

A Single Session from *Anxiety*

SKIP McDONALD

ANXIETY

*Finding Comfort and
Reassurance from God*



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COMFORT IN TIMES OF FEAR

Matthew 14:22-36

Earthquakes, famine, disease, illness, war, crime, financial crisis, broken relationships, fear of failure—these and many other events fuel our anxiety and fear. We have all faced times of fear, and we all handle fear in different ways. We each have different needs so we seek whatever comfort is most appealing to us.

In some ways, fear attacks us at the core of who we are because something personal is in jeopardy. We live in a society where evil abounds and we wonder who will become a victim. Fear could easily dominate our thinking. We wonder if God will protect and come through for us when we are afraid. In this passage, we discover that the disciples wondered the same thing.

Group Discussion. What types of fear are people experiencing in the world today? What are ways you have seen people handle their fears?

Personal Reflection. When have you experienced fear that was almost debilitating? Who or what was helpful to bring you out of the depths of fear?

The disciples were attempting to cross the Sea of Galilee as Jesus had instructed them. As they traveled, their boat was tossed back and forth by the waves. Then, to their horror, they saw a ghostly type figure walking on the water. They were undone. *Read Matthew 14:22-36.*

5. Although you haven't walked on water, in what ways have you encountered Jesus the way Peter did?

6. What happened to the wind when Jesus got into the boat? How did the disciples respond (Matthew 11:32-33)?

7. What does it mean that Jesus is the Son of God?

8. What doubts are you facing that you need to bring to Jesus?

9. When have you experienced Jesus calming your fear?

10. How can this passage help prepare you for other possible times of fear and anxiety?



Pause and thank God for his care of you when you feel afraid and anxious.

NOW OR LATER

Read Matthew 14:1-21. Reflect on the two major events that Jesus encountered leading up to walking on the water. Verses 13 and 23 tell us that Jesus required some time alone. This week, allow yourself some time for solitude.

LEADER'S NOTES

My grace is sufficient for you.

2 CORINTHIANS 12:9

STUDY 2. COMFORT IN TIMES OF FEAR, MATTHEW 14:22-36

PURPOSE: To show the authority that Jesus has to calm our fears.

Overview of Matthew 14: After Jesus heard what had happened to John, he withdrew privately to a solitary place. Then after feeding the five thousand, Jesus immediately *made* the disciples get into the boat and go ahead of him to the other side of the Sea of Galilee while he dismissed the crowd and spent time alone.

Question 1. We don't know for certain why Jesus made the disciples get in the boat and cross to the other side. One possibility is that he needed that time alone after a tiring time of ministry to his disciples and thousands of people. A second possibility is that Jesus wanted to demonstrate that he is indeed the Son of God (Matthew 14:33) by this powerful miracle.

Question 2. They were "buffeted by the waves." *Buffeted* is the same as *striking repeatedly*. They were without Jesus all night.

Question 4. Peter's example is a strong lesson of trusting God when it doesn't make sense. On the human level, it made no sense for him to get out of the boat onto the water even when Jesus was right in front of him. On a faith level, it did. Peter had a huge decision to make. Would he trust Jesus in such a bold way or not?

Question 7. As Jesus was baptized by John the Baptist, we read, "A voice from heaven said, 'This is my Son, whom I love; with him I am well pleased'" (Matthew 3:17). Also see John 1:1-17. The Father makes it clear that Jesus is his Son.

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