

We come to the last 12 verses of Mark 6. I’m going to make a few comments on this passage and then I want to offer four lessons from a leaky boat to those of you who feel exhausted because you have been facing some strong headwinds you’re afraid that you’re not going to make it to shore.

Read 6:45-48a. Everywhere Jesus went, crowds of needy people were waiting for Him. 3:20-21, “Then he went home, and the crowd gathered again, so that they could not even eat. And when his family heard it, they went out to seize him, for they were saying, ‘He is out of his mind.’”

5:21, “And when Jesus had crossed again in the boat to the other side, a great crowd gathered about him, and he was beside the sea.”

6:30-32, “The apostles returned to Jesus and told him all that they had done and taught. And he said to them, ‘Come away by yourselves to a desolate place and rest a while.’ For many were coming and going, and they had no leisure even to eat. And they went away in the boat to a desolate place by themselves. Now many saw them going and recognized them, and they ran there on foot from all the towns and got there ahead of them.”

The way Jesus handled the noise of the needy was to set aside times of solitude so that He could check in with the Father.

“He made them get into the boat.” The word is very specific. He compelled them, He forced them, He made them do something they didn’t want to do. John helps us here. After the feeding of the 5,000, John’s account adds an interesting detail in John 6:15, “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.” It’s possible that the disciples were caught up in the afterglow of the miracle of the loaves and wanted to stick around and sign autographs. But Jesus “makes them” get into the boat and go to Bethsaida.

From Jesus’ vantage point on the side of the mountain, He could look out across the Sea of Galilee and observe the disciples straining at the oars and struggling to make headway against a stiff wind. So, He took a walk...on the water!

“He intended to pass them by.” 6:48b. This is an interesting observation by Mark. What is that about? The entire first half of Mark’s gospel is intended to demonstrate that Jesus is the Messiah. Or, to put it another way, God in human form. The first half of Mark’s gospel is answering the question the disciples asked after Jesus stilled the storm at the end of chapter 4, “Who is this man?” In rapid-fire succession He demonstrates authority over nature, sickness, demons, and even death. Here He walks on water and when Mark describes it, he uses a phrase from Ex. 33:18-19, “Moses said, ‘Please 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.’” Just as God passed Moses by, Jesus was intending to pass the disciples by to reveal the glory of His name.

Their fear is understandable...v. 49. They have been on that lake all day, exhausted from rowing. They are taking on water. They are probably taking turns rowing and then bailing. Then they see the figure of a man walking on water toward them. As He approaches, Jesus used two little words to comfort them, the same two words God used to introduce Himself way back in Exodus. He says, “Take courage, it is I, do not be afraid.” “It is I,” could be translated “I Am.” Those two little words, “I Am” have far more significance than their size would imply. Throughout John’s gospel for example, Jesus makes several “I Am” statements. Light of the world, good shepherd, the way, truth, life, the resurrection. He even says, “Before Abraham was, I Am.” These are the very words God speaks in the OT. In Exodus 3:14, Moses asks God how should he respond to the question the Israelites will ask, “Who sent you? What is His name?” “God said to Moses, “**I AM WHO I AM**”; and He said, “Thus you shall say to the sons of Israel, ‘I AM has sent me to you.’”

Jesus’ words are a not-so-subtle declaration of His deity. We are getting closer to the doctrinal center of Mark’s gospel where Peter proclaims, “You are the Christ.” (8:29). This is also the blazing center of the gospel. Jesus is the promised Messiah, God in human form who was sent from Heaven to pay the penalty of our sins and provide a place for us to live with Him forever. This is the answer to the question the disciples asked in Mk. 4:41, “Who then is this, that even the wind and the sea obey him?”

This event had the desired effect – the disciples recognized that Jesus was no mere man. They correctly concluded, “Truly you are the Son of God.” And when they get to the other side, there they are again...the needy...vv. 53-56

What do we take away from this passage? Here are four lessons from a leaky boat.

1. Obedience does not guarantee smooth sailing. The disciples are obedient to His command to go on ahead of him to their next assignment on “the other side, to Bethsaida,” but their obedience produces pain and exhaustion. What a good reminder for us. We often think that if I am obedient to God’s will, my path will get easier. The truth is that obedience is not only hard, but the results are often hard. Chris Young last week. Moved from Chicago to attend DTS...hard.

Next weekend I will recite the wedding vows for a beautiful young couple, “I take you to be my wife/husband in good times and bad, in joy and in sorrow, in sickness and health...” I know full well that they have no idea how bad times can get or how deep sorrow can be or how devastating it can be to watch helplessly as your loved one endures intense pain leading to death. Eleven of these 12 apostles will endure to the end. And what will they get for their obedience? They will suffer agonizing deaths at the hands of evil men.

“Blessed are you when people hate you and when they exclude you and revile you and spurn your name as evil, on account of the Son of Man! ²³ Rejoice in that day, and leap for joy, for behold, your reward is great in heaven; for so their fathers did to the prophets.” Mt. 5:11.

2. Jesus’ delays are not denials. If you find yourself in a tough spot, Jesus sees you. He is not unconcerned. He may appear to be disinterested in your situation or deaf to your prayers because He knows that sometimes delays can be beneficial to our faith. He may be withholding His help to build your faith...Azaleas/withhold water to make their roots grow deeper into the soil.

3. Jesus’ silence is not absence. It doesn’t mean He doesn’t care. Vv. 51-52, the wind dies down and the disciples were astonished. They were also a little slow. This is not the first time Jesus has calmed the angry sea. In fact, since they just saw Him feed 5,000 with a couple of fish and a few loaves of bread, is there anything He cannot do? The disciples are afflicted with a serious case of Arteriosclerosis. That is a hardening of the arteries or, in this case, a hardening of the categories. It is easy to lose sight of the supernatural and focus only on the natural world. But How does that happen? They forgot. They forgot that He calmed the Sea in chapter 4. He resurrected a dead girl in chapter 5. He turned 1 meal into 5,000 in chapter 6. And He will come to their aid again just a few hours later. The One who stills the storm and walks on water sees us in our need and has His eye on us always.

4. When you go through troubled waters, don't be afraid, keep your eyes on the great "I Am". Now, for the rest of the story. Mt. 14 fills in the rest of the story. "And Peter answered him, 'Lord, if it is you, command me to come to you on the water.' He said, 'Come.' So, Peter got out of the boat and walked on the water and came to Jesus. But when he saw the wind, he was afraid, and beginning to sink he cried out, 'Lord, save me.' Jesus immediately reached out his hand and took hold of him, saying to him, 'O you of little faith, why did you doubt?' And when they got into the boat, the wind ceased. And those in the boat worshiped him, saying, 'Truly you are the Son of God.'" Mt. 14:28-33

This has been a stormy week for me. Thursday, we had the funeral for MB Gaylor. She was a pillar in this church and prayed for me often. When I was on my way to the funeral, Jana texted me to let me know that some of our oldest friends lost their only son to suicide. Our boys grew up together and he was gone. Then I woke up yesterday to learn that my friend Charles Taylor died late Friday night. I am comforted by this passage. What do you do when the winds blow and you are straining at the oars? Keep your eyes on the I Am.

It is no secret. We are facing an uncertain future. Our staff and elders have been straining at the oars and rowing this boat against the prevailing winds of change. They need our prayers. More importantly, they need to know that Jesus sees us and will be there for us when we need Him most. Never doubt that. He may not show up in your time or my time but He will be there in time.

Jordan on bicycle...

FOLLOW

JESUS THROUGH THE BOOK OF MARK

PART 1: FOLLOW THE PERSON OF JESUS



“Then he went home, and the crowd gathered again, so that they could not even eat. And when his family heard it, they went out to seize him, for they were saying, ‘He is out of his mind.’”

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MARK 3:20-21

“And when Jesus had crossed again in the boat to the other side, a great crowd gathered about him, and he was beside the sea.”

MARK 5:21

“The apostles returned to Jesus and told him all that they had done and taught. And he said to them, ‘Come away by yourselves to a desolate place and rest a while.’ For many were coming and going, and they had no leisure even to eat. And they went away in the boat to a desolate place by themselves. Now many saw them going and recognized them, and they ran there on foot from all the towns and got there ahead of them.”

MARK 6:30-32

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.

MARK 6:47-52

18 Moses said, "Please show me your glory." 19 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.

EXODUS 33:18-19

28 And Peter answered him, "Lord, if it is you, command me to come to you on the water." 29 He said, "Come." So Peter got out of the boat and walked on the water and came to Jesus. 30 But when he saw the wind,[a] he was afraid, and beginning to sink he cried out, "Lord, save me." 31 Jesus immediately reached out his hand and took hold of him, saying to him, "O you of little faith, why did you doubt?" 32 And when they got into the boat, the wind ceased. 33 And those in the boat worshiped him, saying, "Truly you are the Son of God.

MATTHEW 14:28-33

“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.

MARK 6:53-56

FOUR LESSONS FROM A LEAKY BOAT:

OBEDIENCE IS NO GUARANTEE OF SMOOTH SAILING.

DELAYS ARE NOT DENIALS

SILENCE IS NOT ABSENCE

**WHEN YOU GO THROUGH TROUBLED WATERS, DON'T BE AFRAID,
THE "I AM" WILL BE WITH YOU.**