



BIBLE STUDY WEEK

2

The Man at Gadara

Begin in prayer together that you will help one another to encounter the power and care of Jesus

Point 1: God is trustworthy and wants us to experience rest and refuge in the safety of His care.

Whoever dwells in the shelter of the Most High will rest in the shadow of the Almighty. Read Psalm 91:1-6

Before we begin our study this week, we want to reflect for a moment on what it means to live life in community with one another. Dietrich Bonhoeffer wrote “We do God’s work for our brothers and sisters when we learn to listen to them. So often Christians, especially preachers, think that their only service is always to have to ‘offer’ something when they are together with other people. They forget that listening can be a greater service... Christians who can no longer listen to one another will soon no longer be listening to God either.” So, as we go further in this study together, we want to make an effort to really listen to one another, so we can come alongside one another in our daily lives. Too often we enter into the rhythm of a weekly worship service and forget that most of our lives are lived outside of “church”.

Together we can learn to encounter Jesus in the day-to-day as we connect more frequently with one another. Psalm 91 gives us a daily rhythm by which we can experience God’s presence in our lives. The passage recognises the troubles of life and the reality that there are indeed “storms” that may cause us to experience fear. We don’t live life as followers of Jesus only on Sunday, but every day of the week. A healthy rhythm includes getting proper rest and learning not to live in constant fear and anxiety. This passage recognises the troubles which come “by day, at midday and by night”. In our passages today we will see that Jesus cares about our circumstances and wants to show his power in the “storms” we may be facing, including both external situations and inner turmoil.

? What phrase from Psalm 91:1-6 jumps out at you, do you experience this in your day-to-day life?

Point 2: Jesus wants us to be aware that He is with us in the storm we may be facing right now.

That day when evening came, he said to his disciples, “Let us go over to the other side.” Read Mark 4:35-41

At this point in our journey together, it’s important to recognize that every day we face difficulties and troubles that can cause us great personal distress. In our first session in this series, we reminded ourselves that 2 Corinthians 1 says that God wants to help us in our troubles, so that out of the help we have received from Him, we can help others. The ancient Greek word “parakletos” was used to refer to a small ship, which would be sent out in a storm, to help a stranded ship find its way safely to shore. Jesus and the Holy Spirit act as our “parakletos”, so that we in turn can be a “parakletos” to someone else. Let’s take an opportunity during this study to truly come alongside one another in our trouble.

In this passage, we see a great contrast in the way Jesus reacts to the storm and the reaction of His disciples. Have you ever experienced extreme turbulence on an airplane flight and been shocked at how calm some of the passengers can be? Mark says that Jesus was literally asleep on a cushion! Why was Jesus asleep? At the risk of stating the obvious, He was super tired 😊 Jesus had had a very busy day of ministry and He told the disciples that he wanted to “go over to the other side”. He didn’t say, “Let’s go half way and see what happens.” Jesus knew He was perfectly safe even in the storm, the disciples had their doubts... and so do we sometimes. We can remind one another that no matter what storm is currently raging around us, Jesus is with us and He is able to still the storm in a moment. Maybe in this moment you need someone to remind you that you too can sleep in the storm (read **Psalm 4:8**).

🔍 Please take a moment to share a “storm” you might currently be facing and how it feels to you?

Point 3: In addition to external “storms”, Jesus cares for those facing mental and emotional “storms”.

They went across the lake to the region of the Gadarenes. Read Mark 5:1-17

This passage reminds us of the dangers of isolation. The story of this man is incredibly sad, he has been abandoned by his community and left with no help. He was considered unclean, avoided and marginalized by the local people, but he had an encounter with Jesus. When we become aware of those who face spiritual bondage or mental illness are we tempted to look away or even worse discourage them from coming into our community? Jesus engaged with this man to bring about transformation and in Mark 5:15 we read that he was “dressed and in his right mind”. Taken together, we see that these two passages show Jesus’ power to “still the storms” that are raging both in our outward circumstances and in the inner suffering we might be facing. He will show His power but it begins with a willingness to show “care”.

Remember the words spoken by the disciples in Mark 4:39 “Teacher, don’t you care if we drown?” Can you see the great danger of isolation and marginalisation in community. In the world around us, people are often suffering and do not know where to go for help. The Church needs to be a community that demonstrates care. We certainly would never claim to have all the solutions or be experts in every kind of trouble. But we can welcome everyone in and encourage each person to be open about their struggles so that we can help them have an encounter with Jesus which will bring about transformation. The ending words of this passage are so full of hope, “So the man went away and began to tell in the Decapolis cities how much Jesus had done for him. And all the people were amazed.” (Mark 5:20)

Share an example of how the Church brings help and pray that God will make us more effective in care

Notes
