



CONNECT GROUP NOTES

Sunday 20.08.2023

“Be Still”

Preacher

Ps. Andy Maccallum

Scripture

“That day when evening came, he said to his disciples, “Let us go over to the other side.” 36 Leaving the crowd behind, they took him along, just as he was, in the boat. There were also other boats with him. 37 A furious squall came up, and the waves broke over the boat, so that it was nearly swamped. 38 Jesus was in the stern, sleeping on a cushion. The disciples woke him and said to him, “Teacher, don’t you care if we drown?”

39 He got up, rebuked the wind and said to the waves, “Quiet! Be still!” Then the wind died down and it was completely calm.

40 He said to his disciples, “Why are you so afraid? Do you still have no faith?”

41 They were terrified and asked each other, “Who is this? Even the wind and the waves obey him!”

Mark 4:35-41

Thought

We all ask questions, and we all have questions asked of us. As Christians, our responsibility is not so much to give an answer, but to point others to Jesus.



When we ask a question, we try to raise the ceiling of our knowledge. We want more information. Yet Jesus, when He asks a question of us - it's not to raise the ceiling of our knowledge, but to chart the depths of our heart. As we go through this series, our goal is not to seek answers, but to open our hearts to Jesus to reveal truly who we are and who Christ is.

In today's verses, we see a situation which struck fear into the disciples. We all respond to fear in different ways. Some fight, some defer to flight, yet all are fear responses. Whether we respond in defence or anger or by hiding and avoiding, all are signs that we don't know how to handle a situation.

The disciples had seen Jesus in many situations, but they hadn't seen him in this particular scenario. They didn't have a full picture of who Jesus was. The same is true of us - how do we see Jesus? Do we see Him as someone who improves our lives? Do we see Him as a healer? Do we see Him as a rule-setter? How we view Him has a direct correlation with how we respond when the storms of life come. The more we know His heart, His character, the more we can stand with Jesus through it. Jesus isn't indifferent to our situations and challenges. He's not idly sleeping in the boat of life because He doesn't care - He's sleeping because he is sure. Sure of the future, sure that He holds you in His hands and He cares for you.

"Why are you so afraid, do you still have no faith?" Jesus asked the disciples.

The crux of discipleship is found in this exchange. We think our journey with Christ is transactional, we have a need and we approach Him, but He's not a genie in a bottle. He's far more important than that - He's far more powerful, loving and gracious. Jesus in this moment takes their situation and flips it on its head and He challenges the disciples in their trust. Do we trust Him regardless of the season - if we're in smooth waters or stormy seas, do we trust Him, that He has a future and a hope for us, that He indeed holds the power of life and death in His hands, and He and He alone can and will calm the storms in our lives?

Today, take stock of where you are in life. Are you sailing in calm waters? Then take this time to lean into Christ, to learn of His nature and His heart so that when the storms come, you can lean into his goodness and rely on Him without fear.



Are you watching clouds gather on the horizon? Then stand with Jesus, hand in hand and know that He won't let you go, come what may.

Are you in the midst of the storm, being blown here and there, unable to keep things together? Then know this; that the Lord who created you, who created all things is calling you to trust Him in this moment. He is with you, He will not abandon you, He will not let you sink. To have faith in this moment is to know that Christ loves you, that He is with you, and that in His perfect time, He will call the storm to stillness. It has nothing to do with your faithfulness, it has everything to do with His. Life throws storms at us, but Christ reigns above them all.

Yes, calm waters will come, but our hope is not in the calm, our hope is in Christ - and this means that no matter what the season, no matter what challenges we face, we can, right now, rely on God's love and goodness in our lives. Yes, we can see His favour, know His presence and experience His love, no matter the season.

He will surely lead us to calmer waters, but He is with us even in the wind and waves. May we know this truth in a deeper way today, and may His perfect love dispel all fear.

Discussion Points

1. What season am I in at the moment? Is it a restful and calm season, is it a transition season where the waters are choppy and unsure, or do I find myself in the midst of life's storms?
2. Is my focus on my situation, or is it on Christ? Likewise, am I relying on the calming of the storm more than the one who brings calm?
3. How can I partner with Christ today in helping to bring peace and calm to someone else who may be going through a stormy season? What encouragement or practical help can I bring to another, as the hands and feet of Jesus?



Personal application + Prayer

Lord,

Today, I place my ultimate hope in You - above all circumstances, above the storms, and I look to You and Your goodness in the midst of life. I place my hope not in the calming of the storm, but in You, for I know that Your love for me is strong enough to hold me through the wind and rain, and You will never let me go. Thank you that one day, I will sail on still waters with You and know the healing embrace of Your eternal love, be that in this life or the next. I release control to You today, and I thank You for Your infinite love that holds me today and always.

Amen.