

Life Group Discussion Guide

OUR STORY

Matthew 16:24

Stuart Jones - November 11, 2018



INTRODUCTION

It had been a busy day.

Thousands had gathered earlier to hear Jesus and to experience His healing touch. As dusk approached, the disciples urged Jesus to release the people so that they could go to nearby villages to get food, but Jesus miraculously fed over five thousand with a mere five loaves and two small fish.

After the disciples gathered the remaining pieces, Jesus sent them across the lake ahead of Him and He released the crowds. Then He retreated to a nearby mountain to pray.

This incredible passage records what was the capstone of a most extraordinary day. Buffeted by encroaching wind and waves caused by a terrifying storm, the disciples looked up to see Jesus approaching, walking on the water before them.

Peter accepted Jesus' invitation to join Him on the water. And while the rest of the story is familiar to most of us, the significant point to be made is that at the moment Peter saw Him, he realized that the safest place he could possibly be was in the presence of Jesus.

Discipleship is the choice we make to leave what we perceive to be safe in order to enjoy a new dimension of life and living as a follower of Christ. To some it may be perceived as a risky act of the will; to the disciple it is the only logical next step.

DISCUSSION STARTER

1. Stuart told of the Stacia's World of Torture diet he's on. Have you ever gone on a diet? Did it work? Did you despise it as much as Stuart does his diet?
2. When you hear the word sacrifice, what images and thoughts come to mind?

EVALUATE IT

1. Read Matthew 16:21-27. Finish the following sentence: "If anyone would come after me, he must deny himself, take up his cross and follow me," means...
2. What things compete with or reduce our commitment to Christ?
3. Stuart said, "Once we have prioritized God, we more easily see what it means to embrace sacrifice." How so? What does Stuart mean by this?
4. Stuart said, "You see, when we only focus on the sacrifice...it's discouraging, depressing and angry." Why is it easy to become consumed with sacrificing for the kingdom? Why is this a huge detriment to us and our relationship with Christ? Why is the "why" we sacrifice so important?

MAKE IT PERSONAL

1. What acts of faith would you do if you had total assurance of God's presence in your life?
2. Answer the question Stuart asked, "What do you need to release in order to bring the cause of Christ to the forefront of who you are? Is it how you spend your time, is it how you spend your money?"