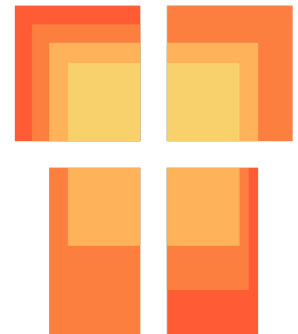
Jonah 1:1-17

Written by Joe Sawatzky

Joe Sawatzky is a theologian and a former mission worker in South Africa.

MEETING JESUS

in sacred spaces



Stories of transformation

Introduction

Mark 4:35-41 is a story about Jesus creating sacred space, or a set-apart time, for his disciples to meet him as he truly is. Jesus begins with an invitation — “Let us go across to the other side” — to which the disciples respond by “[taking] him with them in the boat.” Jesus calls, and the disciples say “yes” to him. On the sea with Jesus, a great windstorm arises and threatens the disciples’ lives, so much so that they question Jesus’ concern for their well-being. Even so, the perilous storm presents an opportunity for Jesus to act, proving his care for the disciples. Jesus wakes up and rebukes the wind and says to the sea, “Peace! Be still!” Then the wind ceased, and there was a dead calm.” Jesus’ saving act begins a transformation in the disciples. In place of the fearful storm, they are filled with reverence for Jesus. Together, they sense that their “teacher” is someone more — “Who then is this, that even the wind and the sea obey him?” Their faith was not yet complete, but by following Jesus “to the other side,” they grew to know him more deeply. By following Jesus into sacred space, they met him anew!

Discover how the workers and partners of Mission Network are pursuing God’s mission of making sacred space for people to meet Jesus.

Children’s time

On God’s team

“For in the one Spirit we were all baptized into one body—Jews or Greeks, slaves or free.” —1 Corinthians 12:13

She raced onto the field, which was worn and dusty from soccer matches before. The score was tied 1-1 with 15 minutes remaining. The team needed Mingombo. In soccer, she was a part of something bigger than herself. But in Christ, Mingombo was a part of something bigger still.

Mingombo Bulamba (Mee-NGOHM-bo bu-LAM-bah) lives in the city of Ilebo in the Democratic Republic of Congo. Ilebo is about the size of Portland, Maine.

Last summer, Mingombo traveled seven hours to go to camp organized by the Mennonite Church in Congo. This was Mingombo's first time at camp. (There are fewer camps in Congo than the United States.) Mingombo wasn't a Christian, but she thought it would be fun to play soccer with 150 other youth.

Off the soccer field, Mingombo learned how much God loved her. Because of God's love, she wanted to follow Jesus' teachings. This means that she loves God and loves others. At the end of camp, Mingombo told her friends about her choice to follow Jesus for the rest of her life. To show this, she got baptized.

It was then that Mingombo joined something bigger than a soccer team. She joined God's team. God's team speaks all types of languages, has many beautiful colors of skin, and lives all around the world—in Congo, in the United States, and everywhere in between.

Even though Mingombo is young, she is a part of the Mennonite church in her town.

"Mennonite youth are not the church of tomorrow, but of today," Komuesa Kalunga told the youth. He is the president of the Mennonite Church of Congo.

Questions for discussion

- Have you ever been to camp? What did you do there? What did you learn?
- Why did Mingombo choose to follow Jesus?
- After choosing to follow Jesus, Mingombo chooses to help others at church. What are ways that you can help others at church or in your neighborhood?

Prayer

Dear Jesus, thank you for loving us and for welcoming us onto your team. Help us to love you more and to show your love to others. Amen.

Changing lives through sports

Read 1 Corinthians 12:4-5: "Now there are varieties of gifts, but the same Spirit; and there are varieties of services, but the same Lord."

Botswana is a beautiful country, filled with many good people. But sometimes, even good, smart, hardworking people can't find a job.

When Mothusi Kenosi looked around his home in Francistown, Botswana, it made him sad. He was sad that there were few jobs. He was sad that women and children had to make hard choices. He was sad when the choices sometimes hurt families.

So he decided to do something about it.

Mothusi didn't have many resources. But he had a dream for a better Botswana, a love for sports, and a supportive church.

That dream became the Bokgoni Sporting Club. ("Bokgoni" means potential.) The Bokgoni Sporting Club uses netball and soccer to teach young women and children. It models healthy exercise, teamwork, and helps young women to follow their dreams. They reached out to women and children because they often didn't have the opportunities that young men had.

Lesedi Kapaya is one of those young women. Before playing netball at the Bokgoni Sporting Club, she was living day-to-day, with no direction in life. "Bokgoni has taught me ... the difference between healthy and unhealthy behaviors," said Lesedi. "I feel confident standing up for myself and expressing my opinions openly. I also have learned how to treat my family and friends with more respect."

Questions for discussion

- Have you ever been a part of a team? Maybe you played sports, sang in choir, or played an instrument in band. How did the people around you change you? What are ways that you had an impact on other people?
- Church is a little bit like being on a team. Everyone is important—no matter how young—and everyone has a special gift to bring. Some people bring their musical gift, others bring their gift of friendship, or the gift of how they see the world. What are some of the gifts that you bring to your church?

Prayer

Jesus, thank you for surrounding us with a team of believers. Thank you that we can learn from and encourage each other to follow you more. Bless the Bokgoni Sporting Club and help it to continue to teach people how you would like them to live. Amen.

Sermon starters

Hans Denck, an early Anabaptist evangelist, said, "No one can truly know Christ unless one follows him in life, and no one may follow him unless one has first known him." How do you see this paradox at work in Mark 4:35-41?

What similarities and differences do you notice between Mark 4:35-41 and Jonah 1:1-17? By comparing these stories, what new insights emerge for you about Jesus and his mission?

In 2 Corinthians 3:18, the Apostle Paul speaks about transformation "from one degree of glory to another." How does this relate to the disciples' journey with Jesus in Mark 4:35-41?

Reflect on your own journey as a disciple of Jesus. Can you think of times you have spent in sacred space when you have met Jesus?

How does your church create sacred space for people to meet Jesus?

Sermon illustrations

In the following stories, consider how sacred spaces are being created. In what ways do these stories point to Jesus?

- [Youth Venture Borderlands learning tour inspires future service](#)
- ["Women and Peace" project creates sacred space for peacebuilders of faith](#)
- [Mennonites and Muslims in Burkina Faso celebrate a unified response to suffering](#)
- [Mission Network family to join ministry of hospitality for refugees in France](#)
- [Lamentation for the Halmoni](#)

Worship resources

Songs and readings from *Voices Together*:

Readings

- No. 857 "Holy God, you call us together"
- No. 928 "No one can truly know Christ"
- No. 992 "Sovereign Majesty, we pray for your continued outpouring"
- No. 1029 "Christ, whose insistent call disturbs our settled lives"
- No. 1066 "May the Christ who walks on wounded feet"
- No. 1068 "Eternal God, you call us to ventures"

Gathering songs

- No. 7 "Come, Let Us All Unite to Sing"
- No. 23 "Hamba nathi (Come, Walk with Us)"
- No. 29 "Come, Now Is the Time to Worship"
- No. 37 "Be Still and Know"

Praise songs

- No. 89 "Tú eres todopoderoso (Because You're Holy)"
- No. 116 "How Great Is Our God (Cuán grande es Dios)"
- No. 128 "Wakantanka (Many and Great)"
- No. 160 "What a Fellowship / Leaning on the Everlasting Arms"

Songs that tell God's story

- No. 283 "Tú has venido a la orilla (Lord, You Have Come to the Lakeshore)"
- No. 306 "I Want Jesus to Walk with Me"
- No. 375 "Joys Are Flowing like a River"

Songs that share our story

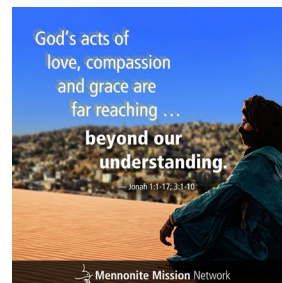
- No. 456 "Oceans (Océanos)"
- No. 540 "Will You Come and Follow Me"
- No. 545 "Here I Am, Lord"
- No. 555 "Lord, I Am Fondly, Earnestly Longing"
- No. 558 "Lord, I Want to Be a Christian"
- No. 566 "Somlandela (We Will Follow)"
- No. 570 "When We Walk with the Lord"
- No. 581 "Jésus, je voudrais te chanter (Lord Jesus, You Shall Be My Song)"
- No. 592 "How Firm a Foundation"

Songs of prayer

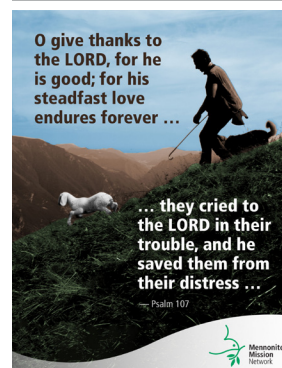
- No. 765 "Neno lake Mungu (Listen, God Is Calling)"
- No. 767 "Nzambi wakatamba (God Loves All His Many People)"

Downloadable scripture graphics

MennoniteMission.net/ScriptureGraphics



[Jonah 1:1-17, 3:1-10](#)



[Psalm 107](#)



Mark 4:39

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