



small groups

Discussion Guide



Our Doubt

Matthew 14:22-33

Ice Breaker

(5 minutes)

Discuss

- When did you learn to swim? Who taught you?
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Lesson Review

(40 minutes)

Read Matthew 14:22-33

Andy noted an interesting phrase in Mark's telling of this story that isn't included in Matthew's. Jesus either intended or pretended to walk right past the disciples.

Read Mark 6:47-49

A theophany is an appearing of the divine. Andy pointed out other places in scripture where God appears, but passes by someone.

Read Exodus. 33:12-23, 1 Kings 19:10-14, and Luke 24:13-35

Discuss

- What do all these stories have in common?
- Why do you think this is a motif that God seems interested in?

Another trope the disciples might have recognized is Jesus' words in verse 27: "Take courage! It is I. Don't be afraid."

The command Jesus gives in that verse is the most-repeated command of God in all the Bible: take courage, fear not, be not afraid.

And the little two-word phrase Jesus uses to identify himself is the very name of God: I Am. In Greek, *ego eimi* (ἐγώ εἰμι)

Jesus was delivering two world-changing truths: I am God; and you don't have to be afraid.

Discuss

- How do those two truths make you feel?

When Peter understood what was happening, he had an urge to do something commensurate with glory and power of Jesus. And Jesus rewarded that ambition. When Peter asked to walk on water, Jesus didn't say, "No Peter. What good would that do? My power isn't for parlor tricks." Jesus also didn't say, "Sure. I'll give you water-walking superpower and your circus sideshow can fund our ministry!" Instead, Jesus called Peter to come to him.

Discuss

- What does this say about our ambitions?

Andy said:

Jesus chose a storm for this theophany because, as Dale Brunner notes: "According to the Holy Scriptures, human extremity is the frequent meeting place with God." This is reminiscent of the words of God to Isaiah: "When you pass through the waters, I will be with you; and when you pass through the rivers, they will not sweep over you" (Isaiah 43:2). The storms of life have a powerful way of focusing human attention!

Discuss

- In the storms of life, are you more apt to cry out to God or try to steer your own boat?
 - What storms are you facing right now?
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Application

(15 minutes)

John Ortberg says, “Want to know what your boat is? Your fear will tell you. Just ask yourself this: What is it that most produces fear in me—especially when I think of leaving it behind and stepping out in faith?”

Discuss

- What is your boat? What are you afraid to leave behind?
- Where is Jesus calling you to take a step of faith?

