

Small Group Notes 06 August 2017. Theme: "Wrestling with God-"

Key Words: Fear, Storm, Cry for Help, Jesus is the "Son of God".

Welcome

- Complete the sentence "I was caught out in a storm..."

Worship

Read: *"There is no difference between Jew and Gentile—the same Lord is Lord of all and richly blesses all who call on him, for, “Everyone who calls on the name of the Lord will be saved” (Romans 9:12-13).* Invite group members to consider sharing a testimony of Jesus has heard their cry for help.

Praise God together in song and prayer.

Word

Read Matthew 14:22-33:

- Have you ever noticed that in Revelation's picture of heaven *"the sea was no more"* (Rev. 21:1)? Why do you think that is?
- For the ancient people of Israel, who were not a "sea-faring nation", sea and stormy lakes represented the origin of chaotic, untamed, demonic forces (in Revelation the "Beasts" emerge from the sea). Does this change how you read the Gospel story?
- Leonard Sweet writes: *"this 'phantasma' [ghost] the disciples fear is not merely some wispy apparition, but is the embodiment of all their watery nightmares. The chaotic, demonic, death-dealing powers of the depths had taken form and were stalking them".* What are your greatest fears?
- Why do you think the Disciples believed Jesus to be the "Son of God" (:33)?
- What do you think of Sweet's interpretation: *"[The Disciples] are stuck in a wind- and wave-battered boat in the middle of a stormy sea. They are so trapped by their fears and dreads they are neither going forward nor going back. The focus of this story is NOT, as we too often think, “if you want to walk on water, you have to get out of the boat.” The focus of this story is not Peter’s short-lived walking the gangplank of doubt on the water. The focus of this miracle is not that Jesus walked on water. The focus of this story is on one thing: what do you do when your boat gets stuck in the storms of life?"*
- The Ujamaa Centre for Biblical & Theological Community Development & Research discovered that this text was a favourite amongst HIV/AIDS sufferers in the early 2000's. Why do you think that they chose this text?

Works

- How did last week's "spiritual exercise" go? Share with one another.
- How do we let Jesus "on the boat"? Work out one or two practical steps.
- Pray for our nation and one another in the knowledge that Jesus is the master of every storm and is able to tame every "wild" power.