

THE GOSPEL OF JOHN

GROUP GUIDE: WEEK 11

CONVERSATION STARTER

If you were drifting at sea, who are three people you'd want to have with you in your boat and why?

JESUS HAS POWER OVER THE WATERS

For an ancient Israelite, the sea represented chaos and disorder. Genesis describes the world before Creation as a dark, formless sea. But God shows His power over this chaotic force when He manipulates the waters and forms dry land, bringing order and light to the world. In the Bible, the sea became a metaphor for danger and even evil. Psalm 69 says, "Save me, O God, for **the waters have come up to my neck**. I sink in the miry depths, where there is no foothold."

In this way, the first readers of John recognized that the disciples who were stuck in the middle of the sea during an intense storm were in trouble on more than one account. Not only were they in danger of being swept overboard by the waves and wind, but they were also metaphorically in danger because they were lost in the chaos and darkness of the world all on their own. Who could save them?

That's when Jesus enters the scene, miraculously walking on water. Like God, Jesus has power over the dark chaotic waters. And when Jesus gets in their boat, they immediately make it to the safety of the shore. John is portraying Jesus as the one who can save us in the midst of chaos and darkness. Without Jesus, we are at the mercy of the storm.

Take a moment to discuss this idea with your group. Where do you turn when the wind and waves are raging? And in these times, what would it look like to invite Jesus into your boat, so to speak?

DISCUSSION QUESTIONS

1. What stuck out to you about the reading from this week? Was there a verse or idea that was particularly meaningful or challenging for you?
2. Before the miracle on the sea, Jesus disappeared from the crowd to be alone with God. What does this tell you about Jesus? Do you think we also need times of solitude? Why or why not?
3. Why do you think the disciples were afraid of Jesus at first when they saw him approaching their boat?
4. Do you believe Jesus literally walked on water? Why or why not?
5. What does this story reveal about Jesus' desire to be with you in the midst of life's storms?

WEEKLY PRACTICE

When he reaches the boat, Jesus says to the disciples, "It is I; do not be afraid." In Greek, the phrase he uses literally means, "I am." It's the same phrase God uses when introducing Himself to Moses in Exodus 3. This story is the precursor to what John will do next. Jesus connects himself to the Great "I am." And in next week's reading, we'll get the first of seven "I am" statements that Jesus will use to reveal his identity.

"I Am" the bread of life (John 6:35)

"I Am" the light of the world (John 8:12)

"I Am" the door of the sheep (John 10:7)

"I Am" the good shepherd (John 10:11)

"I Am" the resurrection and the life (John 11:25)

"I Am" the way, the truth, and the life (John 14:6)

"I Am" the true vine (John 15:1)

We'll look at each of these statements as we read them over the next few months, but this week, we're going to follow in Jesus' footsteps. Take a moment to reflect on your own life, who you are and who you want to be. Then, when you're ready, write out seven "I am" statements of your own, no more and no less.

What do these statements reveal about who you are now?

What do these statements reveal about who you want to become?

Where do you see God reflected in these statements?