

Mark 5-6 Chapter Study

INTRODUCTION

Outline

I. JESUS IN GALILEE CHS. 1-9

In Chs. 1-3, Mark gives us a general overview of Jesus' ministry.

He tells us that Jesus taught with authority and performed miracles of great power.

In chs. 4 & 5, he gives *examples* of Jesus' teaching and miracles.

D. Examples of Jesus' Power Ch. 4:35-5:43

Mark gives us *three* examples of Jesus' power.

1. Jesus' power over nature's realm 4:35-41

Which we looked at last week.

The second example shows Jesus' power over the spiritual realm.

2. Jesus' power over the spiritual realm 5:1-20

¹ Then they came to the other side of the sea, to the country of the Gadarenes. ² And when He had come out of the boat, immediately there met Him out of the tombs a man with an unclean spirit, ³ who had *his* dwelling among the tombs; and no one could bind him, not even with chains, ⁴ because he had often been bound with shackles and chains. And the chains had been pulled apart by him, and the shackles broken in pieces; neither could anyone tame him. ⁵ And always, night and day, he was in the mountains and in the tombs, crying out and cutting himself with stones.

This poor man! He was demon-possessed and tormented so badly his humanity had been degraded to the point where he was more like an animal than a man.

He was in the last stages of possession, where the demons were doing their best to *kill* him.

There was probably no more pitiable picture of humanity than this poor man.

His humanity had been totally subsumed under the control of demons that'd so tormented him he was completely out of control as far as normal life and society were concerned.

In the same way that God loves us & has a wonderful plan for us, the devil hates us and has a hideous plan for us.

If you want to know what the devil has planned for you, look at this guy!

You think that sin offers something desirable and appealing? Look at this poor man and observe where sin leads.

Many people think that if they become a Christian they'll lose all their friends and end up being lonely. No – it's *sin* that leads to loneliness.

The devil wants desperately to *isolate* you, to cut you off from others and drive you from the warmth of human companionship.

Look at *this* guy – he's living in tombs, alone.

6 When he saw Jesus from afar, he ran and worshiped Him.

As soon as Jesus landed on the eastern shore of the lake, this demon-possessed man rushed forward and began to worship Jesus. See, even the demons have to worship God.

As it says in Philippians 2 – *every* knee shall bow & *every* tongue confess that Jesus Christ is Lord, those in the heavens, those on earth, & those under the earth! [Phil. 2:10-11]

7 And he cried out with a loud voice and said, “What have I to do with You, Jesus, Son of the Most High God? I implore You by God that You do not torment me.” **8 For He said to him, “Come out of the man, unclean spirit!”**

By which Mark means Jesus **HAD** said this *before* the demon spoke.

9 Then He asked him, “What is your name?” And he answered, saying, “My name is Legion; for we are many.”

Jesus took pity on this poor man & commanded the demons to come out.

But they plead with Him not to pass the *final* judgment on them– that day was yet future & they requested they not be confined to the place of eternal judgment *yet*.

That’s when Jesus required the demon to identify itself.

As we saw a couple weeks ago, the Jewish exorcists spent many hours trying to get a demon to give up its name because they thought *that* was the key to deliverance.

Jesus simply asks, and the demons reply that there are *many* of them.

A Roman legion consisted of between 3 & 6,000 !!!

So – if the key to deliverance was to get a demon to give up its name, & this took *days* to accomplish, this poor guy will *never* be free.

Jesus was not now using the Jewish method of exorcism by asking the demon for its name; He was giving evidence to the disciples of His power.

He’d instantaneously calmed the storm on the lake just an hour or two before, now He’s about to effect a deliverance of a man which to the Jewish mind was an *absolute impossibility*.

10 Also he begged Him earnestly that He would not send them out of the country.

This request *fascinates* me. Why would they not want to be sent out of *that country*?

We’ll come back to this.

11 Now a large herd of swine was feeding there near the mountains. 12 So all the demons begged Him, saying, “Send us to the swine, that we may enter them.” 13 And at once Jesus gave them permission. Then the unclean spirits went out and entered the swine (there were about two thousand); and the herd ran violently down the steep place into the sea, and drowned in the sea.

The demons **KNEW** Jesus was going to set this man free.

They knew they were leaving – but the thought of being *un-embodied* terrified

them.

Part of the *loss* these fallen angels experienced when they rebelled with Satan was their *angelic glory*.

Now they're so hungry for that glory they ache to be clothed in humanity.

As humans we bear a measure of glory because we're created in the image of God.

But whatever demons touch they degrade and pollute, as they did with this man.

They turned him into little better than an animal.

And now that they're about to be turned out, they plead with Jesus to let them have some body, any body – there are pigs nearby – a whole herd of them; that will suffice.

So Jesus consented, the demons left the man, entered the herd, and the swine, driven immediately mad, rushed down the hillside into the lake and drowned.

Where this took place is known as Underwood Bay and where we get the whole idea of deviled ham.

14 So those who fed the swine fled, and they told *it* in the city and in the country. And they went out to see what it was that had happened.

15 Then they came to Jesus, and saw the one *who had been demon-possessed and had the legion, sitting and clothed and in his right mind. And they were afraid.* 16 And those who saw it told them how it happened to him *who had been demon-possessed, and about the swine.* 17 Then they began to plead with Him to depart from their region.

The swine herders ran back to town and told everyone what had happened.

A huge crowd went out to the shore and found Jesus, the disciples and the formerly demon-possessed man all sitting there as normal as can be.

They marveled, worshipped Jesus, and pleaded with Him to stay and teach and heal among them! **NOPE.** They pressed Jesus to leave!

Why would they do this? Simple – Jesus was messing with their income.

2,000 pigs is a lot of cash and while it's great to see the demon-possessed guy is better, to their thinking it would have made better sense to let him **remain** possessed than to lose a herd of swine.

How many pigs is a man worth? To the Gadarenes – less than 2,000.

As we saw in our study recently in Numbers, the Gadarenes were the descendants of the Tribe of Gad, one of the original tribes of Israel.

By request, they'd settled **outside** the eastern borders of the Promised Land, saying that the area was perfect for their livestock.

Of greater concern to them than living in the place of God's promise was living in the place of **maximum income**.

Here they are 1,500 years later and their still making the same foolish choice.

It's all very well & good that Jesus has amazing power and can bring instant relief to an impossible case like this demon-possessed man.

But when He goes messing with their pocketbook – well that's taking the religion thing too far.

They begged Jesus to leave!

And that gives us a clue as to *why* the demons asked to *not* be banished from this area. They knew what kind of people lived in Gadera.

They were compromised, greedy, irreligious people who were prime targets for their diabolical plans.

Later Jesus will tell a story about a demon which is expelled from a man, but when it returns to check the guy out and see how he's doing, discovers the man is *still* spiritually lost and so goes and gets other demons many times worse than it is and they re-infest the man.

The demons who'd possessed this man in Gadera knew the people of the region were the kind who would not tolerate Jesus' presence if He was going to affect their income.

They might have to leave *this guy*, but there'd soon be a whole flock of new candidates for possession.

When you look Jesus in the face and tell Him to go away – You've just done a supremely foolish & *dangerous* thing!

This story speaks powerfully to us about just how real our faith & religion are.

If what we say we believe doesn't affect our finances then we don't *really* believe it.

Jesus taught on this often – He said money was a *gauge* that marks our true level of spirituality.

18 And when He got into the boat, he who had been demon-possessed begged Him that he might be with Him.

This isn't hard to understand is it?

19 However, Jesus did not permit him, but said to him, "Go home to your friends, and tell them what great things the Lord has done for you, and how He has had compassion on you." 20 And he departed and began to proclaim in Decapolis all that Jesus had done for him; and all marveled.

If the man left with Jesus, there would be **NO ONE** there to tell the straight and honest story about what happened and the region would be turned against Jesus so that when He returned later, they'd be opposed to Him.

Jesus knew this man's testimony would keep the door of future ministry open.

Many people, especially many young men, get saved, and think that they need to go into full-time ministry; meaning, they think they're called to be a pastor.

But God wants us to live out our faith in *whatever setting* or vocation we're in, just so long as it's nothing inherently illegal or immoral.

You can't be a "Christian drug-dealer, gang-banger, loan-shark or stripper."
"Christian assassin" – No, that's not going to cut it.

We must stop looking at life as divided between the secular and the sacred.

As the people of God, *all* of life is sacred—every moment of it.

And in the work of the Kingdom of God, it's just as needed that we have

Christians serving in the schools, in the malls, in engineering, insurance, investing, sales, the media, and government as being pastors.

The point is to live out our faith where ever we are and whatever we're doing.

This guy did a great job of obeying Jesus in the region of Decapolis, of which Gadera was small part, because we read later that when Jesus came back to this region, the crowds were huge and many were brought to faith in Him.

3. Jesus' power over death 5:21-43

21 Now when Jesus had crossed over again by boat to the other side, a great multitude gathered to Him; and He was by the sea. **22** And behold, one of the rulers of the synagogue came, Jairus by name. And when he saw Him, he fell at His feet **23** and begged Him earnestly, saying, "My little daughter lies at the point of death. Come and lay Your hands on her, that she may be healed, and she will live."

Jesus is back at Capernaum now. As soon as He arrived, the crowd once again swelled.

One of those who came was one of the most important men of the community – Jairus, a **ruler** of the synagogue. This means he was a city council member.

The synagogue in Capernaum is still there and although it was in ruins, it's been slowly restored over the last 30 years.

The discoveries made there have revolutionized our understanding of first century synagogues.

24 So Jesus went with him, and a great multitude followed Him and thronged Him. **25** Now a certain woman had a flow of blood for twelve years, **26** and had suffered many things from many physicians. She had spent all that she had and was no better, but rather grew worse. **27** When she heard about Jesus, she came behind Him in the crowd and touched His garment. **28** For she said, "If only I may touch His clothes, I shall be made well."

As Jesus followed Jairus to his house a woman pressed toward him through the crowd.

She was intent on touching Him.

The other gospels tell us her whole aim was simply to make contact with the hem of His garment.

Remember the command in Numbers God gave the people of Israel to put **tassels** in the corners of their out garments? [15:37-41]

They were to be a reminder that they were called into covenant with Him to be a holy people.

The people believed that when Messiah came, He would be the **embodiment** of holiness and that the tassels of his garment would possess healing virtue.

This woman was **desperate**. She'd been afflicted with a flow of blood for 12 years. This would have made her ritually unclean & caused her to be exiled from normal family & social life.

She'd spent her entire fortune on doctors and none had brought relief.

But now she'd come to believe Jesus was the answer to her need & would not be denied access to Him.

The rules might say she couldn't be out in the crowd like this, but she didn't care.

She set her faith on one goal – *touching Jesus*.

29 Immediately the fountain of her blood was dried up, and she felt in her body that she was healed of the affliction. ³⁰ And Jesus, immediately knowing in Himself that power had gone out of Him, turned around in the crowd and said, **“Who touched My clothes?”** ³¹ But His disciples said to Him, “You see the multitude thronging You, and You say, **‘Who touched Me?’**” ³² And He looked around to see her who had done this thing. ³³ But the woman, fearing and trembling, knowing what had happened to her, came and fell down before Him and told Him the whole truth. ³⁴ And He said to her, **“Daughter, your faith has made you well. Go in peace, and be healed of your affliction.”**

She was fearful of the judgment of the crowd when they realized she was unclean yet among them.

But she figured it would be better to risk their wrath than to deny the call of the One she now knew as Lord.

Jesus let all of them know that it was the woman's faith in Him that had resulted in her healing.

As you know, Jesus is the epitome of humility. Humbleness finds its *consummate* expression in Him.

Yet Jesus never hesitated to encourage people to believe in Him and to look to Him as the One who was worthy of worship.

Now, this seems contradictory – and it would be if it were anyone but Jesus!

Jesus encourages people to believe in & worship Him, not because it makes *Him* feel better.

Jesus doesn't need to inflate His own sense of self-esteem and worth!

No, He encourages our faith & worship not because **HE GETS ANYTHING** out of it; He knows **WE DO!**

We were created to know and love God – and when we do what we were created for, then we discover the joy and peace that eludes the rest of humanity.

Believing in & worshipping Jesus makes us more alive, more human, more centered in the things that make life full and good.

35 While He was still speaking, some came from the ruler of the synagogue's house who said, **“Your daughter is dead. Why trouble the Teacher any further?”**

In their thinking, Jesus was good as a *healer*. But raising the dead wasn't an act of healing – it was a miracle! Jesus' power was great, they thought, but it certainly wasn't *that* great!

36 As soon as Jesus heard the word that was spoken, He said to the ruler of the synagogue, **“Do not be afraid; only believe.”** ³⁷ And He permitted no one to follow Him except Peter, James, and John the

brother of James. ³⁸ Then He came to the house of the ruler of the synagogue, and saw a tumult and those who wept and wailed loudly.

Jesus pared down the group going to Jairus' house probably out of sensitivity to the parents who'd be devastated by this news.

He wanted Peter, James & John to go with Him because as the inner circle of the disciples, He wanted them to *see* just how far-reaching His authority & power extend.

When they arrived at Jairus' house, even though it's only been a few minutes since the girl died, already there's a little crowd of *professional mourners* there.

These guys were the 1st century equivalent of "ambulance-chasers."

They made their living off other people's grief.

When someone died, they'd show up in their sackcloth & ashes and begin weeping, wailing; making a scene of the most desperate sorrow.

They got paid by the *volume* of tears they wept & wails they sobbed.

[Show tear jar]

Since Jairus was a wealthy & powerful man, this gig would pay handsomely.

They had been waiting for the news to go out his daughter had finally died so they could rush to his house & begin mourning.

They were doing was *auditioning*. They hoped Jairus would select them to be one of the half dozen or so hired mourners.

39 When He came in, He said to them, "Why make this commotion and weep? The child is not dead, but sleeping." ⁴⁰ And they ridiculed Him. But when He had put them all outside, He took the father and the mother of the child, and those who were with Him, and entered where the child was lying.

When Jesus arrived at Jairus' house He told the mourners to beat it – their services weren't needed. They didn't take this interference in their affairs well.

But Jesus expelled them just the same, then took the parents & disciples into the child's room.

41 Then He took the child by the hand, and said to her, "Talitha, cumi," which is translated, "Little girl, I say to you, arise." ⁴² Immediately the girl arose and walked, for she was twelve years of age. And they were overcome with great amazement. ⁴³ But He commanded them strictly that no one should know it, and said that *something* should be given her to eat.

And there it is – Jesus raised a dead 12 year old girl to life.

He just took her by the hand & said, "Arise" and she got up.

Their reaction was stunned amazement.

You can imagine just how far the swing of emotion went for this mother & father.

From the absolute depths of despair to the height of joy in the blink of an eye.

As difficult as it would be, Jesus told them they were not to make a big deal about it – but rather, just give the girl something to eat.

Her sickness had probably meant she hadn't eaten for some time and her first need was practical – food!

Some friends of mine who are really strong and mature in Christ, lost their little son.

He was born with some health problems and when he was just a couple years old he died.

They prayed for him, believed God for his healing and pleaded with the Lord to touch him. But he died and they grieved deeply for him.

Why does God heal some and not others.

Why is one 2 year old restored to life while another is taken?

I don't know! But this I do, those of us who *are healed* of sickness, even raised from the dead, will eventually die.

All of those Jesus touched and healed 2000 years ago, including this 12 year old girl, they all died. They all came down with some illness or had an accident that led to their eventual death.

The touch of Christ didn't prevent them from *eventual* pain & suffering.

But if they *listened carefully to Him*, His words brought hope, peace, & confidence that even if their body's should grow old & sick, they would *never really die*.

Faith in Christ means that even when the body wears out, the soul lives on in glory.

And this is why Jesus put the emphasis on His word, on His teaching when the people wanted to see *more* of the miracles.

Even today, people get all excited by seeing healing & miracles.

God has healed many people here at Calvary.

But like Jesus, we don't make a big show & production out of it.

We won't become a miracle mill, a healing hall where the spiritual thrill-seekers come to be get their weekly booster shot of excitement.

If we *promoted* the miraculous, we'd see the place fill up with the *curious*.

I'd rather see the place filled, as it is tonight, with the *serious*, not the mere curious.

As wonderful as it is to have our bodies touched by the miraculous power of God, it's far better to have our souls healed by the awesome & powerful Word of God.

By the way, let me pose you a little riddle.

How old was Jairus' daughter? 12 How many years had the woman who touched Jesus on the way to Jairus' house been afflicted? 12

Is this a coincidence – or might there be a connection?

We examined this in our study in Matthew – but I'll leave it for *you* to ponder.

E. Rejected At Nazareth 6:1-6

1 Then He went out from there and came to His own country, and His disciples followed Him.

Because that's what disciples do – they follow their rabbi.

2 And when the Sabbath had come, He began to teach in the synagogue. And many hearing Him were astonished, saying, "Where did this Man get these things? And what wisdom is this which is given to Him, that such mighty works are performed by His hands! 3 Is

this not the carpenter, the Son of Mary, and brother of James, Joses, Judas, and Simon? And are not His sisters here with us?" So they were offended at Him.

Jesus grew up in Nazareth & had spent the first 30 years of his life there.

These people knew him and his family well.

Nazareth was not a large city – it was little more than a humble little village, a work-camp really.

Herod was building the city of *Sepphoris* just a few miles north of Nazareth.

It was going to be his new headquarters & the capital of Galilee.

Its architecture was classic Roman, complete with a theater.

Sepphoris had a college of mural-making & today possesses some of the most extensive & well-preserved murals of the ancient world.

Nazareth was really little more than a work-camp for the Jewish workers who were constructing Sepphoris.

In v. 3, the people referred to Jesus as a “carpenter.”

The Greek word is “tekton” [tek-tone] and refers to a craftsman.

Traditionally, this has been translated as ‘carpenter’ but a trip to Sepphoris will reveal that far more than carpentry, what was needed was masons.

So it’s possible, & more & more NT scholars are coming to this conclusion, that Jesus, along with Joseph before Him, were probably a masons.

In any case, the people of Nazareth have heard all about Jesus’ spreading fame as a powerful rabbi.

Now that He’s back home & teaching in their own synagogue, they come to hear Him.

And while His Words carry the ring of authority, they cannot get past their prejudices concerning Him.

They demand of Him – “Where’d you get Your s’mikah, Your authority????”

Remember, Jesus had not followed the route the other rabbis of Galilee had followed.

That He’s known in Nazareth as a *craftsman* means He’d not followed the route expected of rabbis. [Rehearse it]

While Jesus was the best student every to have applied Himself to the study of the Word of God, He did not follow that route.

How do we know He was the best student ever? That story of Him at 12 when He was reasoning with the priests in the temple in Jerusalem!!

So, why didn’t Jesus follow the usual route to being a rabbi?

Because the needs of His family demanded He go to work – as a mason.

Joseph was gone – when we don’t know.

What we do know is that Joseph dropped out of the picture after he & Mary had produced 4 other sons and at least a couple sisters.

As the eldest, support for the family would have fallen on Jesus’ shoulders.

He didn’t leave home to start His mission as Messiah until His brothers had grown old enough to take his place, and the proper age for becoming a rabbi had arrived – 30.

The people of Nazareth knew all of this. In their eyes, Jesus was no rabbi – He was a carpenter, a mason!

So where did He get s’mikah / authority to be a rabbi and to teach *them*?

The word that had spread about Jesus was that He might be the Messiah.

The people of Nazareth scoffed at this – that the Messiah would have brothers and sisters, normal people that they knew personally, was absurd to them.

4 But Jesus said to them, “A prophet is not without honor except in his own country, among his own relatives, and in his own house.”⁵ Now He could do no mighty work there, except that He laid His hands on a few sick people and healed *them*.⁶ And He marveled because of their unbelief. Then He went about the villages in a circuit, teaching.

The problem of the people of Nazareth was an *assumed familiarity* with Jesus.

Because they thought they already knew Him, they rejected the possibility of learning anything new by listening to Him.

And this refusal to believe resulted in their missing out on all that Jesus could have brought them.

Jesus spoke in v. 4 about the danger of assuming we know God and have nothing left to learn.

I recently talked to a guy who told me that he’d given his life to Christ a few years ago, then his whole world went into the gutter, and he *blamed God for it*.

He said God *tricked* him, and that he *hated* God for it.

He came close to spitting in my face, saying my attempts to convert him were despicable.

Now, his assumptions about God are all wrong – but it was clear he was not going to change those beliefs no matter what I said.

Everything I said to him was filtered through his assumption that God is evil and wants to destroy him.

The people of Nazareth serve as a huge warning to us – that we, as people who’ve become familiar with the things of God, can hold assumptions that end up *keeping* us from experiencing Him in a deeper & more powerful way.

One of my consistent prayers for myself and for this church is that we do not hold thoughts that are unworthy of the Lord, that distort our knowledge of Him.

Friend, be careful of what you assume God can & cannot do. He is God!

Let the Scriptures & Spirit reveal Him to you – do not let your assumptions put God in a box.

F. Sending Out The Twelve 6:7-13

7 And He called the twelve to *Himself*, and began to send them out two by two, and gave them power over unclean spirits.

When Jesus left Nazareth, He made a circuit of the villages of that area.

As He went, the disciples got a great lesson in His method of preaching, teaching, and meeting the practical needs of the people.

Once they’d been shown what to do, Jesus told *them* to go do it; to carry on in the other little burgs scattered across Galilee.

He sent them out by twos for the encouragement & support they could provide each other.

As they went, He authorized them to be official representatives of the Kingdom of God.

This meant when they came face to face with demonic power, they could

defeat it.

8 He commanded them to take nothing for the journey except a staff— no bag, no bread, no copper in *their* money belts— ⁹ but to wear sandals, and not to put on two tunics.

Hospitality is a custom and virtue of the Middle-Eastern world that exists to this day.

It was even *more pronounced* in Jesus' day.

When a visitor came to town, it was inevitable that several people would invite him to eat & stay at their house.

A failure to invite strangers over was a sign of disgrace and it was only during periods of total depravity in Israel that we see such hospitality denied to visitors.

Traveling rabbis were the object of special favor – & as Jesus sends out the disciples, He tells them to live by faith.

They aren't to take along any provisions but to simply go and do what He's been doing.

As they do, they can trust that God will take care of them.

This was an important lesson for them to learn, because in just about a year and half they will be doing this full-time when He leaves.

10 Also He said to them, “In whatever place you enter a house, stay there till you depart from that place. ¹¹ And whoever will not receive you nor hear you, when you depart from there, shake off the dust under your feet as a testimony against them. Assuredly, I say to you, it will be more tolerable for Sodom and Gomorrah in the day of judgment than for that city!”

When they're invited to a home, they must stay there till they leave that village.

Jesus knew what would happen – they would go to someone's house, but as they preached and healed, they'd become sought after and soon people would be asking them to come and stay at their house, offering them incentives to get them to come.

Jesus says “No” to this. The disciples must not use their calling for selfish ends!

The gifts they've been given of the Word & Power of God must never be turned into tools to gain earthly reward.

God will bless them as they faithfully obey Jesus, but they must not angle to increase the blessing.

If their message & ministry aren't received, then they're to depart & give testimony to the fact that they've been rejected by warning the people of the consequences of such rejection.

If Sodom and Gomorrah stand as examples of God's judgment, then rejecting Christ will result in a judgment that makes Sodom and Gomorrah look easy.

12 So they went out and preached that *people* should repent. ¹³ And they cast out many demons, and anointed with oil many who were sick, and healed *them*.

The disciples were duplicating the mission of Jesus! This had to have blown their minds.

G. Word Of Jesus Reaches Herod 6:14-29

14 Now King Herod heard of Him, for His name had become well known.

This marks a dangerous moment – when news of Jesus finally reaches Herod’s ears.

Remember, the authorities were leery of anyone who rose up among the Jews and began to gather a loyal following.

This had always meant a severe Roman crack-down.

And he said, “John the Baptist is risen from the dead, and therefore these powers are at work in him.”¹⁵ Others said, “It is Elijah.” And others said, “It is the Prophet, or like one of the prophets.”¹⁶ But when Herod heard, he said, “This is John, whom I beheaded; he has been raised from the dead!”

While there were many opinions on exactly where Jesus fit into the scheme of the Jewish prophets, Herod believed Jesus was a reincarnation of John the Baptist.

The reason why is because Jesus’ message was much like John’s – “Repent, for the Kingdom of God is at hand.”

Herod’s conscience was tormenting him too because He’d recently executed John even though he knew it was terribly wrong. Mark tells us about it . . .

17 For Herod himself had sent and laid hold of John, and bound him in prison for the sake of Herodias, his brother Philip’s wife; for he had married her.¹⁸ Because John had said to Herod, “It is not lawful for you to have your brother’s wife.”¹⁹ Therefore Herodias held it against him and wanted to kill him, but she could not;²⁰ for Herod feared John, knowing that he was a just and holy man, and he protected him. And when he heard him, he did many things, and heard him gladly.

Herod knew John was a man of God and sent from God on a divine mission.

And even though John had publicly denounced Herod for the sin of incest with his sister-in-law, still he respected him.

When John spoke out against him, he had to do something lest he appear weak before his subjects, so he arrested John and had him thrown into the dungeon of one of his many fortresses.

Herodias, Herod’s former sister-in-law turned wife, hated John for his public condemnation of her union with Herod. She determined to do him in.

But she couldn’t get around Herod who loved listening to John, and had even made many decisions based on John’s counsel.

21 Then an opportune day came when Herod on his birthday gave a feast for his nobles, the high officers, and the chief *men* of Galilee.²² And when Herodias’ daughter herself came in and danced, and pleased Herod and those who sat with him, the king said to the girl, “Ask me whatever you want, and I will give *it* to you.”²³ He also

swore to her, “Whatever you ask me, I will give you, up to half my kingdom.”

Herodias’ daughter was named Salome, and tradition says she was quite a looker.

She was Herod’s niece – the daughter of his brother Philipp.

She danced a little boogie and got Herod pretty worked up so he blurted out a foolish promise – to give her whatever she asked.

This promise, made in front of all these officials and important people meant that Herod couldn’t get out of it – he was bound to his promise.

24 So she went out and said to her mother, “What shall I ask?” And she said, “The head of John the Baptist!” 25 Immediately she came in with haste to the king and asked, saying, “I want you to give me at once the head of John the Baptist on a platter.” 26 And the king was exceedingly sorry; yet, because of the oaths and because of those who sat with him, he did not want to refuse her. 27 Immediately the king sent an executioner and commanded his head to be brought. And he went and beheaded him in prison, 28 brought his head on a platter, and gave it to the girl; and the girl gave it to her mother. 29 When his disciples heard of it, they came and took away his corpse and laid it in a tomb.

This is a sad story – but it gives you an idea of how sick & sadistic Herodias & Salome were.

It also makes us sober up to the state of affairs in Israel at this time and just how precarious life was.

If John could be executed because some girl excited an older man, how dangerous is to for Jesus who’s fame has covered the land and who’s name is on the lips of tens of thousands?

H. Jesus Feeds Thousands 6:30-44

30 Then the apostles gathered to Jesus and told Him all things, both what they had done and what they had taught. 31 And He said to them, “Come aside by yourselves to a deserted place and rest a while.” For there were many coming and going, and they did not even have time to eat. 32 So they departed to a deserted place in the boat by themselves.

After being sent out, the disciples returned & reported to Jesus.

Jesus knew that they needed some time alone with Him to refresh and renew, so He took them away, intending to spend some quiet time just with them.

33 But the multitudes saw them departing, and many knew Him and ran there on foot from all the cities. They arrived before them and came together to Him.

By this time there were some in the crowd that knew Jesus’ routine and made a guess at where He was taking the disciples.

They rushed there ahead of time, running round the edge of the lake.

When the boat with Jesus and the disciple pulled up, there was a multitude

there already.

34 And Jesus, when He came out, saw a great multitude and was moved with compassion for them, because they were like sheep not having a shepherd. So He began to teach them many things.

Even though Jesus' plan was to spend some quiet time with His boys, the scene before Him touches His heart and He moved to meet the present need.

The disciples still needed that private, quiet time with the Lord, and they would get it, but not right now.

I so appreciate this story because there are times in my life when I prayerfully make my plans and believe the Lord has given me direction.

As I move in that direction, something comes up that seems to thwart it.

It's a pressing need that I suddenly sense the Spirit saying is *not a distraction*, but a real need I must attend to.

The first direction is not cast aside, only delayed.

In fact, looking back, I can see that what appeared to be an interruption was actually a part of the journey in the original direction the Lord had given me.

Jesus will soon be alone with the Disciples & all that happens from this point till then is part of the experiences they had to have so that that time alone with the Lord could be as full and rich as it could be.

Jesus will ask them Who they think He is and Peter will say, "You are the Messiah, the Son of the Living God."

It was things like what we are about to read that helped the disciples realize who Jesus really was.

35 When the day was now far spent, His disciples came to Him and said, "This is a deserted place, and already the hour is late. 36 Send them away, that they may go into the surrounding country and villages and buy themselves bread; for they have nothing to eat." 37 But He answered and said to them, "You give them something to eat." And they said to Him, "Shall we go and buy two hundred denarii worth of bread and give them something to eat?"

The miracles the disciples had been witnessing up to this point were mostly in the healing category.

They'd seen sickness and disease healed and people with malady of the demonic delivered.

They'd witnessed the storm calmed too, but that had delivered them from imminent danger.

How to provide food for a crowd so vast as this just did not occur to them.

When Jesus told them to feed the multitude, they said, "Even if we had 200 denarii," about half a year's wages, "that still wouldn't be enough to buy bread for all these."

In v. 44 we learn that there were about 5,000 men in this crowd.

Adding in women & children, this multitude could have numbered as much as 10-12,000!

Also, as v. 35 says, it was a deserted place – even if they'd had that much

money, there was no town nearby, and at this time of night, no bakeries making bread.

38 But He said to them, “How many loaves do you have? Go and see.” And when they found out they said, “Five, and two fish.” 39 Then He commanded them to make them all sit down in groups on the green grass. 40 So they sat down in ranks, in hundreds and in fifties. 41 And when He had taken the five loaves and the two fish, He looked up to heaven, blessed and broke the loaves, and gave *them* to His disciples to set before them; and the two fish He divided among *them* all. 42 So they all ate and were filled. 43 And they took up twelve baskets full of fragments and of the fish. 44 Now those who had eaten the loaves were about five thousand men.

This is a wonderful story of the power of Christ & many excellent Bible studies and sermons have been preached on it.

Tonight what I want to make sure we see is 2 things –

- 1) The 12 baskets give us a clue as to why Jesus performed this miracle.
12 was a number the Jews had a special affinity for because they were a nation of 12 tribes.
Jesus was letting the crowd know that He was the very same God who'd fed their fathers in the wilderness.
If they would receive Him, then as the Messiah, He would provide for them.
His reign would bring prosperity and abundance, they would be filled with all good things.
- 2) While Jesus performed the miracle of multiplying the bread and fish – the disciples were the ones who handed it out to the people.
The same is true today. God wants to work in people's lives & provide for their needs in miraculous ways, but His hands & feet are those which belong to His disciples.
The power is God's – the hand that bestows it is ours.

I. Jesus Walks On Water 6:45-52

45 Immediately He made His disciples get into the boat and go before Him to the other side, to Bethsaida, while He sent the multitude away.

46 And when He had sent them away, He departed to the mountain to pray.

Even more than spending time alone with the disciples, Jesus needed to spend time alone with His Father.

The shores of the Lake of Galilee are covered with hills, and the hills on that eastern side are especially steep and high.

Jesus climbed one & sat down to pray, able to see the boat that carried the disciples.

47 Now when evening came, the boat was in the middle of the sea; and He was alone on the land. 48 Then He saw them straining at

rowing, for the wind was against them. Now about the fourth watch of the night [between 3 & 6 a.m.] He came to them, walking on the sea, and would have passed them by. ⁴⁹ And when they saw Him walking on the sea, they supposed it was a ghost, and cried out; ⁵⁰ for they all saw Him and were troubled. But immediately He talked with them and said to them, **“Be of good cheer! It is I; do not be afraid.”**

While the Jewish teachers of that day said there was no such thing as ghosts, the common people still held to a belief in them.

Sailors especially were fearful of apparitions on the water because they believed if they were to drown at sea, the spirit of the deep would appear & glide to them across the water just before dragging them into the depths.

That’s why in v. 50 Mark says they were *“troubled.”* = ‘Terrified!’

Jesus’ word of greeting removed their terror of dying, and replaced it with an awe that moved them to marvel at Jesus.

⁵¹ Then He went up into the boat to them, and the wind ceased. And they were greatly amazed in themselves beyond measure, and marveled. ⁵² For they had not understood about the loaves, because their heart was hardened.

Mark makes it clear that at this point, while the disciples are blown away by Jesus’ power & ability to do things like walking on water, calming storms, and healing multitudes, they don’t really have Him figured out yet.

The lesson of the feeding of the multitude they’d just witnessed has not come home to them yet.

They see in Jesus’ demonstrations of power something to create fear rather than comfort.

The disciples were used to how power is used among men – to control and manipulate; it’s a tool for self-advancement.

The feeding of the thousands, which they had assisted in, ought to have taught them that Jesus’ power was used to help others.

Jesus *always* used power to serve others, to bless and benefit them.

Even walking to them on the water was to help them realize Who He was.

That knowledge would help them rein in & conquer all other fears.

But at this point, they were missing that lesson.

J. Many Are Healed 6:53-56

⁵³ When they had crossed over, they came to the land of Gennesaret and anchored there. ⁵⁴ And when they came out of the boat, immediately the people recognized Him, ⁵⁵ ran through that whole surrounding region, and began to carry about on beds those who were sick to wherever they heard He was. ⁵⁶ Wherever He entered, into villages, cities, or the country, they laid the sick in the marketplaces, and begged Him that they might just touch the hem of His garment. And as many as touched Him were made well.

The popular expectation that the Messiah’s tassels would bring healing were being fulfilled.

The moment when the authorities will issue official orders of opposition to Jesus are just around the corner, and Jesus now begins to move in more overt ways to reveal that He is indeed Israel's Messiah.

That admission, coupled with the official opposition will polarize people into one of two camps – those who believe in and follow Jesus and those who reject Him.