



Sermon Discussion Guide

Getting Faith

Jesus Makes Headlines, Part 1

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March 15 & 16, 2014

"But Jesus spoke to them at once. 'Don't be afraid,' he said. 'Take courage. I am here!' Then Peter called to him, 'Lord, if it's really you, tell me to come to you, walking on the water.' 'Yes, come,' Jesus said. So Peter went over the side of the boat..." Matthew 14:27-29 (NLT)

The Bible includes accounts designed to build our faith. Two events in Peter's life that helped him get faith include: (1) Jesus dramatically increasing Peter's catch of fish, and (2) Jesus leading Peter to walk on water. You could say that: (1) Jesus gets into your boat, and then (2) Jesus gets you out of your boat! He typically comes into our lives through the steps of (1) interest, (2) revelation, (3) fear, and (4) faith. He grows you beyond yourself by giving you: (1) faith to get out of the boat, (2) faith to step out on the water, and (3) faith to cry out when you're sinking!

OPEN YOUR GROUP WITH A PRAYER. THIS IS ONLY A GUIDE – SELECT THE POINTS YOU WANT TO DISCUSS.

"Jesus replied to Simon, 'Don't be afraid! From now on you'll be fishing for people.'" Luke 5:10b (NLT)

1. Why do you think Jesus was trying to calm Peter's fear? When you first acquired faith, what fears did you encounter?

"When Moses heard this he covered his face because he was afraid to look at God." Exodus 3:6 (NLT)

2. What are some things God has called you to do that you feared? How did your faith help you overcome your fear?

"And as soon as they landed, they left everything and followed Jesus." Luke 5:11 (NLT)

3. Peter left everything to follow his new life with Jesus. What do some people leave behind today to follow Jesus? How did you overcome any fear you might have felt about letting things go?
4. Read Matthew 14:27-29 at the top of the page. Give some illustrations of having to leave a place of security. What are some areas you're afraid to give God control of for fear that he may not come through?

"Peter went over the side and walked on the water toward Jesus. But when he saw the strong wind and the waves, he was terrified and began to sink." Matthew 14: 29-30 (NLT)

5. As a fisherman, Peter knew Jesus calling him to step out of the boat made no earthly sense; what is God calling you to do, and would you be willing to trust Him to make it happen? Faith is more than just positive thinking, it's focusing on the Lord rather than our circumstances. What circumstances in our lives take our focus off the Lord?

"'Save me, Lord!' he shouted. Jesus immediately reached out and grabbed him. 'You have so little faith,' Jesus said. 'Why did you doubt me?' When they climbed back into the boat, the wind stopped. Then the disciples worshiped him. 'You really are the Son of God!' they exclaimed." Matthew 14:30-33 (NLT)

6. Peter's faith came up against failure. There are times that we try to cover it up instead of crying out to God, play it off rather than praying it out. Discuss times when your faith faltered. How did you handle it?

Diving Deeper (optional)

Peter had been with the Lord for over a year by the time of the events recorded in Matthew 14:27-29 at the top of the page. By this time, Peter had gotten some faith in Jesus, but not enough faith to keep him from becoming afraid and sinking. How did Peter's faith grow later? What are some examples? How can your faith grow in Jesus?

REVIEW ANY ASSIGNMENTS OR COMMITMENTS MADE DURING YOUR PREVIOUS MEETING.

Sermon Discussion Guide Leader Notes

Suggestions for This Week’s Study

- **Icebreaker:** Name some times you’ve stepped out in faith – in matters large or small.
- **Goals:** Look at some examples in Peter’s life that helped him get faith. See how Jesus both gets into your boat and gets you out of your boat! Consider ways he comes into your life through steps such as interest, revelation, fear, and faith. Consider how you can grow in faith to get out of the boat, to step out on the water, and cry out when you’re sinking!
- **Prayer:** Heavenly Father, I want to live a life of faith. I pray that you will get into my boat and give me the faith to get out of my boat! Thank you for being a loving and trustworthy Savior! In Jesus’ name. Amen.

Preparing to Lead Your Group

- ✓ **PRAY** for insight as you begin to prepare for leading your group. Ask for God’s wisdom, that the Holy Spirit will be the teacher and that you will be God’s instrument to lead the group to greater understanding and a willingness to commit to becoming more like God. Prayer should be your primary source of personal preparation for leading your group.
- ✓ **PLAN** where you want to take your group in the next 60-90 days. Is your group strong in some areas and weak in others? How can you challenge the members to live more balanced Christian lives? Consider God’s five purposes for the church: Fellowship, Discipleship, Ministry, Mission and Worship, and make a plan to encourage your group members to growth and commitment in their weak areas.
- ✓ **PONDER YOUR PROGRESS** after each session and at the end of a series. Reflect on what went well and what didn’t. Re-evaluation is key to your growth as a leader. Consider whether your plan is being effective in moving the group to greater understanding and commitment. How are you doing with leading the discussion: is it stimulating, challenging, and meaningful? Are you able to keep the group on track? Do you need to make some changes?

Using This Sermon Discussion Guide

- Talk It Over is a tool to aid you in meeting the needs of your group. We’ve designed it so it can be completed easily within 30-45 minutes. As the discussion leader, you should preview and evaluate the questions based on the needs of your group. Decide in advance what is most important to focus on, should time not allow for the entire lesson.
- Feel free to adapt the format to meet the needs of your group. If your group is mature and wants to dig deeper, consider using the Diving Deeper section or add additional Scripture and ask suitable questions. Remember that this is only a guide.
- The questions relating to Bible study methods are helpful to develop Bible literacy and spiritual maturity in our lives. You can help your group be aware of their needs in these areas by using these questions as a regular part of each discussion.
- Personal applications are essential for growth and should be included in every discussion. When discussing how they will apply principles, group members may state very general goals such as “I need to spend more time in prayer.” It is important for you to help people make goals that are very specific and commit to specific plans of action by asking, for example, “How are you going to begin?” An example is to get up 25 minutes earlier each morning, spending 15 minutes reading the Bible and 10 minutes in prayer. Encourage each group member to be accountable to the group for personal progress at the next meeting.
- Your goal as the leader is to bring the group into a stimulating discussion that helps the members recognize their needs for personal life change. Ultimately you want them to be willing to commit to change with accountability to the group. Accountability helps us to persevere in our commitments and achieve the blessings of success.