

**Mark: A Servant on a Mission***Missing the Majesty*

**Introduction:** Today we bring chapter six of Mark to a close with a section of Scripture containing at least two of the more well-known stories in the Gospels—the feeding of 5,000 and Jesus walking on the water.

In the first half of Mark 6 the disciples are taught the VALUES OF THE MASTER

- When we evaluate the worth of people based on human criteria, we will overlook the treasure and be blind to the light. (They saw Jesus as only a carpenter)
- When we assume that God's calling is to position and entitlement we will abandon the calling at the first experience of rejection. (He told His disciples they would meet with rejection—shake dust off your feet)
- When we set our sights and expend our energy on the temporary affliction we run the risk of forfeiting our eternal reward. (John the Baptist experienced persecution but there was an eternal reward.)

So—Jesus teaches the disciples the values He embraces, the values of the Kingdom

- He sends them out to minister
- They went out and preached the Kingdom and that people should repent
- Their ministry was marked by the miraculous, demons exorcised and people healed—so much that Herod wondered, “is this John raised from the dead?”

So as our text begins today the disciples have returned from their first ministry tour and they return to tell what has happened

*“Then the apostles gathered to Jesus and told Him all things, both what they had done and what they had taught.” Mark 6:30 NKJV*

**NOTE:** There is no listing of what they did or who did what or methods employed—aren't you glad? We would have the school of James and John and Phillip and Nathaniel. They just reported to Jesus what had happened!

## I. Four mini-narratives

### A. Invitation to Rest

*“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. So they departed to a deserted place in the boat by themselves. 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. 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.” Mark 6:31-34 NKJV*

1. The notion of God giving His people rest in a theme of the OT
  - a. To the wilderness generation Moses said, “Your wives, children, and livestock will stay in your cities until the Lord has given rest to your brethren” (Deuteronomy 3:20, they had to help each other conquer before they could rest).
  - b. To the same people He reminded them they had not come to “the rest and the inheritance that the Lord God is giving you” (Deuteronomy 12:9).
  - c. Joshua reminded the people “The Lord your God is giving you rest...” (Joshua 1:13).
  - d. God gave “then rest all around” (Joshua 21:44)
  - e. The rebellious ones in the wilderness were not allowed to “enter My rest” (Psalm 95:11)
  - f. New Testament, picking up on that theme, says there is a rest still available for the people of God

*“For if Joshua had given them rest, then He would not afterward have spoken of another day. There remains therefore a rest for the people of God. For he who has entered His rest has himself also ceased from his works as God did from His. Let us therefore be diligent to enter that rest, lest anyone fall according to the same example of disobedience.” Hebrews 4:8-11 NKJV*

2. Jesus Himself made it clear that HE was their means of rest

*“Come to Me, all you who labor and are heavy laden, and I will give you rest.” Matthew 11:28 NKJV*

3. So here in Mark, Jesus is inviting the disciples to enter the rest that had been promised since Moses, and it was a rest found only in Him!
4. But the crowds who had been drawn to Him and the ministry of the disciples saw them leave and ran by foot to meet them where they were going—they arrived first
5. Jesus saw the crowds and knew their need and began to teach them

*“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.” Mark 6:34 NKJV*

- a. A key text in this section of Scripture
- b. In Numbers 27:17 (in the wilderness) Moses prays that God will provide a leader after his death

*“Then Moses spoke to the LORD, saying: “Let the LORD, the God of the spirits of all flesh, set a man over the congregation, who may go out before them and go in before them, who may lead them out and bring them in, that the congregation of the LORD may not be like sheep which have no shepherd.” Numbers 27:15-17*

- c. And God responded

*And the LORD said to Moses: “Take Joshua the son of Nun with you, a man in whom is the Spirit, and lay your hand on him;” Numbers 27:18 NKJV*

- d. Joshua’s name in Septuagint is Jesus (Yahweh Saves)
- e. The time of rest in the wilderness that the people of God had looked for for centuries had finally come to its fulfillment in Jesus

## B. Feeding of the 5,000

1. This event was crucial for the understanding of the dignity of Christ
2. In contrast to Herod’s drunken debauchery, this banquet will truly satisfy the needs of the people
3. The role of the shepherd is to feed, “prepares a table before me in the presence of mine enemies”
4. Disciples tell Jesus it is late in the day and they are in a desert place and the people are hungry
5. 200 Denari was equivalent to an entire year’s wages of a day laborer and no one had that kind of money at their disposal
6. Five barley loaves and 2 fish was not enough (like Moses “Where will I find meat to give to all these people?” (Numbers 11)
7. Crowd arranged in groups on the green grass in ranks 50X100
8. Jesus blessed, broke, and gave and they all ate and were filled-stringent Jewish law but he looked up (only deviation)
9. 12 basketfuls leftover and 5,000 men ate
10. God who gave manna, fed Elijah and Elisha now feeds the multitude
11. Jesus is the Shepherd who feeds His wandering flock in the wilderness
12. But still to the crowds and the disciples He is a great teacher but not yet seen as the Son of God

## C. Walking on the Water

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*“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. And when He had sent them away, He departed to the mountain to pray. Now when evening came, the boat was in the middle of the sea; and He was alone on the land. Then He saw them straining at rowing, for the wind was against them. Now about the fourth watch of the night He came to them, walking on the sea, and would have passed them by. And when they saw Him walking on the sea, they supposed it was a ghost, and cried out; 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.” Then He went up into the boat to them, and the wind ceased. And they were greatly amazed in themselves beyond measure, and marveled. For they had not understood about the loaves, because their heart was hardened.” Mark 6:45-52 NKJV*

1. Jesus sends them to the other side abruptly (seems to signal some unnamed crisis)—sent them ahead and he dealt with the crowd (John 6:15 said they were going to take him by force and make him king—not what Jesus wanted)
2. They got on a boat and he went to mountain to pray and he saw them straining and rowing (supernaturally) and so he came to them in fourth watch of night (about 3:00 a.m.)
3. In verse 48 “he would have passed them by” (what does it mean?)
  - a. Greek verb is “parerchomai” (to pass by)
  - b. This shows up twice in the Septuagint

—Exodus 33-34

*“Then He said, “I will make all My goodness pass before you, and I will proclaim the name of the LORD before you. I will be gracious to whom I will be gracious, and I will have compassion on whom I will have compassion.” But He said, “You cannot see My face; for no man shall see Me, and live.” And the LORD said, “Here is a place by Me, and you shall stand on the rock. So it shall be, while My glory passes by, that I will put you in the cleft of the rock, and will cover you with My hand while I pass by. Then I will take away My hand, and you shall see My back; but My face shall not be seen.”*

*“And the LORD said to Moses, “Cut two tablets of stone like the first ones, and I will write on these tablets the words that were on the first tablets which you broke. So be ready in the morning, and come up in the morning to Mount Sinai, and present yourself to Me there on the top of the mountain. And no man shall come up with you, and let no man be seen throughout all the mountain; let neither flocks nor herds feed before that mountain.” So he cut two tablets of stone like the first ones. Then Moses rose early in the morning and went up Mount Sinai, as the LORD had commanded him; and he took in his hand the two tablets of stone. Now the LORD descended in the cloud and stood with him there, and proclaimed the name of the LORD. And the LORD passed before him and proclaimed, “The LORD, the LORD God, merciful and gracious, longsuffering, and abounding in goodness and truth, keeping mercy for thousands, forgiving iniquity and transgression and sin, by no means clearing the guilty, visiting the iniquity of the fathers upon the children and the children’s children to the third and the fourth generation.” Exodus 33:19-34:7 NKJV*

—1 Kings 19:11-12

*“Then He said, “Go out, and stand on the mountain before the LORD.” And behold, the LORD passed by, and a great and strong wind tore into the mountains and broke the rocks in pieces before the LORD, but the LORD was not in the wind; and after the wind an earthquake, but the LORD was not in the earthquake; and after the earthquake a fire, but the LORD was not in the fire; and after the fire a still small voice.” I Kings 19:11-12 NKJV*

- c. Jesus wanted them to see His transcendent majesty (His divine glory)
- d. God cannot be fully seen but Jesus could—He wanted them to see Him as the Son of God
- e. Earlier when He had calmed the storm they had asked “Who can this be that even the winds and the waves obey Him?” (Mark 4:41).
- f. They thought it was a ghost
- g. He said, “Fear not, it is I” they knew Is. 43:2—“when thou passest through the waters I will be with thee and through the rivers, they shall not overflow thee.”
- h. But they were afraid? Why?

*For they had not understood about the loaves, because their heart was hardened.”—They missed in that miracle that He was the Good Shepherd, the one who cares for and provides, the very Son of God. So, they didn’t understand this miracle either.*

*Paul Minear—The disciples “were blind to the presence of God and His care for men...to the full glory of the revelation of God in the face of Christ.”*

#### D. Healings in Gennesaret

*“When they had crossed over, they came to the land of Gennesaret and anchored there. And when they came out of the boat, immediately the people recognized Him, ran through that whole surrounding region, and began to carry about on beds those who were sick to wherever they heard He was. 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.” Mark 6:53-56 NKJV*

1. This summarizes the ministry and activity of Jesus just before He departs for the coastal cities of Tyre and Sidon
2. The disciples had set out for Bethsaida (see v. 45) but then wind had pushed them severely southward and they ended up in Gennesaret between Capernaum and Tiberius (highly populated area on west coast of Sea of Galilee)
3. The people were not expecting Jesus but they recognized Him and they brought to Him the sick and afflicted.
4. They knew if they only touched Him by faith they would be healed

5. No teaching mentioned here, they did not yet understand and Jesus patiently wants for that understanding to develop

## II. Practical Lessons in the Narratives

### Seven of Them

#### A. There is a spiritual rest that Jesus invites us to enjoy

1. In Mark 6:31 He invites the disciples to come aside and “rest a while” (Note: Matthew 11:28).
2. This rest does not mean inactivity
3. It means trusting Him and relationship with Him as that which makes us right with God NOT what we do for Him!

#### B. There is no limit to His provision (12 baskets full were left when the miracle was over).

#### C. It is possible to be very engaged in ministry and not know who Jesus is (more later).

#### D. Jesus knows when we are toiling, struggling and in distress. Note: When they were (or thought they were) alone, they were in distress but His presence calmed them.

#### E. The care of God for us is full—he wants us to rest, to be sustained, and to be protected from our enemy.

#### F. Failure to fully understand God does not limit the grace He reveals to us.

#### G. God’s revelation to us in Christ is uncomfortable to some because He comes to us a sometimes elusive presence that we cannot control. The disciples were afraid.

## III. Pastoral Challenge in the Narratives

Go back to the text:

*“Then He saw them straining at rowing, for the wind was against them. Now about the fourth watch of the night He came to them, walking on the sea, and would have passed them by. And when they saw Him walking on the sea, they supposed it was a ghost, and cried out; 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.” Then He went up into the boat to them, and the wind ceased. And they were greatly amazed in themselves beyond measure, and marveled. For they had not understood about the loaves, because their heart was hardened.” Mark 6:48-52*

NKJV

#### A. They completely missed the revelation of the Son of God because their hearts were hardened.

1. He wanted to pass by (reveal his majesty)
2. But they missed it (their hearts were hardened—poraho) dull or calloused (root for porous)
3. In that state they missed his revelation

## B. Hard hearts must be guarded against today—it is what causes a spiritually hard heart

1. Focus on patterns, not people (easy in ministry)
  - a. We all start out idealistically
  - b. People we see have patterns and we begin to expect the shoe to drop
  - c. Certainly the way of ancient culture
  - d. Lack of trust...had to be the worst that would happen
2. Over-protect a wounded heart
  - a. Had hoped before
  - b. That their deliverer would come
  - c. Cynical attitude of the Jewish people under Roman domination
3. You stop looking for what is good in people and situations
  - a. After burned enough the hope wears away
  - b. Don't trust, don't believe, too many disappointments
4. Pride can harden one's heart (it did Pharaoh for sure)

## C. The tragedy of a hardened heart—We Miss the Majesty!

1. In the working and gathering of the Body of Christ (if you have done it to least of these you have done it to me)
2. In the sharing of communion (we don't believe in transubstantiation but something powerful we miss when our hearts are hardened)
3. In the ministry of the Word (He is the Word, the Bread of Life)
4. In the beauty of worship that invites His manifest presence

**Conclusion:** Are we so wrapped up in life and hardness of heart that we are Missing the Majesty?

*There was no question he loved her. He was absolutely bedazzled by her. Surprising, really, because she was plain, maybe even... well, (to someone else perhaps) disappointing. But then, he himself was a poor man who didn't have even two coins to rub together. He wasn't especially handsome, either. But he was good... a good and godly man, and he swept her off her feet, and won her heart. What makes that ordinary story extraordinary is the rest of the story.*

*The story—told by Soren Kierkegaard—actually begins, "Suppose there was a king who loved a humble maiden." He was a great king and he could have whatever he wanted. Every statesman feared his wrath, every foreign state trembled before his power; they would have all sent ambassadors to the wedding.*

*He realized that if he asked his courtiers they would say, "Your majesty is about to confer a favor upon the maiden for which she can never be sufficiently grateful her whole life long." That was the problem! Even if she wanted to come with*

*him, he would never know for certain if she would have loved him for himself. So he wrestled with his troubled thoughts alone.*

*Finally, he decided. If she could not come up to his high station and be sure to love him freely, he must descend to hers. And he must descend stripped of his royal power and wealth, for only then would he know if his beloved loved him freely, as equals. So he laid aside all his power and privileges, and came to her as her equal, to win her love.*

- That's what Jesus did—He became a man so that we could truly love Him
- He stripped Himself of His glorious attributes so we would not see Him just as a cosmic Santa Claus, ready to divvy out the gift list
- He came to BE with us, to show up in the storm as our friend
- To touch and comfort us as we worship
- To make Himself known as we take the bread of His body
- To manifest His love through His body

But—we too often MISS HIS MAJESTY!