



LEADER NOTES & KEY SCRIPTURES

LEADER TIPS: There isn't time to cover every question – **choose what's best for your group.**

- Take a moment to thank God for the group as it assembles today. Remind everyone that just a few weeks ago, some of them didn't even know one another and now our group is beginning to feel like "family." Encourage them to continue attending because everyone is important to the family!

Peace I leave with you; my peace I give you. I do not give to you as the world gives. Do not let your hearts be troubled and do not be afraid.

John 14:27 (NIV)

Then Jesus got into the boat and started across the lake with his disciples. 24 Suddenly, a fierce storm struck the lake, with waves breaking into the boat. But Jesus was sleeping. 25 The disciples went and woke him up, shouting, "Lord, save us! We're going to drown!" 26 Jesus responded, "Why are you afraid? You have so little faith!" Then he got up and rebuked the wind and waves, and suddenly there was a great calm. 27 The disciples were amazed. "Who is this man?" they asked. "Even the winds and waves obey him!"

Matthew 8:23-27 (NLT)

"I have told you these things, so that in me you may have peace. In this world you will have trouble. But take heart! I have overcome the world."

John 16:33 (NIV)

"Therefore, since we have been justified by faith, we have peace with God through our Lord Jesus Christ." ... 10 For if, while we were God's enemies, we were reconciled to him through the death of his Son, how much more, having been reconciled, shall we be saved through his life!

Romans 5:1, 10 (NIV)

Because of what Christ has done for us, the default disposition of the Christian's heart is peace. The goal for this series is to evict the mindsets that are disturbing that peace. The occupants of your mind, such as fear, stress, worry and rejection, have no legal right to stay, but must be forced out. Let's partner with the Holy Spirit to see that happen in our lives!

Start talking. Find a conversation starter for your group.

- When you were a kid, where did you go in the house to hide (or to be comforted) when there was a bad storm?
- What external circumstance (or creature) brings out the greatest fear in your life? (Ex. Heights, public speaking, spiders, snakes, being lost, etc.) Why does that fear impact you so strongly?

Start thinking. Ask questions to get your group thinking.

- Read Matthew 8:23-27 aloud. Just prior to this event, the Disciples have seen Jesus healing many people. Discuss the range of emotions they probably went through from then, until the storm began and then grew worse.
- On Sunday, Pastor Matt said: "God will often allow us to experience trials that challenge our peace and stretch our faith." Do you agree or disagree? How does this fly in the face of your (or other people's) expectations about what it means to be a follower of Jesus?

Read John 16:33 aloud to see what Jesus revealed about what we can expect?

Start sharing. These questions can create openness.

- Read Romans 5:1,10 aloud. Now that you have peace with God through your relationship with Jesus, your "enemy list" has grown. Discuss how you have been attacked and/or influenced by the following enemies:
 - o The "**World**" (a secular mindset of *nowism* that says it's all about the here and now. This is all that matters.)
 - o The "**Flesh**" (the selfish part of us that wants to be God; the desire to live for ourselves and our own glory.)
 - o The "**Devil**" (the personal, supernatural evil intelligence who leads other evil intelligences to disrupt, steal, destroy, and kill the mankind.)
- The devil's aim is to destroy the peace that Jesus gave you, but his power is limited. What might happen if you overestimate the devil's power? (*You might give up and retreat too soon.*) What if you underestimate it? (*You might be underprepared for battle.*)
- Read Matthew 8:25-26 aloud again. What was Jesus teaching the Disciples (and us) by sleeping through the storm? (*Ex. We can trust that God is with us, even when we don't see or hear him.*)

What did He teach by rebuking (literally, *forcefully muzzling*) the storm? (*Ex. Nothing we face can ever overwhelm God's power!*)



LEADER TIP: Stress confidentiality regarding anything that is shared in group!)

Give ample time for people to consider whether or not to respond aloud. **Silence is okay** as people ponder these questions.

Jesus was sleeping at the back of the boat with his head on a cushion. The disciples woke him up, shouting, "Teacher, don't you care that we're going to drown?"
Mark 4:38 (NLT)

LEADER TIP: Don't forget about your group mission/serving experience. Take the lead and help get the date set. This is a great family-building exercise for your group!

Start responding. Encourage everyone to be bold and pray with power.

- What is the worst personal storm you have faced? How did Jesus help?
- Read Mark 4:38 aloud (gives a bit more detail from this episode). Note that the Disciples didn't ask about Jesus' **strength**: "Can you still the storm?" They didn't ask about His **knowledge**: "Are you aware of the storm?" They didn't ask about His **know-how**: "Do You have any experience with storms like this?" Rather, they questioned His **character** when they said, "Don't you care!?"

What storm are you facing right now that seems to be too much for you (or is tempting you to ask the Lord "Do you really care")?

LEADER: Give ample time here. After folks have shared their area(s) of fear and doubt, consider breaking the group into two or more smaller groups (perhaps men and women), and separating for a few moments of prayer.

SAY BEFORE THE GROUPS BRANCH OFF: We are going to exercise Pastor Matt's advice from Sunday. As you go into these smaller groups, pray for one another and see this as **"Talking to Your Heart"** – telling it what to believe about Jesus and His love, His ability, and His interest in your situation. **Cry out to God** for confidence in Him, and for breakthrough/change in the circumstances. **Agreeing in prayer together** fights fear and helps us know that God has heard us!

LEADER: Stress that this is **NOT** a time to give advice, but rather a time to pray for each person who has shared, and to speak words of **LIFE** over them.

Distribute copies of the "33 Verses" page included in these resources that people can use in those groups to pray God's Word over others

Start doing/serving. Commit to a step and live it out this week.

- Consider keeping the "33 Verses" handout close by or downloading it to your phone. Use it anytime you feel anxious or fearful this week.
- Reach out this week to help someone else who is feeling fearful. As you rely on God to help you help them, you will discover your own fears are lessened.
- Continue planning your group mission/serving experience. Set the date and go for it!