



Preparing for Small Group: Read the passage below, and answer the following questions.

- (1) What do these verses tell me about God?
- (2) What do these verses tell me about sinful humanity?
- (3) What do these verses tell me about Jesus?
- (4) What does God want me to know?
- (5) What does God want me to do?

“Waves and Wonder”

Matthew 8:23-27

Main Point: Jesus is the Lord of creation.

Because Jesus is the Lord of creation, here are some truths that you can trust:

When you follow the Lord of creation...

You can trust that He knows where He’s leading you (23-24).

In the parallel accounts of this story in Mark 4 and Luke 8, Jesus told the disciples where he was headed, which was to the “other side.” Matthew leaves this detail out, but Matthew clearly indicated that Jesus led His disciples to get into the boat and that the disciples followed Jesus. In other words, since a boat was a mode of transportation, which was used to travel and to work, Jesus had a purpose and a destination in mind when He got into the boat. Equally clear was the fact that the disciples got into the boat as well since they were following Jesus. Surely Jesus knew what was ahead in the boat ride. Surely He knew that a storm was ahead, and surely His purpose in leading the disciples into a storm was the continued revelation of His identity to His disciples, revealing that Jesus was the Lord of creation. Considering His identity, the disciples would also learn an incredibly important and practical truth about following Jesus: When you follow the Lord of creation, you can trust that He knows where He’s leading you! Nothing has changed, and as a result, regardless of what happens along the journey of following Jesus, you can trust that God knows.

1. Read verse 23. It’s a simple verse, but it’s also a profound verse. To put these simple words in context, read Matthew 8:18-22. These verses will be covered in the weeks to come, but considering what has just been said about “following” Jesus, discuss the disciples’ understanding of what following meant when they got into that boat on that day.
2. What do you think is the most common perception of “following” Jesus in the U.S. church today? Have you had a different perception from what’s in the text in Matthew 8? If so, how?
3. In following, the disciples immediately encountered a storm. Why is this important to know?
4. How is knowing that Jesus knows what’s coming in your life helpful in growing your faith?

You can trust that your life is in His hands (25).

In every account of this event in the synoptic gospels, the disciples cried out to Jesus, expressing their fear of impending death. In Mark’s account, Mark related that the disciples even wondered if Jesus cared since He was sleeping through the storm. The fact that they looked to

Jesus to save them was good. Their faith in Jesus was developing, but it wasn't where it needed to be. At that moment they had more faith in the power of the storm to take their lives than they did in the power of Jesus to protect their lives. This was a lesson that they needed to learn, and this was a lesson that would teach them clearly about the true identity of the One they followed. This lesson would also teach them that if they were following the Lord of creation, there was nothing in creation that could take their lives until the Lord of creation called them home. Praise God that this truth is still something that followers of Jesus can trust in today.

1. Like the disciples, how do our words reveal what we truly believe in our hearts?
2. Has belief in your circumstances ever clouded your believe in God? Share, and discuss.
3. Do you know anyone who is overwhelmed with belief in their circumstances and is failing to find overwhelming strength through faith in God? How can you pray for them today. How can you encourage them in the Word and with your testimony this week?

You can trust that He is focused on your faith (26a).

Wasn't it wonderful that when Jesus awoke He was focused on His disciples and not on the storm, and wasn't it powerful how He expressed His focus in the lives of His disciples: "Why are you afraid, O you of little faith?" Jesus was not concerned about their safety in the situation. He was concerned about their faith through the situation. From a human perspective, His question makes no sense. Why wouldn't the disciples be afraid in a wooden boat on the water in the midst of a massive storm? His question only makes sense in light of His identity as the Lord creation. Jesus was the One who spoke creation into existence, and at His word, all of creation obeys His command. Jesus had no need to be afraid, and a lesson flowing out of the revelation of His identity and His words to His disciples was that those who are with Jesus don't have any reason to be afraid as well. There's no doubt that Jesus was using this moment in the lives of His disciples to grow their faith in Him. Today, as a follower of Jesus, if you find yourself in a situation that makes you wonder if God is awake or if He cares, be certain that He does, and be certain that through the situation He's focused on growing your faith!

1. Read Matthew 8:26a. Break down and discuss the question of Jesus.
2. How is God focusing on your faith right now?
3. Knowing that Jesus puts such emphasis on faith, how should this truth affect the way you minister to others who are in uncertain and fearful situations in life? What's most important?

You can trust that He is in control (26b-27).

To reinforce the truth of the words of Jesus for the lives of His disciples, Jesus spoke. He spoke to the wind and to the waves, and the words of the Creator calmed and controlled creation. The question of the disciples was important. They asked, "What kind of man is this?" The answer to their question was crystal clear. No ordinary man can speak to the wind and to the waves and control creation. No ordinary person can do that! Only God, who is the Lord of creation, can speak to the wind and to the waves and control creation. Jesus was clearly a physical man, sitting or standing in the boat where they could see, touch, and hear Him; however, Jesus was a man who was doing things that only God could do. Jesus was revealing to the disciples that He was the One who was truly God and truly man. Jesus was the Lord of Creation who had come to creation to be the Savior of the world. The disciples needed to learn the lesson: Because Jesus was the Lord of creation, they could trust that He was in control.

1. How is your belief in the identity of Jesus critical to your ability to trust that He is in control?
2. What is the correct, biblical understanding of the nature of Jesus as God and man? What are some incorrect understandings about the nature of Jesus? Why is this important?
3. Are you following Jesus like you truly trust that He is in control? If so, how? If not, why?
4. Do you know someone who needs to know that Jesus is in control? Pray for them now.