

Content in the Spirit

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BIG IDEA - It's easier to be content when God is in control of you.

scripture focus - Mark 6:45-52

“Immediately after this, Jesus insisted that his disciples get back into the boat and head across the lake to Bethsaida, while he sent the people home. After telling everyone good-bye, he went up into the hills by himself to pray. Late that night, the disciples were in their boat in the middle of the lake, and Jesus was alone on land. He saw that they were in serious trouble, rowing hard and struggling against the wind and waves. About three o'clock in the morning Jesus came toward them, walking on the water. He intended to go past them, but when they saw him walking on the water, they cried out in terror, thinking he was a ghost. They were all terrified when they saw him. But Jesus spoke to them at once. “Don't be afraid,” he said. “Take courage! I am here!” Then he climbed into the boat, and the wind stopped. They were totally amazed, for they still didn't understand the significance of the miracle of the loaves. Their hearts were too hard to take it in.”

Quiz: True or False?

GOD WILL NEVER GIVE YOU MORE THAN YOU CAN HANDLE

I hate to break it to you but that is just not Biblical.

Now if you want to hear it Biblically rephrased, you can listen to this line, Ben Sosa came up with, **“God won't give you more than He can handle.”**

The error in the first saying comes out of **misapplication of 1 Corinthians 10:13** - “The temptations in your life are no different from what others experience. And God is faithful. **He will not allow the**

temptation to be more than you can stand. **When you are tempted, he will show you a way out so that you can endure.**"

The Apostle Paul tells us that God would not allow the TEMPTATION to be more than we can stand.

How did we get from "temptation" to "suffering," feeling overwhelmed, in over our heads or just anything difficult we face in life.

What is so crazy about this false saying is that it's actually the exact opposite.

God does put us in situations over our head so that we will grow, mature and learn what it means to take up your cross and follow Jesus! He didn't say pick up your cotton candy and lotto winnings!

Of course when God calls us into something big he does provide some help. Or, in other words like **Emily Sombrito told our staff, "God equips you AS he calls you."**

It seems to me that **Jesus was intentional on helping his followers readjust their idea of the word content.** Jesus was content to have them be discontent for very good reasons.

There is an uncomfortable part of contentment. It's being content with God being in control. It's seeing what God is teaching us and where God is leading us.

It's more than just situational contentment. It's spirit led contentment.

Content to stay where God says to stay and content to go where God says to go!

God desires us to live a full and joyous life here. Like a very old proverb from the 1600's says,

All work and no play makes Jack a dull boy,

Later Irish novelist [Maria Edgeworth](#) added,

All play and no work makes Jack a mere toy.

In other words, work is hardwired into us being happy, and learning to be content. Most of us understand that hard work is good for us, but we forget that spiritual hard work reflects our maturing in faith.

Using the Apostle Paul's phrases, "living by," or "walking in" the Spirit IS spiritual work. (Galatians 5:16, 25).

Mark 6:45-52

"Immediately after this, Jesus insisted that his disciples get back into the boat and head across the lake to Bethsaida, while he sent the people home. After telling everyone good-bye, he went up into the hills by himself to pray. Late that night, the disciples were in their boat in the middle of the lake, and Jesus was alone on land. He saw that they were in serious trouble, rowing hard and struggling against the wind and waves. About three o'clock in the morning Jesus came toward them, walking on the water. He intended to go past them, but when they saw him walking on the water, they cried out in terror, thinking he was a ghost. They were all terrified when they saw him. But Jesus spoke to them at once. "Don't be afraid," he said. "Take courage! I am here!" Then he climbed into the boat, and the wind stopped. They were totally amazed, for they still didn't understand the significance of the miracle of the loaves. Their hearts were too hard to take it in."

Three quick points about this fun little boat ride across the lake as big as an ocean.

- 1. Jesus insisted that his disciples get back into the boat.**
- 2. Jesus saw that they were in serious trouble.**
- 3. Jesus intended to go past them.**

Is this entire episode an object lesson for the Jesus' closest friends?

If Jesus had a point to make, what was it?

Mark compares the two miracles of “fish and loaves” to “immediately calming the storm.” What do these two miracles have in common?

Jesus' control over all things! Think about this: **Supernaturally multiplying bread loaves is one thing, but creating a once living thing, ie: a fish into multiple fishes.** That's astonishing!

Mark says Jesus just started replicating carbs and meats right in front of their eyes.

Whoa! I don't know if the disciples were just tired and hungry and super slow on the “understanding” part, but they missed the mystery of a miracle right in front of them. As if to think, “hmmm that was weird,” but gave it no further thought. They weren't processing what was happening even though it was right in front of them.

Jesus wanted them to have a Do-Over. It's what we teach our kids when they just didn't get some attitude or behavior down correctly. **It's a “let's try this again” learning experience.**

Mark 6:45-52 is an elaborate DO OVER!

If you ask, “Glenn, how can you say that?”

How could you possibly know why Jesus would

- **MAKE them get into the boat** to cross over at dusk.
- **Watch from the cliff side as they struggled in the bewitching hour of the night,** and
- **scare the poop out of them as he intended to pass on by.**

That's easy!

Mark tells us **for they still didn't understand the significance of the miracle of the loaves. Their hearts were too hard to take it in.**

It seems that **it is the disciples' own will that keeps them from understanding the full meaning of Jesus' message.**

God did in fact give them more than they could handle! There are more examples of this in the gospels.

What is going on here?

Is Jesus against them, making life and learning harder for them? I don't think so.

Are they really slow at understanding what God is up to and how Jesus goes about fulfilling his purpose at every possible moment?

Yes, and they are just like us.

I know in my life, I am really slow to get the point. First of all, it takes me forever to even clear my head of being angry, frustrated, or feeling like a victim. **But then I have to learn from it? Yes.**

Can I be content knowing that God is in control under the most frightening, frustrating times in my life?

Can I learn and understand contentment through circumstances that are difficult to process even as miracles are taking place all around me?

In 1964 a young woman searching for direction at a crossroads in her life. It was so difficult on her she penned this little poem called Footprints. Margaret Fishback celebrated the 50th anniversary of writing Footprints in 2014 and that the poem had travelled around the world.

Footprints in the Sand

One night I dreamed a dream. I was walking along the beach with my Lord. Across the dark sky flashed scenes from my life. For each scene, I noticed two sets of footprints in the sand, one belonging to me and one to my Lord.

When the last scene of my life shot before me I looked back at the footprints in the sand. There was only one set of footprints. I realized that this was at the lowest and saddest times of my life. This always bothered me and I questioned the Lord about my dilemma.

"Lord, You told me when I decided to follow You, You would walk and talk with me all the way. But I'm aware that during the most troublesome times of my life there is only one set of footprints. I just don't understand why, when I need You most, You leave me."

He whispered, "My precious child, I love you and will never leave you, never, ever, during your trials and testings. When you saw only one set of footprints, it was then that I carried you."

My version is nothing comparably serene and peaceful. Written in 2009, my experience as been,

"Skid-marks on the Sidewalk."

One night I dreamed I was walking through my neighborhood with the Lord.

Many scenes from my life flashed before my eyes. In each scene I noticed these shoe prints on the sidewalk. Sometimes there were two sets of shoe prints, other times there were only one set of shoe prints along with these really odd streaks.

This bothered me because I noticed that during the critical periods of my life, when I was seeking direction and purpose, I could only see one set of shoe prints followed by these strange marks.

So I said to the Lord, “You promised me Lord, that if I trusted you, you’d show me what to do. But I have noticed that during the most terrifying, decisive moments there have only been one set of shoe prints and these weird strokes.

Why, when I needed you most, it seems you disappeared?

The Lord replied, “The times when you have seen only one set of shoe prints along the path followed by a set of skid-marks are the times when I had to drag you to your destiny for you did not understand.”

This year’s Thanksgiving Offering will be directed to three areas:

- Project number one is **Convoy of Hope**, giving towards the [disaster relief in Florida](#).
- Project number two is [The Gateway Project](#), giving towards house churches, clean water and Champion Centers (special needs children) in Egypt.
- Project number three is [Preborn!](#), giving towards **saving babies and their mothers**, equipping pregnancy clinics throughout the United States.

NOTES

Quiz: True or False?

GOD WILL NEVER GIVE YOU MORE THAN YOU CAN HANDLE

<https://www.insightforliving.ca/read/articles/god-will-never-give-you-more-you-can-handle>

I hate to break it to you but that is just not Biblical.

A very old proverb from the 1600's
(https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/All_work_and_no_play_makes_Jack_a_dull_boy)
says,

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But later Irish novelist [Maria Edgeworth](#) added,

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The Story of Footprints in the Sand

<https://www.harpercollins.ca/9781443401753/footprints/>

The poem was composed by Margaret Fishback, a young woman searching for direction at a crossroads in her life. In this inspiring story, the creation of the poem, its subsequent loss and its astonishing recovery are intertwined with a life full of challenge, adversity and joy. October 2014 marks the 50th anniversary of the writing of "Footprints." **What was inspired by a walk on a beach in 1964 has become a treasured poem** that has brought comfort and courage to countless people all over the world.

Scriptures

Mark 6:45-46 NLT

"Immediately after this, **Jesus insisted that his disciples get back into the boat** and head across the lake to Bethsaida, while he sent the people home. After telling everyone good-bye, he went up into the hills by himself to pray."

Mark 6:47-49 NLT

"Late that night, the disciples were in their boat in the middle of the lake, and Jesus was alone on land. He saw that they were in serious trouble, rowing hard and struggling against the wind and waves. About three o'clock in the morning Jesus came toward them, walking on the water. He intended to go past them, but when they saw him walking on the water, they cried out in terror, thinking he was a ghost."

Mark 6:50-52 NLT

"They were all terrified when they saw him. But Jesus spoke to them at once. "Don't be afraid," he said. "Take courage! I am here!" Then he climbed into the boat, and the wind stopped. They were totally amazed, for they still didn't understand the significance of the miracle of the loaves. Their hearts were too hard to take it in."

Questions

Q: What was the significance of the loaves and fishes?

Q: Did it take a horrific boat ride and being scared to death out on a lake to allow them to reflect on it?

Q: Is this entire episode an object lesson for the Jesus' closest friends?

Q: Jesus had a point to make, what was it?

Q: Mark compares the two miracles of "fish and loaves" to "immediately calming the storm." What do these two miracles have in common?

Q: Can I be content knowing that God is in control under the most frightening, frustrating times in my life?

Q: Can I learn and understand contentment through circumstances that are difficult to process even as miracles are taking place all around me?

COMMENTARY REFERENCES

The Bible Knowledge Commentary

John 6:16–19: His walking on the water. According to Mark 6:45, **Jesus compelled His disciples to get into the boat and go to Bethsaida while He dismissed the crowds.** From Bethsaida they went on toward Capernaum. Both villages are at the north end of the Sea of Galilee. His disciples went down to the lake, for the land is hilly and high on the east side. As they got out on the lake, the sun went down and the wind picked up. **Jesus was up in the hills praying while watching them in their toil** (Mark 6:45–48).

The west wind, which often picks up at evening, caught them in the open water. They were headed directly into it and found themselves making little progress. They were "straining at the oars" (Mark 6:48). The Sea of Galilee is notable for its sudden and severe storms. **They had rowed three or three and a half miles, so they were in the middle of the lake.** They were terrified to see a figure walking on the water. They thought it was a ghost (Mark 6:49). Rational explanations have included the idea that Jesus was walking on the sand by the shore or floating on a large beam or log, but neither notion does justice to the text. This occurred in the "fourth watch" of the night, that is, between 3 and 6 o'clock in the morning (Matt. 14:25; Mark 6:48).

Mark 6:47–52 :

6:47. At evening (sunset till darkness) the disciples' boat was well out in the ... lake (not the geographical middle) and Jesus was alone on land. **When He was absent (or appeared to be), the disciples often experienced distress and demonstrated a lack of faith (cf. 4:35–41; 9:14–32).**

6:48. Jesus continued praying well past midnight. Meanwhile the disciples had made little headway out on the lake because a strong north wind blew against them. In the dim light of early dawn, the fourth watch of the night (by Roman reckoning, 3 to 6 a.m.; cf. 13:35), Jesus saw them straining at the oars and went out to them, walking on the choppy water's surface. The words He was about to pass by them do not mean **He was going "to bypass" them**. He intended "to pass beside" them in the sense of an Old Testament theophany (cf. Ex. 33:19, 22; 1 Kings 19:11; Mark 6:50b) to reassure them.

6:49–50a. The disciples cried out (cf. 1:23) with terror at Jesus' appearance on the water. **They thought He was a ghost (phantasma, a water phantom)**. Mark explained that they responded this way because they all saw Him (not a hallucination by a few) and were terrified.

6:50b–52. Immediately (euthys; cf. 1:10) Jesus calmed their fears and spoke words of reassurance. Take courage! (tharseite) Don't be afraid (lit., "stop fearing") are familiar Old Testament words to people in distress (cf. the LXX of Isa. 41:10, 13–14; 43:1; 44:2). The first command occurs seven times in the New Testament, always on the lips of Jesus except for Mark 10:49 (cf. Matt. 9:2, 22; 14:27; Mark 6:50; John 16:33; Acts 23:11). **The words It is I (lit., "I am," egō eimi) may simply convey self-identification ("It is I, Jesus"), but they are probably intended here to echo the Old Testament formula of God's self-revelation: "I am who I am" (cf. Ex. 3:14; Isa. 41:4; 43:10; 51:12; 52:6).**

When Jesus joined the disciples in the boat ... the wind died down (ekopasen, "stopped, rested"; cf. Mark 4:39), an additional demonstration of His mastery over nature (cf. 4:35–41).

The disciples were completely amazed (existanto, lit., "out of their minds"; cf. 2:12; 5:42) among themselves at this revelation of Jesus' presence and power. Mark alone explained (gar, for) they had not caught on to the meaning of the loaves miracle (cf. 6:35–44) as a pointer to His true identity. So they did not recognize Him when He walked on the water; they were spiritually imperceptive (cf. 3:5).

Faithlife Study Bible

Mark 6:52: they did not understand Jesus might have expected them to understand the significance of gathering 12 baskets of leftovers (Mark 8:17–21). Although Jesus gives the disciples special access to knowledge about the kingdom (4:11), **there are points in Mark where the disciples are ignorant of the significance of Jesus' teaching** (e.g., 7:17–18; 9:32) or actions (e.g., 8:21; 10:13). **hearts were hardened Indicates stubbornness** (see Exod 4:21 and note). Based on Jesus' later comment in Mark 8:17–21, it seems that **it is the disciples' own will that keeps them from understanding the full meaning of Jesus' message.**