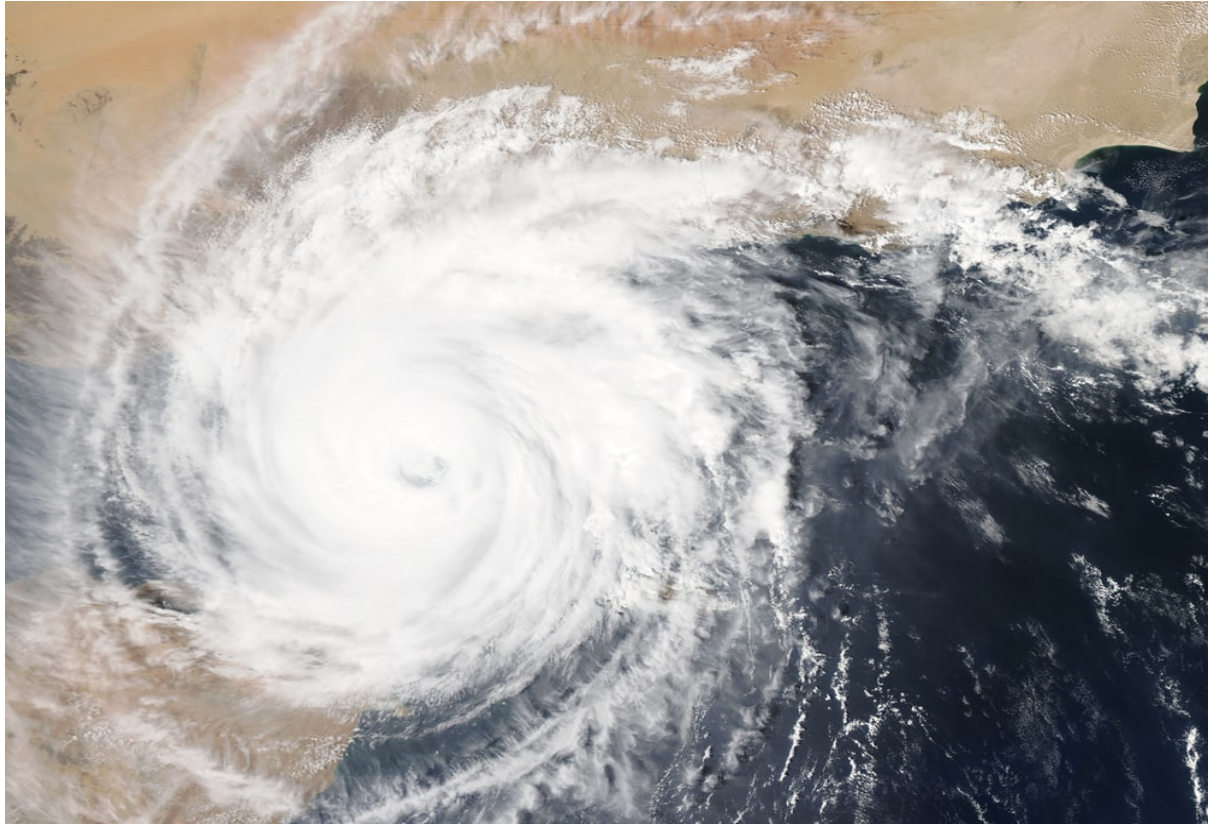


Centred Discussion Guide



Part 5: Centred In The Storm

Matt Thiele, Immanuel Lutheran Church, Buderim - Mar 29th 2020

INTRODUCTION

Please turn off your phone (unless you're using it to discuss this with someone).

You might like to start with one or two of these questions:

- *Share something that made you laugh this week? An experience, meme, joke!*
- *Often people compartmentalise life into different zones (e.g. online / offline) and behave differently in each. Name some ways we 'compartmentalise' life.*

Please start with prayer because "everything starts with prayer."

STAYING CENTRED IN A STORM

For some time our Immanuel congregation musicians have been almost addicted to a worship song called “Raise A Hallelujah”. The chorus says:

*“We’re going to sing, in the middle of a storm,
Louder and louder, hear the praises roar,
Up from the ashes, hope will arise,
Death is defeated, the King is alive.”*

Jake Stevens | Jonathan David Helser | Melissa Helser | Molly Skaggs © 2018 Bethel Music Publishing
(Admin. by SHOUT! Music Publishing Australia). All rights reserved. www.ccli.com. Words printed under CCLI Licence # 46616

Think of a time when your foundations were shattered...

- What kept you going?
- Name someone who really made a difference for you in that hard time.

THREE WAYS OF THINKING THAT WILL CENTRE YOU IN THE MIDDLE OF A STORM

1. EVERYTHING IS SPIRITUAL

Religious people often divide life up into two zones - spiritual and ordinary - often called sacred and secular. Added to is the idea that God is more interested in the spiritual/sacred and less interested in the ordinary/secular.

- How do you feel about this division of life?
- Where in our lives has this sort of thinking crept in?
- How is this kind of compartmentalisation unhealthy?

The Bible actually does talk about special things or people being *set aside* for special holy purposes. And the Bible does call us to worship together and says there is power in gathering. But this sort of compartmentalising of life is not Biblical. The Old Testament does not even have a word for spiritual. The New Testament uses the word, but never to divide up life into compartments. So the Bible does not have a concept that divides life up into the sacred and secular. Instead everything is spiritual because God is a part of everything. There is nowhere that God is not.

- Look at the list of quotes below.
- What do you hear? Which spoke to you? What do you notice?

The earth is the Lord's, and everything in it, the world, and all who live in it...

- Psalm 24:1

The one washing dishes at the sink does work as holy as the pastor at communion!

- Martin Luther (1483 - 1546)

God, who is everywhere, never leaves us. Yet God seems sometimes to be present, sometimes absent. If we do not know God well, we do not realize that He may be more present to us when absent than when present.

- Thomas Merton (1915-1968)

The one thing that is everything is friendship with God in Christ, because it alone can satisfy our longing for love, our thirst for peace, and our hunger for joy. It is an intimate friendship that makes all our ordinary doing holy. It supplies our everyday life with meaning, purpose, and direction that are holy and healthy.

- Kirk Byron Jones (*Rest In The Storm*, 2001) [edited]

2. TRUTH IS RESILIENCE

To stay centred we need to become deeply honest. If you're pretending something, you won't see God. If you're faking something, you won't notice God. If you're lying, it will blind you to seeing truth. This is a time to be brave and calm and make a difference. But it is not a time to pretend you're OK when you are not!

- | | |
|----------------|--------------|
| ▪ Angry | ▪ Joyful |
| ▪ Anticipation | ▪ Miffed |
| ▪ Anxious | ▪ Numb |
| ▪ Ashamed | ▪ Protective |
| ▪ Confused | ▪ Scared |
| ▪ Disgusted | ▪ Surprised |
| ▪ Exuberant | ▪ Stressed |
| ▪ Energised | ▪ Sad |
| ▪ Fatigued | ▪ Thankful |
| ▪ Guilty | ▪ Worried |

- Look at the list of emotions. Name one or two you felt in the last week.

Perhaps the Psalms are the most centred part of the scriptures. Every Psalm reveals Jesus Christ. Every Psalm contains details of his life. Every one of them has him speaking somewhere. They are the prayers of Jesus Christ with us and for us. So many are so deeply honest about fear, anger, hurt and pain.

- Look up Psalm 88.
- Where do you see or hear Jesus in it?
- What can we learn from its sheer honesty?

3. EXPECT JESUS

Matthew 14:22-33

Immediately after this, Jesus insisted that his disciples get back into the boat and cross to the other side of the lake, while he sent the people home. After sending them home, he went up into the hills by himself to pray. Night fell while he was there alone. Meanwhile, the disciples were in trouble far away from land, for a strong wind had risen, and they were fighting heavy waves. About three o'clock in the morning Jesus came toward them, walking on the water. When the disciples saw him walking on the water, they were terrified. In their fear, they cried out, "It's a ghost!" But Jesus spoke to them at once. "Don't be afraid," he said. "Be brave. I am here!" Then Peter called to him, "Lord, if it's really you, tell me to come to you, walking on the water." "Yes, come," Jesus said. So Peter went over the side of the boat and walked on the water toward Jesus. But when he saw the strong wind and the waves, he was terrified and began to sink. "Save me, Lord!" he shouted. Jesus immediately reached out and grabbed him. "You have so little faith," Jesus said. "Why did you doubt me?" When they climbed back into the boat, the wind stopped. Then the disciples worshiped him. "You really are the Son of God!" they exclaimed.

- They did not recognise Jesus. Why? When else did this occur?
- Where have you seen Jesus this last week?
- How can we expect Jesus?

GROUP ACTIVITY FOR THE WEEK

Please check on someone elderly this week. You are welcome to join Immanuel's "phone prayer" ministry. If you'd like to get involved please call our office number.