



I LOVE MY CONNECT

STUDY 14

Trust and Hope in the Midst of Difficulty

1 Corinthians 10:13, Hebrews 4:16, 12:1-3, James 1:2-4, Matthew 8:23-27

Like the disciples, we have all experienced difficult or challenging times in our lives and maybe you are in the midst of a “storm” right now. Problems can overwhelm us, swallowing us completely and fear can easily take a hold of us. The thing we must never forget, though, is that Jesus is with us in that storm. We are not alone.

Not only are we not alone, the person we are with is our Lord, Jesus Christ! The only possible outcome is victory through Jesus. What a confidence that brings as we move through times of challenge. Jesus is no stranger to storms. He personally experienced a storm through his crucifixion and conquered it, rising from the dead on the third day. This awesome power is with you in your storm! He is a storm specialist. When facing a storm, we need not be afraid. Heb 4:16 tells us that God will help us in our time of need; all we need to do is approach Him confidently.

We may want to avoid storms but it is through them that we grow. Faith is tested and it becomes something solid that cannot be easily shaken. This will produce a developed, mature character and take us to new levels within ourselves and our ability to lead others. With this mindset we can welcome challenges! We can place our trust and hope in Jesus during a storm, walking boldly forward without fear as He will provide a way and take us through it, which will allow us to truly consider it a joy for no matter what we are in the midst of, Jesus is Lord.

CONNECTION AND ACTION *Use these questions to promote conversation and connection.*

- Q:** Do you generally enjoy or dislike challenges? What about change?
- Q:** “My anchor holds within the veil” - Discuss how you have worked through previous times of challenge or difficulty.
- Q:** Have you ever been strengthened by someone else? Describe the experience.
- Q:** Describe a time when God broke through in a storm in your life.
- Q:** In what areas of your life would you like to see God move?
- Q:** “When darkness seems to hide His face” – What challenges do life's storms pose to our trust in God? Why? How can we protect ourselves from these?

HIGHLIGHTS COMING UP

- With the release of our new live album “Cornerstone”, be sure to keep the team, the album and its impacts across the globe in your prayers!
- Friday (Brisbane) & Sunday (Sydney) Night Live – During the month of August we present the Gospel in new and innovative ways! What a great opportunity to bring friends and family to Church!!

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BIBLE AND BELIEF Use these scriptures and questions to develop a Biblical worldview.

Read Matthew 8:23-27

In this passage, Jesus calms a storm to the great surprise of the disciples. With this miracle Jesus gives us a glimpse of the things that can happen once God is in charge.

- Q:** How is it, do you think, that the disciples were panicking in the storm, but Jesus was able to sleep?
- Q:** Why do you think he rebukes them for their "little faith"?
- Q:** What revelations about Jesus do you think the disciples came away with from this incident?
- Q:** What revelations about themselves do you think the disciples gained?
- Q:** What lessons do you think we're meant to learn from reading this passage?

Read Psalm 107:23-3

- Q:** Do you think the disciples in the boat would have thought of this scripture when Jesus calmed the storm? What would their reactions have been if they had?
- Q:** Can you think of other examples in the gospels of what can happen when God is in charge?
- Q:** Can you think of examples of how we can put God in charge of our lives?
- Q:** Give an example of what happened when you put God in charge.

GROWING LEADERSHIP Use these questions to help people in your group grow as leaders.

- Q:** What can we, as leaders, contribute to a ministry team member who is going through a storm-season?
- Q:** What can we do as leaders to build a strong support network in our connect group or team so that members will help each other through a storm?
- Q:** How can we keep Jesus as the centre in good seasons, as well as in storm seasons?
- Q:** What can you as a leader do to help people in your connect group or team develop a strong relationship with God?

Check Up

Check in with leaders in your group on how they're going with:

- Starting new connect groups over the rest of the year.

PRAY TOGETHER

- New Connect Group Leaders
- Decisions for Jesus in our Services
- Ps Brian & Bobbie Houston

PASTORAL CARE

- We have a pastoral care team at church to walk alongside people in your group who may be going through a tough time
- Please contact the church office Sydney 02 8853 5353 or Brisbane 07 3422 8500 to let us know of anybody in your group (with their permission) who have sickness, death of a loved one, marriage challenges, surgeries.

NATION BUILDERS – Causes we are supporting through Nation Builders:

1. **Church Planting** – Supporting a new generation of dynamic leaders to plant & build churches that will serve communities, influence cities and ultimately impact nations.
Including: Amsterdam, Japan, Moscow, Paris, Stockholm, Copenhagen and Hillsong Germany.
2. **Gospel Missions** – Supporting missions locally & others that are furthering the Gospel all around the world.
Including: Mission Aviation Fellowship (MAF), Hillsong TV and overseas workers in SE Asia.

We support a number of overseas workers in projects throughout south east Asia. One example is Thailand where legends Erik and Marianna Klar have been based as missionaries since 1992. Some of their work includes:

- The River Centre which has been transformed from a Brothel into a thriving Church and community training centre.
- Church planting and community development in the unreached northern Hills tribes near the border with Burma. 100's have come to Christ through arrange of projects including water and toilet ministry!
- Reaching out into a southern city to rescue girls who are being trafficked