

# “Selected Gospel Sections”

Spring Series 1

Lesson 6

## “Stilling the Storm”

Matthew 8:23-27; Mark 4:35-41; Luke 8:22-25.

**Objective:** To understand the message of the Gospel accounts in their context within each work independently and then to compare the accounts to each other to seek understanding of emphasis and focus. The goal is then to apply this message to our time and context in order to understand the message’s call on our lives.

**Materials:** To use the Greek, Syriac, and other ancient translations in order to help us understand the message of these Gospels. We will also examine the writings about these passages in journal articles, commentaries and other sources.

### Procedures

1. To first translate each text from Greek and then compare it to other ancient translations.
2. To identify issues of importance within the texts and to explore possible meanings as they applied to the original audience.
3. To take the meaning for the original audience of the Gospels and to understand it how applies to our modern context and cultural situation.
4. To explore ways that these text call the disciples of Jesus to live their lives as faithful followers.

**Matthew 8:23-27** <sup>23</sup> And After He got into the boat, his disciples followed Him. <sup>24</sup> And behold a great earthquake arose in the sea, so that the boat was being swamped by the waves, but He was asleep. <sup>25</sup> And coming to him they awakened Him saying, "Lord, save us! We are perishing!" <sup>26</sup> And he said to them, "Why are you afraid, you of little trust?" Then after getting up He rebuked the winds and the sea, and there was a great calm. <sup>27</sup> And the men were amazed saying, "What sort of man is this, that the winds and the sea obey Him?"

**Mark 4:35-41** <sup>35</sup> And in that day, when the evening had come, He said to them, "Let us pass over to the other side." <sup>36</sup> And abandoning the crowd, they took Him just as He was in the boat, and other boats were with Him. <sup>37</sup> And there came to be a storm, a great wind and the waves beat upon the boat, so that already the boat was being swamped. <sup>38</sup> And He was in the stern upon the cushion sleeping. And they woke Him and said to Him, "Teacher, do you not care that we are being destroyed?" <sup>39</sup> And He awakened, rebuked the wind and said to the sea, "Hush, be still." And the wind stopped and there became a great calm. <sup>40</sup> And He said to them, "Why are you afraid? Do you not yet have trust?" <sup>41</sup> And they were terrified with a great fear and they were

**Luke 8:22-25** <sup>22</sup> And one day came about and He embarked in a boat and His disciples and He said to them, "Let us pass to the other side of the lake." So they set out. <sup>23</sup> And while they were sailing He fell asleep. And a storm of wind came down onto the lake, they were being swamped and they were in danger. <sup>24</sup> And they went to Him and woke him saying, "Master, Master, we are perishing." And He woke up rebuked the wind and the raging of the water. And they ceased and became calm. <sup>25</sup> And He said to them, "Where is your trust?" But being frightened they were amazed saying to one another, "Who then is this that even the winds, and the water obeys Him?"

**John** NO CORRESPONDING TEXT IN JOHN.

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**saying to one another,  
“Who then is this that even  
the wind and the sea obeys  
Him?”**

The story of the “Stilling of the Storm” is one that challenges and inspires. For modern readers it is very often seen as a story that clearly, and powerfully, indicates the deity of Christ, but for the apostles on the day that it happened, this is perhaps not what they understood from this event. In the early church, the divine sonship of Jesus that was so patently presented in the writings of Paul is still an open question in the Synoptic Gospels, according to some scholars. One question for us is, can this same message that expresses the deity of Christ in the writings of Paul be found in the Gospels also? In order to understand the original message of the Gospels it is important to focus on the setting that we find there, the context, where Jesus is teaching His apostles in the early stages of their walk as His disciples. Ceroke says, “The evangelists are preoccupied with the divinity only to the extent necessary to the purpose of their gospels as a whole.”<sup>1</sup> It is important for us to be able to put aside our modern understandings, preconceptions, and ingrained notions, in order to look at this account from the Gospels with fresh eyes; in order to come to understand the message that this event gave to those apostles of Jesus in that boat. We need to imagine how they first experienced this event and then explore the ways that they, and the early readers of these Gospel accounts, will have understood its message.

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<sup>1</sup> Christian P. Ceroke, “The Divinity of Christ in the Gospels,” *The Catholic Biblical Quarterly*, 24:2 (1962), pp. 125-139.

Each of the Gospel accounts has its own emphasis and, at least for now, we will focus much of our attention on Mark's Gospel. It is the longest and fullest of the three accounts. For many, the key matter for interpreting Mark 4 is set in place by Mark's opening statement in 1:1.<sup>2</sup> This introduction would seem to settle the issue of focus on the deity of Christ, but the complexity of the matter is compounded by the fact that some of the earliest and best manuscripts do not have the words "God's Son" (υἱοῦ θεοῦ - *wiou theou*) in this opening text.<sup>3</sup> The absence of these words in some of these early manuscripts is perhaps due to an oversight in copying, occasioned by the similarity of the endings on the *nomina sacra* (Ἰησοῦ Χριστοῦ - *Iesou Christou* - "the sacred name" - Jesus Christ) that occurs just prior the phrase "Son of God" (υἱοῦ θεοῦ - *wiou theou*) that has the same ending. On the other hand, there was always a temptation, to which copyists often succumbed, to expand titles. This would mean that there was the temptation to expand the name of Jesus to add the descriptive addition that He is the "Son of God." For modern textual critics there is some doubt as to whether this phrase (υἱοῦ θεοῦ - *wiou theou*) is original, or not, even though it does have some very good,

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<sup>2</sup> **The beginning of the good news about Jesus Christ, God's Son**, NRSV.

<sup>3</sup> Sinaiticus - 4<sup>th</sup> century Alexandrian manuscript. Koridethi - 9<sup>th</sup> century - The text of Mark is similar to that used by Origen and Eusebius in the third and fourth centuries at Caesarea. Vaticanus 354 - 949

and some very early, manuscript evidence to support it.<sup>4</sup> For me, there would seem to be considerably more reason to add this phrase rather than to exclude it. Certainly, it is the case that Jesus was the Son of God, but the challenge here is whether this wording is original to Mark, or added later by a copyist. I think that it is highly likely to have been added by a later copyist.

However, if it is original then it impacts the interpretation of our passage and the overall focus of whole of Mark's Gospel tremendously, as it would then be setting out from the very beginning to convey to the original audience the divinity of Jesus. If this reading is not original, then that too impacts how we would interpret our passage. It does seem to me that in the stilling of the storm text there was the perfect opportunity for Mark to declare the divinity of Jesus if that were his goal, and yet he did not do that. The recent majority trend, among commentators on this passage in Mark, have viewed the calming of the storm as a clear and unequivocal indication of the divinity of Christ. There are also some that would not agree with this interpretation and they offer additional evidence that they believe should be taken into consideration in interpreting this passage. Kirk and Young think that the case for understanding this incident to be an

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<sup>4</sup> Bruce M. Metzger, *A Textual Commentary on the Greek New Testament*, 3<sup>rd</sup> edition, corrected edition (London: United Bible Societies, 1975), p. 73. Bruce Metzger gives the likelihood for the inclusion of *υἱοῦ θεοῦ* - *wiou theou* in Mark 1:1 a "C" rating. A "D" rating is the lowest rating given for accepting the reading as belonging in the text. If we were to think of this on a scale of 1-4 with 1 being highly likely this would be a 3 rating.

expression of the divinity of Jesus is not as strong as many believe.<sup>5</sup> Biblical interpretive issues are seldom as simple and straightforward as we often would be led to believe. One piece of evidence that Kirk and Young cite as perhaps indicative of other possibilities for interpreting this passage is Psalm 89:25<sup>6</sup> (88:26 in the Septuagint). This is a Psalm portraying the ideal king in the lineage of David that was to come.

According to Kirk and Young this passage uses the portrayal of the idealized Davidic king, being described in Psalm 89:25, as one who participates in God's authority over the sea and rivers without there being any sense that this person is being declared as divine. They also cite some other evidence they believe is to be found in stories from the Old Testament where there were others who they say exercised control over waters and yet were not considered to be divine. They put forward as evidence that both Moses

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<sup>5</sup> J. R. Daniel Kirk and Stephen L. Young, "I Will Set His Hand to the Sea": Psalm 88:26 LXX and Christology in Mark,' *Journal of Biblical Literature* 133:2 (2014), pp. 333-340.

<sup>6</sup> **I will set his hand on the sea. I will set his strong hand on the rivers.** CEB.

(Exodus 14:16<sup>7</sup>, 27<sup>8</sup>) and Joshua (3:7-4:19<sup>9</sup>) were portrayed as agents of God who exercised control over the waters of the sea, and a river respectively (the Jordan at flood stage). In the case of Moses, there is the

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<sup>7</sup> As for you, lift your shepherd's rod, stretch out your hand over the sea, and split it in two so that the Israelites can go into the sea on dry ground. CEB.

<sup>8</sup> So Moses stretched out his hand over the sea. At daybreak, the sea returned to its normal depth. The Egyptians were driving toward it, and the LORD tossed the Egyptians into the sea. CEB.

<sup>9</sup> The LORD said to Joshua, **"Today I will begin to make you great in the opinion of all Israel. Then they will know that I will be with you in the same way that I was with Moses."** <sup>8</sup> "You are to command the priests who carry the covenant chest, 'As soon as you come to the bank of the Jordan, stand still in the Jordan.'" <sup>3:9</sup> Joshua said to the Israelites, "Come close. Listen to the words of the LORD your God." <sup>10</sup> Then Joshua said, "This is how you will know that the living God is among you and will completely remove the Canaanites, Hittites, Hivites, Perizzites, Girgashites, Amorites, and Jebusites before you. <sup>11</sup> Look! The covenant chest of the ruler of the entire earth is going to cross over in front of you in the Jordan. <sup>12</sup> Now pick twelve men from the tribes of Israel, one per tribe. <sup>13</sup> The soles of the priests' feet, who are carrying the chest of the LORD, ruler of the whole earth, will come to rest in the water of the Jordan. **At that moment, the water of the Jordan will be cut off. The water flowing downstream will stand still in a single heap."** <sup>3:14</sup> The people marched out from their tents to cross over the Jordan. The priests carrying the covenant chest were in front of the people. <sup>15</sup> When the priests who were carrying the chest came to the Jordan, their feet touched the edge of the water. The Jordan had overflowed its banks completely, the way it does during the entire harvest season. <sup>16</sup> **But at that moment the water of the Jordan coming downstream stood still. It rose up as a single heap very far off, just below Adam, which is the city next to Zarethan.** The water going down to the desert sea (that is, the Dead Sea) was cut off completely. The people crossed opposite Jericho. <sup>17</sup> So the priests carrying the LORD's covenant chest stood firmly on dry land in the middle of the Jordan. **Meanwhile, all Israel crossed over on dry land, until the entire nation finished crossing over the Jordan.** <sup>4:1</sup> When the entire nation had finished crossing over the Jordan, the LORD said to Joshua, <sup>2</sup> "Pick twelve men from the people, one man per tribe. <sup>3</sup> Command them, 'Pick up twelve stones from right here in the middle of the Jordan, where the feet of the priests had been firmly planted. Bring them across with you and put them down in the camp where you are staying tonight.'" <sup>4:4</sup> Joshua called for the twelve men he had appointed from the Israelites, one man per tribe. <sup>5</sup> Joshua said to them, "Cross over into the middle of the Jordan, up to the LORD your God's chest. Each of you, lift up a stone on his shoulder to match the number of the tribes of the Israelites. <sup>6</sup> This will be a symbol among you. In the future your children may ask, 'What do these stones mean to you?' <sup>7</sup> **Then you will tell them that the water of the Jordan was cut off before the LORD's covenant chest. When it crossed over the Jordan, the water of the Jordan was cut off.** These stones will be an enduring memorial for the Israelites." <sup>4:8</sup> The Israelites did exactly what Joshua ordered. They lifted twelve stones from the middle of the Jordan, matching the number of the tribes of the Israelites, exactly as the LORD had said to Joshua. They brought them over to the camp and put them down there. <sup>9</sup> Joshua also set up twelve stones in the middle of the Jordan where the feet of the priests had stood while carrying the covenant chest. They are still there today. CEB

account where God had made Moses “god to Pharaoh” (Exodus 7:1<sup>10</sup>). Moses is later on instructed to “stretch out your hand over the sea and divide it” (Exodus 14:16 NRSV), and “YHWH drove the sea back” (Exodus 14:21<sup>11</sup>). To be fair it seems to me this passage makes it very clear that authority over the sea is exercised by YHWH and not by Moses even as a proxy of God. This seems markedly different from what we find in the Gospel of Mark and in the other two Gospel accounts. There, it seems to me there is no indication of a borrowing of authority, or power or acting as proxy for anyone by Jesus.

In the instance of Joshua, the miracle of dividing the waters of the Jordan River was to establish Joshua as one with whom the Lord is present in the way that He was present with Moses (Joshua 3:7). These accounts indicate that God has, in some sense, perhaps shared his authority with human agents in the biblical narrative without there being any claims for them sharing in the deity of God. Such possibilities of a God-empowered, water-ruling king, could perhaps be seen as informing the connotations that we might

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<sup>10</sup> Most English versions add the word “like” in front of god, but this is not the case in either the Hebrew or the Old Greek text of this verse. Here is a literal translation: **And YHWH said to Moses, “Behold, I have set you God to Pharaoh, and Aaron your brother will be your prophet.”** I have never heard it put forward that what God is doing here is in any way indicating the divine nature of Moses.

<sup>11</sup> **Then Moses stretched out his hand over the sea. The LORD drove the sea back by a strong east wind all night, and turned the sea into dry land; and the waters were divided.** NRSV.

draw from Jesus' control of the seas according to Kirk and Young.<sup>12</sup> It appears to me that there are also considerable differences between the account in Mark, Matthew, and Luke from what is found in the accounts of Moses and Joshua. To be fair to Kirk and Young this is their ancillary evidence for their supposition with their primary evidence coming from the Psalm. However, I do not find this secondary evidence compelling; as a matter of fact I think it might prove just the opposite point. The way Jesus exercises authority over the winds and the sea is markedly different from the way either Moses, or Joshua were involved in the parting of the Red Sea and the Jordan River. Jesus appears to act with an inherent authority and not as an agent. The wind and the seas obey His command.

Kirk and Young think that it is possible that Mark may have created images, in his account of the calming of the sea, a set of descriptions, that may be in some way similar to those to be found in the Davidic King psalm. They would then postulate that a literate Christ follower of the first century A. D., who drew upon the traditions found in the Judean Scriptures, could reasonably have been expected to consider that God's eschatological Davidic representative might have such authority over the sea as we see in Jesus

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<sup>12</sup> J. R. Daniel Kirk and Stephen L. Young, "I Will Set His Hand to the Sea": Psalm 88:26 LXX and Christology in Mark,' *Journal of Biblical Literature* 133:2 (2014), pp. 333-340.

calming the storm without necessarily identifying such a person as a partaker of divinity in the sense that this identification is taken to be the case for those arguing for a divine Christology in Mark. This means that they consider the mastery that Jesus exercises over the sea is not necessarily to be perceived as an indication of Him sharing in the identity of Israel's God as a divine being. They would however admit that the scholars who do advance the position that Mark is indicating that Jesus is being identified with the divine persona by Mark may be correct, but they believe that the arguments for such a position are not as strong as are so often put forward. They believe that it was at least possible, in this period, to understand that a non-divine figure could exercise authority over the sea.<sup>13</sup> Even though I do not accept that their evidence as compelling I do believe there is at least some merit in their thesis that this is not a slam dunk indication that Mark, or the other Gospel writers, are seeking to indicate the divinity of Christ in this story.

Joel Marcus examines the premise of a Davidic figure exercising control over the sea and does not consider a messianic hope that has been fashioned along Davidic lines to be big enough to embrace the one whose resurrection is to God's right hand<sup>14</sup> with the implication that Jesus does participate in the divine

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<sup>13</sup> J. R. Daniel Kirk and Stephen L. Young, "I Will Set His Hand to the Sea": Psalm 88:26 LXX and Christology in Mark,' *Journal of Biblical Literature* 133:2 (2014), pp. 333-340.

<sup>14</sup> Mark 16:19 - **After the Lord Jesus spoke to them, he was lifted up into heaven and sat down on the right side of God.** CEB.

majesty. Marcus would indicate that the forces arrayed against Jesus and the plane of battle on which Jesus undertakes His mission is beyond the scope what could be expected of a “Son of David” figure that also did not share in the divine nature. The supernatural forces that are arrayed against Jesus and the battle that He wages indicate that the title “Son of David” is insufficient to express fully the power displayed by Jesus in quelling of the sea, the driving out demons, and the raising the dead. This divine affirmation is expressed when Jesus strides in the self identification formula “I am He,” (Mark 4:35-41; 6:45-52), He is speaking and acting out the language of the Old Testament using language indicating the divine warrior in which YHWH Himself subdues the demonic forces of chaos in a cosmos-creating act of holy war. Marcus would admit that Mark stops short of taking such stories to their logical conclusion and actually calling Jesus God; however, the suggestive nature of these narratives do place Jesus in a category that cannot be adequately grasped by an epithet that would restrict Jesus to the dimensions of simply one who is an ordinary human descendant of David.<sup>15</sup>

Going back to the divine title that Mark uses in 1:1 (ὁ υἱὸς τοῦ θεοῦ - *wiou theou*) Boring would put forward the view that while Mark pictures Jesus as full of divine power, he does not characteristically relate the title

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<sup>15</sup> Joel Marcus, *The Way of the Lord* (Louisville KY: Westminster/John Knox Press, 1992), pp. 144-145.

to deeds of power, but to the commission of the Messiah, authority, and obedience in carrying out his Father's commission even to the point of suffering and death (1:11; 9:7; 14:61-62; 15:39; cf. 12:6; 14:32-36). He would also admit that Mark's usage of the divine title (υἱοῦ θεοῦ - *wiou theou*) is disputed.<sup>16</sup> Gathercole would state that, "The conclusion in all three Gospels is the same, however: "Who is this, that the wind and the sea obey him?" a question which is left unanswered."<sup>17</sup> This seems to me to be the best understanding of what the disciples will have perceived from this event when it happened. It challenged them and began to open up for them new questions and the potential to come to new understandings. There is little indication that at this point in their journey of discovery they had any real conception of what it might look like for God to be with them in human form. This would have been an incredibly radical concept for them, likely even one that they would have considered heretical.

It was radical and heretical because of their understanding of what it meant for God to be "one" and because of their understanding of the distance that existed between them and God. To think of the "One" who set the mountain on fire at Sinai walking on earth with them, eating with them, riding in a boat with

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<sup>16</sup> M. Eugene Boring, "Markan Christology: God-Language for Jesus?" *New Testament Studies* 45 (1999), pp. 451-471.

<sup>17</sup> Simon J. Gathercole, *The Preexistent Son* (Grand Rapids MI: William B. Eerdmans Publishing Company, 2006), p. 63.



them was indeed radical and shocking. In so many ways we are insulated and isolated from the shocking nature of the incarnation, God become flesh.<sup>18</sup> Changing the minds of people is always difficult and challenging. We are prone to a status quo that resists change, that resists concepts that especially challenge what we consider to be core beliefs. Our degree of certainty determines our openness to new ideas and new concepts. Even today there are people that believe that the world is flat and they insist that all those who believe that it is round are mistaken and deluded. They are not open to the evidence, their minds are closed. Most of us have things that we consider so foundational that we are unwilling, or perhaps even unable, to accept anything that challenges these concepts. Sometimes something will come along that shakes our confidence in our understanding.

This is what I believe happened with the disciples of Jesus in the boat when He calmed the storm. He shook their confidence in their understanding of basic concepts concerning God, how He works, and who He is. This began the process of opening them up to learn new things, it opened them up to new possibilities, new understandings of who God is. They were challenged by what Jesus did, and the way He did it exactly

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<sup>18</sup> John 1:14 - **The Word became flesh and made his home among us. We have seen his glory, glory like that of a father's only son, full of grace and truth.** CEB.

because He did not fit in with their perceptions and understandings of who God is and how He works. They were not sure at this point what the message was, but they were sure that it did not fit with their understandings and we are told that they were afraid. When we do not understand things this is often how we respond, we are afraid. In our fear we then seek a place of safety. That safety can come when we retreat to familiar understandings, or when we learn something new. Jesus challenges His disciples here by asking them if they have “faith.” This has for us become a church word that is often emptied of much of the deep meaning contained in this word. I very often now choose to translate this word (*πίστις - pistis - as trust, or confidence*). When Jesus asks them the question of Mark 4:40 **“And He said to them, “Why are you afraid? Do you not yet have trust?”** He is challenging their concept of “trust.”

In whom, or in what, do you trust? Is it in your 401K, in your government, your job, your abilities, your family? When the storms come, and they will come, where does your trust rest. Jesus was challenging His disciples in that boat to trust in Him. They did not yet realize, I believe, that He was divine, that He was God. That would have likely been more information than they could handle at this point. They would likely have jumped overboard out of fear if they had understood that. As Jesus walked with them and taught them they built relationship, which is what God wants with His children. Here I believe that Jesus challenges them in



way that they can handle, but He challenges them to leave behind their understandings of who they think God is and to leave behind their understandings of how God works and become open to new possibilities. He challenges them to trust Him and in that trust would grow the realization that Jesus is God. A concept that is still hard for us today to grasp and comprehend. The one who spoke and light sprung into existence seeks relationship with His lost children, all of us.

He is willing to take on flesh, to take on suffering and pain, and to reach out to us and protect us from that which endangers us. In the accounts of Jesus calming the storm scholars have seen that the way He commands the storm is the same way that he commands the demons to come out of people and depart. Some have seen in this an indication that the cause of the storm is demonic forces. Whether this is correct, or not I do not know, but either way that you might see it Jesus commands the wind and the waves and they obey; there is then an ensuing calm, a peace that comes at His command. It is interesting to me that the disciples who were afraid and woke Jesus hoping that He would do something appear even more afraid when He does something. Our tendency is to run away from that which frightens us, but if that is Jesus then that is the wrong thing to do. We should run toward Jesus, trust Jesus more when we are frightened. He calls us to trust Him to believe in Him and this will often mean we are challenged because He will respond in ways



that are unexpected and challenging to us. The challenge of this story is one that challenges us all to recognize that we do not know everything, and we are not all-powerful, but we know one who is. When we are afraid, when we are confused we are challenged to walk in trust of the one who stills the storms, Jesus the Christ the Son of God.

# Synopsis

The account of the calming of the storm is one that is challenging and inspiring to all that hear it, but it is also one that is misunderstood, as it was originally experienced by the disciples. Many see it as a clear indication that the disciples will have understood it as a proclamation of the deity of Christ, as the one God who commands the sea and the wind. Not everyone agrees with this assessment though most modern commentators on Scripture in our modern era hold such a view.

There are a number of scholars who would indicate that we should exercise greater caution and explore more fully the context in order to understand how the disciples of Jesus in that boat will have understood this event. Some would propose that the expected coming Davidic King might be expected to wield such power and authority, while others unequivocally deny such a possibility. Some would say that Mark in his Gospel account sets out to provide information that proves this point from the very first verse of the Gospel where he calls Jesus the Son of God. This too is open to question on textual grounds as there is a discrepancy among early manuscripts with some including this reading while others exclude it.

Some would challenge us to read the verses and hang on tightly to the context and not overstate what is clearly conveyed in the text, which is an indication that the disciples were puzzled by this event and left in a state of uncertainty. To me, this seems the best way for us to understand this text. Jesus was beginning to form their understanding of His nature, but at this early point they will not have grasped the magnitude of this event until much later. In their uncertainty, they are now open to new understandings and new possibilities. They are open to trust in Jesus rather than in their notions of God and the Messiah with which they were ingrained and indoctrinated by generations of traditions.

We too should be challenged to consider what Jesus wishes to teach us and to be careful in closing our minds and hearts to new possibilities of understanding and new ways of relating to God. These verses challenge us to see God in new ways and to understand what it means to follow Jesus with fresh eyes.

# Questions

1. When you think of what it means to be “divine” what things come to your mind?
2. When you think about Scripture being copied by hand over multiple generations do you think the copyists ever made any mistakes? Why, or why not?
3. When you think of how the disciples of Jesus reacted to His stilling of the storm, what do you think they will have been thinking?
4. What are some things that are foundational to your understanding of who you are and why you are here?
5. What are some things that cause you to be afraid?
6. When you are afraid how do you react?
7. How do you think Jesus calls His disciples to react when they are afraid?
8. What are some ways that you seek to understand more fully who Jesus is in your walk of discipleship?
9. What are some ways that we can encourage each other to trust more fully and completely in Jesus each day?
10. Why do you think Jesus became flesh and dwelt among us?
11. What are some ways that Jesus challenges you to change who you are and how you think?
12. How do you think we as the church can help the world to more fully understand God today?



13.What are some ways that you can demonstrate your trust of Jesus each day as you live your life?

14.What are some of the storms that you encounter that cause you to be afraid?

15.When are you most willing to learn new things? Why?

# To Take Home

## **What is Important to know?**

It is important to know that each of us has an understanding of how we think the world works and often we think we understand how God works, what He wants, and who He is. Often such understandings act as barriers to us growing and becoming more fully disciples of Jesus Christ. It is especially when we are frightened that we retreat to that which is familiar and comfortable. As the disciples of Jesus walked with Him, He continually challenged their understandings of God, their place in the universe, and what love is. What are some ways that you seek to pursue a genuine understanding of God each day?

## **Where is God in these words?**

God is in the words here challenging preconceived notions and calling His children to “trust” Him. From the very beginning the problem has been one of trust. Will we trust ourselves and seek knowledge that leads us to greater independence, or will we listen to God and trust Him. Adam and Eve chose to seek independence and this led to separation from God. We must take great care in order to not allow our independence to separate us further from God. What are some ways that you are continually seeking to trust more fully in God?

## **What does any of this mean for how I live my life?**

This perhaps means that we should examine the way we live our life, to look at the things that we trust in, what we fear, and be challenged to trust more fully in Jesus. All of us will experience storms in this life, the real challenge is how will we respond in the midst of those storms. The disciples appear to have believed that their boat was going to sink with Jesus onboard and asleep. Perhaps it is the case with us that we believe that Jesus is asleep to the things we are experiencing, to the storms of our life. What are some ways that we can see that Jesus is not asleep to the storms of our lives?

## **What is the word of God calling us to do?**

The word of God is calling us to be open to new understandings, new ways of perceiving who God is, and how He works in my life and in the world. So often when we are afraid there is the tendency to retreat into places of comfort and surety, but it is especially in those moments that we are challenged to trust Jesus. How can you more fully express your trust in Jesus in the way you live each day?