



UPSTATE GROUP GUIDE

Through the Bible

September 1 - 7

Matthew 14

Things to Know

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Studying God's Word *In Community*

*Reminder: Seek to understand and apply God's word, **not** rehash the sermon.*

Sermon Recap

1. Jesus sees us in the storm — No matter how strong the wind and waves, Christ is never far; His presence is our peace.
2. Faith thrives when fixed on Jesus — Like Peter, we walk by faith only when our eyes remain on Christ, not our circumstances.

3. Worship is the right response — When Jesus saves and calms the storm, the only fitting response is to bow and confess Him as the Son of God.

Discussion Questions

1. Why do you think Jesus sent His disciples into the boat while He went up the mountain to pray (vv. 22–23)? What does this teach us about His priorities and His care for His people?
2. When the disciples saw Jesus walking on the sea, they were terrified (vv. 25–27). Why do you think they reacted this way, and how does Jesus’ response speak into our own fears?
3. Peter stepped out of the boat in faith but began to sink when he saw the wind (vv. 28–30). What does this reveal about the difference between faith and fear in the Christian life?
4. Jesus immediately reached out His hand to save Peter (v. 31). How does this moment illustrate both our weakness and Jesus’ willingness to rescue?
5. The disciples worshiped Jesus as the Son of God when the storm ceased (vv. 32–33). How should our experiences of Christ’s power and presence lead us to deeper worship today?

Read

Read Matthew 14:22-33 and make observations about the text.

- What is God teaching us in the passage?
 - What does this reveal about who God is, what God has done, and how I should respond?
 - Which part of the text was most meaningful to you and why?
 - What do you need help understanding about this passage?
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Scripture

Matthew 14:22-33

Jesus Walks on the Water

22 Immediately he made the disciples get into the boat and go before him to the other side, while he dismissed the crowds. **23** And after he had dismissed the crowds, he went up on the mountain by himself to pray. When evening came, he was there alone, **24** but the boat by this time was a long way from the land, beaten by the waves, for the wind was against them. **25** And in the fourth watch of the night he came to them, walking on the sea. **26** But when the disciples saw him walking on the sea, they were terrified, and said, "It is a ghost!" and they cried out in fear. **27** But immediately Jesus spoke to them, saying, "Take heart; it is I. Do not be afraid."

28 And Peter answered him, "Lord, if it is you, command me to come to you on the water." **29** He said, "Come." So Peter got out of the boat and walked on the water and came to Jesus. **30** But when he saw the wind, he was afraid, and beginning to sink he cried out, "Lord, save me." **31** Jesus immediately reached out his hand and took hold of him, saying to him, "O you of little faith, why did you doubt?" **32** And when they got into the boat, the wind ceased. **33** And those in the boat worshiped him, saying, "Truly you are the Son of God."

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Matthew 14:22-33

Living on Mission In Community

Faith is not the absence of fear but the decision to trust Jesus in the middle of it. Like Peter, we are called to step out of the boat and fix our eyes on Christ, even when the waves seem overwhelming. The storms of life—uncertainty, suffering, or doubt—are not beyond His reach. When we stumble, Jesus is quick to save, reminding us that His power is greater than our weakness. The right response to His saving hand is worship, not worry. So where in your life is Jesus inviting you to step out in faith and trust Him more fully?

How is God leading me to respond to His Word this week?

Optional Breakout Questions

Consider making time at the end of the group to break out into groups of 2-4 (keep them gender specific). Have them answer these three questions about their weeks:

1. How did you feed yourself?
 - *(What have you been doing to feed your spiritual life, and how is it going?)*
2. How did you feed others?
 - *(How did you share the gospel or gospel truth with someone this week?)*
3. How did you feed your flesh?
 - *(What sins did you struggle with this week? How can your friends hold you accountable?)*

Leader Resources - September 1-7

Small Group Curriculum - Faith That Fixes Its Eyes on Jesus

Passage: Matthew 14:22–33

1. Session Overview

In this session, we will study Jesus walking on water and Peter's step of faith. This story shows us that Jesus is Lord over creation, that faith grows when we fix our eyes on Him, and that doubt distracts us from His power. The passage ends with the disciples worshipping Jesus as the Son of God.

2. Opening

- Prayer: Begin by inviting the Holy Spirit to open hearts to see Christ clearly.
- Icebreaker: Share about a time when you faced something overwhelming and what helped you through it.
- Accountability Prompt (in pairs or triads):
“Is there any way we can pray for your personal walk with God this week?”

3. Scripture Reading

Read Matthew 14:22–33 aloud together.

(Optional: Read parallel accounts in Mark 6:45–52 or John 6:16–21 for comparison.)

4. Teaching Points

A. Jesus Sends and Sees (vv. 22–24)

- Jesus sends His disciples into the boat while He withdraws to pray.
- Even though the disciples are battered by the wind and waves, Jesus sees them and comes to them.
- The sovereignty of Christ means that storms in our lives are not outside of His control.

B. Jesus Comes in Power (vv. 25–27)

- Jesus walks on the sea, revealing His authority over creation.
- The disciples are terrified, but Jesus calms their fear with His words: “Take heart; it is I. Do not be afraid.”
- His presence is our peace.

C. Peter Steps Out in Faith (vv. 28–31)

- Peter’s boldness shows both courage and weakness. He walks on water by fixing his eyes on Jesus.
- When he looks at the wind, fear overtakes him and he begins to sink.
- Jesus immediately saves him and gently rebukes his doubt.

D. Worshiping the Son of God (vv. 32–33)

- When Jesus and Peter get into the boat, the storm ceases.
- The disciples respond with worship, confessing Jesus as the Son of God.
- Faith always leads to worship when we see Christ rightly.

5. Discussion Questions

1. What do you notice about Jesus' priorities in this passage (praying, sending, coming, saving)? (vv. 22–27)
2. Why do you think Peter asked to step out of the boat? What does this teach us about faith and risk? (vv. 28–29)
3. What caused Peter to begin sinking? How do we see the same distractions in our lives? (v. 30)
4. How do Jesus' words in v. 27 speak into your personal fears today?
5. What does the disciples' worship in v. 33 teach us about the ultimate purpose of trials and faith?

6. Application Points

- Fix Your Eyes on Jesus: Like Peter, our faith is strongest when we look to Christ, not our circumstances.
- Trust Jesus in the Storm: Whatever storm you face, Jesus sees, comes near, and saves.
- Respond in Worship: True faith leads to worship, not just relief when the storm ends.

Application Question:

Where is Jesus calling you to “step out of the boat” in faith this week, and how can this group support you?

7. Closing Reflection and Prayer

- Reflect silently: “Where am I sinking because I’ve taken my eyes off Jesus?”
- Close with group prayer, inviting members to name specific storms they want to entrust to Christ.

8. Memory Verse

Matthew 14:27 – “But immediately Jesus spoke to them, saying, ‘Take heart; it is I. Do not be afraid.’”

9. Leader's Notes

- Encourage honesty when discussing fear and doubt; Peter's failure points us to Christ's saving power.
- Highlight Christ's deity: walking on water, calming storms, receiving worship.
- Balance Peter's example—commend his boldness while emphasizing that faith must remain fixed on Jesus.
- Guide discussion toward personal application, not just admiration of the story.

