

Small Group Guide: Walking on Water - Faith in the Storm

Based on John 6:16-21 & Matthew 14:22-33

Opening Prayer & Icebreaker (10 minutes)

Icebreaker Question: Share about a time when you felt completely exhausted—physically, emotionally, or spiritually. What helped you get through that season?

Sermon Recap (5 minutes)

This week we explored the miracle of Jesus walking on water—the fifth sign in John's Gospel. The disciples were exhausted after burying John the Baptist and feeding the 5,000, yet Jesus sent them out on the Sea of Galilee where they faced a violent storm. When Jesus appeared walking on water, Peter stepped out in faith but began to sink when he focused on the storm instead of Jesus. This miracle reminds us that following Jesus doesn't guarantee smooth sailing, but we can have peace in the midst of storms.

Key Definition: A miracle is an event brought about by a special act of God.

Discussion Questions

Understanding the Context (15 minutes)

1. **What details from the sermon helped you better understand what the disciples were experiencing that night?** Consider their emotional state after John the Baptist's death, their physical exhaustion, and the conditions on the Sea of Galilee.
2. **Why do you think Jesus made the disciples get in the boat during the night while He went to pray alone?** What might He have been teaching them?
3. **The sermon mentioned that Matthew and John were eyewitnesses in the boat that night. How does knowing this was a firsthand account affect how you read this story?**

Personal Reflection (20 minutes)

4. **The pastor said, "Following Jesus does not guarantee smooth sailing." How does this statement challenge or confirm your understanding of the Christian life?**
5. **Share about a time when you felt like you were "fighting the waves while Jesus was elsewhere." How did you experience God's presence (or absence) during that season?**
6. **Peter experienced something he'd never felt before—God's transforming power flowing through him as he walked on water. Have you ever had a moment where you tangibly experienced God's power in your life? What was that like?**
7. **When Peter began to sink, Jesus asked, "Why did you doubt?" The sermon also referenced Luke 8:25 where Jesus asks, "Where is your faith?" What's the difference between these two questions, and how do they speak to you?**

Application & Growth (20 minutes)

8. **What are the "waves and wind" in your life right now that are causing you to take your eyes off Jesus?** Be specific and vulnerable with your group.
9. **The sermon mentioned the song lyrics: "When the oceans rise and the thunders roar, I will soar with You above the storm. Father, You are King over the flood, and I will be still and know You are God." How can we practically "be still" when we're in the middle of exhausting circumstances?**
10. **Peter had to cry out, "Lord, save me!" when he began to sink. Is there an area of your life where you need to cry out to Jesus for rescue right now?**
11. **The disciples' response to this miracle was worship: "Truly you are the Son of God." How does remembering past miracles or God's faithfulness help you worship Him in current difficulties?**

Key Takeaways

- **Miracles are supernatural acts of God** that point to Jesus' divinity and reveal who He is.
- **Following Jesus doesn't guarantee smooth sailing**, but it does guarantee His presence with us in the storm.
- **Exhaustion is real**, and God meets us in our weariness—we don't have to pretend we're not tired.
- **Where we place our faith matters**—are we focusing on our destruction or on Jesus' power to save?
- **The proper response to God's miraculous work is worship**, not pride or self-reliance.
- **When we begin to sink, Jesus immediately reaches out His hand**—He doesn't abandon us in our doubt.

Practical Applications

Choose 1-2 of these to commit to this week:

For Personal Reflection:

- Journal about where you're currently placing your faith. Are you trusting in Jesus or in your own understanding of your circumstances?
- Memorize the song lyrics shared in the sermon or another Scripture that reminds you of God's sovereignty over your storms.
- Set aside time to worship God specifically for past miracles or moments when He rescued you.

For Action:

- Identify one area where you're "fighting the waves" and specifically pray each day, "Lord, save me" in that area.
- Reach out to someone in your life who seems exhausted and offer practical help or encouragement.
- Practice "being still" for 10 minutes each day this week—no phone, no distractions—simply sitting in God's presence.

For Community:

- Share your "waves and wind" with a trusted friend or accountability partner who can pray with you.
- Plan to attend the Good Friday experience at church (March 29, 6:30 PM)

Closing Activity (10 minutes)

Group Prayer Exercise:

1. Have each person share one specific "storm" they're facing right now (keep it brief—1-2 sentences).
2. After everyone has shared, go around the circle and have each person pray specifically for the person on their right, asking Jesus to meet them in their storm.
3. Close with a corporate prayer thanking Jesus for being the Son of God who is mighty to save.

Looking Ahead

Next week we continue in John's Gospel exploring more signs that point to Jesus. Come prepared to discuss how today's lesson about faith in the storm impacts your daily walk with Christ.

Memory Verse for the Week: *"Immediately Jesus reached out his hand and caught him. 'You of little faith,' he said, 'why did you doubt?'"* - Matthew 14:31

Additional Resources

- Reread John 6:16-21 and Matthew 14:22-33 during your personal devotional time this week
- Consider reading Psalm 107:23-32 for another perspective on God's power over storms
- Reflect on Mark 4:35-41 where Jesus calms a different storm on the Sea of Galilee