

STUDY GUIDE

HOPE — IN THE — CHAOS

FINDING PEACE IN THE STORM

NEW LIFE

Overview & Scripture

This guide is based on a sermon exploring how followers of Christ can find and maintain genuine peace during chaotic seasons of life. Using the account of Jesus calming the storm in Mark 4:35-41, we examine what it means to trust God, surrender control, and keep our eyes fixed on the one who has authority over every storm.

SCRIPTURE REFERENCES

Mark 4:35-41 -- Jesus and the disciples in the storm; Jesus rebukes the wind and waves, bringing sudden calm

John 14:27 -- Jesus describes peace as a gift he gives, distinct from anything the world can offer

Isaiah 26:3 -- God promises perfect peace to those whose minds remain fixed on him

Romans 8:28 -- God causes all things to work together for the good of those who love him and are called according to his purpose

Proverbs 3:5-6 -- Trust in the Lord with your whole heart, not leaning on your own understanding; seek his will and he will direct your path

1 Peter 5:7 -- Cast all your worries on God because he cares for you

Isaiah 54:17 -- No weapon formed against you will prosper

02 / KEY TEACHINGS

Peace in the storm

- 1. Chaotic seasons are temporary.** Just as natural seasons cycle and change, difficult seasons in life do not last forever. Recognizing this truth is the beginning of holding on with hope.
- 2. Peace is a gift, not a reward.** Jesus offers peace not as something earned through good behavior or favorable circumstances, but as a gift freely given. Like salvation, it must be received and accepted.
- 3. Being in God's will does not guarantee smooth sailing.** The disciples were following Jesus's direct instruction when the storm hit. Difficulty does not mean you are out of God's will.
- 4. God's silence is not God's absence.** Jesus was in the boat the entire time, even while sleeping. He never left the disciples, and he never leaves us.
- 5. Peace begins when you recognize who is in your boat.** The storm does not have to stop for peace to begin. Peace starts with acknowledging the presence and authority of Jesus in your life.
- 6. Surrender is how we access peace.** Releasing control of outcomes, relationships, finances, and circumstances to God is not weakness -- it is the pathway to perfect peace.
- 7. Focus determines stability.** Peter walked on water as long as his eyes were on Jesus. The moment his focus shifted to the storm, he began to sink. Where we fix our attention matters enormously.

Reflect & discuss

1. Think about a season of life that felt chaotic or overwhelming. Looking back, how did you respond to it? What do you wish you had done differently?

2. When you hear the word "surrender," what emotions or thoughts come up for you? Does it feel like defeat, relief, or something else?

Reflect & discuss

3. The pastor pointed out that Jesus told the disciples to get in the boat before the storm ever came. Have you ever been in a situation where you felt certain you were following God's direction, only to face unexpected difficulty? How did that affect your confidence in what God had told you?

4. The disciples woke Jesus and asked, "Don't you care that we're going to drown?" The pastor described this as a judgment statement about the character of God. Have you ever caught yourself making a similar statement -- either out loud or internally? What does it reveal about where our trust is in those moments?

Reflect & discuss

5. The pastor drew a contrast between the world's definition of peace -- everything calming down first -- and the peace Jesus offers, which works from the inside out. How have you seen this difference play out in your own life or in the lives of people around you?

6. Peter was the only disciple who got out of the boat. The pastor noted that many of us never get out because the boat feels safe. Is there an area of your life where God may be calling you out of the boat, but fear of sinking is keeping you in place? What would it look like to take that step?

Reflect & discuss

7. The pastor said, "The one in your boat is greater than the storm around your boat." How does that truth practically change the way you face a current challenge? What would it look like to act on that belief this week?

8. Romans 8:28 says God causes all things to work together for good for those who love him. How have you seen this promise fulfilled in your past? How does remembering those moments help you trust God in present difficulties?

Reflect & discuss

9. The pastor observed that during major crises -- COVID, natural disasters, economic uncertainty -- fear and worry often flood the church just as quickly as they flood the surrounding culture. Why do you think that happens? What practical habits might help us respond differently the next time a large-scale crisis hits?

10. The sermon emphasized that we need each other -- that the idea of having a private faith that requires no community is a lie. How has this group, or Christian community in general, helped you get through a chaotic season? How can you be more intentional about offering that same support to others?

This week

Choose one or more of the following to put into practice before your group meets again.

1. Build a Faithfulness Journal Start a simple written record of moments when God provided for you, healed you, or brought you through a difficult season. Review it whenever fear and worry begin to rise. Let your history with God become an anchor for your present trust in him.

2. Practice the Surrender Prayer Identify one area of your life where you have been trying to maintain control. Each morning this week, pray a short, specific prayer releasing that area to God. At the end of the day, honestly assess whether you picked it back up. Ask the Holy Spirit to help you leave it with him.

3. Redirect Your Focus When anxious thoughts arise this week, pause and ask yourself: Am I looking at the storm, or am I looking at Jesus? Choose one scripture from this guide to memorize and repeat whenever fear or worry surfaces.

4. Reach Out to Someone in the Storm Think of one person in your life who is currently going through a chaotic season. Reach out to them this week -- not to fix their problem, but simply to pray with them, encourage them, and remind them that they are not alone.

5. Identify the Boat You Need to Leave Prayerfully consider whether there is a step of obedience God has been calling you toward that you have been avoiding out of fear. Share it with a trusted person in this group and ask them to pray for you and hold you accountable.

05 / PRAY TOGETHER

Close in prayer

Close your group time by praying specifically over any chaotic seasons represented in the room. Invite members to share briefly what they are trusting God with, and then pray together that the peace of Jesus -- the peace the world cannot give -- would settle over each person. Remind one another: keep Jesus in the boat.

PRAYER REQUESTS & NOTES

MY NEXT STEP

SOMEONE I WILL ENCOURAGE THIS WEEK
