



Homes of H.O.P.E. Prayer and Study Guide #14
Based on sermon: “Don’t Let the Water Get You Down”
Preached March 28, 2009

1. What’s your current state of mind? Are you anxious, fearful, stressed, at peace, hopeful? How much of what’s happening in the world influences your mood? How do you cope with stress?
2. Read John 6:1-15; Mark 6:30-34, 45, 46. How did Jesus handle stress?
3. The disciples were not happy to be in the boat. Commentators tell us that they were confused and angry that Jesus dismissed the crowd rather than ride the wave of popularity and allow himself to be crowned King. (See John 6:15.) From their viewpoint, a golden opportunity had been lost. Can you empathize with the disciples? Are you ever confused or angry about how God does things? Explain.
4. Read Mark 6:47-52. There are several lessons to be learned from this story. What lessons do you take away from it? Share your own insights before going on.
5. Lesson #1: Even when you’re angry at Jesus, He’s praying for you. Even as they questioned His motives, Even as they doubted Him, Jesus was interceding for them, as He is doing for us right now. (See Heb. 7:25.) What does this mean to you?
6. Lesson #2: Sometimes obeying Jesus gets you into trouble. When and how has this happened in your life?
7. Discuss the following statement: *Sometimes you’re going to find the going tough—not because you’re doing anything wrong—but because you’re obeying Jesus. The “wind” will be against you precisely because you’re not going with the flow. Don’t assume that trouble means you’ve been abandoned by God. Rather, be on the alert when things are too easy, because instead of the wind being against you, it may now be with you.*
8. Lesson #3: No matter how great the storm, we are never out of God’s sight. (See Psa. 33:18.) According to Mark 6:48, Jesus “saw the disciples straining at the oars...” The Sea of Galilee is 12 miles long north and south; 6 miles east and west at its widest point. The disciples had set out sometime before sunset and the trip would have normally only taken a few hours to cross. Jesus doesn’t come to them until the fourth watch—between 3:am and six a.m. That means they had been battling the wind for 9 hours and they were only halfway there, (about 3 Roman miles) “in the middle of the lake.”

Imagine how tired and desperate the men were after 9 hours! We may think that we’re all by ourselves in our struggles, but are we ever alone? From the place of prayer the Lord sees the struggles of those He prays for. They were never really in danger because they were never out of His care. Agree or disagree?

9. Read Mark 6:48. Here it is in the *Amplified* version: “About the fourth watch (around 3:a.m.) of the night, he went out to them, walking on the lake. And He acted as if He meant to pass by them.” Why do you think Jesus waited as long as he did to come to them?

10. Discuss this statement: *What threatens to overwhelm us is beneath the feet of Jesus.* What does this mean and how does this bring you hope?

11. Why does Jesus act as if he would walk right past the disciples? What do we learn from this?

12. What was the disciple’s reaction? (Read Mark 6:49.) Discuss Lesson #4: In the confusion of life’s storms, don’t mistake Jesus for the enemy. How does this happen even in the lives of Christians? Have you ever mistaken God for the enemy?

13. Read verse 50. Jesus’ command for them to “Take courage” and “don’t be afraid,” is in direct contradiction to what is raging all around them. How could Jesus say these things in the midst of a terrible storm? Why should the disciples pay attention to Him? Why should we?

14. Lesson #5: Call on Jesus and take Him into your “boat.” Jesus literally says, “Take heart! I Am! Stop being alarmed and afraid.” (See Exodus 3:14.) What are the implications of Jesus saying “I Am!”?

15. How do you take Jesus “into your boat”? Storms in life don’t always quiet down “immediately” as this one did when they called on Jesus. Is there still comfort we can take from this story even if our “storm” continues? Explain.

Pray about the storms you may be facing and encourage each other to cling to what God has revealed through tonight’s lesson.