

Group Notes 22 January 2012
Discipleship 3: Trust

Welcome - Ice Breaker

Have you had a memorable experience while rowing? sailing? canoeing? on a cruise? generally in the water?

Word – Matthew 14:22-33

It's a dark and stormy night... The wind is howling, the waves are breaking, and through the darkness a ghostly figure is heading towards you, walking on the water. Confess - would you have stepped out of the boat, as Peter did? Thought not! Sometimes we blame Peter for sinking in the water: "He looked at the wind and the waves and took his eye off the Lord, didn't he? We wouldn't have done that!" Too right we wouldn't because we'd still be in the boat! It's true that Peter panics and starts to sink, but even then he has what Jesus calls "little" faith. He doesn't ask his mates in the boat to rescue him, nor does he try and swim to shore. No, He calls on Jesus – "Lord, save me!" There's an active faith that steps out on the water and an enduring faith that still trusts even when it all goes horribly wrong.

Question 1: When did you last step out in faith? What happened?

- **Can you think of any great figures from history who stepped out in active faith? Or any local examples from here in Walsall?**

Trust is essential to discipleship. Last week we were looking at lifestyle and how the disciple seeks to emulate the lifestyle of his master – how God wants to form the character of Jesus in us. It is trust in Him that is the engine of this character forming process. There has to be a bond of trust between master and disciple or it just won't happen. We can jump out of the boat as much as we like, but if Jesus hasn't called us to come we'll just get very wet. And all kinds of stuff will happen to us in life, but if we don't trust, it's just a lot of stuff happening. That essential element of growing to be like Jesus only works when the bond of trust is there.

Question 2: Can you think of any other stories from Peter's life that demonstrate his trust in Jesus?

Notice that this trust is a two-way bond, because just as Peter is learning to trust Jesus, so Jesus trusts Peter. He trusted him when he said, "You are Peter (*The Rock*), and on this rock I will build my church." Jesus entrusted the future of His mission to this sometimes wayward disciple. Though Peter had many ups and downs and often got it wrong, it was his great willingness to trust that stood out. God also entrusts you with things. For example, with talents. In the parable of the talents the Master goes away and entrusts his wealth to his servants. He also entrusts us with people He expects us to care for, encourage, nurture, forgive, love...

Question 3: What in your opinion God has entrusted you with? Or who?

Question 1 asked, *When did you last step out in faith?* Here's some practical examples of situations where you might be able to step out. Some are just baby steps! We all have to learn how to walk by faith, and we all start off as toddlers!

- you are in church after the service with a group of friends. You see someone stood on their own looking sad. Do you step out of your safe circles and approach them? What kind of reception will you get?
- You decide to tell someone at work that you are Christian and witness to them. What if they reject you? How will it change your relationships at your workplace?
- A relationship has gone sour. You know God wants it sorted. Do you go and see the other person?
- You feel constantly guilty about something you have said or done. Will you believe the Lord's own promise to forgive and cleanse you when you repent?
- Your friend is not well. Can you ask to pray with them for healing? What if nothing happens...?
- You are not well. Do you dare ask someone on the ministry team for healing prayer?
- You take up some new ministry... you exercise a gift of the Spirit... You go on a course... you feel called to a new job...

Question 4: What could you do to step out afresh in faith this week?

Worship ideas for groups with no musicians.

Faith only works because God is faithful. Trust only works because the Lord is trustworthy.

Give people a couple of lines each of the hymn, Great is thy faithfulness and read it out together as an act of praise and trust.

Great is Thy faithfulness, O God my Father;
There is no shadow of turning with Thee;
Thou changest not, Thy compassions, they fail not;
As Thou hast been, Thou forever will be.

Great is Thy faithfulness!
Great is Thy faithfulness!
Morning by morning new mercies I see.
All I have needed Thy hand hath provided;
Great is Thy faithfulness, Lord, unto me!

Summer and winter and springtime and harvest,
Sun, moon and stars in their courses above
Join with all nature in manifold witness
To Thy great faithfulness, mercy and love.

Pardon for sin and a peace that endureth
Thine own dear presence to cheer and to guide;
Strength for today and bright hope for tomorrow,
Blessings all mine, with ten thousand beside!

Works/witness.

Encourage everyone to take a step of faith as discussed in the last para of the notes on the Word. Do it this week – feed back next week how it went.