

He sees your struggle, and He is on His way.

5.20.18

Message 28

Mark Series

Mark 6:45–56 (NIV)

⁴⁵ Immediately Jesus made his disciples get into the boat and go on ahead of him to Bethsaida, while he dismissed the crowd. ⁴⁶ After leaving them, he went up on a mountainside to pray.

⁴⁷ Later that night, the boat was in the middle of the lake, and he was alone on land. ⁴⁸ He saw the disciples straining at the oars, because the wind was against them. Shortly before dawn he went out to them, walking on the lake. He was about to pass by them, ⁴⁹ but when they saw him walking on the lake, they thought he was a ghost. They cried out, ⁵⁰ because they all saw him and were terrified.

Immediately he spoke to them and said, “Take courage! It is I. Don’t be afraid.” ⁵¹ Then he climbed into the boat with them, and the wind died down. They were completely amazed, ⁵² for they had not understood about the loaves; their hearts were hardened.

⁵³ When they had crossed over, they landed at Gennesaret and anchored there. ⁵⁴ As soon as they got out of the boat, people recognized Jesus. ⁵⁵ They ran throughout that whole region and carried the sick on mats to wherever they heard he was. ⁵⁶ And wherever he went—into villages, towns or countryside—they placed the sick in the marketplaces. They begged him to let them touch even the edge of his cloak, and all who touched it were healed.

1. Jesus begins this passage taking immediate action.

A. Notice how this passage begins?

1. Jesus makes the disciples get on the boat.
2. Jesus then dismisses the crowd,

3. Followed by Jesus going by himself to a place of prayer.

B. Mark doesn't give us enough information to tell us what was going on, but the Gospel of John does.

1. John 6:14–15 (NIV)

¹⁴ After the people saw the sign Jesus performed, they began to say, "Surely this is the Prophet who is to come into the world."

¹⁵ Jesus, knowing that they intended to come and make him king by force, withdrew again to a mountain by himself.

2. The feeding of the five thousand led to a crisis of identity.

a. Many of the people in the crowd had grown up anticipating the birth of a warrior Messiah who would come and rescue them from the evil rule of Rome.

b. This miracle was enough to convince the crowd that Jesus was that guy.

c. And He was.

3. But **Jesus hadn't come to set them free from the tyranny of Rome but the tyranny of sin.**

a. Jesus was looking far beyond their present situation.

b. Jesus had come to bring more than freedom from the Roman legions, empire, and the dreaded Roman cross.

c. Jesus had come to reverse the curse of sin and death.

d. Jesus had come to push back the forces of evil and every miracle that He did was evidence of the defeat of Satan.

C. Jesus hadn't come to Earth to inhabit an earthly throne.

1. Jesus' motivation in feeding the crowd was not a political game.

2. Jesus' motive was compassion and love, not manipulation.

3. But the crowd didn't care.

4. They rushed to make Jesus a king, but the wrong kind of king.
5. Simply put, the people had missed the reason why Jesus had come.
6. Before we criticize the crowd, we are guilty of the same thing.
 - a. We chase after Jesus to heal us.
 - b. We chase after Jesus to fix our relationships.
 - c. We want Jesus to bail us out of our trouble.
 - d. But we don't want Jesus telling us how to live our lives.
 - e. We want Jesus to run our government but we don't want him running our personal life.
 - f. We want to make Jesus a king but a king in our own image and for our own benefit, just like the crowd wanted.
7. But this isn't why Jesus had come, so he took action.

2. Jesus' response to this problem had two parts.

A. First, he sent the disciples and the crowds away.

1. Why did Jesus send Peter and the disciples away?
 - a. Because they wanted what the crowds wanted.
 - b. In Jesus' group were men who wanted Jesus to overthrow Rome.
 - c. Simon the Zealot (one of the twelve) was a committed member of an organization known for causing riots and assassinating Roman officials.
 - d. Jesus didn't need his disciples trying to influence Him to do things He knew was not God's will.
2. The same was true with the crowd.
 - a. They wanted something that was not God's will.

b. Just because you want something, it doesn't mean it is God's will for your life.

c. The crowd let their stomachs and their flesh desire something that was not God's will for them.

d. So Jesus, in His wisdom and mercy, sent them away.

B. Then Jesus got away to a solitary place to pray.

1. This is not the first time Jesus escaped the demands of the crowd to pray.

2. Whenever Jesus found himself pulled in a direction contrary to God's will, He went to prayer.

3. What a great example for us.

a. How would our temptations be different if we went to Jesus instead of to Facebook?

b. How would our struggles be different if we prayed more than we complained?

4. Jesus went to the Father in a time of prayer.

a. He shut out the voice and temptation of the crowd and of his disciples.

b. What Jesus needed was not human opinion but divine direction.

c. And that need led Him to a quiet place to pray.

3. While Jesus was praying, the disciples were struggling.

A. The disciples were caught in a headwind.

1. The wind was fighting them so hard they could not make any progress.

2. After several hours of rowing without any progress, they were clearly in trouble.

3. Stuck in the middle of the lake, they couldn't go any further.

B. Are there anybody here today who feel stuck?

1. No matter how hard you work, you can never get ahead.
2. You take 1 step forward and 2 steps back.
3. And the worst part is, you know you are following God's will.
4. *The disciples were stuck on the lake and they were there because it was Jesus' idea.*
5. Jesus had told them to go across the lake.

C. What the disciples couldn't realize was that Jesus knew they were struggling.

1. From Jesus' vantage point, He could see the silhouette of the boat and knew his disciples were struggling against the wind.
2. **We often forget the vantage point that God has in our life.**

a. Isaiah 55:8-9 (NIV)

⁸ "For my thoughts are not your thoughts,
neither are your ways my ways,"
declares the LORD.

⁹ "As the heavens are higher than the earth,
so are my ways higher than your ways
and my thoughts than your thoughts.

b. We can't see what Jesus sees.

c. Often we forget and think we are alone, fighting the winds of life.

d. We believe we are the only one out there, and that nobody cares.

e. When all along, Jesus has a view of our life that nobody else has.

D. Although Jesus can see that they were in trouble, He doesn't come to their immediate rescue.

1. Jesus finishes his time in prayer and then comes down to them.

a. Just because you are struggling, that does not mean God has forgotten you.

b. The presence of a struggle does not necessarily mean that you are not where you are supposed to be.

c. The presence of trouble does not mean you are out of the will of God.

2. Jesus often uses your struggle and frustration as an opportunity to walk on your water.

a. Jesus' arrival in our lives is often miraculous.

b. Jesus begins to walk across the water towards His disciples who are struggling in their boat.

c. Jesus defies the laws of physics that He created to demonstrate His power and compassion.

d. A few hours before Jesus changed the laws of matter by multiplying the 5 loaves and 2 fishes to feed thousands.

e. Now He makes an example of the water by walking on it.

4. Instead of delight, Jesus' presence on the water evoked fear.

A. The ancients were very superstitious.

1. They believed that ghosts could appear on the water as omens of death.

2. When they saw what looked like Jesus' ghost, they responded in human fear.

B. After the miracle they had just witnessed, fear was not an appropriate response for the Disciples at this point.

⁴⁹ but when they saw him walking on the lake, they thought he was a ghost. They cried out, ⁵⁰ because they all saw him and were terrified.

Immediately he spoke to them and said, “Take courage! It is I. Don’t be afraid.” ⁵¹ Then he climbed into the boat with them, and the wind died down. They were completely amazed, ⁵² for they had not understood about the loaves; their hearts were hardened.

1. “Don’t be afraid” is a phrase the Lord has said many times before.

a. Every time the Lord revealed himself to a new person or in a difficult situation in the Old and New Testaments, the Lord or the Angel of the Lord told the person to “Don’t be Afraid”.

b. But his time was different.

2. The disciples were afraid when they saw Jesus walking on the water and then they were amazed when the winds stopped at his presence.

3. The problem is that their fear was a symptom of a hardening of their hearts and small faith.

C. The reason they responded in fear and not faith is that they lacked spiritual receptivity.

1. The disciples had seen Jesus miraculous feeding of the 5,000.

a. They had tasted the food themselves.

b. They probably had the leftovers with them in the boat.

c. But they still didn’t understand who Jesus was and what he had come to do.

d. One moment they were tasting a miracle and the next they are in despair.

e. They could not yet understand that the same Jesus who feeds the multitudes was the same Jesus who saw their

struggle against the storm and had the power to save them.

2. The saddest part of this story is that it is repeated daily in our lives today!

a. We read about miracles in the past, and yet don't really believe it can happen today.

b. We trust God to save our souls from hell but don't pray like He can multiply our paycheck.

c. We think that Jesus can only do one miracle per person and then we are on our own the rest of our lives.

d. So we live as though our one miracle has already happened, OR we are saving it for when we are really in trouble.

e. I know this because I am just like the guys in the boat.

D. **Hardness of heart will cause you to believe that miracles were for the past but not the present.**

1. The disciples had just seen a huge miracle.

2. And a few hours later they are freaking out over Jesus walking on water and then calming the wind with His presence.

3. Perhaps the disciples thought this was the time when Jesus' power to do miracles would run out.

4. What they had not yet figured out was that Jesus was not limited in His power and authority because He was the Son of God.

5. The end of this passage features Jesus healing more people.

⁵³ When they had crossed over, they landed at Gennesaret and anchored there. ⁵⁴ As soon as they got out of the boat, people recognized Jesus.

⁵⁵ They ran throughout that whole region and carried the sick on mats to wherever they heard he was. ⁵⁶ And wherever he went—into villages, towns or countryside—they placed the sick in the marketplaces. They begged him

to let them touch even the edge of his cloak, and all who touched it were healed.

A. As soon as Jesus lands, He is called upon to heal more people.

1. He had not used up all of His power on the other side of the lake.
2. Wherever faith is present, Jesus still heals the sick and brings hope to the oppressed.
3. Wherever faith is present, Jesus can still use loaves and fishes to feed a crowd.
4. Wherever faith is present, Jesus can still calm raging storms.

B. This morning, do you believe in Jesus?

1. Not only that He exists.
2. Not only that He can heal some people or help some people.
3. DO you believe that Jesus is the Son of God who has the power and compassion to change your world?

C. Some of you are facing serious obstacles.

1. This morning, I want to give you an opportunity to trust Jesus.
2. You can respond to your situation with either faith or fear.
3. Fear forgets what God has already done and leads us to face the situation on our own.
4. Faith remembers what God has done and acts like He will do it again.

D. Several of you here today need to remember what God has done in your past and believe in Him again for today.

1. Some of us need to be reminded why Jesus came to Earth:
 - a. He came not to accomplish our will and purpose but His.
 - b. So we need to get our priorities in line with God's will.

2. Still, others, what you need to hear is that even though you may feel like you are alone, Jesus can see your struggle and He is on His way.

3. This morning, let us ask the Holy Spirit to apply His Word to us and in a moment, we are going to respond by stepping out in prayer.