

Small Group Guide: Eye of the Storm

Opening Prayer

Begin your time together with prayer, asking God to open hearts and minds to what He wants to teach through this discussion.

Ice Breaker

Share a time when you faced a literal storm (weather-related) or a metaphorical "storm" in your life that left you feeling out of control. How did you respond?

Scripture Reading

Have someone read **Mark 4:35-41** aloud to the group.

Key Takeaways from the Sermon

1. **Fear reveals where our trust really lives** - It exposes what we functionally believe versus what we theologically claim to believe.
 2. **Fear is a natural human response** - It's not always evidence of weakness or failing; it's part of how God designed us.
 3. **Working Definition of Fear:** "Fear is the natural response when what's against me appears bigger than what's for me."
 4. **Working Definition of Faith:** "Faith is the relational trust that He who is for me is greater than any against me."
 5. **Jesus wants to enlarge our view of Him** - As representatives of Jesus, it's important to continually see Him more clearly and accurately (and bigger).
 6. **Even when Jesus doesn't calm the storm, He is with us in it** - His presence matters more than changed circumstances.
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Discussion Questions

Understanding the Text

1. **Why do you think Jesus was sleeping during the storm?** What does this reveal about both His humanity and His divinity?
2. **The disciples asked, "Don't you care that we are going to die?"** Have you ever felt this way toward God? What does this question reveal about their view of Jesus in that moment?
3. **Jesus rebuked the wind with the same words He used to cast out demons ("Be muzzled/Shut up").** What does this tell us about Jesus' authority and power?

Personal Reflection

4. **The sermon stated that "fear often gets a bad rap."** How does viewing fear as something that can reveal where our trust lives change your perspective on your own fears?
5. **Think about a current "storm" in your life.** Using the definition of fear from the sermon, what does your fear reveal about what you believe is bigger—the problem or God?
6. **The sermon mentioned that fear narrows our field of vision and creates stories.** What "stories" have you created around your current circumstances? Are those stories based on truth or fear?
7. **Jesus asked the disciples, "Why are you afraid? Do you still have no faith?"** This seems like a hard question given the circumstances. How do you reconcile Jesus' expectation of faith with the reality of genuinely dangerous situations?

Going Deeper

8. **Pastor Mike shared the story of his grandfather grabbing rocks to defend his grandchildren.** How did that story illustrate the shift from fear to confidence? Can you share a time when someone's presence changed your perspective on a fearful situation?
9. **Read Revelation 1:12-18 (John's vision of Jesus).** How does this "bigger" view of Jesus challenge or comfort you in your current circumstances?
10. **Romans 8:31 says, "If God is for us, who can be against us?"** Do you functionally believe this in your daily life? What would change if you truly lived like this was true?

Application

11. **The sermon emphasized that sometimes Jesus doesn't calm the storm but is with us in it.** How does this reality change the way we pray or what we expect from God?
12. **Philippians 4:6-7 was quoted: "Don't worry about anything, but in everything...present your requests to God."** What does it look like practically to bring everything to God while still experiencing peace that "surpasses understanding"?

Practical Applications

This Week's Challenge

Choose one or more of the following to practice this week:

1. **Fear Inventory:** When you experience fear this week, pause and ask yourself:
 - What story am I creating around this situation?
 - What does my fear reveal about where my trust really is?
 - How can I transfer my trust from the circumstance to Jesus?
2. **Scripture Meditation:** Memorize Romans 8:31 or Philippians 4:6-7. When fear arises, speak this truth aloud.
3. **Prayer Practice:** Each day, specifically pray through your fears, asking God to enlarge your view of Him and to help you see Him as bigger than whatever you're facing.
4. **Gratitude Journal:** Write down three ways God has been present with you in past "storms" as a reminder that He doesn't abandon you.
5. **Share Your Storm:** Identify one trusted person and share a current fear or storm you're facing. Ask them to pray with you and help you see Jesus more clearly in the situation.

Prayer Time

Small Group Prayer Focus:

- **Confession:** Invite group members to confess areas where they've made Jesus smaller than their circumstances.
- **Intercession:** Pray for specific storms that group members are facing. Pray both for God to calm the storms AND for His presence to be evident in the midst of them.
- **Thanksgiving:** Thank God for being bigger than anything we face and for His promise to never leave us.
- **Closing:** Pray Philippians 4:7 over the group—that God's peace which surpasses understanding would guard their hearts and minds in Christ Jesus.

Looking Ahead

Next Week's Preview: Jesus will face a demon-possessed man with a legion of demons. Consider this week: What "demons" (strongholds, addictions, patterns) feel too big to overcome? How might this next passage speak to those situations?

Additional Resources

- Read through **Psalm 107** this week, noting how God delivers people from various storms.
- Consider reading through the entire **Gospel of Mark** to get the full picture of Jesus' identity and authority.
- For those struggling with fear and anxiety, consider reading *Anxious for Nothing* by Max Lucado or *Ruthless Trust* by Brennan Manning.

Leader Tip: Create space for silence and reflection. Not every question needs to be answered. Sometimes the most powerful moments happen when people sit with difficult questions and allow the Holy Spirit to work.