



Bible Study

MATTHEW 8:23-27



Canadian Lutheran
World Relief

CLWR BIBLE STUDIES

CLWR's Bible Studies have been designed to help congregations delve deeper into the challenges leading to injustices around the world, to explore related Bible stories, to discuss how these connect and how God calls us to act together.

These studies are meant to be adapted for your congregation's needs and are free to use. Each study includes discussion questions for children to adults, as well as suggestions to connect this discussion to action.

As CLWR continues to grow our resource collection, we would love to hear suggestions and insight from you. Please feel free to contact Heidi Van Schaik, our Church Relations Manager at heidi@clwr.org with ideas and feedback.

BACKGROUND INFORMATION

- The gospel of Matthew is the first gospel in the canon and is the one that most heavily relies on the Hebrew Scriptures.
- Matthew is reliant on Mark being written first, as well as using other sources such as 'Q' and 'M' and therefore the authorship of this gospel is not definitive.
- The text indicates a familiarity with the first Jewish Revolt (66–70 CE) and must then have been written after that time, but it is equally familiar with the story from the early period, so it is believed to have been written likely in the final decade of the first century, most likely in the 80's CE.

CULTURAL CONTEXT

- The original readers/hearers of Matthew's gospel are predominantly Jewish (more specifically, Jewish leadership), and the author uses familiar texts from the Hebrew Scriptures to point to the messiahship of Jesus.

SITUATIONAL CONTEXT

- Very violent storms frequently pop up on the sea of Galilee with little to no warning.
- Waves can reach up to 10 feet in height.
- The boat suspected to be similar to the one in this story is approximately 8.3 metres/27 feet long, 2.3 metres/7.5 feet wide and 1.3 metres/4.3 feet high and would have carried up to 15 people.

Matthew 8:23-27

23 And when he got into the boat, his disciples followed him. **24** A gale arose on the lake, so great that the boat was being swamped by the waves; but he was asleep. **25** And they went and woke him up, saying, “Lord, save us! We are perishing!” **26** And he said to them, “Why are you afraid, you of little faith?” Then he got up and rebuked the winds and the sea; and there was a dead calm. **27** They were amazed, saying, “What sort of man is this, that even the winds and the sea obey him?”

STUDY

Read Matthew 8:23-27

Where were Jesus and the disciples going and why?

- The crowds were pressing in, and Jesus wanted to cross the sea
- Maybe he was looking for rest following many miracles
- Maybe he had more to do in another area

Read Matthew 8:24

What do you think the disciples were feeling when the storm came upon them?

Have you ever had a storm come upon you in your life? How did you feel? In the midst of this storm?

What do you think the reactions of the disciples were when they found Jesus sleeping through the storm?

STUDY (CONTINUED)

Have you ever felt that Jesus was sleeping through the storms in your life?

Read Matthew 8:26

What do you think Jesus was saying to the disciples?

What did Jesus do in response to the fear of the disciples?

What was the reaction of the disciples?

Have you ever called out to God for help in a storm in your life? How has God stilled your past storms? What was your reaction to the end of the storm, the calming of the seas of your life?

Consider those around the world, what kind of storms are others facing?

Did You Know:

- According to the United Nations refugee agency (UNHCR), the global refugee population increased by 7 per cent to reach 43.4 million during 2023. Compared to a decade ago, the total number of refugees globally has more than tripled. [1]
- The United Nations Relief and Works Agency for Palestine Refugees in the Near East (UNRWA) estimates that between October and December 2023, up to 1.7 million people (or over 75 per cent of the population) were displaced by the conflict in the Gaza Strip, with some forced to flee multiple times.
- Conflict in Sudan broke out in April 2023, causing one of the largest humanitarian and displacement crises in the world. More than 6 million people were displaced within the country, with a further 1.2 million fleeing to neighbouring countries.
- In Myanmar, escalating violence following the military takeover in February 2021 displaced more than 1.3 million people within the country in 2023.

1. <https://www.unhcr.org/global-trends>

WONDERINGS

Consider your local community; how are refugees welcomed into your community? How are people in the midst of life storms being supported?

Consider Canada; how do we respond, as a country, to those who flee violence and disaster? How are people in the midst of life storms being supported?

Consider the world; what factors might contribute to people needing to flee their homes, friends and/or families for a place of safety? How are people in the midst of life storms being supported?

ACTION BRAINSTORM

How can you/your parish support local refugee families or those who are challenged by life's challenges?

How can you/your parish offer refugee resettlement or support nationally for those who are challenged by life's challenges?

How can you/your parish offer refugee resettlement or support globally for those who are challenged by life's challenges?

ACTION SUGGESTIONS

Read and learn more. Subscribe to the UNHCR newsletter and join a global community that cares for the protection and well-being of refugees, internally displaced and stateless people.

- You can do that here: unhcr.org/sign-and-stay-informed

Offer a worship service that focuses on praying for peace, conflict resolution, the displaced and those who are stateless; consider the languages that are used in the service. Take an offering or host a fundraiser and donate towards local refugee resettlement or to one of CLWR's programs that support refugees:

- Refugee Resettlement Program: clwr.org/what/refugee-resettlement
- Share hope in crisis: clwr.org/products/share-hope-in-crisis

Host an event with a guest speaker who will offer their experience of being a refugee and donate funds raised towards local refugee resettlement or through CLWR's Refugee Resettlement Program (link above).

Host an event to support local refugee families.

Consider acknowledging January 31 as Holocaust Remembrance Day. Many of our Jewish brothers and sisters have lived experience and understanding about living as refugees.

Connect with the CLWR to learn how to develop a settlement plan to sponsor a refugee:

- clwr.org/refugee-resettlement/settlement-plans

Ask children: Have you ever felt scared? Did you know the disciples were scared too?

Share the story of Matthew 8.23 – 27.

Ask children: What helped the disciples to stop being afraid?

- Jesus

Ask children if they think they can ask Jesus for help when they are scared.

Ask children: Did you know that around the world there are lots of people who are scared about the things that are happening around them too, just like the disciples in the storm?

Ask the children if they would help pray for those people around the world who are scared.

PRAYER

Jesus,

You have the power
to calm the storms of our life and in our world.

Please come into our hearts
and help us to find peace.

Please come into our world
where there is conflict
and bring the kind of peace only you can.

Please come and be with those
who are scared so that they will know
the peace you offer.

Amen.