



# ***Followers of Jesus Christ***

## **Series Overview**

Following Christ involves a wholehearted commitment. Disciples become like the Master, learners become like the Teacher. Christianity is not simply a ticket to heaven. No self-serving version of Christianity will bring us to maturity in Christ, allowing the church to minister and serve God, others, and the world. No self-centered version of Christianity will let us enjoy the fullness of Christianity in full-faced relationship with Christ. Answering the call to follow Jesus turns our lives in a different direction. We can't follow unless we go where he leads. This series of small group discussions looks at centering our lives on Christ, weathering the storms of life, going where Jesus goes, caring for others, and focusing on God's grace.



**March 8, 2009**

## **Session Two: Learning to Weather the Storms**

**Theme:** *God never promised that life would be easy, but he assures us that he is always in control and will always be with us.*

**Texts:** Psalm 23; Mark 4:35–41; Acts 27:1, 14–26; 1 Peter 5:6–11

**Summary:** This study will help us grow in faith during troubled times by finding out more about who Jesus really is. The study focuses on the experiences of David the shepherd, the faith-challenged disciples, the shipwrecked Paul, and the tempted Peter.

### **Ice Breaker**

What is the 'stormiest' thing that ever happened to you?

How did you survive the storm?

I found a lifeboat that happened to be going by.

I have made previous preparations and had my lifeboat ready.

I was rescued by someone else.

I was part of a supportive group that went through the storm together.

What helped you survive the storm?

My own power and strength.

God.

Other people. \_\_\_\_\_

### **Bible Study**

What is your favorite description from the 23<sup>rd</sup> Psalm?

Green pastures

Still water

Restoring my soul

Providing every need

Other \_\_\_\_\_

What do you think David had in mind when he wrote, “walk through the valley”?

- Bears and lions who threatened the sheep
- Saul trying to kill him
- The problems within his family

In Mark 4:35-41, why did the apostles have faith problems after all of the miracles and teachings of chapters 1-4?

- They weren't paying attention
- They didn't know what to look for
- They had false expectations of what it meant to follow Jesus
- They had an incomplete view of who Jesus was

What is the key to Paul's confidence during the shipwreck?

- He had been shipwrecked before so he knew what to expect
- He knew the skill of the captain and crew
- He was a person of prayer
- He knew who Jesus was

What problems do you think Peter had in mind when he spoke of Satan as a roaring lion?

- His own denial of Jesus
- His lack of faith at the Transfiguration
- The times he had been persecuted as a follower of Jesus
- He was aware of the many problems other Christians had faced

### **Applying**

Can a person make it through life's troubles without faith? Discuss the group's answers and the reasons given.

This lesson suggests that surviving storms depends on knowing who Jesus is. On a scale of 1 to 10, to what extent are faith and knowing who Jesus is the same thing? How are they the same? How are they different?

Do you think life is easier for a person of faith than for a person without faith? Why or why not?

As you reread Mark 1-4, are there any aspects of life that Jesus doesn't control? Which ones?

For those who have survived serious storms, what things built your faith in difficult days?

What advice would you give to others to help us prepare for the storms of life?

### **Connecting**

Who do you know that is going through a storm right now? Make a prayer list of those mentioned by the group, and share it as a prayer guide in the coming week.

What can you specifically do or say to help the person you mentioned?

What can the group do to demonstrate the love of Christ or serve that person?

Make an agreement as a group (or with one other person in your group, not a family member) that you will share the troubles of life, and let at least one other person know when you need help, prayer, or encouragement.