

The Gospel According to Mark Jesus Walks Where Only God Walks

Mark 6:45-56

Sunday, September 27, 2020

Introduction

One of the recurring themes throughout the Gospel of Mark is the disciple's slowness to true faith in Jesus. It's true that they were faithful followers of Jesus, and they had a front row seat to all that Jesus said and did. But despite their proximity to Christ and their desire to be with Him, Mark tells us over and over that they still failed to truly see Jesus and believe (Mark 4:40-41; 8:17-18). This becomes evident again following the feeding of the 5,000.

A Hardness of Heart (6:52)

After witnessing another incredible miracle Mark tells us something that may come as a bit of a shock. We read in Mark 6:52 that the disciples didn't understand that the feeding of the 5,000 was about more than physical bread; that it was Jesus's revelation of Himself as the true and eternal bread. They still didn't see Jesus fully and Mark says their hearts were hardened.

But despite their slowness to truly see, in Mark 6:45-51 we see that Jesus continues to show compassion on them. He goes to great lengths to help them see that He's not only the provider of bread or the healer of the sick: He's God in the flesh who has come bringing salvation.

Jesus Sends the Disciples Away (6:45-46)

- **Escaping the crowds** – According the Gospel of John, after the feeding of the 5,000 the crowds were prepared to take Jesus and make Him king (John 6:15). While Jesus is the true King, He came to earth the first time as a suffering servant. Knowing the intention of the crowds Jesus sends His disciples away and then disperses the crowds.
- **A time for prayer** – This is one of three times in the Gospel of Mark when we are told that Jesus goes off by Himself at night to pray. We don't know the content of the prayer, but we do see that Jesus Himself thought it needful to pull away for devoted times of prayer. How much more so should we recognize our need for time in prayer?

Jesus Goes to His Disciples (6:47-50a)

- **The first miracle – Jesus sees** - It's the middle of the night; it's dark and stormy. The disciples have been sailing for hours and yet Mark says that from where He is Jesus sees them and their struggles against the storm. Here we see the omniscience of Jesus and we are reminded of the fact that we are never out of His sight (Psalm 139:7-10). Jesus is never blind to or unaware of our pain.

- **The second miracle – Jesus walks on water** – Knowing the disciples needs, both physically and spiritually, Jesus determines to go to them in a way that only God can - He walks on top of the water (Job 9:7-8).
 - **John MacArthur** – *The Creator of the waters and the wind sets foot upon the choppy surface as if it were hard as stone and smooth as glass, making His way to His disciples in their hour of despair.*
- **The reason He goes** – In verse 48 we have a phrase that reveals the true desire of Jesus in going to the disciples. He goes to them, not only to save them from the storm, but to show them (once again) who He really is.
 - **When God passes by** – When Mark says that Jesus intended to pass them by he uses a phrase that connects us back to some seminal interactions of God with His people in the Old Testament. Both with Moses (Exodus 33) and Elijah (1 Kings 19) we are told that God 'passed by them' in order to give them a glimpse of who He really is.

Fear, Comfort and Calm (6:50b-52)

- **The disciples are afraid** – While Jesus intended to reveal Himself in a way that would produce faith, the disciples responded (once again) with fear. Just like when Jesus calmed the storm (John 4:40-41), the revelation of His power produced fear instead of faith.
- **Comfort – I AM** – Jesus doesn't rebuke the disciples for their fear, instead He offers them words of comfort. He tells them to take heart and to not be afraid; and in the middle of these encouragements He reveals why they should trust Him. Jesus says, *it is I*, using the same phrase that God uses to identify Himself to Moses in Exodus 3:13-14 – *I AM*. Here, in a subtle way, Jesus is again revealing Himself as God – the One who can be trusted.
- **Calm** – Not only does Jesus offer words of comfort, He also performs another miracle – He calms the storm that the disciples had been fighting against for hours.

The Continued Popularity of Jesus and His Power to Heal (6:53-56)

- As Jesus and the disciples come to land Mark records that once again the crowds are ready and waiting. They flock to Jesus and He heals many of their diseases. Here again we see the compassion of Jesus as He provides physical healing, but we also recognize crowds of people who do not see Him for who He really is.

Summary – In this passage we are reminded yet again of the fact that there were many who saw Jesus and yet never truly believed. The disciples were slow to believe, and yet we should be thankful for the patience and compassion of Jesus as He continued to reveal Himself to them time and time again. We should be thankful for this revelation of Jesus and strive to ensure that we see Him, not only as the provider of physical bread, but as the true bread that fully and eternally satisfies.