

- Identity: I'm a child of God, loved and saved through Jesus.
- Purpose: I'm called to make God known in the world.
- Action: I live a life of courage, loving God and my neighbor.

BIG QUESTION

How can you courageously face the storms of life?

VIRTUE

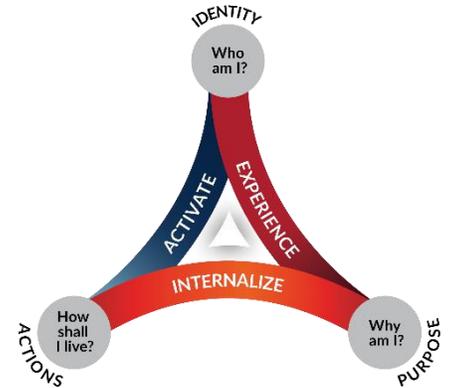
Courage: God's power for you to overcome fear.

HISTORICAL BACKGROUND

Jesus had taught crowds of people from his position in a boat on the lakeshore all day long. When evening came, instead of going home, he told the disciples they would all sail to the other side. What the Jews living in Galilee meant by "the other side" was the region across the lake to the southeast, known as the Decapolis. While Galilee may have been an area with many Jews who were fairly religious, the Decapolis was much more Roman in culture. Many religious Jews avoided the area if at all possible because the area was so obviously full of sin and evil, but Jesus headed straight for it. Perhaps the storm on this night was evil in its origin because Jesus addressed it with exactly the same words He used when the demon-possessed man cried out in the synagogue: "Be muzzled!" Fierce storms were not uncommon on the Sea of Galilee. The low position of the lake compared to the high hills around made it susceptible to intense and sudden storms that would have been a problem even for the professional fishermen on board. [Click here for a map of Galilee and Decapolis.](#)

SCRIPTURE

[Mark 4:35-41](#)



EXPERIENCE IT!

Imagine that you are one of Jesus' disciples. How would you feel about Jesus wanting to take you to the Decapolis, an evil region that is so different from where you live?

Hint: Following Jesus isn't always easy or comfortable; this could actually be a little scary.

Then it gets worse. A furious storm blows up while you are in the middle of the lake, too far from shore to turn around. You knew Jesus was tired, but you can't believe He's still asleep. What are you and the other disciples doing?

Hint: Holding onto ropes, bailing water, getting drenched, feeling seasick, yelling, praying, trying to keep my balance and not fall in.

INTERNALIZE IT!

How can your knowledge of Jesus give you strength in life's storms?

Hint: Jesus' character and words are our anchor. He is trustworthy, and the promises He has made in His Word are sure.

Even when the wind stopped, it normally would have taken hours for the inertia of the water to calm down; but at Jesus' word, the sea is immediately calm. It is proof that He is the Most High God and that He cares for His disciples. What does this tell you about God's purpose for storms in your life?

Hint: They are not meant to drown us but to allow us to know God better. They give us the privilege of experiencing Him firsthand. The storms we live through turn our head knowledge about God into a personal story of His faithfulness in action.



Jesus Calms the Storm

When the storm stilled and the disciples realized that the Lord of Creation was actually in the boat, they were even more terrified! They were in awe at the presence of God Almighty. How does your level of awe toward God affect your actions in life's difficulties?

Hint: When we are in awe of Him, everything else seems small in comparison. There is nothing else that we need to be afraid of. We can be courageous when He is the only one we fear.

ACTIVATE IT!

Is there a storm you are facing now? Find a verse in the Bible that is a promise you can remember this week when it is hard to be courageous.

Hint: "Trust in the Lord with all your heart, and He will direct your paths." (Prov 3:5-6); "I will never leave you or forsake you." (Heb. 13:5); "For I know the plans I have for you." (Jer. 29:11); "My presence will go with you, and I will give you rest." (Exod. 33:14); "My peace I give to you." (John 14:27)

CHRIST CONNECTION

In the brief time the disciples had followed Jesus, they had already seen Him show authority to cast out demons, to heal diseases, and to forgive sins--all things that only God can do. These young Jewish men knew the Old Testament scriptures well. They would have known verses like Psalm 107:28-29, "Then they cried out to the LORD in their trouble, and he brought them out of their distress. He stilled the storm to a whisper; the waves of the sea were hushed." And Psalm 89:8-9, "Who is like you, LORD God Almighty? You, LORD, are mighty and your faithfulness surrounds you. You rule over the surging sea; when its waves mount up, you still them." It was the work of the LORD God to calm a storm. Therefore, if Jesus could do that, He must be God. When Jesus spoke to the wind and waves, they obeyed because He was God. The creation had to obey its Creator. The works that Jesus did were not just to help people feel better and give them some good information to think about, but Jesus wanted them and us to know that He was God come in the flesh. The Lord of Creation Himself was in the boat, and the Lord Almighty was here because He was the only One capable of saving us. God is the only One who is righteous and without sin and all-powerful. So no one but God Himself could pay the price for our sin. Because Jesus proved over and over again that He was God, we can be sure that our faith in Him for salvation is well-placed!



FAMILY MEMORY VERSE (consider posting on refrigerator or bathroom mirror, for example, this week)
 "They were terrified and asked each other, 'Who is this? Even the wind and waves obey him!'"
 Mark 4:41

PRAYER

Thank You, God, for your promises in the Bible. Thank You that You never break a promise, and that Your words are always true. Please help us to remember Your promises when we feel alone and afraid. Help us to know that You will never leave us, You have good plans for us, and You love us. In Jesus' name, Amen.