

## Home Group Leaders Discussion Guide

### Luke 8:22-25

This week we embark on a well-known story from the life of Jesus...the calming of the storm. We need to be cautious in how we handle this passage. In our rush to find the relevance and application of this event to our own lives, we risk misapplying it.

If you're a long-time church goer, how often have you heard something like this: "Jesus will calm the storms of your life.", in connection with this passage? While that sounds really nice, and as much as we may wish that was true, that's not the reason Luke (nor Matthew and Mark for that matter) include this story in their accounts of Jesus' life.

This was a real, factual event. There was a storm, a pretty serious storm, and Jesus actually calmed it with a couple simple words. The mistake that is commonly made is to turn this actual event into a metaphor in order to make it relate to us somehow. But this passage isn't about US, it's about Jesus! Only secondarily does it have something to say about His disciples in the boat with Him. It isn't about us at all. But having said that, that's not to say we can't learn something from it. So what are we to learn from it?

But before we jump to that, since this story is found in Matthew, Mark, and Luke, it's good to do a little observational exercise of compare/contrast between the 3 accounts. Matthew 8 and Mark 4 are where the parallel accounts are found.

- Q. What similarities and differences do you see between the 3 accounts of this story?**
- Q. Which of the differences in the accounts is most intriguing to you?**

So some observations...

-Matthew's account places the story in a different place (earlier) in the ministry of Jesus. Interestingly, Matthew has it even before the account of his own calling to be a disciple.

-The terms used to describe the storm are slightly different. Matthew uses the Greek word "seismos" (from where we get the word seismic), which in every other place in the New Testament is translated as "earthquake", but the word is flexible enough to also mean; commotion, gale, tempest. Mark and Luke use the Greek term "lialaps" (which as far as I know we don't get any English word from☺), which literally means "whirlwind"...but storm or tempest can work too. Regardless of the terms, they all agree it was one heck of a storm.

-All 3 writers agree that the boat was taking on water.

-All 3 writers agree that Jesus was fast asleep and needed to be woken up. (That's pretty sound asleep to be sleeping through such a violent storm, and likely getting wet as He slept.)

-In Matthew's version, Jesus responds to the disciples...then calms the storm; while in Mark and Luke, Jesus calms the storm then has some words for the disciples.

-All three authors state that Jesus "rebuked" the storm—though only Mark details His words, "*Quiet! Be still!*" And all three agree that it became quickly/immediately calm. (This is the only place in the New Testament that this Greek word for "calm" is used.)

-The three writers offer slightly different reactions by the disciples: Matthew's description is one of amazement, wonderment, marveling and admiring; Mark's account almost has them (based on word usage) as afraid of Jesus (by His awesome display of power/authority) as they were of the storm. Luke offers more of a combination of the two—fear and amazement.

-All three agree that the wind and waves/water "obey" Jesus...i.e. conformed to His will (and this is probably more the heart of the passage...the take away, if you will).

So if the point of this passage isn't "Jesus will calm the storms of your life.", then what is it? The answer is two-fold. First, the question the disciples ask themselves in bewilderment, "*Who is this?*" is an important question we should have at the forefront of our minds. We are always in danger of taking Jesus for granted, or domesticating Him, or even being underwhelmed by Him (even as we read about crazy, super-natural stuff that He did). But when was the last time you/we were just in awe of Jesus? I mean, take your breath away wonderment. The One we follow, serve, worship is the One who rules the cosmos. Do we stand in awe of Him, or do we just shrug our shoulders, "yeah, that's old news." The reason the Gospel writers include this story is so we'd have our socks blown off by Jesus. As we read it, our reactions should be, "He did WHAT?!?!? Holy cow!!!". But, sadly, we can easily become over-familiar with Jesus and the stories that surround Him.

**Q. When was the last time you were really blown away, simply awe struck, by Jesus?**

**Q. As you read about all the amazing things Jesus does in the Gospels, what is your reaction?**

**Q. Has Jesus revealed something new about Himself to you recently? Describe/explain.**

Secondly, the words/questions Jesus had for the disciples are worth our consideration as well. "Where is your faith?" (as Luke puts it); "You of little faith, why are you so afraid?" (Matthew); "Why are you so afraid? Do you still have no faith?" (Mark). It's interesting to think about the various possible tones Jesus might have used when He said this to the disciples. It's also important to recognize the connection Jesus places between fear and faith (or lack thereof).

What was Jesus' desire or expectation of them when confronted by a nasty storm? Their reaction was one of mortal fear, and Jesus chides them for that. And in their fear, they did turn to Jesus, but He seems unimpressed with that. It would seem that Jesus, perhaps, wants us to ask ourselves those question whenever we are afraid, "Why am I afraid?" and "Where is my faith?"

- Q. Are you currently experiencing any fear? Describe/explain**
- Q. How has your faith in Jesus helped you overcome fear?**
- Q. Think about some of the poorer decisions you've made in the past. Is there any connection between them and any fear you may have been experiencing at the time?**
- Q. How has fear impacted your life? As a Christ-centered community, how can we help each other through periods of fear?**
- Q. When you experience fear, does it tend to drive you closer to Jesus or further from Him? Explain**
- Q. What is the worst storm you've ever experienced? (real storm, not a metaphorical one...possible icebreaker)**