

40 DAYS OF DISCOVERY

GROWING YOUR FAITH IN DARKNESS

SESSION 6 | DISCOVERING FAITH IN A STORM (Uncontrollable Moments)

MATTHEW 8:23-27 | THE DISCIPLES

Lesson Scripture: Matthew 8:23-27

Background: Matthew 8

Key Verse: v.26

Supporting Scriptures:

Mark 4:35-41, Luke 8:22-25, Jonah
1:4:6, Psalm 29:3

INTRODUCTION

There's nothing more uncomfortable than being in a situation that has spiralled out of control. The outbreak of the COVID-19 virus quickly reminded many of us that we do not ultimately control our lives. We often

feel that if we could just have control, our lives would be free from worry. The reality is that control is an illusion. As frustrating and frightening as they may be, it is often these moments when God does his most miraculous work to increase our faith.

In this session, we join Jesus' disciples as they cross with Him over the Sea of Galilee. Finding themselves in a crisis, their experiences give us clues as to how God shapes us to find faith in the darkness of our chaotic situations.

LET'S DISCOVER!

Faith is not found on the _____ . v.23

"And when he got into the boat, his disciples followed him." v.23

The disciples were unaware a storm awaited them as they followed Christ onto the boat. If we never face anything beyond our control, we'll never trust the God who is in control.

God's _____ is enough. v.24

"And behold, there arose a great storm on the sea, so that the boat was being swamped by the waves; but he was asleep." v.24

If God is not worried, neither should you. Jesus had fallen asleep and remained that way as the chaos began to rise.

God's _____ is not lost in the storm. v.25

"And they went and woke him, saying, 'Save us, Lord; we are perishing.'" v.25

In our storms, we may wonder if God cares for us. Like the disciples, we cry out to Him for help, but question his intent to rescue. The parallel passage in Mark 4:35-41 demonstrates the underlying fear in their question: "Do you not care that we're perishing?" So often in our storms, our fear is louder than our trust in his character.

At times, God provides the _____ before the _____. v.26a

"And he said to them, 'Why are you afraid, O you of little faith?'" v.26a

Jesus rebuked his disciples before he rebuked the storm. While the storm still raged, he taught them with a rhetorical question: "Why are you afraid?" Sometimes God will teach within the chaos before he delivers us from it.

God has complete _____ over all circumstances. v.26b

"...Then he rose and rebuked the winds and the sea, and there was a great calm." v.26b

Just as a great storm arose, a great calm arrived at the command of Jesus. The chaos that surrounds us is always subject to His authority.

God grants _____ to increase our faith. v.27

"And the men marveled, saying, 'What sort of man is this, that even winds and sea obey him?'" v.27

God uses uncontrollable circumstances to call us to a clearer understanding of who He is. He proves himself greater than we imagined, and beckons our faith to rise to a higher level.

CONCLUSION

Control is an illusion: Only God is in control.

Only when we submit our situations (even our own lives) into his hands are we able to increase our faith. God is able to use our chaotic moments to reveal just how powerful He is.



QUESTIONS FOR EXPLORATION

1. What areas of your life might God be commanding you to yield control? _____

2. What are you afraid of? Why does it frighten you? Are you safe with God? _____

3. Which "storms" (uncontrollable circumstances) are raging in your life right now?

Is there a lesson to learn while you're in this storm? _____

4. Do you believe God is in complete control of your storm? _____

5. Have you ever witnessed God come through for you in a miraculous way? _____

How did it increase your faith? _____

How might this aid you in the next storm? _____



APPLICATION

- Develop a "Yield List:"
 - Prayerfully consider a list of people or things you run to when you feel life is out of control.
 - Which of these help increase your faith in God? Which of these do not?
 - Which of these might God want to use in your life today?
 - Take your first step in obedience.
- If someone invites you to walk with them in their storm, how can you come alongside them to help increase their faith? Remember, be sensitive to the Holy Spirit's guidance in your approach.

“

To trust God in
the light
is nothing,
but to
trust Him in
the dark -
that is faith.

C.H. SPURGEON



40 DAYS OF DISCOVERY

GROWING YOUR FAITH IN DARKNESS



Daily Prayer Journal

The Psalms show us how to pray and when to pray—when tired, angry frustrated, lonely forsaken, overwhelmed as well as when joyous, full of praise, thankful, or happy. Spending time with a Psalm each day will draw you into an open and honest dialog with God.

Read slowly and repeatedly, and write your thoughts and images that come mind. Follow the prayer prompts. Review the resource “*Suggested Weekly Discovery Exercises*” on page 14 for other ideas to experiment as you learn to pray scripture in all its raw and “subversive” emotion and glory.

WHAT ARE SOME

“TREASURES IN THE DARK”

YOU HAVE FOUND DURING
THIS SEASON OF LIFE?

ISAIAH 45:3

WEEK 6 | DAYS 36-40

Isaiah 45:3 says, “*I will give you the treasures of darkness and the hoards in secret places, that you may know that it is I, the Lord, the God of Israel, who call you by your name.*” God lets a pagan king know that he has treasures in darkness and riches (hoards) in secret places, so that God’s name may be glorified.

There lies in each of us the capacity for great faith, which God wants to nurture and grow. God knows in what area your faith needs to grow, and he will use whatever means necessary to make that happen. As a loving father, he will use whatever means necessary to draw out the faith that already exists in you, but has been placed in other things. It is his desire to transfer that faith to Him. God's tool chest is bountiful: pain and suffering, disappointments and discouragement, and the trials of others you love. Though difficult, these challenges become invitations! Our faith grows in proportion to the challenge we face and the trust we place in our God. So, the greater the difficulty or obstacle to overcome, the greater the opportunities to watch God do “Even Greater Things.”

This 40-day journey will be ground-breaking for Golden Gate. First, this is our first all-digital 40-day spiritual growth campaign, and second, the first campaign designed, written, and produced by our own Golden Gate members.

We have two primary goals for this 40-day journey together:

1. Growing faith in tough (dark) times.
2. Learning to pray by reading the Psalms.

These two goals can be accomplished by entering into and following through on three commitments.

1. Spending time with God using the Daily Devotional Journal. Each day you will dive into the prayer book of the Bible.
2. Encountering God in his word with others. A weekly Bible study taught by some great guest teachers will enlighten and offer hope to you and your friends who journey with you.
3. Adoring God in weekly corporate worship. Every Sunday at 10:15 a.m., join the Golden Gate family as we seek to bring pleasure to God in praise, prayer and preaching.

How to Use the 40 DOD Weekly Resources

VIDEO LESSONS

- Each week, a video lesson will be released along with a downloadable lesson guide. Use the guide to follow along, jotting down the key points of the lesson. You may watch the lesson individually, with your discovery partner, or with a group. Always take the opportunity to invite someone new into your study: friends, family, co-workers, etc.
- Set a weekly time to meet with your partner or group and answer the reflection questions.
- Pray together and challenge one another to exercise the application points listed in the guide.
- Join in on the fellowship and discussion for our ***Sunday Chat & Chew at 11:30am CST*** on ZOOM where we will allow open forum and discussion along with other fun and challenging activities.

WEEKEND SERMON NOTES

- Take notes of the weekly sermons. There is space provided with your weekly lesson to take sermon notes as well. Write any questions, immediate thoughts and comments from what you hear.
- You are welcome to join in the after church ***“Chat & Chew”*** on Zoom to engage with others on the sermon for the day and other topics related to the theme for the week.

DAILY PRAYER JOURNAL

- The journal offers a daily walk through the “Prayer Book” of the Bible. Each day, a passage from the Psalms based on the theme for the week allows you to absorb the prayer itself and offer it back to God.
- The Psalms show us how to pray and when to pray – when tired, angry, frustrated, lonely, forsaken, or overwhelmed, as well as when joyous, full of praise, thankful, or happy. Spending time with a psalm each day will draw you into an open and honest dialog with God. Read slowly and repeatedly. Write the thoughts and images that come to mind. Follow the prayer prompts. Review the resource *“Suggested Weekly Discovery Exercises”* on page 14 for other ideas to experiment as you learn to pray scripture in all their raw and “subversive” emotion and glory.

LEANING IN

Start and end your week every Monday and Friday at 6:00 a.m. with a word of encouragement highlighting the theme for the week. Several guests have been invited to share God’s word on Golden Gate’s FB Live and Free Conference call. Invite someone to join in with you as well.

SOCIAL MEDIA HASHTAG

#GG40Days2021

Please follow us on social media: [@goldengatembc](https://www.instagram.com/goldengatembc) and post your discoveries with [#GG40Days2021](https://www.instagram.com/gg40days2021)

DAY 36

Slowly and purposefully read the passage a minimum of 2-3 times.

PSALM 46

MEDITATION

Take some time to reflect on the words and phrases in the text. Underline words, phrases, or images that speak most to you? Write what comes to your mind. OR answer these questions.

What word(s) in this passage caught your attention?

What in this passage comforted you?

What in this passage challenged you?

PRAY

Give God what the Holy Spirit found in your heart. Pray the passage back to God in the form of a personalized prayer of adoration, confession, renewal, petition, intercession, thanksgiving, etc.

CONTEMPLATE

Read the scripture passage again, followed by this reflection: How does this passage connect with the experience of my daily life?

This is God's movement towards you. Simply rest in His embrace. When your mind wanders, center yourself by returning to the spirit of the passage.

The LORD

is a very present
help in the time
of trouble

Psalm 46 (ESV)

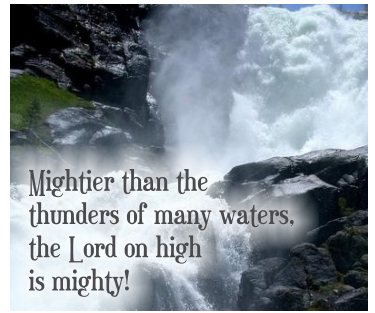
God is our refuge and strength, a very present help in trouble. Therefore we will not fear though the earth gives way, though the mountains be moved into the heart of the sea, though its waters roar and foam, though the mountains tremble at its swelling.

Selah There is a river whose streams make glad the city of God, the holy habitation of the Most High. God is in the midst of her; she shall not be moved; God will help her when morning dawns.

The nations rage, the kingdoms totter; he utters his voice, the earth melts. The Lord of hosts is with us; the God of Jacob is our fortress. *Selah* Come, behold the works of the Lord, how he has brought desolations on the earth. He makes wars cease to the end of the earth; he breaks the bow and shatters the spear; he burns the chariots with fire. "Be still, and know that I am God. I will be exalted among the nations, I will be exalted in the earth!" The Lord of hosts is with us; the God of Jacob is our fortress. *Selah*

DAY 37

Slowly and purposefully read the passage a minimum of 2-3 times.



Mightier than the
thunders of many waters,
the Lord on high
is mighty!

PSALM 93

MEDITATION

Take some time to reflect on the words and phrases in the text. Underline words, phrases, or images that speak most to you? Write what comes to your mind. OR answer these questions.

What word(s) in this passage caught your attention?

What in this passage comforted you?

What in this passage challenged you?

PRAY

Give God what the Holy Spirit found in your heart. Pray the passage back to God in the form of a personalized prayer of adoration, confession, renewal, petition, intercession, thanksgiving, etc.

CONTEMPLATE

Read the scripture passage again, followed by this reflection: How does this passage connect with the experience of my daily life?

This is God's movement towards you. Simply rest in His embrace. When your mind wanders, center yourself by returning to the spirit of the passage.

Psalm 93 (ESV)

The Lord reigns; he is robed in majesty; the Lord is robed; he has put on strength as his belt. Yes, the world is established; it shall never be moved. Your throne is established from of old; you are from everlasting. The floods have lifted up, O Lord, the floods have lifted up their voice; the floods lift up their roaring. Mightier than the thunders of many waters, mightier than the waves of the sea, the Lord on high is mighty! Your decrees are very trustworthy; holiness befits your house, O Lord, forevermore.



DAY 38

Slowly and purposefully read the passage a minimum of 2-3 times.



Thank the LORD
for his steadfast
love

PSALM 107:23-32

MEDITATION

Take some time to reflect on the words and phrases in the text. Underline words, phrases, or images that speak most to you? Write what comes to your mind. OR answer these questions.

What word(s) in this passage caught your attention?

What in this passage comforted you?

What in this passage challenged you?

PRAY

Give God what the Holy Spirit found in your heart. Pray the passage back to God in the form of a personalized prayer of adoration, confession, renewal, petition, intercession, thanksgiving, etc.

CONTEMPLATE

Read the scripture passage again, followed by this reflection: How does this passage connect with the experience of my daily life?

This is God's movement towards you. Simply rest in His embrace. When your mind wanders, center yourself by returning to the spirit of the passage.

Psalm 107:23-32 (ESV)

Some went down to the sea in ships, doing business on the great waters; they saw the deeds of the Lord, his wondrous works in the deep. For he commanded and raised the stormy wind, which lifted up the waves of the sea. They mounted up to heaven; they went down to the depths; their courage melted away in their evil plight; they reeled and staggered like drunken men and were at their wits' end. Then they cried to the Lord in their trouble, and he delivered them from their distress. He made the storm be still, and the waves of the sea were hushed. Then they were glad that the waters were quiet, and he brought them to their desired haven. Let them thank the Lord for his steadfast love, for his wondrous works to the children of man! Let them extol him in the congregation of the people, and praise him in the assembly of the elders.

DAY 39

Slowly and purposefully read the passage a minimum of 2-3 times.

PSALM 121

MEDITATION

Take some time to reflect on the words and phrases in the text. Underline words, phrases, or images that speak most to you? Write what comes to your mind. OR answer these questions.

What word(s) in this passage caught your attention?

What in this passage comforted you?

What in this passage challenged you?

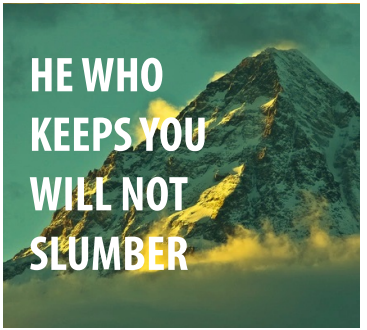
PRAY

Give God what the Holy Spirit found in your heart. Pray the passage back to God in the form of a personalized prayer of adoration, confession, renewal, petition, intercession, thanksgiving, etc.

CONTEMPLATE

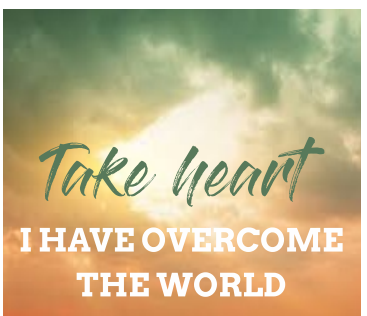
Read the scripture passage again, followed by this reflection: How does this passage connect with the experience of my daily life?

This is God's movement towards you. Simply rest in His embrace. When your mind wanders, center yourself by returning to the spirit of the passage.



Psalm 121 (ESV)

I lift up my eyes to the hills. From where does my help come? My help comes from the Lord, who made heaven and earth. He will not let your foot be moved; he who keeps you will not slumber. Behold, he who keeps Israel will neither slumber nor sleep. The Lord is your keeper; the Lord is your shade on your right hand. The sun shall not strike you by day, nor the moon by night. The Lord will keep you from all evil; he will keep your life. The Lord will keep your going out and your coming in from this time forth and forevermore.



DAY 40

Slowly and purposefully read the passage a minimum of 2-3 times.

PSALM 29

MEDITATION

Take some time to reflect on the words and phrases in the text. Underline words, phrases, or images that speak most to you? Write what comes to your mind. OR answer these questions.

What word(s) in this passage caught your attention?

What in this passage comforted you?

What in this passage challenged you?

PRAY

Give God what the Holy Spirit found in your heart. Pray the passage back to God in the form of a personalized prayer of adoration, confession, renewal, petition, intercession, thanksgiving, etc.

CONTEMPLATE

Read the scripture passage again, followed by this reflection: How does this passage connect with the experience of my daily life?

This is God's movement towards you. Simply rest in His embrace. When your mind wanders, center yourself by returning to the spirit of the passage.



May the
Lord bless
his people
with peace

Psalm 29 (ESV)

Ascribe to the Lord, O heavenly beings, ascribe to the Lord glory and strength. Ascribe to the Lord the glory due his name; worship the Lord in the splendor of holiness. The voice of the Lord is over the waters; the God of glory thunders, the Lord, over many waters. The voice of the Lord is powerful; the voice of the Lord is full of majesty. The voice of the Lord breaks the cedars; the Lord breaks the cedars of Lebanon.

He makes Lebanon to skip like a calf, and Sirion like a young wild ox. The voice of the Lord flashes forth flames of fire. The voice of the Lord shakes the wilderness; the Lord shakes the wilderness of Kadesh. The voice of the Lord makes the deer give birth and strips the forests bare, and in his temple all cry, "Glory!" The Lord sits enthroned over the flood; the Lord sits enthroned as king forever. May the Lord give strength to his people! May the Lord bless his people with peace!

SUGGESTED WEEKLY DISCOVERY EXERCISES

In order to encourage you to truly experience the Psalms and make them your own, complete one of the following exercises for each weekly lesson in this study. These aren't designed to create busywork, but are to stretch you spiritually. When you finish, report back to your partner or group how the exercise worked for you. Ideally, you'll vary the exercises from lesson to lesson to allow the psalms to become part of you in new ways.

- 1. Pray a Psalm.** Select one of the psalms along the theme of the lesson. Then, using the ideas and as many of the words as seem to fit your situation, pray that prayer to God, inserting your own struggles and needs within the prayer. Go through the entire psalm, paraphrasing it as you pray it sincerely to God. Many people have exercised this kind of prayer – they pray through every Scripture passage they read. Why don't you start this practice with one of the Psalms?
- 2. Meditate on a Psalm.** To meditate means to think deeply about something and mull it over in your mind over a period of time. You might read it several times in different translations. Say it over to yourself to feel the words on your lips. Write it out longhand. Consider the meaning of each important word. Memorization is another exercise, but memorizing is a good way to meditate on a verse or a passage.
- 3. Read a Psalm to a Shut-in.** People who are home-bound or in hospitals, nursing homes, jails, etc. need encouragement. As you exercise, read a psalm from this week's theme to a shut-in. If you read more than one, you'll be doubly blessed!
- 4. Paraphrase a Psalm.** Write out a paraphrase of the psalm of your choosing in your own words. Try to find modern-day synonyms and thoughts that correspond to the thoughts in the psalm. Don't be afraid to be creative.
- 5. Write Your Own Psalm.** Write your own psalm based on the theme of this lesson. You're entirely free in how you do this. Some approaches include:
 - Write in the style of Hebrew poetry using thought parallelism and imagery. This will be fun, though you may find it challenging. Consult my Introduction to Psalms in the section on Hebrew Poetry before beginning.
 - Write a psalm with lines that rhyme like traditional Western poetry.
 - Write a psalm in free verse, not bothering to make the lines rhyme. Just express yourself to God.
 - Write a psalm in Haiku style.
 - Write a psalm in any style you wish. The idea here is to learn to express yourself to God more freely.
- 6. Sing a Psalm.** Find a song, hymn, or praise chorus that relates to the theme of this chapter – and that is based on a psalm. Then sing it or lead it for your group. If you like, write your own song, or find a melody that you can use to sing the words of the song from a translation you prefer. Be creative here.
- 7. Prepare a Liturgy, Responsive Reading, or Choral Reading from a Psalm.** Psalms are at the core of the liturgy of Catholic, Orthodox, and Anglican branches of the Church. Explore adapting a psalm for public worship. You might enjoy writing the script for a choral reading of a psalm or portion of a psalm creating parts for 3 or 4 readers. Then try it out during a worship service or in your small group or class.
- 8. Teach or Preach a Psalm.** It's hard to prepare a message for people without really getting inside the text. Teach a psalm to a class of children, youth, or adults, or preach a psalm to your congregation.
- 9. Memorize a Psalm.** "My mind is too old to memorize!" Hogwash! Try it, but perhaps start with a short psalm, or one you've already partially memorized. It's work, but you can do it and you'll find it very spiritually enriching. In ancient days many Hebrew boys memorized the entire Psalter. **In his 90s, Billy Graham put it this way: "Over the years I've memorized many passages from the Bible, and I'm especially thankful now that I did this. I wish we gave more attention to Bible memorization in our churches today."**¹

Memorize one psalm that relates to the theme of the lesson.

¹ Billy Graham in "Quotation Marks," *Christianity Today*, June 2007, p.19.