

- 1) As we finished last time, we found the disciples and Jesus trying to get away from the crowds and rest.
- 2) Instead the crowds found them and Jesus had compassion on them and spent the rest of the day “teaching them many things” because they were like sheep without a shepherd.

Mark 6:35-44 (NIV)

- 1) As time went on, the end of the day drew near, the disciples I think were showing some compassion of their own.
- 2) They wanted to allow the crowd time before sunset to get into the nearby villages and get food since they had none.
- 3) At their suggestion, instead of answering, Jesus simply says, what would be to the disciples very confusing thing – “You give them something to eat”.
 - a) This is an imperative – basically a command.
- 4) First, there is no doubt Jesus knew the financial status of the disciples – He had just sent them out some weeks before with “no money” in their purses.
 - a) Perhaps they did have a treasury at this point – another unknown.
- 5) He also knew that they did not have a stash of food on the boat they just came in on so???
- 6) They knew well that Jesus knew their situation but, this did not change the fact that His statement was mystifying!
- 7) Their only comment was an overview of the facts of the situation: “That would take eight months of a man’s wages! Are we to go and spend that much on bread and give it to them to eat?”
- 8) Underlying that question were even more questions they readily knew answers to.
 - a) If they had that much money in their possession, were they supposed to walk from the remote place to several villages in order to track down enough bread?
 - b) Spend that much on bread.
 - c) Then somehow carry it all back to this remote place?
 - d) If one considers five thousand slices of bread – ~20 per loaf would mean 250 loaves.
 - e) Each disciple would have to carry over 20 loaves.
 - f) Then, they would have to serve it?
- 9) No matter how they looked at it, the disciples saw Jesus' statement to be impossible.
- 10) So what did he mean, and why would he tell them to do something so obviously impossible?
- 11) First, let’s talk for a second about mindset – some see the question asked by the disciples as a lack of faith – I personally think that is a little harsh in this case.
- 12) We know that their faith was not totally there yet – Jesus himself tells us that.

Gospel of Mark – NOTES

- 13) However, the disciples had
- a) just finished a missionary journey during which they had taught, and healed people
 - b) they knew first hand they – thru the power of the Holy Spirit given them by the Lord – were able to do these things.
 - c) However, I doubt seriously during their mission trip they had created any food for anyone or themselves.
 - d) On top of that, they had seen his power over the natural, the universe, and the supernatural (demons).
- 14) But, I don't think the disciples minds were even remotely geared toward them being able to perform such a miraculous feat! – **Control and healing is one thing – creation is quite another!**
- a) Scientist joke...
- 15) Now, if Jesus had said at the outset, “have everyone sit down and we will feed them” that would have possibly set their minds on a different path.
- 16) Perhaps they would have been more inclined to view that as possible for Him.
- 17) The details of this miracle are phenomenal – of that, there is no doubt.
- a) The sheer number – between 5 and 10 thousand people.
 - b) The assumed servers to handle them – 12 disciples and perhaps some other followers.
 - c) The number of groups and logistics of getting the food to them.
 - i) Somewhere between 50 and 100 groups.
 - d) We always think of the loaves and the fish being created but where did the baskets come from?
- 18) All show an amazing – miraculous – event by any standards.
- 19) However, despite the miraculous portions of this event there is a big picture lesson for the disciples and for us.

Do you think God would ask (command) you to do something that you and he together couldn't handle?

- The answer to this question is one of the keys to the mindset of the disciples.
 - i) If they had thought that thought, perhaps their question might have been somewhat different.
 - ii) Perhaps more on the line of ... “Can you help us, if you do we know we can”
- Don't let our lack of resources blind us to seeing God's power.
- Often our meager resources are the starting point for what God wants to do.
- “Never mind that the horse is dead – load the wagon!” HDO

Gospel of Mark – NOTES

Mark 6:45-46 (NIV)

- 1) Geographically, this is a confusing section of scripture.
- 2) Luke tells us that they withdrew to a city called Bethsaida.
- 3) There are currently arguments and excavations going on indicating there were actually two Bethsaidas – one on the western shore below Capernaum (Bethsaida of Galilee) and one north east of Capernaum (Bethsaida Julius).
- 4) John MacArthur offers the following explanation:

Some scholars have wondered what Mark meant, since John 6:17 explains that their intended destination was Capernaum. Two proposed and reasonable solutions merit consideration. First, some have suggested that there were two different villages named Bethsaida. Because the name means “house of fish,” it is possible that more than one fishing village near the lake claimed that title. Those who hold this view differentiate between “Bethsaida Julius,” located on the northeastern side of the Sea of Galilee, and “Bethsaida of Galilee,” which they assert was located on the western side of the lake near Capernaum (cf. John 12:21). According to this view, the meal for the crowd took place near Bethsaida Julius. Upon leaving that area, the disciples sailed toward Bethsaida of Galilee and neighboring Capernaum. A second, perhaps less convincing, solution asserts that there was only one village named Bethsaida (i.e., Bethsaida Julius), based mainly on a lack of archaeological evidence for a second village by that same name. According to this view, the feeding of the five thousand took place in a remote location southeast of Bethsaida (cf. Mark 6:35). When Jesus commanded the disciples to go ahead of Him to the other side to Bethsaida, He was actually instructing them to cross the lake by traveling “toward Bethsaida,” meaning west. (The Greek pre position *pros* [translated as to] can mean “to,” “toward,” or “with regard to.”) As they sailed to the western shore of the Sea of Galilee, they would have initially gone toward Bethsaida, eventually passing it on their way. (It may be that Jesus intended them to follow the shoreline as they traversed the lake, thereby sailing near the village. Bethsaida is part of the larger Plain of Bethsaida that stretches for about three miles along the northern edge of the Sea of Galilee.)

MacArthur, John. Mark 1-16 MacArthur New Testament Commentary Two Volume Set (MacArthur New Testament Commentary Series) . Moody Publishers. Kindle Edition.

- 5) That lets you know some of the debate that goes on regarding this.
- 6) However, what we must know is the principle points that are being put forth here.
 - a) The disciples needed rest.
 - b) At this point, I believe this is off the table so to speak.
 - c) Jesus was in control of the entire situation all the way thru.

Gospel of Mark – NOTES

- d) They accomplished what they set out to do.
- e) And, finally as we will see shortly, they wind up at the place that was truly Jesus' desired destination – the plain of Gennesaret!
 - i) Not to be confused with the “region of the Gerasenes” and the Decapolis.
 - ii) Jesus gets back there in chapter 8.

Mark 6:47-52 (NIV)

- 1) To set this scene, it has been several hours since the disciples set out on the lake toward Bethsaida.
- 2) Fourth watch is between 4 and 6 in the morning.
- 3) John tells us they were 3 or 4 miles out in the lake.
- 4) With these facts, we can see not just one but several miraculous things happening as this incident unfolds.
 - a) First, no normal human can discern someone struggling 3 or 4 miles away in the middle of the night.
 - b) At sea, you can barely start to discern a ship emerging from the horizon at 12 miles
 - c) Here, we have a high wind and possibly rough waters as well.
 - d) At an average stroll, a person will take about 30 minutes to walk a little over a mile.
 - e) This would mean for Jesus to approach them after seeing them in trouble would have been about 1.5 to 2 hours.
 - f) In my mind, this indicates a second miraculous event – Jesus was there very quickly so as to help them.
 - g) Obviously, the third miracle is His walking on the water itself.
 - i) As the old joke goes, this is impossible unless you know where the rocks are.
 - h) Fourth, the high winds do not seem to affect Jesus as he walks
 - i) If it was strong enough to make the men struggle to row forward then, for an average human, one would think it would have affected someone walking in that same direction.
 - i) Fifth, there is the calming of the winds when he steps into the boat.
- 5) That's a lot of things for a mind to absorb!
- 6) Now, let's go a little deeper – what happens next.
- 7) Jesus knows their fear and says to them; "Take courage! It is I. Don't be afraid."
- 8) At this point, Matthew tells us of Peter's reaction:

Matt. 14:28–32 (NIV)

- 9) Jesus then climbs into the boat with them so they see him and know who He is for sure.

Gospel of Mark – NOTES

- 10) The winds die down and all is well – just as they should have expected at this point knowing Jesus as they should have.
- 11) They had just seen Him feed 5000 plus people with basically nothing.
- 12) They had already seen Him still a storm on this very lake, maybe in this very boat, and for sure, only a short time before.
- 13) Instead of hearts filled with faith, knowledge, and an even more solid belief in the fact that they are in the presence of the Son of God ----- they are amazed.
- 14) And not just an amazed at how great this is but amazed in disbelief.
- 15) There is an underlying condition of the heart that is exposed here.
- 16) They see and have seen the miracles.
- 17) They have even by the Holy Spirit given by him been able to perform healings on their own.
- 18) They are smart enough to figure it out – but for whatever reason, they are unable to connect the dots.
- 19) Belief in something this life changing takes effort.
- 20) Thus, Mark’s comment in verse 52; “for they had not understood about the loaves; their hearts were hardened.”
- 21) You might ask at this point how did Mark know this?
- 22) I think for that, we have to again consider who most consider to be Mark’s source for his knowledge (other than the Holy Spirit of course) – that was Peter.
- 23) Peter, the one whose good confession we all know, looking back on this event would know beyond a doubt what was truly in the hearts and minds of all of them at this point.
- 24) He knew that they did not see and was probably somewhat ashamed and bewildered at the same time that their hearts were that hard and they were that unseeing at that point.
- 25) The LABC comments here:

Even after watching Jesus miraculously feed five thousand people, they still could not take the final step of faith and believe that he was God's Son. If they had understood about the loaves (in other words, if they had learned what the miracle was meant to teach them), they would not have been amazed that Jesus could walk on water.

Mark explained that their hearts were hardened. Peter, Mark's source for the story, probably felt a little sheepish as he recounted his and the disciples' continued lack of belief. This was not merely misunderstanding; instead, it meant a hard-hearted refusal to believe (the word is used elsewhere only when describing unbelievers, see 3:5; 10:5).

(from The Life Application Commentary Series Copyright © 1997, 1998, 1999 and 2000 by the Livingstone Corporation. Produced with permission of Tyndale House Publishers, Inc. All rights reserved.)

Gospel of Mark – NOTES

26) Notwithstanding Matthew's final comment – "Then those who were in the boat worshiped him, saying, "Truly you are the Son of God."

Are our hearts ever hardened against Jesus in this way as the disciples were at first?

- Yes – when we are amazed at Jesus working in others lives and refuse to (or cannot) accept the fact that He will work the same way in ours.

As we grow in faith, should our belief in His willingness and ability to help us increase? And shouldn't the same be said for the Holy Spirit?

- Perhaps, if this growth in faith does not take place, it could be viewed as not unbelief but willful hard-hearted rejection of Christ's help.

How do we overcome this hard heartedness when we find it in our lives?

- The disciples were privileged to witness more of Jesus life after this incident.
- However, at the time of the crucifixion they still were struggling with hard-hearts.
- Effort – prayer – study and more effort!

Mark 6:53-56 (NIV)

- 1) In John's gospel (6:17) he says they were headed for Capernaum.
- 2) Well, the plain of Gennesaret is just to the southwest of Capernaum. The city was about 2 miles from Capernaum.
- 3) Mark, as we just read gives the bigger picture of their travels not just to Capernaum but to other villages and towns throughout the countryside.
- 4) In this next segment, we do not know Jesus' exact location – most likely he is still in the vicinity of Capernaum.
- 5) What is amazing is that the Pharisees traveled about 80 mi. to see what Jesus was up to.
 - a) This trip would take about 3 days walking 8 hours per day.
- 6) His reputation and His increase in popularity had obviously reached Jerusalem and perhaps the religious authorities were already feeling threatened.

Mark 7:1-13 (NIV)

- 7) We see here the Pharisees seizing an opportunity to drag Jesus into another debate in which they wished to discredit Him.
- 8) The Mosaic law prescribed ceremonial washings for priests.
- 9) Nowhere did it require others to wash their hands in any particular way before eating.

Gospel of Mark – NOTES

Ex 30:17-21 (NIV)

- 10) The “traditions of the elders” referred to here is basically what is called the “Oral Talmud”.
- 11) These are extrabiblical rules which were passed down and expanded upon from the time of the Babylonian captivity (605–535 B.C.).
- 12) These oral traditions, which pervaded the Judaism of Jesus’ day, were purportedly written down for the first time just after the destruction of the temple in 70 AD and continued to be added to producing the Mishnah and the Gemara.
- 13) The Mishnah, along with additional rabbinic commentary called the Gemara, make up the Talmud of today.
- 14) This collection of Jewish tradition in printed form encompasses thousands of pages of extrabiblical material.
- 15) We must be careful when we deal with these facts and not overstate the magnitude of the rules or traditions themselves.
- 16) Thousands of pages seems like a lot, but, we must remember that this is not just the rules themselves but also rabbinical debate and commentary on these rules.
- 17) The idea here is that these “traditions” were viewed by the religious leaders of that day as not just equal in authority to the original Mosaic law but, to be honored before the Mosaic law.
- 18) The irony is that the purpose of the “traditions” was to protect the Mosaic law.
- 19) That is where the real bind comes in – that is the point Jesus is trying to make to them.
- 20) Jesus also points out that the problems with these “traditions” goes even beyond the fact that they are being bound on the people as law.
- 21) It goes to the fact that they actually in many cases violate or set aside the original Mosaic law to the advantage of anyone who wanted to use them in that way.
- 22) Here, He gives the Corban example we just read.
- 23) Corban in the Hebrew means in broad terms a gift dedicated to God.
- 24) In essence, one could declare all their possessions Corban and, according to most commentators, they could then still use the money as they chose.
- 25) The irony was that they could use the money for their own purposes but they were forbidden because of the vow to use the money for others.
- 26) From what Jesus is saying here, the Pharisees are the crux of the problem.
- 27) They actually legislated the use of the Corban gift and forbid anyone from giving the money or property to anyone else once it was dedicated to the temple.
- 28) One commentary says that things declared Corban were “withdrawn from profane or ordinary use by anyone else.”
- 29) Now, according to at least one commentary, the gift could be taken back by simply saying Corban over it again.

Gospel of Mark – NOTES

30) All this is obviously confusing, however, if we take the whole thing at face value, we can see where this tradition could provide a loophole for anyone to refuse help for their parents.

31) They Corban everything

- a) They can still use it
- b) They don't want to take the gift back by saying corban over it again.
- c) And, unless they do, the pharisees would not allow them to use it for "profane use" such as helping their parents.

Do we have any "traditions" that fall into this category? To clarify - do we have any traditions that we use as an excuse to prevent us from doing something we probably should be doing?

- We don't drink so we use that as an excuse not to associate with someone who does.