

Icebreaker:

Living in Indiana, have you ever been afraid of a tornado touching down nearby? Or have you been afraid of seeing something strange at night?

From last week:

Question and Spiritual Practice: As Jesus provided food, what is one thing you can provide (possibly food) this week that is nourishing (physically, emotionally, or spiritually nourishing)? Take 2-3 minutes to think through a response, then share with your group. Then try to accomplish that this week, and report back to your group next week.

Were you able to provide food or something else this week for someone in need?

Read this week's scripture and discuss:

1. Do you think it's strange that the disciples left the shore without waiting for Jesus? Why do you think they did so?
2. Author Tim Keller says, "Jesus won't minimize the storm, he will maximize himself." Do you agree or disagree with this statement?

3. In regard to fear, read 1 John 4:18 below. What stands out to you?

There is no fear in love. But perfect love drives out fear, because fear has to do with punishment. The one who fears is not made perfect in love.

4. Where in your life do you need Jesus to say, "It is I, don't be afraid?"
5. When is fear a normal or healthy response in your life? Can you share how you have trusted God in the midst of a fearful situation you encountered?
6. Are there spiritual practices that you think help to build your trust in God, especially in stormy times?

prayer requests

- > We celebrate with Haley and Adam Bechtel in the birth of their son Liam.
- > Prayers of healing for Theresa Beardsley, Randy Laffoon, Carver McGriff, Joe Mundil, Robert Neal, and Ruth Ann Townsend.
- > Prayers of comfort for Jill and Cary Schein and family in the death of Jill's father.
- > Prayers for the Men's Great Banquet taking place in our building this weekend.

Last week we studied where Jesus fed the 5,000. This week we take a look at Jesus walking on water. We may not get excited today when reading these stories because we've heard them so many times before. But for the disciples, these incidents were amazing and terrifying – they were unexpected and hard to believe even when seeing them with their own eyes. One of the reasons we continue to study and discuss these well-known stories is to see them in a fresh way and to apply them to our own lives today. We also hope that you see that Jesus calmed their fears and what that means for us today.

Last week's spiritual practice: Please take a few minutes to ask your group if they tried to bring food or help to someone in need. If it didn't happen, they can try again this week. It could be as simple as giving a gift card or a few dollars to someone on the street. It could be helping a neighbor or friend in a physical, emotional, or spiritual way.

1. Jesus had just finished feeding the 5,000 and was probably now tired. It was common for him to go off alone after a big event and rest or pray. The disciples were most likely used to him going off by himself. They trusted Jesus enough as Rabbi, leader and now Messiah, that he would catch up and find them.

2. This makes sense in our lives today. The world is dealing with the Coronavirus, and families in Nashville are mourning the loss of loved ones from a middle of the night tornado. We deal with cancer, job loss, relationship loss, and even death. We don't see our storms diminish. But the stronger the storm, the more we can turn to Jesus, who will carry our burdens and handle any storm with us.

3. The same passage in 1 John 4 says that God is love. It also says we know what love is because Jesus sacrificed his life for our lives. So God's love is perfect and drives out fear. When we can fully trust in God, our fear lessens, because God is love, and he is perfect. Because we are human and imperfect, we are not made perfect in love and will still deal with fear. When we fear, do we turn immediately to God for help, or do we turn somewhere else?

4. This is personal question. But we know that we all fear and need Jesus to say that he is with us. Some areas your group might need God are illness, loved ones struggling, getting ready for a wedding, or a funeral. In our finances, with our children or grandchildren, with our work, and anywhere else, we need to see Jesus say, "Don't be afraid, it is I!"

5. In danger, fear guides our fight or flight response and can keep us safe and alive. Fear can heighten our senses and awareness and help us to be prepared for what's coming. So fear can be healthy when someone gets sick, to get help, or if something bad is coming – so we can be prepared. Fear can push us towards God, to cry out, "Help me Lord!" Fear can be bad if it is paralyzing, and causes us to turn too inward, or to live in fear. Instead, we need to rush to God.

6. Come up with your own spiritual practices which help to build trust in God. Here are 2 suggestions: First, scripture memorization. Specifically memorizing Philippians 4:6-8 on replacing anxiety with prayers. And Proverbs 3:5-6, trusting in God, not leaning on your own understanding. Second, doing some study and/or prayer around God's sovereignty. Believe (and know why you believe) that God is in control even when you are afraid.