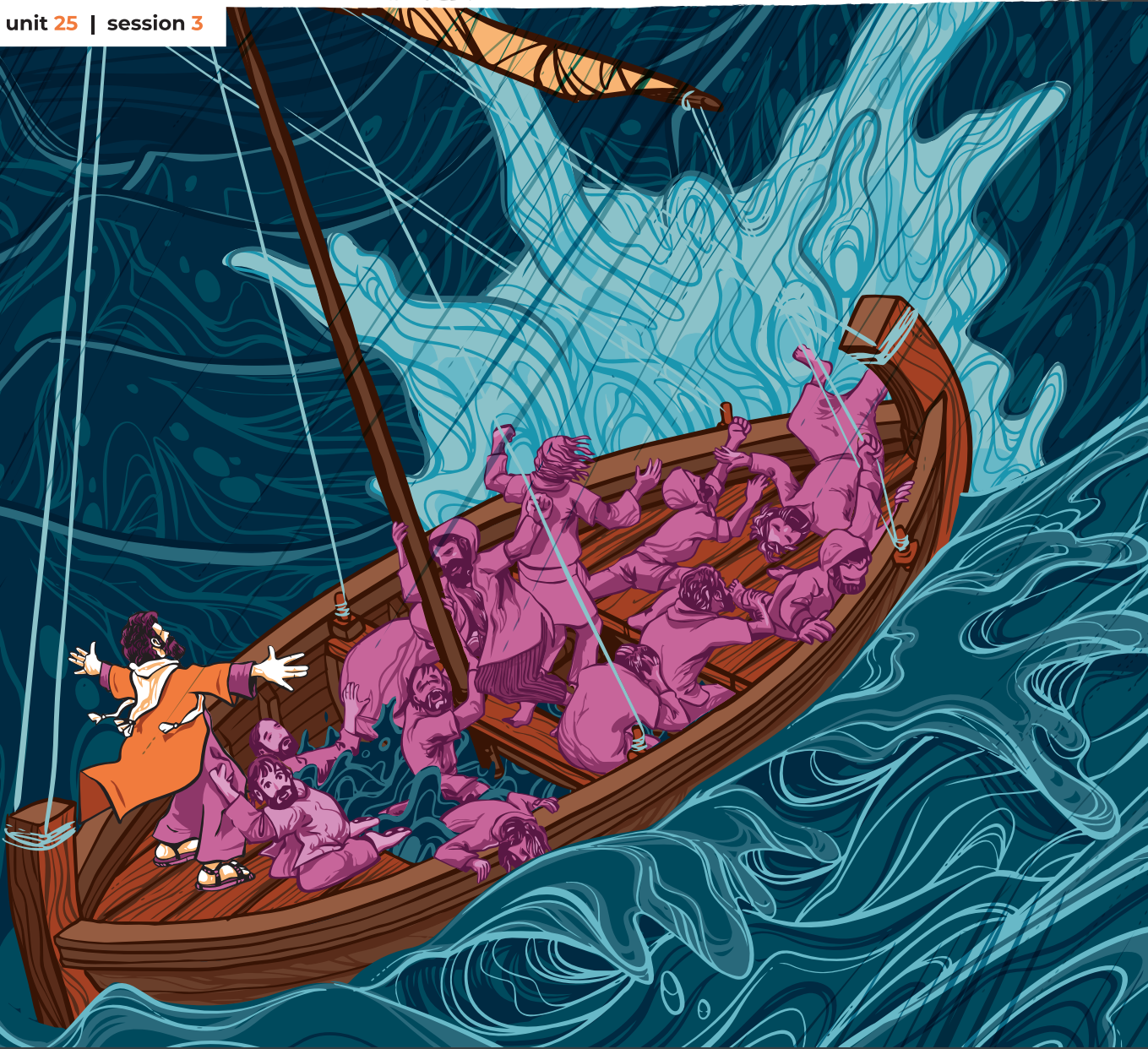


THE WIND AND THE *SEA OBEY*

unit 25 | session 3



CHRIST CONNECTION

Jesus demonstrated sovereign power over nature by calming the storm. Through His miracles, teaching, and most clearly, His death and resurrection, Jesus proved Himself to be worthy of our faith and worship. He alone is able to save us.

***PRESENCE* AND POWER**

This week, we're covering the passages and main points below. But we encourage you to dig in and read all of the content on this timeline.

Mark 4

STORMS ARE NOT GOD'S ABSENCE

MARK 4:35-38

35 On that day, when evening had come, he told them, "Let's cross over to the other side of the sea." 36 So they left the crowd and took him along since he was in the boat. And other boats were with him. 37 A great windstorm arose, and the waves were breaking over the boat, so that the boat was already being swamped. 38 He was in the stern, sleeping on the cushion. So they woke him up and said to him, "Teacher! Don't you care that we're going to die?"

STORMS REVEAL GOD'S AUTHORITY

MARK 4:39-41

39 He got up, rebuked the wind, and said to the sea, "Silence! Be still!" The wind ceased, and there was a great calm. 40 Then he said to them, "Why are you afraid? Do you still have no faith?" 41 And they were terrified and asked one another, "Who then is this? Even the wind and the sea obey him!"

MAIN POINT.

Jesus is worthy of our trust.



THEOLOGY CONNECTION

JESUS'S DEITY

The person of Jesus Christ has two natures—the divine and the human. Scripture teaches He is fully divine and fully human. His divinity is on display in passages that describe Him as being equal with God (John 1:1-18; Phil. 2:5-11; Col. 1:15-20; Heb. 1:1-3). The New Testament also points to the deity of Christ by showing how He possesses attributes that only God possesses, how He performs works that only God performs (Mark 2:5-12; John 10:28; 17:2), and how He Himself claims to be the Son of God (Matt. 26:63-64; John 8:58; 10:30; 17:5).

DISCUSSION

STORMS ARE NOT GOD'S ABSENCE

MARK 4:35-38

- What was the disciples' main fear? What did they not remember?
- When have you struggled to feel God's presence during a storm in your life?
- Do you think that the storm was a surprise to Jesus? Why would He sleep if He knew a storm was coming?

STORMS REVEAL GOD'S AUTHORITY

MARK 4:39-41

- Why is the way Jesus calmed the sea significant?
- Why do we struggle to trust God when storms come? How can storms either help or hurt our understanding of God's character?
- Why do you think the disciples responded the way they did to Jesus calming the storm?



HOW CAN YOU PAUSE TO REFLECT ON GOD'S SOVEREIGN CARE IN YOUR LIFE? HOW CAN YOU LIVE IN GRATITUDE TO HIM THIS WEEK?

CULTURAL CONNECTION

We don't enjoy difficult situations; usually, we do anything we can to avoid them. Regardless, bad things do happen. Sometimes, we want to blame God or ask why He wasn't there when we needed Him. We naturally question why God allows pain. Satan may even attempt to use our pain as twisted evidence that God isn't real or that He doesn't care. Storms do come—but not because God is uncaring or absent. Storms come because we live in a broken world. Sin entered the world in Eden and touched every part of humanity. Even nature experiences the effects of sin. While this may be difficult for us to see in our moments of pain, God hates our pain more than we do. He sent Jesus to make right what sin destroyed. The Lord is present with us in our pain. He walks with us through difficult times. He has ultimate authority over the world! God doesn't keep His children from experiencing struggles, but He sustains us as we depend on Him, and through Jesus, we have assurance of an eternity free from pain and sorrow.



DAY ONE

JOHN 15:18-20

The picture in a restaurant's menu almost always looks better than the actual meal that arrives at your table. You order something off the menu because the picture looks so good, but when it arrives, you think, "What is that?" Many people can feel like this when it comes to their faith.

People often make the decision to put their faith in Jesus and think all their problems will go away, everyone will like them, and they'll never go through anything difficult. They think that following Jesus will exempt them from the harsher realities of this life. While Jesus does promise life, and life to the fullest, He was also transparent about our fallen and broken world and our very real enemy (John 10:10). Jesus assured believers that they'd face trials and tribulation, but He also assured us that He has overcome the world and will be with us in it (John 16:33). If we follow Jesus, and if He is our example, then we shouldn't be surprised when we face difficulties. Jesus faced persecution and hate. Jesus told His disciples that since the world hated Him, it would also hate them—and us, His disciples today (John 15:18-20). When we follow Jesus, persecution, trials, and tribulation may be a part of our lives. But we don't have to live in fear or discouragement. Instead, we can take heart knowing that Jesus promised never to leave nor forsake us. We already have victory in Jesus's name, and every trial is an opportunity for God to receive glory because of His power and faithfulness to us.

- **HAVE YOU EVER BEEN SURPRISED BY A DIFFICULT SITUATION OR SEASON? HOW DID IT AFFECT YOUR FAITH?**
- **HOW CAN KNOWING BELIEVERS WILL FACE PERSECUTION PREPARE YOU TO TRUST GOD AND ENDURE?**

PRAY

**THANK YOU, JESUS, FOR NEVER LEAVING ME.
GIVE ME THE STRENGTH AND ENDURANCE TO
TRUST AND FOLLOW YOU NO MATTER WHAT I
FACE IN THIS LIFE.**



DAY TWO

PSALM 23

Have you ever gotten caught in a storm without an umbrella? You probably got absolutely drenched. People often refer to the difficulties of life as storms, even saying the expression, “When it rains, it pours.” But what if we have an umbrella available to us when it rains and when it pours?

In this psalm, David wrote from the experience of a shepherd. He knew the lengths shepherds go to in caring for their sheep: They stay close; they lead them to safety; and they provide for their needs. David explained that even when we walk through the darkest valleys, we don’t have to fear because God is with us (v. 4). God’s presence and His power not only keep us safe, but they also comfort us. Why? Because if God is for us, then who can be against us (Rom. 8:31). Not only does God go with us and protect us, but He also provides what we need in every circumstance (v. 5). Therefore, no matter the storms we go through or what trials we face, we can have both confidence and comfort, knowing God sees, cares, and stays close.

While this is true, something is required from us. Even if you have an umbrella in the middle of a rainstorm, it does you no good if you don’t open it and use it. Although God has promised to never leave us and to be our Protector and Provider, we must choose to come under His covering. How do we do this? We intentionally run to God, call on Him, and rest in His presence. We remain close to our Shepherd. No matter what rainstorm you find yourself in, remember that an umbrella is available to you—one that is more than capable to handle the weather and one that will always keep you safe. His name is Jesus.

- **HOW HAVE YOU EXPERIENCED GOD’S COMFORT AND CARE FOR YOU DURING A DIFFICULT TIME?**
- **WHAT ELSE ARE YOU TEMPTED TO RUN TO DURING LIFE’S STORMS? HOW CAN YOU GO TO GOD INSTEAD?**

PRAY

**GOD, I KNOW YOU PROMISED TO NEVER LEAVE ME.
HELP ME RUN TO YOU SO THAT I MAY EXPERIENCE
YOUR PRESENCE AND POWER IN THE MIDST OF
LIFE’S DIFFICULTIES.**



DAY THREE

2 TIMOTHY 1:7

When we're afraid, we don't act like our normal selves. Fear has a way of weakening us from the inside out. We can feel vulnerable and exposed. Our perspective becomes distorted, our attitudes shift, and our ability to make wise decisions is compromised. How we react to fear matters because we'll face many situations that make us afraid. And in those moments, a wrong perspective or attitude can lead us to make really unwise choices. So what do we do when fear shows up?

The apostle Paul explained that God didn't give us a spirit of fear; He gives us a spirit of power, love, and good judgment. This verse is more than encouragement; it is truth that we can apply to our lives! The Spirit of God who lives within us as believers gives us the ability, even in the presence of fear, not to be ruled by it. Fear may lurk nearby, but it doesn't have control. Instead, the Spirit empowers us to stand in God's strength, to respond in love, and to make wise, steady decisions that are grounded in the truth of who God is and in what He says in His Word. And though fear sometimes feels very loud, God's voice is louder. The Holy Spirit continually reminds us that God is with us and that He is our good heavenly Father (Gal. 4:6). As our good heavenly Father, God has promised to never leave us. He has promised to care for us, to guide us, and to be present with us in every moment. Knowing all of this should give us great confidence and help us to stand firm when fear tells us to run and hide. We can maintain a godly perspective, choose life-giving attitudes, and take faithful steps forward when fear would tell us to do the opposite. The next time fear creeps in, pause and remember that God is with you. Invite the Holy Spirit to strengthen you, to help you walk in love, and to guide you into wise and faithful choices.

- **HOW DOES FEAR AFFECT YOU? WHEN HAS FEAR MADE YOU ACT NOT LIKE YOURSELF?**
- **HOW CAN YOU RELY ON GOD AND CALL ON THE HOLY SPIRIT THE NEXT TIME YOU'RE AFRAID?**

PRAY

**GOD, WHEN I FEEL AFRAID, EMPOWER ME WITH
YOUR SPIRIT SO THAT FEAR DOES NOT TAKE
CONTROL OF MY LIFE.**



DAY FOUR

PROVERBS 3:5-6

Have you ever seen someone walk around with a “kick me” sign taped to his back without that person knowing? Because the sign is placed on his back, he can’t see it; so, he wonders what’s going on when people start laughing, or worse, kicking him! We don’t have eyes in the back of our heads, right?

So, what’s the lesson? Well, in life, we can’t see or know everything. While we may understand this in theory, if we’re honest, we often live as though we can see and know everything. Living this way makes following Jesus more difficult because following Jesus requires faith (2 Cor. 5:7). Living by faith is often admitting we don’t know the way, we don’t understand, we can’t see what’s next. When we operate like we do see and know everything, we begin to trust only what we can see and what we can understand, a mindset in tension with a life of faith.

God warns us against building a life that rests on our own understanding; instead, He urges us to build a life of full trust and confidence in Him. God promises that when we demonstrate this kind of trust by seeking His will in every area of our lives, He will lead and guide us, even when we can’t see or understand what lies in front of us—especially then! Shouldn’t this type of love and guidance give us great confidence? Yes! We get to rest; the pressure is off our shoulders to figure everything out because we have great confidence in our good God. When we rely on Him, He faithfully directs our steps and shows us the way.

- **WHY CAN IT BE DIFFICULT TO TRUST GOD WHEN WE CAN’T SEE WHERE HE IS LEADING US?**
- **HOW CAN YOU DAILY RELY ON GOD’S GUIDANCE RATHER THAN ON WHAT YOU CAN SEE AND UNDERSTAND? WHO CAN HELP YOU DO THIS?**

PRAY

GOD, I MAKE THE CHOICE TODAY TO TRUST IN YOU FULLY. LEAD AND GUIDE EVERY PART OF MY LIFE AND GIVE ME THE STRENGTH AND COURAGE TO FOLLOW AS YOU DO.



DAY FIVE

1 PETER 4:12-19

A soldier who goes to war is fully prepared for what lies ahead. They are prepared to face an enemy, prepared to face resistance, prepared to fight, and even prepared to die. They are not civilians; they are soldiers on a mission who've said "yes" to an assignment. In the same way, as Christians, we are not civilians but soldiers.

The Bible clearly explains that we have an enemy and that we are engaged in a battle of faith (1 Tim. 6:12). Though we live in this world, we're citizens of God's kingdom; in a very real way, this world is not our home (Phil. 3:20). As believers, we live like soldiers—fighting the good fight of faith, representing God's kingdom, and carrying an assignment or mission (Matt. 28:19-20). Therefore, like soldiers who face an enemy, we too should be prepared for resistance, prepared to fight, and even prepared to die to ourselves.

We often don't think about life in this way; we don't often view ourselves as soldiers from another kingdom. Then, when we face resistance or faith feels like a fight, we act surprised. Not only do we act surprised, but we also begin to wonder if we are doing something wrong! Peter wrote that we shouldn't be surprised when we face trials and tribulations, as if something strange were happening to us (v. 12). Trials are often evidence that we're in the battle. Instead, we should consider it great joy because we're on mission with Christ and are guaranteed victory in Him. So, like soldiers, let us prepare ourselves for what lies ahead. Yes—a fight. But also a victory! Jesus defeated sin, death, hell when He rose from the grave, and as we fight the good fight of faith, we can know His victory is our victory too!

- **AS A CHRISTIAN, DO YOU EVER FEEL SURPRISED WHEN YOU GO THROUGH HARD TIMES? IF SO, WHY?**
- **HOW CAN THIS PASSAGE GIVE YOU STRENGTH AND CONFIDENCE DURING DIFFICULT TIMES?**

PRAY

GOD, HELP ME TO REMEMBER THAT I AM ON MISSION WITH YOU, AND THAT I AM ENGAGED IN THE GOOD FIGHT OF FAITH. REMIND ME OF THE VICTORY I ALREADY HAVE IN JESUS!