



Small Group Study Guide

PETER

*A FLAWED, YET FAITHFUL
FOLLOWER OF JESUS*

August 9, 2020
"Walking with Jesus
in the Storms"

OPENING PRAYER

Heavenly Father, we thank you for the world you have made. We confess that we grow fearful in the midst of the storms. We thank you for your continuing presence with us. Thank you for the people in this group and for this time to study your word together. Thank you for your disciple Simon Peter who shows us that we, too may be faithful disciples, in spite of our flaws. Guide and bless our time together. Help us to remember that you are always with us through the storms we face. In Jesus' name we pray. Amen.

SCRIPTURE PASSAGES:

Matthew 14:22-33 (CEB)

²² Right then, Jesus made the disciples get into the boat and go ahead to the other side of the lake while he dismissed the crowds. ²³ When he sent them away, he went up onto a mountain by himself to pray. Evening came and he was alone. ²⁴ Meanwhile, the boat, fighting a strong headwind, was being battered by the waves and was already far away from land. ²⁵ Very early in the morning he came to his disciples, walking on the lake. ²⁶ When the disciples saw him walking on the lake, they were terrified and said, "It's a ghost!" They were so frightened they screamed.

²⁷ Just then Jesus spoke to them, "Be encouraged! It's me. Don't be afraid."

²⁸ Peter replied, "Lord, if it's you, order me to come to you on the water."

²⁹ And Jesus said, "Come."

Then Peter got out of the boat and was walking on the water toward Jesus. ³⁰ But when Peter saw the strong wind, he became frightened. As he began to sink, he shouted, "Lord, rescue me!"

³¹ Jesus immediately reached out and grabbed him, saying, "You man of weak faith! Why did you begin to have doubts?" ³² When they got into the boat, the wind settled down.

³³ Then those in the boat worshipped Jesus and said, "You must be God's Son!"

INTRODUCTION

The disciples were caught in a storm on the Sea of Galilee and they were terrified. Jesus walks on water in the midst of the storm and tells the disciples “Be encouraged, It’s me, don’t be afraid.” This story is about something that happened on the Sea of Galilee a long time ago, but it’s recorded in the Gospel because it’s something that happens in our lives all the time if we just realize it. What can we learn about Jesus and what it means to be a disciple from this passage?

Three things we learn from our story of Jesus and Peter on the Sea of Galilee. 1) When we look at Jesus we see God. 2) The Christian faith calls us to step outside of our boats (comfort zone). 3) In the midst of the storm Christ walks with you.

QUESTIONS

- 1) Do you enjoy being around water (pool, lake ocean etc.) Why or why not?
- 2) Too often, Christians either focus their ministry to God’s world exclusively on preaching eternal salvation through Jesus, or else exclusively on making the conditions of life in this broken world better. Jesus clearly did both. What did Peter (and what do you, as one who follows Jesus the way Peter did) learn from observing Jesus’ pattern of ministry?
- 3) Peter seemed content then to see Jesus’ popularity spreading through Capernaum (some students estimate the town’s population at about 1500). Jesus already had a broader focus—“he traveled throughout Galilee.” He ultimately commissioned Peter and all his followers to “go and make disciples of all nations” (Matthew 28:19). How far do your hopes and visions for God’s Kingdom extend? In what ways can you play your part in making that vision a reality?
- 4) Jesus often introduced teaching with phrases like the “Listen and understand” he used in this reading. What people, publications or practices have helped you most in gaining greater understanding of Jesus’ teaching and how to apply it in your faith life? In what ways would you like to increase your understanding?
- 5) Only God, the Hebrews believed, could restrain the sea’s stormy chaos (cf. Jeremiah 5:22). Our world still faces many “storms.” Have you seen God in any way bring peace during such storms and their aftermath? If so, list ways you’ve seen or still see God at work for good in these tragic situations.

FINAL APPLICATION

This week, reflect on which one of the three lessons you need to focus on from this sermon. Then take that next step that Jesus has called you to take.