

Boom! That was Easy
The Authority of Jesus - Don't Miss It
The Greatest Opportunity Series – Part 15
Mk 6:30-56
6/29-6/30

Introduction

- Christians are never alone which means their reality is always adjustable. Jesus changes everything. Not just after the manger but before. The 2nd Person of the Trinity is the typical concrete person of God (the visible, engaging one).
 - Noah was going to drown unless Jesus gave him a boat.
 - Joseph would have died in jail if Jesus didn't get him out, but He did.
 - The Hebrew people were doomed to die at the foot of the Red Sea until Jesus opened it up.
 - The Jewish nation would have died of thirst in the wilderness if Jesus didn't bring water from a rock.
 - David would have fell to Goliath if Jesus didn't train him and direct his rock.
 - Naaman would have remained a leper if Jesus didn't cleanse him in the river.
 - Lazarus would have stayed in the tomb if Jesus didn't call him out.
 - Daniel and the boys would have been burned and eaten if Jesus didn't walk in the fire and sit in the den.
 - We would all die in our sins if Jesus didn't go to the cross.
 - But He did.

JESUS BRINGS OPPORTUNITY WHEREVER HE GOES

- Recap from last week
 - **John the Baptist** getting his head cut off
 - The story of the **4 Herods** of the New Testament
 - **Disciples returning** from their 1st major field trip – before the flashback story. This is where they 1st became 'apostles' (sent out empowered emissaries on Jesus' behalf).

Lesson

- Filled Up and Drained
 - The Disciples Return from Training Exhausted
 - *Mk 6:30-32 – “The apostles returned to Jesus and told him all that they had done and taught. ³¹ And he said to them, “Come away by yourselves to a desolate place and rest a while.” For many were coming and going, and they had no leisure even to eat. ³² And they went away in the boat¹ [John - to the other side of the Sea of Galilee, which is the Sea of Tiberias,] to a desolate place by themselves [Luke - to a town called Bethsaida].”*

¹ “The site toward which the disciples set sail cannot be identified with any degree of certainty; but this was not important to the evangelist. What was significant was the character of the place to which Jesus and his disciples withdrew, and this is sufficiently indicated by the descriptive phrase “wilderness-place.” NICNT Commentary, William Lane

- ESV Combo Account – all 4 gospels - Mt 14:13-22; Mk 6:30-45; Luke 9:10-17; John 6:1-15
 - *After this, on their return to Jesus the apostles told him all that they had done and taught. And he said to them, "Come away by yourselves to a desolate place and rest a while." For many were coming and going, and they had no leisure even to eat. And he took them and withdrew from there in a boat to the other side of the Sea of Galilee, which is the Sea of Tiberias, to a desolate place by themselves, to a town called Bethsaida.*
- The apostles returned² – Recap: They were sent out by Jesus with his power and authority to go into the towns and villages around the north to spread the gospel and bring the power of the kingdom to people. The ONE team turned into SEVEN teams and they fanned out. This was the next step in their apprenticeship with Jesus. It was time for them to do it alone.
- And told him all that they had done and taught – training debrief – we need to learn to be effective believers/disciples. Not everything is natural or instinctive. This demands community and submitting to learn from leadership and mentors.
- Jesus said, 'Come away by yourselves to a desolate place and rest a while...' – the disciples were sent out on a brutal first incursion. They were commanded to travel light and work hard. They did. They were EXHAUSTED. They got a taste of what it would be like to be Jesus.
 - **Resting is necessary for healthy ministry** – How many times have you demonstrated your worse self when you were exhausted? Right. That is why all of us need to be rested appropriately so that we can continue to represent Jesus well. All of us are ministers. All of us are salt and light in this world. We simply aren't our best when we are overtired. This means that we need to find appropriate self-care and rest to make sure that we reflect the Lord and not our worst self.
- For many were coming and going, and they had no leisure even to eat – Proximity ministry is really tough. In today's world there is a lot of traveling from one place to the next and that means we have invisible walls that keep people away from us. We will do ministry and then go home. But what if you live where you minister? What if your door is always open? What if everyone has access to you all the time? I purposely live far away from the church so that my family can be healthy and I can be sane. I'm a talkative guy and mostly approachable. 😊 (some still are intimidated by me which cracks me up). Jesus and the guys were surrounded by ministry with little to no break.
- And they went away in the boat [John - to the other side of the Sea of Galilee, which is the Sea of Tiberias,] to a desolate place by themselves [Luke - to a town called Bethsaida] – Although there is a lot of debate

² At the conclusion of their mission to the Galilean villages the disciples returned to Jesus. He had commissioned them to be his emissaries (Ch. 6:7–13), and it is appropriate to this circumstance that they should report to him how they had fulfilled their commission. The designation of the Twelve as "the apostles," which occurs only here in Mark's Gospel, has specific reference to the mission they have just undertaken. In this context the term is descriptive of the disciples' function rather than an official title, and could be rendered "missionaries." William Lane, NICNT

about which town they went to, I don't care enough to both talking about it. Yes, different gospels have different directions but the seeming contradiction smooths out in the details (not that we have all the information but that we have sufficient educated guesses). The bigger message here is that Jesus took them to a desolate place for them to get some time away.

- Time and space away – Richard Foster said, *'We must go away from people so that we can be truly present when we are with people.'* (Celebration of Discipline). We are busy and crowded because being alone makes us face our true selves. Yet if we aren't taking time away, we will continue living a lie. All Christians, all ministers, must have time away from crowds and demands to hear their hearts.
 - One of my favorite quotes by Henri Nouwen is "Solitude is the furnace of transformation. Without solitude we remain victims of our society and continue to be entangled in the illusions of the false self."
 - The wilderness motif – over and over Mark highlights wilderness themes because he is tying it all back to the Old Testament and how Jesus was launching a new movement as the new Moses.
- Digging Deep
 - Jesus Has Compassion on the Crowds
 - Mk 6:33-34 – *"Now many saw them going and recognized them, and they ran there on foot from all the towns and got there ahead of them [John - because they saw the signs that he was doing on the sick].³⁴ When he went ashore he saw a great crowd, and he had compassion on them, because they were like sheep without a shepherd.³ [John - Jesus went up on the mountain, and there he sat down with his disciples (and) welcomed them]. And he began to teach them many things [Luke. - and spoke to them of the kingdom of God and cured those who had need of healing]."*
 - ESV Combo Account – all 4 gospels - Mt 14:13-22; Mk 6:30-45; Luke 9:10-17; John 6:1-15
 - *When the large crowds saw them going and recognized them, they followed him (running) on foot from all the towns and got there ahead of them because they saw the signs that he was doing on the sick. When he went ashore he saw a great crowd, and he had compassion on them, because they were like sheep without a shepherd. Jesus went up on the mountain, and there he sat down with his disciples (and) welcomed them and began to teach them many things and spoke to them of the kingdom of God and cured those who had need of healing (healed their sick). Now the Passover, the feast of the Jews, was at hand.*

³ "The comparison of the people to "sheep not having a shepherd" is an allusion to Num. 27:17 and Ezek. 34:5. In the context of both of these passages, Mark's statement belongs to the wilderness theme. In Num. 27:17 Moses prays that the Lord will appoint a leader to take his place prior to his death in the wilderness lest the people "be as sheep which have no shepherd." It is significant that God appointed as shepherd Joshua, whose name in the Septuagint is "Jesus." In Ezek. 34 the shepherd image is also associated with the wilderness. There is no shepherd for the sheep, but God promises the coming of a faithful shepherd, "my servant David" (Ch. 34:23), who will establish a covenant of peace, causing the people to "dwell securely in the wilderness" (Ch. 34:25). In verse 34 Mark proclaims Jesus on the background provided by these passages: he is the one appointed by God to be the leader of the people in their exodus into the wilderness; he is God's servant David who provides rest for the people in the wilderness. These theological notes are not extraneous to Mark's presentation. They provide the indispensable background for understanding the feeding narrative which follows." NICNT

- Now many saw them going and recognized them,⁴ - notice that prior it had been that ONLY Jesus was famous, but now after the apostles did the same ministry, the whole group was famous.
- and they ran there on foot from all the towns and got there ahead of them – these are not just looky-loos, these are desperate people. If you knew that your child could be healed, what would you be willing to do? They did that. They ran all the way around the lake. They ran from town to town. They did whatever they could to get next to Jesus.
- John insight: because they saw the signs that he was doing on the sick.] – It's not His teaching that was drawing the crowds, it was His miracles. The miracles were not just compassion but a sign and a draw to get people to hear the message of life.
- When he went ashore he saw a great crowd, - they were already there when He arrived. They had been waiting. This meant there wasn't a moment of peacefulness or quiet once they got there. Desperate people don't tend to have the same appropriate people skills operating.
- and he had compassion on them, because they were like sheep without a shepherd. – The NICNT brilliantly explains the prophetic statement here, which I would have missed. This phrase, 'like sheep without a shepherd' is a reference to two key Old Testament passages: Num. 27:17 and Ezek. 34:5. The first is a reference to Moses praying that God would send another leader to take his place after his death otherwise they would be sheep without a shepherd. Joshua is selected, as we know, but we must remember that JESUS is a form of the name Joshua. The Ezekiel passage refers to God coming in and leading His people personally since the leadership of the Jews had left them 'like sheep without a shepherd', and clearly Jesus is that provision as God.
- John insight: Jesus went up on the mountain, and there he sat down with his disciples (and) welcomed them – It's neat that Jesus wanted to make sure that everyone could hear whenever possible. He went up on a hill to make sure that other people could see and hear. It was like the sermon on the mount set up.
- And he began to teach them many things [Luke - and spoke to them of the kingdom of God...] – Mark doesn't tell us what Jesus taught but Luke does. He explains that Jesus was primarily talking about the kingdom of God which means talking about the new (original) way that God wants things to be done. It's about the nature of God and His operation in the world thereby dictating what we ought to be doing and thinking.
- Luke insight: and cured those who had need of healing – this wasn't just a teaching time but also a ministry time of healing. The people would have been anxious to get to the healing part but Jesus knew they needed more than just physical restoration.

⁴ "The mission activity of the Twelve had caught the attention of large numbers of people, who pursued after the disciples even as earlier they had sought the benefactions of Jesus. Mark conveys the impression of one group following another as he reports that "many were coming and going," with the result that the Twelve had no leisure to eat." NICNT

- You Do It
 - Jesus Challenges the Disciples to Feed the Crowd
 - Mk 6:35-37 – *“And when it grew late, his disciples came to him and said, ‘This is a desolate place, and the hour is now late.’³⁶ Send them away to go into the surrounding countryside and villages and buy themselves something to eat. [Luke adds - for we are here in a desolate place].”³⁷ But he answered them, ‘You give them something to eat.’ [John adds - Jesus said to Philip, ‘Where are we to buy bread, so that these people may eat?’ He said this to test him, for he himself knew what he would do.]. And they said to him, ‘Shall we go and buy two hundred denarii⁵ worth of bread and give it to them to eat?’ [John tell us, ‘Philip (added), ‘Two hundred denarii worth of bread would not be enough for each of them to get a little.’]”*
 - ESV Combo Account – all 4 gospels - Mt 14:13-22; Mk 6:30-45; Luke 9:10-17; John 6:1-15
 - *Now the day began to wear away and it grew late (it was evening), and the twelve disciples came to him and said, ‘the day is now over, and the hour is now late. Send the crowds away to go into the surrounding villages and countryside to find lodging, get provisions and buy food for themselves, for we are here in a desolate place.’ But Jesus said to them, ‘They need not go away; You give them something to eat.’ Jesus said to Philip, ‘Where are we to buy bread, so that these people may eat?’ He said this to test him, for he himself knew what he would do. And they said to him, ‘Shall we go and buy two hundred denarii worth of bread and give it to all these people to eat?’ Philip (added), ‘Two hundred denarii worth of bread would not be enough for each of them to get a little.’”*
 - And when it grew late, - they had been ministering ALL DAY. They were already needing a break and now this. Now they really needed it.
 - his disciples came to him and said, “This is a desolate place, and the hour is now late. – there is a repeated metaphor and descriptor in this passage and it’s: Wilderness. Every time we hear wilderness in the New Testament we should think of the desert wandering in the wilderness of the Jewish people in the Old Testament. Just as God gave them provisions in the Old Testament, so too does He do it again in the Person of Jesus Christ (manna then – now food again). Jesus had already poured out Himself spiritually (His Word and Healing – body and spirit), so now it was given physical proof in the provision of literal food.
 - Send them away to go into the surrounding countryside and villages and buy themselves something to eat.” – It’s good that the disciples/apostles were concerned about the people instead of simply saying, ‘that’s their problem.’ They were thinking through a practical and logistical lens, which wasn’t wrong. It’s just that Jesus had other plans.
 - But [Jesus] answered them, “You give them something to eat.” – Matthew’s account adds that Jesus said, “they need not go away.” This is significant to me. Too often we do ministry with the mindset of what we

⁵ “Two hundred denarii was roughly equivalent to the entire year’s wage of a day laborer, and it is clear that the Twelve did not have such a sum at their disposal.” NICNT

can offer on earth. We forget what we should offer from heaven. Jesus knew that they had all that they needed. He said, 'why should they leave? We are here!' This was a paradigm change for the disciples who were still, even after doing miracles for weeks (perhaps). We all struggle to know when God wants to do a special thing.

- John adds - Jesus said to Philip, "Where are we to buy bread, so that these people may eat?"⁶ – Jesus was asking a question to initiate a response and teaching moment. He knew exactly what He was doing. But he wanted to highlight the need. He asked Philip to process the situation in front of him.
- John adds - He said this to test him, for he himself knew what he would do. – this is the clear evidence we need to see that Jesus was always setting up teaching moments and many times He would ask questions was not to get information but point out information.
- And they said to him, "Shall we go and buy two hundred denarii worth of bread and give it to them to eat? – This particular amount of money is a whole years wage of a day laborer. Philip was likely the one who responded here. He was thinking, do you really want us spending that amount of money. We don't have that to spare.
- John adds - "Philip (added), "Two hundred denarii worth of bread would not be enough for each of them to get a little."⁷ – this is a BIG problem (like the wedding in Cana). They need a TON of food. They aren't going to have the cash on hand to do that, nor the practical ways to get it done. Philip adds that even a years wages wouldn't be enough to give everyone even a little bit.
- When does God want good planning and when does God want more faith? – this is a question that all Christians have to continually ask. It's tough. On one hand we have Jesus telling the disciples to plan things out (go get the colt for me; prepare the Passover meal; I'm moving on, send the people away...etc.) but then there's tremendous faith challenges (why did you think we need that?). So, in our day to day lives, which is it? How do we know? I think there are **THREE principles** that should determine our answers:
 1. Did God provide the means already? – If God has given us the means already, we should use them. A miracle ahead of time is still a miracle. Provision in advance isn't less beautiful than provision at the last minute. We must wisely use what we have been given by God to advance the ball.

⁶ "Its position in the Marcan framework after the account of Herod's feast juxtaposes the sumptuous oriental aura of the Herodian court with the austere circumstances in which Jesus satisfied the multitude with the staples of a peasant's diet. In spite of the tetrarch's pretensions to royalty, the people are as leaderless as sheep who possess no shepherd. In contrast to the drunken debauchery of the Herodian feast, Mark exhibits the glory of God unveiled through the abundant provision of bread in the wilderness where Jesus is Israel's faithful shepherd." NICNT

⁷ "Five small barley loaves and two salted or roasted fish were insignificant in the presence of such need, and the disciples might have echoed Moses' cry of anguish in the wilderness: "Where shall I find meat to give to all these people?... Shall all the fish of the sea be gathered together for them, to satisfy them?" (Num. 11:13, 22)." NICNT

2. Did you check in with God? – just because you HAVE the PROVISION doesn't mean you cut out or IGNORE the PROVIDER. We don't only check in with God when we are wanting, but we also check in on Him to honor/respect Him, and to connect with Him as a close partner (albeit not an equal partnership. He's God after all).
 3. Is there a faith gap? – when you look at what your current situation from a 90,000 foot view down, is there a faith gap? Is there an area where God may want to do more? Is there a stirring in your spirit that He wants something different? Are there any indicators that your practical mindset isn't accounting for the supernatural?
- So Many Fish...So Much Bread
 - Jesus Feeds the 5,000
 - **[READ COMBO ACCOUNT]** Mk 6:38-44 – *“And he said to them, “How many loaves do you have? Go and see.” And when they had found out, they said, “Five, and two fish.”³⁹ Then he commanded them all to sit down in groups on the green grass.⁴⁰ So they sat down in groups, by hundreds and by fifties.^{8 41} And taking the five loaves and the two fish, he looked up to heaven and said a blessing and broke the loaves and gave them to the disciples to set before the people. And he divided the two fish among them all.⁴² And they all ate and were satisfied.⁴³ And they took up twelve baskets full of broken pieces and of the fish.⁴⁴ And those who ate the loaves were five thousand men.”*
 - ESV Combo Account – all 4 gospels - Mt 14:13-22; Mk 6:30-45; Luke 9:10-17; John 6:1-15
 - *And he said to them, “How many loaves do you have? Go and see.” One of his disciples, Andrew, Simon Peter’s brother, said to him, “There is a boy here who has five barley loaves and two fish, but what are they for so many?” And he said, “Bring them here to me.” For there were about five thousand men. And he ordered his disciples (to command them all to sit down in groups, “Have them sit down in groups of about fifty each.” And they did so, and had them all sit down in groups, by hundreds and by fifties on the green grass. Now there was much grass in the place. And taking the five loaves and the two fish, he looked up to heaven and said a blessing over them. And when he had given thanks, he broke the loaves and gave them to the disciples, and the disciples set them before the crowds. And he divided the two fish among them all, as much as they wanted. And they all ate and were satisfied. He told his disciples, “Gather up the leftover fragments, that nothing may be lost.” And what was left over*

⁸ “The arrangement of the crowd into field-groups of hundreds and fifties recalls the order of the Mosaic camp in the wilderness (e.g. Ex. 18:21). This detail is particularly striking because the documents of Qumran use these subdivisions to describe true Israel assembled in the desert in the period of the last days. If this concept is presupposed in verse 40, the multitude who have been instructed concerning the Kingdom is characterized as the people of the new exodus who have been summoned to the wilderness to experience messianic grace. Through these elements of the wilderness complex Mark portrays Jesus as the eschatological Savior, the second Moses who transforms a leaderless flock into the people of God.” NICNT

was picked up, twelve baskets full of the broken pieces and of the fish left over. And those who ate were about five thousand men, besides women and children."

- And he said to them, "How many loaves do you have? Go and see." – this is Jesus' way of getting them to assess the situation deeply. Before a miracle would happen they need to know the lack and the gap between the need and the provision. He wanted their eyes on it.
- One of his disciples, Andrew, Simon Peter's brother, - Andrew was one of the first disciples of Jesus and a former disciple of John the Baptist. He was the one that introduced Peter (his brother) to Jesus.
- said to him, "There is a boy here who has five barley loaves and two fish, but what are they for so many?" - whether the boy offered it or Andrew asked him for it, is not clear. The barley loaves would be small and individual size for a lunch along with the salted dried fish. What seems like **NOT ENOUGH, BECOMES MORE THAN ENOUGH.**
- And he said, "Bring them here to me." – Normal stuff in Jesus' hands becomes extraordinary stuff. Over and over we see in Scripture how God can transform something regular and mundane into something amazing. Think about **the staff in Moses' hand. It was just a staff, but then it was used for miracles and did all kinds of stuff. A regular fleece became a confirmation to Gideon. A jawbone of a donkey became a weapon of mass destruction in the hands of a Spirit-inspired Samson. A rock and a sling killed a giant in David's hands via the Spirit's power. Simple oil and flour became impossibly abundant via Elijah and Elisha.**
- For there were about five thousand men. – we find out later that this was just the count of the men, not the women and children. It was a TON of people (see below).
- And he ordered his disciples (to) command them all to sit down in groups, "Have them sit down in groups of about fifty each." And they did so, and had them all sit down in groups, by hundreds and by fifties on the green grass. Now there was much grass in the place. – the grass may have a prophetic mention here but it seems just more practical that it allowed groups to sit down on the ground. The more prophetic or impactful part of this piece is that they arranged like the early Jewish nation in the desert who would camp together in the wilderness.
- And taking the five loaves and the two fish, he looked up to heaven and said a blessing over them. – It was a well-known practice (and command) to give thanks to God for all provision, especially food. Usually that blessing of thanks was done with head bowed but Jesus looked up to heaven, as if giving a signal to the direction of the Provider. What was the blessing He spoke? It doesn't say. I would assume it was short and to the point and practical. I think it may have sounded like, "Father, bless these items to fulfill your purpose and to bring glory to your name. In your name I bless them to be more than enough." Or something like that.

- And when he had given thanks,⁹ - again, it was common practice to make sure that God is acknowledged as the giver of all good gifts when eating. Jesus did what every good Jew would do.
- he broke the loaves and gave them to the disciples, and the disciples set them before the crowds.¹⁰ – this is important. Jesus never gave the food directly to the people. Why? He could have, but this was a teaching moment, and the teacher didn't need to learn the lesson, the students did. Jesus wanted to teach them the principle that it goes from God, through His children/ministers to the people of the world. That's the chain of command. Most of the time God's plan to provide for the world will be through believers. Why did Jesus break the loaves and fishes? Why not just hand out whole fish and whole barley loaves? I'm assuming that was the obvious first step of dividing for a lot of people. Perhaps Jesus had a practical mindset that He would break as long as it would break by the power of the Holy Spirit.
- And he divided the two fish among them all, as much as they wanted. – As much as they wanted is a signal of ABUNDANCE. Too often we see God has miserly and that we have to beg Him in prayer. That is not true. You know your lack because He told you. There are a lot of things you lack right now but don't know about. But God loves to bless His people because it brings glory to His name.
- And they all ate and were satisfied. – the satisfaction goes back to the shepherd that gave food to the 'sheep.' The condition of the sheep reflects on the shepherd. They were full and satisfied. That is the type of leader that Jesus is.
- He told his disciples, "Gather up the leftover fragments, that nothing may be lost." – I don't know if this is for a teachable moment or that it's about not wasting what God provides. It could be both.
- And what was left over was picked up, twelve baskets¹¹ full of the broken pieces and of the fish left over. – these are personal small wicker baskets that each disciple would carry around. It wasn't massive baskets. But **the point was: they ended up with more than they started with.**

⁹ "In Judaism it was a stringent rule that nothing should be eaten without thanking God before and after the meal. On this occasion Jesus performed the duty of the host in pronouncing the blessing over the loaves and the fish. Mark's sequence of words describes the characteristic procedure at ordinary Jewish meals¹⁰³ and indicates that Jesus faithfully followed the accepted form: he took the bread in his hands, pronounced the blessing, broke the bread into pieces and distributed it. The only deviation from normal practice was that while praying Jesus looked toward heaven rather than downward, as prescribed. This is not an ordinary meal, and it is proper to see in Jesus' prayer not only the customary praise and thanksgiving but a reliance upon the Father for the extraordinary power necessary to meet the people's need. The object of the blessing pronounced was not the loaves and the fish, but "the Lord," since every prayer before a meal began with the blessing of the name of God: "Praise unto thee, O Lord our God, King of the world." The continuation of the prayer depended on the nature of the food involved; in the case of bread, blessing was invoked on God, "who makes bread to come forth from the earth."¹⁰⁵ This recognition that the bread was God's provision was confirmed by those who were present with their "Amen." NICNT

¹⁰ "Whether the bread increased in the hands of Jesus or in the hands of the disciples who distributed it was not considered important in the tradition. Here the Kingdom of God was functioning." NICNT

¹¹ The fragments were collected in the small wicker baskets that every Jew carried with him as a part of his daily attire. Each of the disciples returned with his basket full. The quantity of the remaining fragments witnesses to the fulness of the meal and confirms the satisfaction noted in verse 42." NICNT

- And those who ate were about five thousand men, besides women and children.¹² – Talk about revival! The two towns nearby: Capernaum & Bethsaida, only had about 2500 people each. That means that not only was it ALL those folks, but tons from another town.
- Protected Solo Time
 - Jesus Withdraws to Pray
 - Mk 6:45-46 – *“Immediately he made his disciples get into the boat and go before him to the other side, to Bethsaida, while he dismissed the crowd.*⁴⁶ *And after he had taken leave of them, he went up on the mountain to pray.* [John adds - “ When the people saw the sign that he had done, they said, “This is indeed the Prophet who is to come into the world!” Perceiving then that they were about to come and take him by force to make him king, Jesus withdrew again to the mountain by himself.]
 - ESV Combo Account – all 4 gospels - Mt 14:13-22; Mk 6:30-45; Luke 9:10-17; John 6:1-15
 - *Immediately he made his disciples get into the boat and go before him to the other side, to Bethsaida, while he dismissed the crowds. When the people saw the sign that he had done, they said, “This is indeed the Prophet who is to come into the world!” Perceiving then that they were about to come and take him by force to make him king, Jesus withdrew again to the mountain by himself.”*
 - Immediately he made his disciples get into the boat and go before him to the other side, - Jesus did a mighty miracle. Everyone was okay. It was time to get out of dodge and it’s tough to get the whole crew out of there with needy people. Jesus wanted to take the hit and keep the people distracted with Him while the disciples get away.
 - to Bethsaida,¹³ - I thought they were just IN Bethsaida? What the heck? It’s complicated but we only need to know that they went somewhere across the lake (see explanation above and the footnote).
 - while he dismissed the crowd. – clearly Jesus was concerned about his guys being exhausted since He was the famous one. Usually, the less famous disperse the crowd so the famous one can dip out secretly. But now that the apostles had done miracles they too were famous.
 - And after he had taken leave of them, ~~he went up on the mountain to pray.~~ – John explains that there was a lot of drama before Jesus went to pray. He still got there but the people made it difficult. At some point Jesus broke free.

¹² “Five thousand men was an immense gathering since large neighboring towns like Capernaum and Bethsaida had only 2000–3000 inhabitants each.” NICNT

¹³ “The text is attested by the great majority of witnesses, but it creates the difficulty that Bethsaida was on the northeast shore of the lake, in the region where the feeding took place according to Lk. 9:10, not on “the other side.” It is better to accept the Caesarean text, which omits εἰ τὸ πέραν and gives only πρὸς (εἰς) Βηθσαϊδᾶν: P⁴⁵ W λ q sy⁵. For a defense of the primitiveness of this reading see L. Vaganay, “Mk 6:45,” RB 49 (1940), pp. 5–32. The longer reading of Mark appears to be a conflated variant reuniting the shorter reading supported by the Caesarean text with the different reading of Mt. 14:22. Mark evidently uses εἰς τὸ πέραν to indicate a change of location by boat where the destination of the voyage is unspecified (cf. Chs. 4:35; 5:21; 8:13 with 6:32, 53; 8:10) or quite general (Ch. 5:1). See further C. C. McCown, “The Problem of the Site of Bethsaida,” JPOS 10 (1930), pp. 32–58; J. O’Hara, “Two Bethsaidas or One?” Scripture 15 (1963), pp. 24–27.” NICNT

- John adds - "When the people saw the sign that he had done, - this was the sign of the provision by feeding the 5,000 men plus. Everyone got the inkling that it was a miracle and word spread. They knew that there was no way that Jesus had brought in all these provisions. A sign is different than a miracle at times since it points to something bigger. This was a sign of the Messiah providing for the people.
 - they said, "This is indeed the Prophet who is to come into the world!" – this is a Messianic reference pointing back to Moses saying that God would send a prophet just like Him in the future to take care of sins.
 - Perceiving then that they were about to come and take him by force to make him king, - the people were bound and determined to make Him king whether He liked it or not. They are pushy.
 - **When we try to make Jesus something He's not** – we do this same thing. We demand in our minds that He fit a mold for us for our benefit. But Jesus is who Jesus is and nothing more.
 - Jesus withdrew again to the mountain by himself. – somehow Jesus got away. Maybe He talked them down. Maybe He ran. I don't know. But in the end Jesus got away.
- Master of the Waves
 - Jesus (and Peter) Walk on Water
 - **Mk 6:47-52 – [READ COMBO ACCOUNT]** *"And when evening came, the boat was out on the sea, and he was alone on the land. ⁴⁸ And he saw that they were making headway painfully, for the wind was against them. ¹⁴ And about the fourth watch of the night [3:00AM] he came to them, walking on the sea. He meant to pass by them, ⁴⁹ but when they saw him walking on the sea they thought it was a ghost, ¹⁵ and cried out, ⁵⁰ for they all saw him and were terrified. But immediately he spoke to them and said, "Take heart; it is I. Do not be afraid." [HUGE OMISSION – PETER'S STORY] ⁵¹ And he got into the boat with them, and the wind ceased. And they were utterly astounded, ⁵² for they did not understand about the loaves, but their hearts were hardened."*
 - **ESV Combo Account – Matthew 14:23-33; Mark 6:46-52; John 6:15-21** (Luke doesn't have an account of any of this and only Matthew tells the Peter part)
 - *"When evening came, his disciples went down to the sea, got into a boat, and started across the sea to Capernaum. And after he had dismissed the crowds and taken leave of them, he went up on the mountain by himself to pray. When evening came, he was there alone on the land, but the boat by this time was a long way from the land*

¹⁴ "Whenever the master is absent from the disciples (or appears to be so, as in Ch. 4:35–41), they find themselves in distress. And each time they experience anguish it is because they lack faith (Chs. 4:35 ff.; 6:45 ff.; 9:14 ff.). This is clearly the case in this episode where the physical exhaustion of the disciples was aggravated by stark terror when they encountered what they believed to be a night spectre." NICNT

¹⁵ "Gr. φάντασμα, sy^s reads δαιμόνιον, while I Enoch 60:16 speaks of the "spirit" of the sea which is "masculine and strong." The sea, like the wilderness, was regarded as the dwelling place for demons." NICNT

on the sea, beaten by the waves. The sea became rough because a strong wind was blowing. They had rowed about three or four miles and he saw that they were making headway painfully, for the wind was against them. It was now dark, and Jesus had not yet come to them. And in the fourth watch of the night [3:00AM] he came to them, walking on the sea, coming near the boat. He meant to pass by them, but when all the disciples saw him walking on the sea, they were terrified, and cried out in fear, "It is a ghost!". But immediately Jesus spoke to them, saying, "Take heart; it is I. Do not be afraid." And Peter answered him, "Lord, if it is you, command me to come to you on the water." He said, "Come." So Peter got out of the boat and walked on the water and came to Jesus. But when he saw the wind, he was afraid, and beginning to sink he cried out, "Lord, save me." Jesus immediately reached out his hand and took hold of him, saying to him, "O you of little faith, why did you doubt?" And when they got into the boat, the wind ceased. And those in the boat worshiped him, saying, "Truly you are the Son of God." Then they were glad to take him into the boat, and immediately the boat was at the land to which they were going. And they were utterly astounded, for they did not understand about the loaves, but their hearts were hardened."

- When evening came, his disciples went down to the sea, got into a boat, and started across the sea to Capernaum. – Now we are heading down to Capernaum instead of Bethsaida! Sheesh. See above to note the confusion of which directions they were traveling and which cities they were in. For our purposes we just care that while Jesus was handling the crowds, the disciples got away, got in a boat and took off on the Sea of Galilee.
- And after he had dismissed the crowds and taken leave of them, he went up on the mountain by himself to pray. – remember the drama that John explained. Jesus was tired before this day started but now He's wiped out for sure. He needs to slow down, quiet down, connected with the Father and get filled back up by the Holy Spirit and the angels.
- When evening came, he was there alone on the land, but the boat by this time was a long way from the land on the sea, - this is a logistical problem. Jesus didn't have a way to get to where they were.
- beaten by the waves. The sea became rough because a strong wind was blowing. – there seems to have been a storm and the wind was blowing against them making everything difficult for the disciples.
- They had rowed about three or four miles and he saw that they were making headway painfully, for the wind was against them. – this is just a highlight about how frustrated and tired they were. They were trying to get away to chill out and rest, but here they are struggling just to get to their safe/quiet space. They must have been in bad moods for sure.

- Trouble apart – Mark seems to highlight that the disciples really struggled when they were apart from Jesus. The point seems to be that His presence brings shalom.
- It was now dark, and Jesus had not yet come to them. And in the fourth watch of the night he came to them, - it's 3am and Jesus is going to head out and reconnect with them. So, instead of getting another boat in the middle of the night He just steps out on the water and starts to walk. The wind that was stopping the disciples boat doesn't seem to stop him.
- walking on the sea, - How does this work logistically and practically? Do you have to step up on the waves and go up and down as they ebb and flow, or do you walk 'through them' which would mean that you are getting your lower half soaked? I don't know but I want to know. The miracle is that Jesus EITHER made that which was liquid a solid OR made His body so light that it didn't need to sink (like a water bug – the *water strider*. Side note – have you ever seen a Jesus Christ Lizard (frilled lizard) run on water? It's awesome. He gets a full steam of momentum and his webbed feet act like rafts.). Either way Jesus walked on water.
- coming near the boat. He meant to pass by them,¹⁶ - read the commentary on this. It sounds funny. It sounds like Jesus was going to walk past them and meet them on the other side. But another way to read this is that He wanted to get to them (pass by them to join them). That's more likely.
- but when all the disciples saw him walking on the sea, they were terrified, and cried out in fear, "It is a ghost!" – they knew that people don't walk on water. But Jesus did. So, they assumed that it was a ghost. They don't know it's Jesus yet. They just know that a figure is walking across the water, which certainly can't be a person, right?
- But immediately Jesus spoke to them, saying, "Take heart; it is I."¹⁷ Do not be afraid." – Jesus spends a lot of time calming the disciples down

¹⁶ "Because the text stresses that Jesus' coming to the disciples was the direct result of his perceiving their distress, the explanation that "he meant to pass by them" seems enigmatic, if not alien to the context. Among the several proposals that have been offered three are worthy of serious consideration. (1) The words record the impression that the disciples had at that time that the spectral figure intended to pass by them. The complex of verses 48–50 becomes intelligible when transposed into the first person: "He meant to pass by us, but when we saw him walking upon the sea we thought it was a ghost, and cried out; for we all saw him and were terrified." (2) The several modern translations, which create the impression of an independent and more or less isolated statement, fail to represent Mark's intention. The text should be rendered, "for he intended to pass their way." The initial particle is to be understood in an explicative sense rather than as a coordinating conjunction; it introduces a subordinate clause clarifying why Jesus came walking on the water. Verse 48 thus forms a composite whole: when Jesus saw that the disciples were wearing themselves out, he already felt the desire to reveal his presence to them by passing their way. This proposal is grammatically feasible and introduces cohesion and balance into the account. (3) For Mark the event is a theophany, a manifestation of the transcendent Lord who will "pass by" as God did at Sinai before Moses (Ex. 33:19, 22) or on Horeb before Elijah (1 Kings 19:11). The text simply uses the language of theophany familiar from the Septuagint. It is possible that the evangelist intends his readers to recognize an allusion to Job 9:8, 11: "he walks upon the waves of the sea ... If he goes by me, I will not see him, and if he passes by me, I will not recognize him." In this instance the divine appearance occurred for the very purpose of being seen. In wonderful fashion Jesus put his authority at the disposal of the disciples and passed by to assure them of his presence with them." NICNT

¹⁷ "The emphatic "I" in verse 50 is ambiguous. It can be understood as a normal statement of identity ("it is I, Jesus"), but it can also possess deeper significance as the recognized formula of self-revelation which rests ultimately on the "I am that I am" of Ex. 3:14. Not only the immediate context of the walking upon the water but the words with which the emphatic "I" is framed favor the theophanic interpretation. The admonitions to "take heart" and to "have no fear" which introduce and conclude the "I am he" are an integral part of the divine formula of self-revelation (e.g. Ps. 115:9 ff.; 118:5 f.; Isa. 41:4 ff., 13 ff.; 43:1 ff.; 44:2 ff.; 51:9 ff.). In the darkness, when the disciples are deceived by their eyes, Jesus affirms his identity with the words "I am he; fear not." NICNT

because He keeps putting them in crazy and impossible situations. The phrase 'it is I' can either be a practical statement of 'it's me, guys, relax', or it could be an I AM statement. The language is open to either.

- And Peter answered him, "Lord, if it is you, command me to come to you on the water." – Peter wants proof. Why? Why does he want to get out of the boat. We always focus on the fact that he did get out and he walked on water, but what was he trying to accomplish. You have a very good boat going, so why do you want to walk out of it onto a stormy lake? Maybe Peter said, 'if you do, it than I want to try it.' John Ortberg wrote a famous book, 'if you want to walk on water you've got to get out of the boat'. Brilliant. Peter may have failed in his attempt but at first he succeeded and no one else had the guts to get out.
 - Mark omits Peter trying to walk on water why? - It's really weird that Luke doesn't even tell the story of Jesus walking on water but when John and Mark tell it they don't tell the Peter version. Why? It's strange because Mark allegedly is writing for Peter. Maybe Peter didn't want to talk about his part in this but only Jesus. But why did Luke skip the story entirely? Was he studying off of Mark's account (he wasn't a disciple that walked with Jesus). And what the heck John? You were there. Maybe he was sick of Peter getting accolades. ☺
- He said, "Come." – Jesus invited him out. He didn't rebuke him for the request, He honored it. Are there areas where we need to step out of our comfort zone boat and join Jesus in the impossible? Is He waiting to invite us into a miracle?
- So Peter got out of the boat and walked on the water and came to Jesus - Incredibly two men walked on water in history: Jesus & Peter. Peter didn't get far but he did it.
- But when he saw the wind, he was afraid, - why the wind (how do you see wind – I think it means, saw the effects of the wind) scared him when he was walking on water I don't know, but maybe it was just sobering up from boldness and needing to rely on faith but he couldn't. He was afraid, not of the storm but of sinking and failing. As long as he kept his eyes on Jesus he could do the impossible but once he took his eyes off Jesus and put them on his circumstance it fell apart. That's a lesson for us.
- and beginning to sink he cried out, "Lord, save me." – He was afraid of sinking and just as he started going down (obviously slow enough to cry out) he called out to Jesus. That's appropriate. Jesus is the savior.
- Jesus immediately reached out his hand and took hold of him, - Jesus caught him and lifted him back up on his feet (rather than picking him up and putting him over his shoulder like a sack of potatoes).
- saying to him, "O you of little faith, why did you doubt?" – you were doing so good, why did you stop believing in me? That's the essence of what Jesus said. Why did you doubt? Why did you allow your

circumstances to be more real than me? Why did you shift your allegiance?

- And when they got into the boat, the wind ceased. – the wind calmed down likely because Jesus told it to but that isn't clear. It could have just been coincidence (I find the timing suspicious). It got calm and everyone had a moment to breathe and think through what just occurred.
 - And those in the boat worshiped him, saying, "Truly you are the Son of God." – He was always the Son of God but they were in awe of His power and ability so it demanded they say it aloud as confirmation of what they knew.
 - Then they were glad to take him into the boat, - I think this line is both funny (of course they were), and total unnecessary (of courage they did).
 - and immediately the boat was at the land to which they were going. And they were utterly astounded, - this seems to be another miracle. While they are all talking about what happened and glorifying God, they teleport to the shoreline. Some think this is a regular 'immediately' by Mark but I think it's a highlight of another miracle. It says they were utterly astounded at the teleporting. The meaning behind it all was that once Jesus was with them the storm and the distance weren't a problem. Jesus is the LORD of CIRCUMSTANCE.
 - for they did not understand about the loaves,¹⁸ - **they were so busy DOING ministry that they didn't see the MIRACLE in the ministry.** How often is that true of us? We are too close and not paying attention. They didn't understand that it was a full blown miracle (and if they did) they didn't realize that it was a sign that Jesus was the Son of God.
 - but their hearts were hardened. – why were their hearts hardened? Is that by God's choice or simple human nature? It seems likely that it's both. I wonder how much familiarity was a problem for them. After all, yes, they saw miracles, but they also saw Jesus go to the bathroom. Maybe they struggled to keep the faith in the bigger narrative (Savior of the World).¹⁹
- Do It All Over Again
 - Jesus & Co Minister the Next Morning
 - Mk 6:53-56 – *"When they had crossed over, they came to land at Gennesaret and moored to the shore. ⁵⁴ And when they got out of the boat, the people immediately recognized him ⁵⁵ and ran about the whole region and began to bring the sick people on their beds to wherever they heard he was. ⁵⁶ And wherever he came, in villages, cities, or countryside, they laid the sick in the*

¹⁸ "Mark alone explains that they had failed to understand about the loaves and that their hearts were hardened (verse 52; cf. Ch. 8:17). The disciples certainly realized that the multitude had been fed with five loaves and two fish, but they had failed to grasp that this event pointed beyond itself to the secret of Jesus' person. Because they were not truly open to the action of God in Jesus they had missed the significance of the miracle of the loaves for them, and saw only "a marvel." That is why they displayed not confidence and joy in Jesus' unexpected presence but faithless panic." NICNT

¹⁹ "Hardness of heart is that lack of spiritual perceptivity, that lack of readiness to learn, for which we are ultimately blameworthy ourselves, and which, in the extreme case of the scribes, can lead at last to the sin against the Holy Spirit. Smallness of faith is a failure to remember God's working in the past and to apply that knowledge of his nature to our present problems." Cole, R. A. (1989). Mark: An Introduction and Commentary (Vol. 2, p. 184). InterVarsity Press.

marketplaces and implored him that they might touch even the fringe of his garment. And as many as touched it were made well."

- When they had crossed over, they came to land at Gennesaret and moored to the shore. – They were finally at their destination. Long night. More exhaustion.
- And when they got out of the boat, the people immediately recognized him - and ran about the whole region – people were all over them. It's now morning time and everyone knew it was them so they started gathering more people to see Jesus' team. Remember, the other people on the other side had a huge revival and healing service, but now it was their turn.
- and began to bring the sick people on their beds to wherever they heard he was. – They were going to get sick people from their homes and get them aligned with Jesus' location. We have to give them credit for helping the needy.
- And wherever he came, in villages, cities, or countryside, they laid the sick in the marketplaces – this was about trying to lay them in Jesus' pathway. If He changed gears or streets they would have to readjust. It was crowded.
- and implored him that they might touch even the fringe of his garment. – they had heard about the woman who touched his clothes and was healed. They believed that the power flowed from Him. Their faith was strong.
- And as many as touched it were made well. – God graced them with miracles when they touched Jesus. It was a response to their faith that He was who He said He was. What about those who didn't touch it? Hmmm. Are we those who would pursue Jesus for our healing?

Conclusion

- Jesus changes everything. Whatever you are going through today, have you considered the Jesus-factor? He's not our butler nor our aspirin, but He is our ever-present God.
- Who needs a miracle today? Stand.