

BGCC Community Group Guide



Take Heart

October 25th, 2026

In The Storm

Mark 6:45-52 – Matthew 14:22-23

Main Idea

Jesus is the King who sees us in our struggles, comes near when we are afraid, and patiently helps us grow in faith. We can take heart not because life will be easy, but because Jesus cares for us and has come to rescue us.

When God Feels Far Away

Following Jesus does not mean life will be easy. The disciples obeyed Jesus and got into the boat, yet they found themselves struggling against the wind in the middle of the lake. Sometimes our hardest moments come even when we are trying to do what God has asked of us.

In the storm, Jesus came to the disciples. He did not shame them for being afraid or wait for them to figure everything out. He came near and said, “Take courage! It is I. Don’t be afraid” (Mark 6:50).

Significance in the Biblical Story

Mark begins his Gospel by declaring that Jesus is “the Messiah, the Son of God” (Mark 1:1). Throughout the Gospel, he invites readers to consider the question: Who is Jesus? In this passage, Jesus walks on the water—a demonstration of divine authority—and reveals both his identity and his heart toward his people.

The story also echoes God’s rescue of Israel from slavery in Egypt. God saw his people’s suffering and came to deliver them (Exodus 3:7–8). In Jesus, God has come near to rescue his

people once again. Ultimately, Jesus' greatest act of rescue comes through his death and resurrection.

Section 1 – Obedience Does Not Guarantee an Easy Life

Mark 6:45–48; Romans 5:3–5

“He saw the disciples straining at the oars because the wind was against them.” — Mark 6:48

Summary

The disciples were in the boat because Jesus had told them to go. Yet they still faced exhausting circumstances beyond their control. Their obedience did not prevent the storm.

We can make the same mistake by assuming that hardship means God has forgotten us or that we have done something wrong. Scripture teaches that following Jesus does not exempt us from suffering. In fact, it directs us towards it. God can use our struggles to develop perseverance, character, and hope, even when we do not understand why we are experiencing them.

Group Question: When have you experienced difficulty even though you were trying to follow God faithfully?

Personal Relevance

Consider a current struggle. Have you interpreted it as evidence that God is distant or displeased with you? How might it change your perspective to remember that the disciples were obeying Jesus when the storm came? Let that inform your perspective on the value and reason for suffering.

Flow Question: If obedience does not guarantee an easy life, what can give us courage when life is hard?

Reflection Question: What struggle do you need to trust God with rather than assume you have been abandoned?

Section 2 – Jesus Comes Near When We Are Afraid

Mark 6:48–50; Exodus 3:7–8

“Take courage! It is I. Don't be afraid.” — Mark 6:50

Summary

The disciples were exhausted, frightened, and unsure what was happening. Jesus saw their struggle and came to them, walking on the water. His words, “It is I,” point beyond simple reassurance: the Lord himself was present with them.

This echoes God's words to Moses when he revealed that he had seen Israel's suffering and had come to rescue them. Jesus is not a distant king who merely tells people to endure their troubles. He is the King who comes near. As Peter later wrote, “Cast all your anxiety on him because he cares for you” (1 Peter 5:7).

Group Question: Why is it especially difficult to trust that God cares when you cannot sense his presence or understand what he is doing?

Personal Relevance

Jesus' presence does not always mean an immediate explanation or escape from hardship. It does mean we are not forgotten. And that means there is a reason for the path forward and the suffering you experience. Bring your fears and questions honestly to him in prayer. His answer, even if it's not the one we expect, is sufficient!

Flow Question: How does knowing that Jesus comes near change the way we face fear? And what about battles?

Reflection Question: Where do you need to hear Jesus' words, “Take courage! It is I. Don't be afraid”?

Section 3 – Jesus Rescues Us When Our Faith Is Weak

Matthew 14:28–33; Mark 6:51–52

“Immediately Jesus reached out his hand and caught him.” — Matthew 14:31

Summary

Matthew's account adds Peter's attempt to walk toward Jesus on the water. When Peter became afraid and began to sink, he cried out, “Lord, save me!” Jesus immediately reached out and caught him. Jesus corrected Peter, but he did not abandon or shame him.

The disciples also struggled to understand who Jesus was. Mark says their hearts were hardened and they had not understood the miracle of the loaves. Yet Jesus still came to them. Their incomplete faith did not stop him from caring for them.

We do not need perfect understanding or flawless faith before we can turn to Jesus. Our hope rests in his strength and willingness to rescue us, not in our ability to keep ourselves above the waves.

Group Question: What does Jesus' response to Peter teach us about how he treats people who struggle with fear and doubt?

Personal Relevance

When you struggle spiritually, your instinct may be to hide from God until you have things figured out. Instead, follow Peter's example and cry out to Jesus for help. God is our father, and so relishes the job of teaching us as a parent. Let Him grow you, teach you, and when things get too crazy trust Him to guard the line where the danger is too much.

Flow Question: If Jesus does not require perfect faith before coming to our aid, what value is there in striving for faith?

Reflection Question: Where are you trying to handle something in your own strength instead of asking Jesus to save and sustain you?

Section 4 – The King Who Rescues Us Is Worthy of Our Worship

Mark 6:51–52; Matthew 14:32–33; Romans 5:3–5

“Truly you are the Son of God.” — Matthew 14:33

Summary

When Jesus entered the boat, the wind died down. Matthew tells us that the disciples responded by worshiping him and declaring that he was the Son of God. Their struggle led them to see more clearly who Jesus was.

Jesus does not promise that every storm will end when we want it to. But our struggles are not proof that he does not care, and they are not beyond his power to use. We can trust him while we are still learning and growing (or fighting through the storms)

The cross and empty tomb give us the clearest evidence of his love. Jesus came to rescue us from sin and death, accomplishing what we could never accomplish for ourselves. Because he has come for us, we can take heart and respond with trust, obedience, and worship.

Group Question: How should Jesus' rescue of us shape our response to hardship and our worship of him?

Personal Relevance

Think about how you respond when a difficult season ends—or when it continues longer than you hoped. Are you looking only for relief, or are you also learning to recognize Jesus' character and worship him?

Flow Question: How does remembering the cross and resurrection help us trust Jesus in the middle of a storm?

Reflection Question: What would it look like to respond to your current circumstances with trust and worship, even before you see how they will turn out?

Conclusion: Take Heart—He Cares for You

In Mark 6:45–52 and Matthew 14:22–33, we see four truths:

1. **Obedience does not guarantee ease.** Following Jesus does not mean we will avoid hardship.
2. **Jesus comes near when we are afraid.** He sees our struggles and does not forget us.
3. **Jesus rescues us when our faith is weak.** We can call on him without having everything figured out.
4. **Jesus is worthy of our worship.** The King who comes to us is the Son of God, our Savior and Lord.

The heart of this story is not that we must work hard enough to reach God. It is that God has come to us. Jesus entered our world, bore our sin on the cross, and rose from the grave so that we could be with him forever.

We may not understand why we face certain storms, but we can know that our struggles are not proof of his indifference. Our King cares for us. We can take heart because he has come to rescue us.

Final Reflection Questions

- Where are you tempted to believe that God does not care about your situation?
- What would it look like to trust Jesus while you are still in the middle of the storm?
- Who in your life needs you to do more than offer encouragement from a distance—to step into their struggle and show Christlike care?

Closing Challenge: This week, trust Jesus with a struggle you cannot control, and look for an opportunity to show someone else the same care that he has shown you.