

SMALL GROUPS

Small Group Guide: "I Thought It Would Be Easier Than This"

Opening Prayer & Icebreaker

Icebreaker Question: Share one thing from your childhood where you thought adults had everything figured out, only to realize as an adult that it's more complicated than you thought.

Sermon Overview

This message explores the disciples' experience in the storm (Mark 4:35-41), revealing that being in God's will doesn't exempt us from life's storms. Sometimes obedience places us directly in them. The sermon challenges us to examine how we respond when reality doesn't match our expectations and when God seems silent in our struggles.

Key Scripture

Mark 4:35-41 - Jesus calms the storm

Discussion Questions

Section 1: Disappointment and Doubt

1. **The pastor said, "Disappointment is often the birthplace of doubt."** When have you experienced a season where God's silence or a difficult circumstance made you question if He cared about your situation?
2. **The disciples asked, "Teacher, don't you care if we drown?"** What does this question reveal about how storms can distort our view of God's character? What "storms" in your life have caused you to question God's care?
3. **"Pain is real, but it's a terrible interpreter."** How have you seen pain create false narratives about God or your circumstances? What truths help you combat these distortions?

Section 2: Success vs. Dependency

4. **The sermon stated, "Success sometimes has a way of convincing us we don't need God."** In what areas of your life (career, finances, relationships, parenting) have you subtly shifted from "God is my source" to "I am my source"?
5. **"God will often use adversity to reveal what prosperity allowed us to ignore."** What has a recent difficulty revealed about where your true dependence lies?

Section 3: Promises vs. Problems

6. **Jesus said "Let us go to the other side" before the storm appeared.** What promises has God spoken over your life that you're struggling to hold onto in the middle of your current storm?
7. **"The disciples were listening to waves; Jesus was resting in a word."** Which "voice" are you listening to right now—fear, culture, past failures, or God's promises? What practical steps can you take to tune into God's voice more clearly?

Section 4: Character Over Comfort

8. **"God is more interested in who you're becoming than what you're surviving."** How does this perspective shift change the way you view your current challenges?

9. **The pastor shared about waiting seven years for confirmation of God's calling.** Share about a time when waiting built your faith versus when waiting threatened to destroy it. What made the difference?

Section 5: Leadership and Fear

10. **"Leadership is not the absence of fear. Leadership is moving forward while fear is present."** (Especially for fathers/parents) What fears are currently shaking your knees, and how can you model trust in God despite those fears?
11. **"Your kids don't need a superhero. They need a man/woman pursuing Jesus."** How does this take pressure off while also raising the standard for what truly matters in parenting and leadership?

Section 6: Revelation Through Storms

12. **"The storm created a revelation for the disciples that they could not have received on shore."** What have you learned about God through difficulty that you never could have learned in comfort?
13. **"When you cannot see God's hand, you can trust God's heart."** How does the cross settle the question "Do you care?" for you personally?

Key Takeaways

- ✓ **Being in God's will does not exempt you from life's storms—sometimes it places you directly in them.**
- ✓ **Disappointment is often the birthplace of doubt; the enemy attacks God's character before he attacks your faith.**
- ✓ **Pain is real, but it's a terrible interpreter—don't let your circumstances write the narrative about God's care.**
- ✓ **God will often use adversity to reveal what prosperity allowed us to ignore.**
- ✓ **Leadership isn't the absence of fear; it's moving forward while fear is present.**
- ✓ **The greatest legacy you can leave isn't possessions—it's your faith.**
- ✓ **The storm changed nothing about Jesus; it changed everything about their understanding of Jesus.**

Practical Applications

This Week's Challenge:

Choose ONE of the following to practice this week:

1. **Identify Your Voice:** Write down the "voices" you're currently listening to (fear, worry, past failures, etc.). Then write down what God's Word says about your situation. Commit to reading God's truth daily.
2. **Surrender Session:** Set aside 30 minutes to bring your specific storm to Jesus. Write out your fears, then physically or symbolically lay them at His feet (tear up the paper, place it at a cross, etc.).
3. **Legacy Check:** Have an honest conversation with your spouse or a trusted friend: "What do my actions communicate about who/what I trust most?" Ask them to help you identify areas where you've subtly shifted from depending on God to depending on yourself.
4. **Rest in the Promise:** Identify one promise from Scripture that applies to your current situation. Write it on a card and place it where you'll see it multiple times daily. Memorize it by week's end.
5. **Transparent Leadership:** If you're a parent, share with your children (age-appropriately) about a current struggle and how you're choosing to trust Jesus through it. Model what it looks like to run to God with your problems.

Prayer Focus

Pray together for:

- Those currently in the middle of storms who are questioning God's care
- Parents and leaders who feel inadequate for what God has called them to do
- Anyone waiting for God's promises to come to fruition
- Breakthrough for hidden struggles that need to be brought into the light
- Faith to surrender fully, even when it's scary

Closing Reflection

"The storm that you are fighting may be the very thing that God uses to reveal the man or woman He created you to become."

Take 2-3 minutes of silence for personal reflection:

- What is God revealing about Himself through your current storm?
- What is He revealing about you?
- What is one step of faith He's asking you to take this week?

For Next Week

Consider journaling about your storm this week. Note moments when you chose to listen to God's voice over the waves, and bring your observations to share next time.

Leader Tip: Create a safe space for vulnerability. The pastor modeled transparency about his own struggles—encourage your group to do the same. Some may need individual follow-up or prayer after the meeting.