DIVING DEEPER DISCUSSION GUIDE

TEXT SUMMARY

In today's text, Matt 8:23-27, Matthew recounts one of Jesus' most amazing miracles, the calming of the storm.

INTRODUCTION (OBSERVATION):

1. The Sea of Galilee (not actually a sea but a large lake) was infamous for its storms. Violent weather could crop up suddenly, making it impossible for small craft like fishing boats to stay afloat. Some of Jesus' hand-picked men were experienced fishermen, accustomed to managing the lake's unpredictable conditions. How do even these men react to this storm?

2. What is Jesus doing as the storm pummels the boat? What question does He ask them when they waken Him?

3. What does Jesus do to quiet the storm?

4. What question does all this prompt His men to ask?

DISCUSSION (INTERPRETATION):

One of the fascinating storylines in the gospels is the way Jesus' men slowly came to understand who He was. Clearly, He was a rabbi, but they knew what a rabbi was. He performed miracles with the authority of a prophet, but they knew the stories of the miracles of Elijah and Elisha. They had seen Him perform many incredible deeds, healing the sick and casting out evil spirits, but they had heard of such deeds before.

Now they saw Him do something truly inconceivable, something for which there was no explanation or historical precedent. What explanations might have swirled through their minds as they heard Him rebuke the weather and saw it respond like a scolded child?

SO WHAT? (APPLICATION):

1. **Before He calmed the storm, Jesus had already done something amazing:** He slept in the middle of it. The storm didn't terrify Him the way it terrified His men.

    - Does this speak to the great fatigue He experienced in His work, or could there have been another explanation for His ability to sleep through all that noise and motion?

    - Have you ever experienced an unnatural calmness when you were going through a great ordeal, a "peace that passes understanding" (Phil 4:7) in the face of peril and suffering? What is that story? What did you learn then about God and about what it means to trust Him beyond your understanding?

2. **The disciples' question is significant:** "What sort of man is this?" (v. 27). From that moment on, they knew that they were dealing with someone they could not account for with the categories their culture could provide; they needed a different, larger frame of reference to explain what sort of man He was.

    Our culture provides several categories for explaining Jesus, all of which fail to account for Him. In the broader culture, He is misunderstood as a charismatic guru, revolutionary freedom fighter, or noble martyr. In our subculture, He is sometimes underestimated as a two-dimensional Sunday school story hero.

    How has your understanding of Jesus deepened over the years that you've walked with Him? What are some of the things you've come to understand about Jesus that have expanded your understanding of who He is?