

**The Man Who Walked on Water**  
**Mark 6:45-56**

As we return to Mark this morning, we're going to be finishing up chapter 6; it's the rest of it. But as we get into this, it's interesting to think about the question regarding Jesus. It's a simple question, but it's worth asking a lot, especially when I've been able to interact with people about the gospel, even when I've gone out and talked with strangers even, or had my own interactions with people in my life that are lost, and they don't know the Lord - just to ask this simple question, who do you think Jesus is? You know, it's a real simple question, but it's great to pose that question and see where people are coming from and see what they have to say. And granted, we've all heard all kinds of answers, but there's some pretty popular ones. Oh, most people will agree He was a good guy. Right? Most people would say, yeah, Jesus was a good person. He was inspirational. He was motivational. Clearly, He must've been a good teacher. He had a following. Right? He's a moral person in some way or some fashion. Some people even are so bold as to say He's Savior of the world. Right? Or, He's Lord in some sense. And so, it's always great when you meet people for the first time that actually have that view of Christ, that He is Lord. He is God. He is Savior of mankind.

But I wonder, if you were to ask Mark the author of our gospel, if we could actually go back in time and talk to Mark, and say, hey, Mark, I know you've written us sixteen chapters about Jesus, and we're so thankful for that, but can you just condense it for me? Give me one, one-word description of Jesus. What would that be? I'm going to speculate this morning because I know Mark really well, apparently, Right? And I'm going to guess that if we were to ask that question of Mark, I think he would say that his description of Jesus would be servant - would be servant. And I get that from Mark 10, actually. So, ...want you to hop over there real quick. We'll look at Mark 10 for just a second here, and then we'll be back in Mark 6 for the rest of our time. But look at Mark 10:45, what many people have even called the theme verse... Alright? ...the purpose verse, the kind of driving thesis statement, almost, of the gospel in some senses. But Mark 10:45 - a statement that comes from Jesus Himself - powerful statement; "For even the Son of Man came not to be served but to serve, and to give his life as a ransom for many." The totality of Christ coming in His ministry, and what He was doing, was for others. It was serving, and that culminated in His death on the

cross, an ultimate act of service, offering up His life in a sacrificial, serving manner to take away sin from mankind. Christ the servant, yes, Christ the good man, Christ the moral person, Christ the amazing teacher, Christ the motivator, Christ the leader, but according to Mark, I think we have Christ the servant - a servant.

And I think that's what we're going to find today as we look at our text at the end of Mark 6. We're going to see this servant side of Jesus come out. Not that we haven't already seen it, but it will be one of these things that resurfaces much like when you're watching a movie or reading a good book; these themes will keep coming up. It's not so sporadic and all over the place, and it doesn't tie together. Mark is a good author in writing that he has this theme of Christ as servant surface from time to time, and I think that's what we're going to find this morning as we look. Consider what we've already seen of Jesus. Alright? Even in His interactions with people, when He first called His disciples and was ministering and healing and doing the casting out of demons and teaching, right in the beginning, He heals Peter's mother-in-law. Right? He interacts with people in such a way as to serve, and it's to serve them personally where they're at and where their needs are. This is what Christ has done in the beginnings of His ministry and as He's progressed, and He's kind of taken the notch up each level that we've seen.

As He goes around and preaches some more, and then kind of recaps and regroupes and then He goes around and preaches some more, we've seen it just increase and increase. So much so, that back when we were in Mark 4 (not that you need to turn there), but when we saw Jesus doing more miracles such that, He was in the boat with them when they were on the stormy Sea of Galilee, and He calms the waves and the wind. His disciples have this response in Mark 4:41; "And they were filled with great fear and said to one another, 'Who then is this, that even the wind and the sea obey him?' " A moment where Jesus could've said, are you guys that slow? Do you seriously not get it? What else do I need to do to convince you? But Jesus is serving them. He serves them even in how He communicates to them who He is. Even in His own communication to His disciples, to the people, to the masses, He does it in a serving way. And that's what we see this morning. Hopefully, we'll continue to see this servant aspect of Christ come out and how He serves, not just His disciples, but even the masses in this kind of two-part text that we have.

Let's read it all in one reading, and starting in verse 45 of Mark 6; "Immediately he made his disciples get into the boat and go before him to the other side, to Bethsaida, while he dismissed the crowd. And after he had taken leave of them, he went up on the mountain to pray. And when evening came, the boat was out on the sea, and he was alone on the land. And he saw that they were making headway painfully, for the wind was against them. And about the fourth watch of the night he came to them, walking on the sea. He meant to pass by them, but when they saw him walking on the sea they thought it was a ghost, and cried out, 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.' And he got into the boat with them, and the wind ceased. And they were utterly astounded, for they did not understand about the loaves, but their hearts were hardened. When they had crossed over, they came to land at Gennesaret and moored to the shore. And when they got out of the boat, the people immediately recognized him and ran about the whole region and began to bring the sick people on their beds to wherever they heard he was. And wherever he came, in villages, cities, or countryside, they laid the sick in the marketplaces and implored him that they might touch even the fringe of his garment. And as many as touched it were made well."

This two-part section here where we have Jesus clearly interacting with His disciples and then interacting with the masses again as we've seen Him do many times in His Galilean ministry. We're going to spend a notable more time on the first section here with Jesus' interaction with His disciples, but we'll also see the servant aspect of Christ come out even in His interaction with the masses in the second part of our text. So, the first part is verses 45-52, and that's where we see this, the miracle to encourage the disciples - in verses 45-52, the miracle to encourage the disciples - a specific audience here in a very familiar story, the story of Jesus walking on water. We'd talked about last time how there was the story of Jesus feeding the, not five thousand, probably like twenty thousand. Right? ...that story that is so commonly referred to and known. In fact, it's in all four of the gospels. It's in Matthew, Mark, Luke, and John. And this morning, we have another familiar story; Jesus walking on the water of the Sea of Galilee. Not every gospel has this, but John still has it, in addition to Matthew, and Mark, but Luke does not - nonetheless, an important event and a popular one that many people know.

So, let's break this down, and as we go through this, we'll see in verses 45-47 first here, the alienation from the crowd - the alienation from the crowd. Once again, in verse 45; "Immediately he made his disciples get into the boat and go before him to the other side, to Bethsaida, while he dismissed the crowd. And after he had taken leave of them, he went up on the mountain to pray. And when evening came, the boat was out on the sea, and he was alone on the land." Once again, this word immediately that Mark loves to use over and over and over again. Immediately, we have some sense of urgency in our scene. Immediately, He's dismissing the disciples, telling them to go "...get into the boat..." the same boat they've been using as they've been going back and forth across the Sea of Galilee. "...get into the boat..." and get out of here, and He gives them direction of where to go. Immediately go! And Jesus Himself says He will take care of the crowd.

We learn a little bit more of probably where this urgency comes from, from John's gospel. In John's gospel when he recorded the events of the feeding of the five thousand, he gives us this for our conclusion; "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." An interesting ending that we learn a little bit more about, this amazing miracle with Jesus feeding thousands of people, and the people actually wanting to rise up and make Him king - quite a stir in the scene. And more than likely, when we come back to Mark, why is Jesus dismissing His disciples so quickly? Probably because they would like this idea. They would think, wow, we have seen Jesus do some amazing things. I could vouch for Him. Yeah, He could be a great king. So, it's very probable that they would join in with the crowd and start chanting and you know raising Jesus up and crowd-surfing Him and everything. Alright. It's very possible that the disciples would be all into this, and so, Jesus, immediately, as this starts to stir and He knows what's happening, He dismisses His disciples. Go, I'll catch up with you later. Get out of here! Because Jesus knows this is not the time. This is not the time nor the place or the way for Him to assume His kingship. So, He sends the disciples away so they don't participate in this, and He Himself dismisses the crowd. I don't know how He dismisses a crowd of twenty thousand people, but He does. Alright? It's in our text. It happens, and we once again don't get all the fullness of, kind of, the picture of what happened.

We get a little direction though of what He does tell His disciples. He tells them, not only to leave in the boat, but to go to the other side to Bethsaida. So to understand what this probably looked like, just a reminder of the Sea of Galilee, not a huge body of water, but a lake, a sizeable lake nonetheless. So, where they were was over there in the northeast shore of the Sea of Galilee, and He's sending them off to the northwest shore of Galilee, essentially is where He's telling them, and you'll even see on the map and you'll kind of notice Bethsaida. He's sending them to Bethsaida? Because in Luke 9:10, it seems like they went to Bethsaida to go and have the five thousand fed. This whole event was them going to Bethsaida and feeding the five thousand, and now Jesus is telling them to leave and go to Bethsaida? What's going on here? There's a contradiction of some sort? And I alluded to this a little bit last time, but this is just a reminder; there's more than one Bethsaida. Bethsaida actually means, like, house of fish - and the Sea of Galilee is a place where there's a lot of fishing taking place, a lot of fishing going on that's quite the industry and the business there. So, it's not that weird and improbable that you'd have more than one Bethsaida.

So, there's probably a Bethsaida, as you can see, where the Jordan River kind of dumps into the Sea of Galilee. There was a Bethsaida on the east side of that, and that was even owned by the other Herod we talked about, Herod Philipp. And then we have him mentioning here a different Bethsaida that's over more in the more Jewish part of Galilee, that we would expect on the western side, that's ruled by Herod Antipas. So, they were in Bethsaida Julius is what it's technically called, and He's sending them off to the other more commonly known Bethsaida as what we find here. So not a contradiction by any means, just a clarification that we can make. So, there's a map that shows that a little bit better. Bethsaida Julius over there, that's where they were. That's where the feeding of the five thousand takes place. Now, He's sending them along over to the other Bethsaida. This is the direction He gives to His disciples.

In verse 46, we go on to read, "And after he had taken leave of them, he went up on the mountain to pray." And we just have here another reminder of Christ's humanity, another reminder of the very fact that, yes, while we've seen Jesus clearly display His Messiahship, and His origin is from God, and He is divine no doubt, that He, too, is a human just like His disciples. He's felt the weight of everything that they have felt. He's been tired. He's been hungry. He's been thirsty. And He needs to depend on God.

He needs to depend on God. We've already seen this so far in Mark's gospel. If you recall just the very beginning in chapter 1, this was something that He did. He made it a point to rise early. He made it a point to go and be with His Father, to spend time in prayer - kind of goes without saying but, I mean, if this, the Son of Man, the Messiah, if God in human flesh had to come down to this earth and spend time in prayer, how much more so you and I? It's a pretty easy and obvious deduction we can make, but how much more so must we make this our commitment. Trying to live and do this on our own is absolutely just foolish. It's folly. It's silly to even try to live on our own. But here's Jesus, and you can only imagine what He's going through, what causes Him to actually retreat up on this mountain to pray and for Mark to mention it and put it in our text.

Well, not only was it His customary practice, like we learn in Luke 5, this is what He would do often. He made it a point to depend on God, to be in prayer, but think about the events. As we learn from John, it's not just that He fed the masses, and everyone was amazed at it, but they wanted to make Him king. They were ready to take Him by force and make Him king. And you think, okay, what's the big deal there? This is another form of temptation. It's actually, really similar to the temptation that He endured when He was in the wilderness for forty days. He hadn't been eating, and then Satan comes and tempts Him. And you remember one of the ways that Satan tempts Him; Satan tempts Jesus by saying here You go, "...all the kingdoms of the earth..." You can have it all right now, just bow down to me. And essentially what Satan is tempting Jesus with is skip the cross. He's telling Jesus, You don't need to go through all that suffering. You can be a king right now. Why not? You can be the king of all the nations. I'll give them to You. Why not Jesus? Skip the cross. You don't need to go through that. And so that temptation that He faced back in the wilderness at the beginning of His ministry, kind of resurfaces in a different way here as the masses are ready at twenty thousand strong to make Him king, and He denies it. He rejects it. He won't have anything to do with it, a legitimate form of temptation that came, and He responds in humility. He responds in obedience, knowing His mission. He has to obey. He has to go to the cross, and He has to take the sin of the world on His shoulders.

This is the perfect example of how you and I need to deal with temptation, how we need to deal with sin, how we need to deal with life. We need to retreat to God. We have to. Any other option is completely slapping God in

the face. He is our strength. He is the way that we endure and move on. He's the way that we obey and remain humble. We have to come to Him in dependence and in prayer. It reminds us of the hymn, "I need thee every hour; stay thou nearby; temptations lose their power when thou art nigh." ... "I need thee, O I need thee; every hour I need thee..." This is what Jesus modeled, and it's great because when you think about this, He didn't have anything to gain publicly through His private prayer. His practice of retreating and being with God privately, that wasn't something that publicly gave Him more credibility or made people talk about Him more. This was something that He totally did on His own, and it's the perfect model for us. Why pray? I mean, why even do that? Because you're depending on God. You need Him. It's not for the show. It's not for people to see or to witness. It's because we need God, and Jesus modeled that perfectly for us.

We come to verse 47; "And when evening came, the boat was out on the sea, and he was alone on the land." Mark is drawing this attention to the separation that we have between Jesus and the disciples. Jesus there alienated from the crowd, alienated from His disciples, spending quality with His Father in prayer, while the disciples are out on sea.

And this brings us to the next portion of our account here. In verses 48-50, we see the appearance of Jesus - we see the appearance of Jesus. And, ultimately, what we find is after Jesus spends time with the Lord in prayer, depending upon Him, responding correctly, not short-cutting the cross, knowing what His mission is to serve in the most ultimate way of giving Himself, He also responds in a very practical way to serve His disciples, right now. He will serve them, right now in this moment. Verses 48-50; "And he saw that they were making headway painfully, for the wind was against them. And about the fourth watch of the night he came to them, walking on the sea. He meant to pass by them, but when they saw him walking on the sea they thought it was a ghost, and cried out, 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.' " In verse 48, we see that they're, as Mark says, "...they were making headway painfully..." It's a painful thing. The wind is against them. Even though they're not trying to go very far, they're just trying to go from the northeast to the northwest shore of the Sea of Galilee, it's still just all against them. And they can't just go by land because they need to take the boat with them. So, they have to go by boat,

and they're just struggling, going against the wind, even rowing, probably, trying to get there, and Jesus is watching this. He's up on the mountain.

It's at nighttime, so you probably got some supernatural vision happening here, and His ability to actually see them out there struggling in the water. Matthew 14:24 adds, "...but the boat by this time was a long way from the land, beaten by the waves, for the wind was against them." ...this idea that they're not even close, a long way from the land. Jesus decides to act and at what time? "And about the fourth watch of the night he came to them..." ... "..."the fourth watch of the night..." Well, by Roman standard of time, which is what this is functioning under and how Mark is using it, this is between three and six in the morning - between three and six in the morning. So, you think, it was evening the previous day, and Jesus dismissed the crowds, and He sent the disciples off in the boat. Who knows what that could have been? ...could've been seven o'clock. ...could've been eight o'clock. We don't know. But since then, 8 p.m. And now, we come to three at the earliest, three in the morning. Jesus has spent hours in prayer, and they've spent hours struggling on the Sea of Galilee, hours of this, and Jesus finally looks up after spending this quality time with the Lord and sees they're struggling and decides to act.

And it's a very practical thing we see. We see Him deciding to act, and it says in our text, "... he came to them, walking on the sea." ... "..." he came to them, walking on the sea." And right away, we know this's a big deal because when we read though the Bible and we think about all of our experiences and think about how life kind of works and operates and the science of things, people don't normally walk on water. Right? It's that simple conclusion that we come to. This just isn't how life operates. As much as you want to try or deceive people, it's just not how it works. But we even have Old Testament scripture that talks about, not just God being the Creator of the waters and the earth and everything that we see, but God alone stretched out the heavens, and He tramples the waves. Alright? This is God. When it says in Isaiah 43:2, "When you pass through the waters, I will be with you; and through the rivers, they shall not overwhelm you..." God protects His people against the waters. We've thought about recent flooding. You know in So Cal here, we have this recent flooding, and we've seen the damage it can do even in our own town, and it's nothing in comparison to the Red Sea, the Jordan River, and these are no problem for God. He can control them. He can protect His people from these waters. Not only can He



trample them and create them, He can protect them, and as Isaiah 43:16 also verifies, “Thus says the Lord, who makes a way in the sea, a path in the mighty waters...” If you think about anybody miraculously manipulating water, if you’re an Israelite, if you’re us today, it’s only God. That’s the first obvious answer that you have. It’s God who’s the One that can do anything that has to do with even manipulating water in any fashion.

And now we have Jesus in our text walking on the sea - walking on the sea. Once again, it’s not this serene glassy sea that’s just nice and calm, perfect for going out water skiing in the morning, not that it’s tumultuous. Alright? There’s waves. It’s stormy. It’s windy. And yet, here He is calmly walking out on the sea. Clearly, right after seeing this depiction of Jesus’ humanity, His need to depend on God because He’s a human like you and I, we now have a complete contrast here with His deity, His deity, the power that He has, that no man has ever and will ever have, the power that is only God’s, the ability to walk on water. Another display where Mark does this - gives us both sides of Jesus’ character. He is both man, convincingly, as well He is God.

But we continue in our text and, not only is it amazing (I mean, I think that’s the normal assumption when you read a text like this as we’ve heard this story taught before, or we’ve read it ourselves, we think this is incredible, a man walking on water, and, rightfully so, that is amazing), but we have this phrase here that continues to take things to another level. As we look back down, we see that “...he came to them, walking on the sea.” And the end of verse 48, “He meant to pass by them...” “He meant to pass by them...” This phrase that has basically vexed all the commentators, what does this mean? “He meant to pass by them...” What was Jesus really thinking? How was He helping by walking on the water? And then this phrase “He meant to pass by them...” What’s going on there?

I kind of have a summary here of some of the different commentators and what they view. One person says Jesus intends to overtake the disciples and playfully surprise them on the other side. But it seems rather pitiless in this part to whisk by and leave them floundering and frightened all in the interest of fun. It’s probably not that. Jesus wants to pass by but does not do so when He sees the disciples distressed. The problem with this view is that He’s already seen them in distress before He sets out on the sea. So, why would He want to pass by in the first place? Some say Jesus is trying to test their

faith. But what does such a test comprise of? Others say Jesus wants to be seen walking on the sea but wishes to remain unrecognized - something that supposedly fits the author's theology of the Messianic Secret. There's no good reason for Jesus to want to frighten His disciples and then disappear into the mist. Why? Why would He do that?

What is Jesus doing here? Walking on the sea, and He intends, He purposes "...to pass by them..." This phrase is actually a unique phrase, and we find it in the Old Testament, and we find it at two crucial moments in the life of two crucial characters; the first being Moses, and the second being Elijah. Moses, the greatest, if you talk to Jews even today, they talk about Moses as the one they look up to, and they memorize all of Torah and what He wrote in Scripture, a great prophet, and then Elijah likewise - the imperative two prophets. Well, just to kind of take you back a little bit, there's a moment in Moses' life where we know he does a great deal of leading the people, bringing them out of Egypt, but the moment when he goes up onto Mt Sinai and he interacts with God and receives the Law for the people of God, and is used by God to deliver that Law, when he's up there, you remember that time when his brother Aaron and all the people have a great idea to take all their gold and jewelry, to throw it into the fire, and as Aaron says, wah-la poof, we got a golden calf. It just came out of the fire, like it wasn't Aaron's doing, somehow. Well, this happens while Moses is up talking to God, and so Moses comes down. They come down to see this terrible thing, and automatically, Moses is distraught. It's terrible. Is the plan of God now thwarted? We just got out of Egypt. We've just been delivered by Yahweh, our God that we serve and worship, and now the people are rebelling already? God even goes so far as to mention, you know what? I think I'm going to just finished these people, just destroy them and start over with you Moses. That's what I'm going to do. And Moses has to plead and intercede with God and say, no. How's that going to look if You bring these people out of Egypt just to kill them in the wilderness? And everyone's going to go what was that all about? Alright? That's not going to look good. Don't do that God.

And after this pleading and interceding and this moment here where Moses, too, is depressed at how the people have responded, the sin of God's people, the inability to obey and worship, the inability to understand what God has done, the inability to respond righteously to God. And so, Moses in his interaction with God has a crucial moment that we find in Exodus 33. In

Exodus 33:18-19, Moses continuing to want to foster and cultivate this relationship with God, for himself and the people, says, “Please show me your glory [show me your glory]. And he said, “I will make all my goodness pass before you and will proclaim before you my name ‘The Lord.’ And I will be gracious to whom I will be gracious, and will show mercy on whom I will show mercy.” You think, okay, well, that’s just one point. Well, later on, we see it keep coming up. Exodus 33:22; “...and while my glory passes by [Moses] I will put you in a cleft of the rock, and I will cover you with my hand until I have passed by.” This most peculiar scene where God and all of His glory passes by Moses, but He hides him so that Moses doesn’t die from the display of God’s glory and yet, at the same time, encourages Moses, helps him to see who God is, the Lord who will by no means let the guilty go unpunished but, at the same time, is merciful, is compassionate, is kind, and forgiving. This is what Moses experiences at a dark moment for the nation, at a dark moment for his own life.

And when we go to Elijah, we see a similar thing. Like Moses, Elijah had his mountaintop experiences and his valleys as well, and Elijah had the experience not too recently in 1 Kings 18, where he’s up on Mt Carmel, with all the prophets of Baal, where they’re challenging and there’s this idolatry that’s rampant in Israel, and Elijah has to confront the people and say you need to chose today who you’ll serve. You can’t do both. It’s either Baal or Yahweh; you need to pick. And Elijah calls out the people, and a glorious scene and a glorious showdown - God wins the day. Yahweh wins. And you think this is an amazing moment for Elijah and for anyone that could be a witness to that day. But the next day, Jezebel, this evil wicked queen of Ahab, threatens Elijah’s life, says she will kill him, and Elijah panics. He flees and runs south. He runs south, even all the way to the same mountain where Moses was, Mt Horeb or Mt Sanai. And Elijah’s hiding, and he’s distressed. The nation and the sin and the idolatry that’s spread and rampant, the leadership that is completely given over to Baal worship, and not to Yahweh.

All this terrible depressing times for the people of God, and Elijah finds himself in the similar situation that Moses does, and God responds in a similar way. In 1 Kings, I’ll read you a little bit before leading up to this. 1 Kings 19:9; “There he came to a cave and lodged in it. And behold, the word of the Lord came to him, and he said to him, ‘What are you doing here, Elijah?’ He said, ‘I have been very jealous for the Lord, the God of hosts.

For the people of Israel have forsaken your covenant, thrown down your altars, and killed your prophets with the sword, and I, even I only, am left, and they seek my life, to take it away.’ And he said, ‘Go out and stand on the mount before the Lord.’ And behold, the Lord passed by...” Again, in a similar fashion, the Lord passes by, causes His character, His goodness, His glory, to pass by Elijah to encourage him and to launch him back into ministry because God and His plan is not thwarted. As depressing as it looks, God’s plan continues. And so, we see these two men of God at depressing times in their life and ministry, God passing by them with His glory to encourage them.

And we come back to Mark, and we think about our disciples in this text, the disciples in this boat, depressed, distraught. They can’t even get to where Jesus told them to go in this boat. They just had this amazing scene where Jesus’s multiplying food, and the people want to make Him king, but He says no. And they’re thinking what is going on? John the Baptist has just died - distressing - a distraught time for these men. So, Jesus doesn’t intend to just encourage them by walking on water. He’s encouraging them by passing by them, causing the glory of God to pass by them, and encourage them that God’s plan continues in Jesus, not just the Man, but the Messiah, God’s own Son, God in human form. As Moses would be encouraged, as Elijah would be encouraged, so these disciples would realize just who Jesus really is, and rather than the response that we saw after Jesus calmed the storm, and they said, “Who then is this...?”, we’ll see a different response here as Jesus passes by them with His glory.

In verse 49, “...but when they saw him walking on the sea they thought it was a ghost, and cried out, 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.’ ” Jesus, not just doing what only God can do by walking on water, Jesus also doing what God did with Moses and Elijah, causing His glory and His character to pass by them and encourage them, but also this phrase, “Take heart [also be courageous, you could say, man up, alright]; it is I.” And it’s unfortunate that we have an English translation that says, “...it is I.”, or something else, because, literally, the words are “I am.” ... “I am.” And you think what’s the significance there? “I am.” To these disciples when they heard this, that’s a title for God. That’s a title for God that we saw God use with Moses when He was interacting with him in the burning bush. Moses said, well, if I go to try and deliver Your people from Egypt, who do I

tell them sent me? “And He said, “Say this to the people of Israel: ‘I am has sent me to you.’ ” ... “I am has sent me to you.” This is Jesus walking on water, causing His glory to pass by them and then telling them, “I am.” He’s God, and the disciples would know this in this terrifying moment for them, as they respond in the exact way you would expect people to when they encounter the glory of God, terrified and now hearing Jesus is God. “I am.”

Their response continues to confirm this, really, in verses 51-52. That’s where we see the astonishment of the disciples; “And he got into the boat with them, and the wind ceased. And they were utterly astounded, for they did not understand about the loaves, but their hearts were hardened.” We see not just the miracle of Jesus hopping in the boat and again the elements responding, the wind ceasing, but in John 6:21, we read, “Then they were glad to take him into the boat, and immediately the boat was at the land to which they were going.” It’s almost as if Jesus got in the boat, and not only did the elements quiet and calm, but the boat, like, transported to the shore that they were trying to get to all along; this amazing, continual, miraculous display that Jesus gives.

And how do they respond to this? Our text says, “And they were utterly astounded...” Literally, if you want to take it word for word and translate it, it’s “Exceedingly of remarkable character in themselves, they were astounded.” “Exceedingly remarkable in themselves,” feeling this reflexive kind of thinking through this. Then the verb... “...were astounded...” Hard to qualify it much more than that to communicate how shocking this was for them. They’re shocked at what had just taken place. They’re shocked because they had just witnessed Jesus feeding the thousands, and they missed it even though the crowd was trying to make Him king, and Jesus said no. They missed all the other signs in it that Mark gives us. They miss the very fact that Jesus is greater than Moses in providing the food in a desolate place. They miss the fact that Jesus is greater than Elisha in multiplying food for the masses. They miss the fact that Jesus is God’s shepherd who’s come to shepherd His people. They miss these things. Our text tells us they didn’t understand about the loaves; they didn’t get it. But in this moment, they got it. The light bulb went on because Jesus came walking on the water, allowing His glory to pass by them and then saying, “I am.” They understood.

How do you know that? Matthew 14:33 also tells us, “And those in the boat worshiped him, saying, “Truly you are the Son of God.” It’s no longer a who even is this guy, it’s now a truly this is the Man. This is God’s own son. This is the conclusion, and this is Jesus taking His time, not needing to do this because they should’ve understand when He fed the masses, but instead He serves them. He serves His disciples by helping them in this time of need to understand. He’s willing to approach them, to show them that God’s plan is not thwarted, that He brings it forward as God’s own Messiah and Son. So, there’s not just this serving for the disciples, there’s also this serving-hood nature of Christ in verses 53-56 which is where we find the miracles to encourage the diseased - the miracles to encourage the diseased. In verses 53-55 we see the scene; “When they had crossed over, they came to land at Gennesaret and moored to the shore. And when they got out of the boat, the people immediately recognized him and ran about the whole region and began to bring the sick people on their beds to wherever they heard he was.” The first thing we see is the diseased. They hurried to Jesus. The diseased hurried to Jesus.

It’s interesting to note that they get to Gennesaret. If you’re wondering, if you remember on that map, Gennesaret is very close to Bethsaida. So, this is the location. It’s this kind of plain open area that’s over there on the northwestern shore of Galilee. When they get here, we notice in our text that “...the people [once again we’re dealing with the people of Galilee] immediately recognize Him...” Almost as opposed to how the disciples in the boat, when they saw the glory of God in Jesus passing by them, they’re terrified. They don’t recognize... They don’t understand what’s happening, and now Jesus comes to the shore, and the people immediately know who He is, and they rush... They rush, “...the whole region...” is rushing to get their sick to carry them to wherever they hear where Jesus is. They respond in a way that clearly shows that they’re aware of Jesus’ authority. They’re aware of His ability. They know what He can do, and they respond in that way.

The question is how will Jesus respond? Once again, the Man with authority who is the Son of God - plenty of things to do - wanting still to get time with His disciples, to interact with them and teach them, to help them learn. And now you encounter a crowd again, and how does Jesus respond? We see Him serving the crowd because He heals them. The diseased are healed by Jesus in this massive summary statement here in verse 56; “And wherever he

came, in villages, cities, or countryside, they laid the sick in the marketplaces and implored him that they might touch even the fringe of his garment. And as many as touched it were made well.” These are mass healings is what’s taking place here. These are mass healings that are, really, unprecedented. I mean, we have seen Jesus heal multiple people, and we have seen Him actually heal people by Him touching them, but we haven’t seen it to this extent; this extent of people just hurrying and rushing to Him just to touch even His garment. Jesus, willing to serve these people. Perhaps, many of these people, too, were uninterested in actually following Jesus. They weren’t really buying into everything. They were swayed by the religious leaders, maybe. We don’t know. But instead of Jesus just denying them and saying no time for you, get out of here, He serves them. He chooses to serve these people by healing them and interacting with them.

This is Mark’s little saga of events that kind of build up here; Jesus revealing His authority and the miraculous feeding of the thousands, and the people try to make Him king, but He declines, and then He reveals His deity, that He is God, to His disciples, and they finally grow in understanding and realize who He is, since they have hard hearts and they’re slow to understand these things. So, after those two stories, we clearly see Jesus has right as King. He is God. He has the authority, and He chooses to serve the masses. He chooses to be the suffering servant of Isaiah 53. He will not only take the peoples’ sicknesses upon Himself, eventually, He will go to the cross and take sin upon Himself. And this is Mark’s emphasis in his gospel; “For even the Son of Man came not to be served but to serve, and to give his life as a ransom for many.” This was His mission. His mission was to serve, and so, you and I, claiming to be followers of this Servant, have to follow in His footsteps, and we have to serve. It’s not an urging. It’s not an idea. It’s a mandatory requirement. We have to serve. Our Messiah had all authority, had all power, and yet He sacrificially gave of Himself and served. We, too, must serve one another sacrificially. We must serve people that are lost and that need this message. We must be willing to lay down our life as our Savior modeled perfectly for us. This is the Servant that we get to continue to study in Mark’s gospel. Let’s pray that we continue to serve as He did.