

Mark 6: 45-56 Discussion Guide

TEXT - Read Mark 6:45-56

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. ⁴⁶ And after he had taken leave of them, he went up on the mountain to pray. ⁴⁷ And when evening came, the boat was out on the sea, and he was alone on the land. ⁴⁸ And he saw that they were making headway painfully, for the wind was against them. And about the fourth watch of the night^[a] he came to them, walking on the sea. He meant to pass by them, ⁴⁹ but when they saw him walking on the sea they thought it was a ghost, and cried out, ⁵⁰ 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." ⁵¹ And he got into the boat with them, and the wind ceased. And they were utterly astounded, ⁵² for they did not understand about the loaves, but their hearts were hardened. ⁵³ When they had crossed over, they came to land at Gennesaret and moored to the shore. ⁵⁴ And when they got out of the boat, the people immediately recognized him ⁵⁵ and ran about the whole region and began to bring the sick people on their beds to wherever they heard he was. 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.

What sticks out to you in this text? Any questions that come up?

- How do the Old Testament verses in Exodus 3:14 and 33:19-33 tie into the lesson this week?
- What is going on in this text (summarize the main points)? What is the context for the text?
- How does this text connect with the Gospel? What Gospel themes do you see in the text?

THEOLOGY - What do we learn about God from this text?

- What attributes or aspects of the character and nature of God do you see in these passages? What else can we learn about God from the text? Take a moment to list these out together.

LIFE

- Jesus sent His disciples into a "hard time". How do you respond when you are in a "hard time?" Disobedience? Grudgingly obey? Questioning? How can Jesus change your hardened heart to respond with trust and joy?
- Their lack of understanding had caused the disciples to harden their hearts. Which of the self-saving, self-serving or self-sufficient issues of your heart are you asking the Holy Spirit to change?
- Jesus came to the disciples in their darkest hour. How has Jesus showed Himself to you in your darkest hours?

PRAYER

- Pray in response to what God revealed to you in this text. If there is sin, confess it to him in prayer. If there is a need, petition God in prayer. If there is encouragement, praise God and share with others.
- What is one personal need you have that we can pray for you as a group?
- Pray for one friend, family member, or coworker with who you want to share the love of Jesus with.

Commentary on Mark 6:14-29

v.45-46 He sent the multitude away: Jesus loved the multitude, but he was not obsessed with crowds. He knew when to kindly tell them to go home (**He sent the multitude away**).

b. **He departed to the mountain to pray:** A long, difficult day spent ministering to the spiritual and physical needs of the multitude left Jesus exhausted. But that hard day drove Jesus *to prayer*, not *from prayer*.

v. 47-52 The boat was in the middle of the sea: Jesus sent the disciples across the Sea of Galilee ([Mark 6:45](#)). As Jesus prayed in the heights above the Sea of Galilee, **He saw them straining at the rowing** as they attempted to cross the lake in the face of the **wind**. Unknown to the disciples, Jesus saw their difficulty and cared for them.

It was difficult to get across because *a great wind was blowing* ([John 6:18](#)). They had rowed for much of the night and had only come about halfway across the lake ([John 6:19](#)).

“The apostolic crew rowed, and rowed, and rowed, and it was no fault of theirs that they made no progress, ‘for the wind was contrary unto them.’ The Christian man may make little or no headway, and yet it may be no fault of his, for the wind is contrary. Our good Lord will take the will for the deed, and reckon our progress, not by our apparent advance, but by the hearty intent with which we tug at the oars.” (Spurgeon)

About the fourth watch of the night is somewhere around 3 a.m.

He came to them, walking on the sea: Jesus almost walked casually because He **would have passed them by**. Jesus came over to them only after they responded with fear and **cried out**.

He went up into the boat to them: As Jesus got into the boat with them, miraculously the boat was instantly carried over to the other side ([John 6:21](#)). Jesus rescued His disciples from working in futility. This was a miracle meant to assure them that He was in fact in control and that He would always lovingly be there to help them fulfill what He commanded.

“He came walking on the waves; and so he puts all the swelling storms of life under his feet. Christians, why be afraid?” (Augustine)

We also know that it was on this occasion that Peter got out of the boat, walking on the water to Jesus ([Matthew 14:28-31](#)). There is reason – from history and subtle clues, not explicitly from the Scriptures – to believe that Peter was the main source for Mark’s gospel. If this was the case, Peter may have left out the story because he didn’t want to be exalted for walking on the water – or to be humbled for sinking.

“Mark does not give the incident of Peter’s walking on the water and beginning to sink. Perhaps Peter was not fond of telling that story.” (Robertson)

v. 53-56 As many as touched Him were made well: With this description of the healing ministry of Jesus, Mark concludes a brief section where we see the power of Jesus over the laws of nature. Normally, five thousand are not fed by one small lunch. Normally, men don’t walk on water. Normally, the sick are not instantly healed. None of this is normal, except by the power of God.