



Week Two

Opening Praying

God, thank you for this group of friends. Help us to encounter you today in a way that empowers us to grow in our faith. Amen.

Talk It Over

Throughout this series we are looking at seismic events or events of enormous proportions. More specifically, we are looking at some seismic moments in the life of Jesus that will impact, effect, and possibly change the way we understand God. This week's topic is about seismic trials, difficult times, or storms that unexpectedly hit our lives.

- What does the idea of trials, difficult times, or storms stir up in you?
- Are you quick to see the worst of things and quick to freak or are you good at remaining calm and positive? Have you always been that way?

Read Matthew 14:22-33 (NLT)

The verses we just looked at depict a seismic moment in the life of the disciples. This particular encounter with Jesus out on the water, in the midst of the storm, helped them to see Jesus for who he was. In turn, their faith grew.

- Had you been present the day of this event, how do you think you would have responded to the whole thing?
- Share about an event or encounter with Jesus you've had that increased your faith in Jesus.
- In our faith journeys, sometimes it can feel as if God pushes his way out of the boxes we so easily put him in. Have you ever experienced a time, event, or season you felt God trying to bust out of a box you put him in? Share about that learning with us.

Read John 16:33

The Bible teaches us that difficulties, trials, and trouble is a part of life, but that God desires for us to find peace in him despite the storms of life. Our God has overcome the world, but this world is still terribly broken.

- Have you ever experienced God's peace in the midst of a storm? Share about that experience.
- What are some of practical ways we can seek God's peace in the midst of a storm? For example, connect in community, listen to worship music, etc.

Read 2 Corinthians 4:16-18 (NIV)

When storms come, we can choose whether to respond in fear or faith. And while we each may easily say we will respond in faith, sometimes responding in faith comes with the risk of looking foolish to other people.

- Have you ever felt misunderstood, judged, or criticized for choosing to respond to a circumstance in faith? Share about that experience with us. **(Continued on the next page.)**

- In general, is it easy or hard for you to not fixate, care, or worry about what people may think about you? Why do you think that is the case?
- Share about a time you responded to a circumstance in fear and later regretted it.
- Do you know someone who is good at choosing to respond in faith versus fear? What sorts of habits, thoughts, or values does this person exhibit?

Read Luke 22:32 (Voice)

No matter how much we may care about God and our faith journey, we are all going to mess up sometimes. But over and over again, God reminds us our failure isn't final. When we cry out to God, God reaches out to us with compassion and he helps us grow.

Along these same lines, as people proactively looking to grow in our faith, it is safe to assume God will regularly invite us to new places of faith, learning, wisdom, and maturity. Like Peter, we will each have our opportunities to step out of the boat. And just like Peter exemplified, we can each anticipate to face some level of a learning curve as we learn to live outside our comfort zone.

- In general, how comfortable are you with your past failures? Are there some types of failures that are harder for you to look past? Explain why this is the case.
- How are you with trying new things that present some level of risk?
- In what ways would you like to get more comfortable with getting outside your comfort zone?
- Is there any area of life you sense God may be inviting you step out of your comfort zone in?

Closing Prayer

God, thank you for loving us. Thank you for bringing us peace in the storm. Thank you for inviting us to get outside the boat from time to time. Help us to hear your call in our life this week. Help us to see the ways in which we can better experience you despite what is happening around us. Help us to hear the ways in which you want us to grow in our faith. Amen.