



A Groovy Series About Joy - Part 4 Sermon Discussion Notes

Opening Idea

When my sons were growing up they loved to go on roller coasters at theme parks. Many times I was dragged onto death-defying theme park rides. Up and down the ride would go - we would climb to sublime heights only to experience the bottom dropping out. The goal of the Christian life shouldn't be like this - to be up some of the time and down most of the time but to learn to live in a state of joy that is consistent and steadfast. We want to learn to live above it all instead of below it all.

Key Scriptures

Matthew 14:22-33 NIV

22 Immediately Jesus made the disciples get into the boat and go on ahead of him to the other side, while he dismissed the crowd. 23 After he had dismissed them, he went up on a mountainside by himself to pray. When evening came, he was there alone, 24 but the boat was already a considerable distance from land, buffeted by the waves because the wind was against it. 25 During the fourth watch of the night Jesus went out to them, walking on the lake. 26 When the disciples saw him walking on the lake, they were terrified. "It's a ghost," they said, and cried out in fear. 27 But Jesus immediately said to them: "Take courage! It is I. Don't be afraid." 28 "Lord, if it's you," Peter replied, "tell me to come to you on the water." 29 "Come," he said. Then Peter got down out of the boat, walked on the water and came toward Jesus. 30 But when he saw the wind, he was afraid and, beginning to sink, cried out, "Lord, save me!" 31 Immediately Jesus reached out his hand and caught him. "You of little faith," he said, "why did you doubt?" 32 And when they climbed into the boat, the wind died down. 33 Then those who were in the boat worshiped him, saying, "Truly you are the Son of God."

Isaiah 6:1 NIV

1 In the year that King Uzziah died, I saw the Lord seated on a throne, high and exalted, and the train of his robe filled the temple.

Hebrews 12:2 NIV

2 Let us fix our eyes on Jesus, the author and perfecter of our faith, who for the joy set before him endured the cross, scorning its shame, and sat down at the right hand of the throne of God.

Discussion Questions

1. Read Matthew 14:22-33 out loud as a group.
2. Can you relate to Peter being brave to get out of the boat and on the water and simultaneously struggling with doubts that made him begin to sink? Do you think most people tend to believe and doubt at the same time? See (Mark 9:24, Mark 9:17-24)
3. What does water tend to do to us? Discuss the unusual preposition “on” used in the story.
 - Mark 9:25a During the fourth watch of the night Jesus went out to them, walking *on* the lake.
 - Mark 9:25b When the disciples saw him walking *on* the lake, they were terrified.
 - Mark 9:28 "Lord, if it's you," Peter replied, "tell me to come to you *on* the water."
 - Mark 9: 29b Then Peter got down out of the boat, walked *on* the water and came toward Jesus.
4. Water has a tendency to pull us under. Is the instability of water (Genesis. 49:4 KJV) a good metaphor for life? Who should we look at to maintain joy? Hebrews 12:3, Isaiah 6:1. Why is Isaiah’s situation relevant to us?
5. Peter was up for awhile then he went down. What are the types of things in our Christian life that can help us get up and living above our storms? What type of things can pull us down?

Concluding Thought

Jesus is often in the center of our storms. Two things are always happening in our lives. Jesus is working while simultaneously the howling winds are blowing all around us. Our attention is often pulled toward the wind and the rain. Joy, living above it all, is always rooted in looking at Jesus and not at the circumstances that are around us.