First Baptist Friendswood Students

Daily Discipleship - October 11-16

SUNDAY – OCTOBER 11TH

Because Jesus is with us, we can take bold steps of faith.

CHRIST CONNECTION

Jesus showed that He cared for His disciples by calming the storm that threatened their lives. He then called on them to have faith in Him. Jesus would later demonstrate God's love in a greater way by laying down His life to provide salvation from sin and death. All who have faith in Him have eternal life.

WALKING BY FAITH - Matthew 14

JESUS MOVES FIRST - MATTHEW 14:22-26

22 Immediately he made the disciples get into the boat and go before him to the other side, while he dismissed the crowds. 23 And after he had dismissed the crowds, he went up on the mountain by himself to pray. When evening came, he was there alone, 24 but the boat by this time was a long way from the land, beaten by the waves, for the wind was against them. 25 And in the fourth watch of the night he came to them, walking on the sea. 26 But when the disciples saw him walking on the sea, they were terrified, and said, "It is a ghost!" and they cried out in fear.

JESUS CALLS US TO WALK BOLDLY - MATTHEW 14:27-33

27 But immediately Jesus spoke to them, saying, "Take heart; it is I. Do not be afraid." 28 And Peter answered him, "Lord, if it is you, command me to come to you on the water." 29 He said, "Come." So Peter got out of the boat and walked on the water and came to Jesus. 30 But when he saw the wind, he was afraid, and beginning to sink he cried out, "Lord, save me." 31 Jesus immediately reached out his hand and took hold of him, saying to him, "O you of little faith, why did you doubt?" 32 And when they got into the boat, the wind ceased. 33 And those in the boat worshiped him, saying, "Truly you are the Son of God."

THEOLOGY CONNECTION - GOD IS OMNIPOTENT

God is all-powerful: There is nothing God cannot do so long as it does not contradict His own nature or moral law. God has power and authority over the universe He created, from the largest solar system to the smallest particle. Affirming that God is all-powerful does not mean that God can sin—since that would go against His perfect moral nature. As Christians, we rest in the belief that the God who has all power is good, and we gain great comfort by knowing that an all-powerful God is working for our good and joy.

SMALL GROUP DISCUSSION

JESUS MOVES FIRST - MATTHEW 14:22-26

• Why do you think Jesus sent the disciples ahead of Him?

• Jesus moved toward the fearful disciples before they saw Him. Why is this an important detail?

• How can fear affect the way we view a situation? How does our fear keep us from seeing Jesus?

JESUS CALLS US TO WALK BOLDLY - MATTHEW 14:27-33

• Why did Jesus ask Peter to come to Him before settling the storm? When have you had to do something similar?

• Why do you think the men worshiped in the boat?

• What does boldly living for Jesus even look like today? What keeps us from living this way?

How is Jesus calling you to live more boldly? How will you respond?

LIFE CONNECTION

Fear comes in a lot of forms, not always contained to darkness, heights, or dark water. In fact, many of us fear being embarrassed, standing out too much, not standing out enough, being found out, or the unknown. Phones and social media heighten these fears because our failures and embarrassing moments can be shared with the world. If we mess up, people will know; people will see. So, we live in a worried state of asking, "What if I fail and everyone sees?" "What if I don't do this right and everyone knows?" "What if I don't measure up to their expectations?" We set a goal to look like what the world says we should look like, at least on our socials—a goal of meeting the world's standards. Want to know the truth? We'll never reach that goal. When we live from this place of fear, we miss out on how God created us to live. He designed us to know Him, and when we know Him, we can confidently live in our identity as His children. Instead of striving for acceptance, we can rest because our Creator accepts us through Jesus's blood. We can walk away from fearing what others think or what may happen because our future is certain.

MONDAY, OCTOBER 12TH - PSALM 46:1-3

In this week's lesson, we read that Peter got out of a boat and walked on water in the middle of the waves and wind. We also saw him take his eyes off Jesus and begin to sink. Instead of fixating on Peter's failure to focus on Jesus, let's first turn our attention to the reason he got out of the boat.

What could cause someone to believe they could walk on water? The reason had nothing to do with Peter and everything to do with the One who commanded him to "come." Peter watched Jesus perform miracles and teach with authority, proving Jesus was exactly who He said He was. Peter knew Jesus was worthy of his trust, even when it came to the impossibility of walking on water. He got out of the boat because his faith in Jesus was greater than his fear of sinking; however, when he took his eyes off Jesus and saw the wind, he began to sink. Peter saw something that caused him to fear—something that diminished his trust in Jesus and caused him to forget what he had seen and heard.

In the same way, when we are afraid of the outcome of a situation, we can forget the truth that God is trustworthy; we can attempt to take control or put our trust in someone or something else besides the Lord. The problem with this is that no person's faithfulness can compare to God's. Psalm 46 describes God as being "our refuge and strength" and "a very present help in trouble." He has proven Himself trustworthy over and over again. He is sovereign over the wind and the waves and everything else in all creation. He cares for His children, and He does what He says He will do; Jesus's life, death, and resurrection are proof! If you're facing circumstances that cause you to fear, you can apply truth and rest, knowing that God is the only One who is completely trustworthy. He will never fail. He will never let you sink.

• How has God been trustworthy in your life?

• When you struggle to believe that God is trustworthy, how can you remind yourself of the truth?

PRAY

Father, thank you for being a refuge that i can trust to protect and strengthen me. You carry me through every circumstance. You are greater than anything i face, and you are more worthy than anything else i could trust.

TUESDAY, OCTOBER 13TH - ISAIAH 26:3-4

Have you ever struggled to know who or what you can depend on? Who or what will be steady when life is unstable? What lasts when everything seems to end? This passage offers a comforting promise about the peace God gives to those who depend on Him. These verses are especially powerful when you know the context in which Isaiah wrote. He prophesied during the height of Assyria's power. Israel lived under the constant threat of invasion, and the nation was unstable in every way. However, instead of focusing on the strength of Assyria, Isaiah spoke of a coming day, a day in which there is a strong city ruled by God alone. In this city, peace is ever-present because the Creator of peace resides there. Isaiah's words were in anticipation of deliverance, while waiting for deliverance. He reminded the people that security didn't come from circumstances but from trusting in God.

We're waiting for deliverance in many ways too. We live in broken world and walk through suffering, pain, sickness, and sorrow. The peace Isaiah speaks of is available to those whose minds and hearts are fixed on God. This peace won't come to us accidentally or passively. We see this played out in our main lesson this week. Peter trusted Jesus enough to step out of the boat, but when he noticed the wind and the waves, he began to sink and was overcome with fear. Both passages remind us that God calls us to be anchored fully in Him. Scripture reminds us that with the help of the Holy Spirit, we can take our thoughts captive and make them obedient to God's Word. This means that when our thoughts linger on what causes us to fear, doubt, or believe lies about ourselves or God, we are to remind ourselves of the truth about who God is. Our world, circumstances, and feelings constantly change; we can't lean on them because they're unsteady. But our heavenly Father gave us His Word and His Spirit so that we can cling to His unchanging character and promises, even when the chaos swirls around us.

• When have you struggled to depend on God?

• Knowing what you know now, what would you go back and tell yourself?

PRAY

Heavenly Father, thank you for being a god of hope. Help me to fix my eyes on you in all situations and not dwell on what causes me to fear or doubt your goodness.

WEDNESDAY, OCTOBER 14TH - HEBREWS 12:2

How good are you at focusing on a task or a conversation? When the environment is loud or chaotic, do you struggle? Some of us can laser focus on a book or a task with no issue, but many of us can't separate what we're seeing or hearing from what needs our attention.

Just like Peter in our lesson this week, we all have things in our lives that can make focusing on Jesus difficult at times. And what competes for our attention isn't always bad. Oftentimes, what distracts us and causes us to take our focus off of Jesus are good things. Sports, school, hobbies, friends, and interests may make it hard for us to keep our eyes fixed on Jesus. The issue with these things is that they could never compare to Jesus—and they aren't supposed to! Our heavenly Father is the best gift-giver. All of these things mentioned are gifts from God for our enjoyment, but they were never meant to take Jesus's place. They aren't designed to give us peace. If we look to sports, school, or hobbies to find our identity or worth, we will find answers that change based on circumstances. If we look only to friends for approval and guidance, we can be led astray and left confused and hurt, even if our friends have good intentions. This is why Hebrews 12 reminds us to keep our eyes on Jesus, "the founder and perfecter of our faith." When we look to Jesus for our identity and approval, for our hope and our peace, we find the unchanging truth that we, who are in Christ, are loved beyond measure and have been made daughters and sons of the living God. When we look to Him for guidance, we will find that His Word is active, applicable, and will lead us only in the way we should go, for our good and for His glory.

• Why is keeping your eyes on Jesus difficult?

• What things in your life are competing with Jesus for your focus? Knowing this, how should you respond?

PRAY

Jesus, thank you for being patient with me when i struggle to fix my eyes on you. Help me to be aware of what i give too much attention to and keep me from stumbling over them as i follow you.

THURSDAY, OCTOBER 15TH - 2 TIMOTHY 2:11-13

When Jesus instructed Peter to walk on the water, He wasn't instructing Peter to walk in his own power. Jesus told Peter to come to Him because He had the power to make Peter's footsteps solid and keep him from harm. The possibility of walking on water rested in Jesus's ability, not in Peter's. When Peter took his eyes off Jesus and began to sink, did that make Jesus any less powerful? Of course not! Jesus's ability to do the impossible does not waver based on our actions.

In the same way, we see in today's passage that God's faithfulness doesn't change based on how faithful we are to Him. When we believed in Jesus and trusted Him for the forgiveness of our sins, we died to our old selves and were given new life through the Holy Spirit. This new life was a promise that He kept. Since we've been given this new life, we get to look forward to eternal life with Him in heaven. This is another promise that doesn't rely on our ability to follow Him perfectly until then. The promise relies wholly on who God is: He said it, so He will do it, and nothing can change that. Why is this the case? Faithfulness is one of God's key traits. He is unchanging even when we change. Knowing this truth shouldn't cause us to take advantage of His faithfulness but should move us to desire to be faithful to Him! God is trustworthy, and all of His promises are true. He isn't good on His Word because of what we can do but because He "cannot deny himself." Isn't this amazing? This truth should not only lead us to worship Him but to be faithful to Him in return.

• How does it impact you to know that God will be faithful to you whether or not you are faithful to him?

• In response to this truth about god's faithfulness, how should you be motivated to live?

PRAY

Heavenly father, thank you for staying the same, even when my faithfulness to you wavers. Help me to seek you first in all situations because of your goodness to me.

FRIDAY, OCTOBER 22 - JAMES 1:2-4

Think of the worst storm you've experienced. Maybe you knew it was coming because the weather service predicted it and prepared everyone. But sometimes, horrific storms come out of nowhere, with no warning. These storms often rattle us more. Jesus wasn't surprised by the storm in this week's lesson. In fact, He intentionally told His disciples to get in the boat and go before Him to the other side of the water. Jesus knew the storm was coming and used it for the good of His disciples. But how was this good? The storm made the disciples desperate. In the middle of the waves and wind, the disciples were powerless to save themselves. Jesus showed up, walked on water, got in the boat with the disciples, and calmed the storm. In this moment, the disciples more clearly understood who Jesus was, and they worshiped Him as the Son of God. Jesus used this trial to increase their faith and show them His power.

In the same way, God can use trials we go through to increase our faith in Him and to help us to see Him more clearly. When we go through difficult times, the illusion that we are self-dependent is stripped away because we recognize our need for help—that we can't save ourselves. When we are forced to depend on God to do what we cannot, His compassion, faithfulness, and power are revealed. In these moments of our weakness, we more deeply understand His strength and rely on it to carry us. Our faith in who God is strengthens. God will use difficult moments in our lives to show us more clearly who He is and to draw us nearer to Him. We experience His steady presence in our struggles. James instructs us to "count it all joy" when we go through trials! Why? Because joy comes from experiencing God's presence and knowing Him more deeply than we did before.

• How can this story encourage you to look differently at the storms you face?

• When have you have walked through something difficult but God used it to grow your faith? If so, what caused you to trust him more?

PRAY

Lord, thank you for controlling the wind and the waves and using them for your glory. When i go through trials, help me to remember that nothing is outside of your control, and i can look to you for help.