



# Mark - Lesson 6E

## Chapter 6:45-56

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- Last week we studied, arguably, one of Jesus' most powerful miracles regarding the nature of His ministry and the identity of His person pertaining to the Kingdom.
  - We witnessed Jesus feeding the 5,000 and this number was not including women and children.
    - It would be through this miracle that Jesus would demonstrate His work and power pointing to who He is as well as teaching His disciples a lesson.
    - The lesson they were to see was that Jesus is the good shepherd that David talked about in Psalm 23.
  - The disciples would have the opportunity to witness the caring and compassionate nature of Christ.
    - They would come alongside Jesus as they participate in serving the needs of the people as their supply and source of need was met by Jesus, Himself.
    - We also saw that this miracle pointed to Jesus being the greater Moses and pointed to Jesus' identity as the Messiah.
  - Tonight, we will see how, despite the powerful demonstration of Jesus feeding the 5,000, that His very own disciples just may have missed the point altogether.
    - If I were to put a tag on tonight's text it would be, "So Close Yet So Far".
    - With that being said, I invite you to open your bibles and meet me in Mark 6:45-56.

**Mark 6:45** Immediately Jesus made His disciples get into the boat and go ahead of Him to the other side to Bethsaida, while He Himself was sending the crowd away.

**Mark 6:46** After bidding them farewell, He left for the mountain to pray.

**Mark 6:47** When it was evening, the boat was in the middle of the sea, and He was alone on the land.

**Mark 6:48** Seeing them straining at the oars, for the wind was against them, at about the fourth watch of the night He \*came to them, walking on the sea; and He intended to pass by them.

**Mark 6:49** But when they saw Him walking on the sea, they supposed that it was a ghost, and cried out;

**Mark 6:50** for they all saw Him and were terrified. But immediately He spoke with them and \*said to them, "Take courage; it is I, do not be afraid."

**Mark 6:51** Then He got into the boat with them, and the wind stopped; and they were utterly astonished,

**Mark 6:52** for they had not gained any insight from the incident of the loaves, but their heart was hardened.

**Mark 6:53** When they had crossed over they came to land at Gennesaret, and moored to the shore.

**Mark 6:54** When they got out of the boat, immediately the people recognized Him,

**Mark 6:55** and ran about that whole country and began to carry here and there on their pallets those who were sick, to the place they heard He was.

**Mark 6:56** Wherever He entered villages, or cities, or countryside, they were

**laying the sick in the market places, and imploring Him that they might just touch the fringe of His cloak; and as many as touched it were being cured.**

- Let's Pray.
- A test is oftentimes the best indicator of where you are and can assist you in where you need to be.
  - In high school, I took AP Calculus and my professor's goal was to prepare us for the AP Exam.
    - Throughout our time with him, we were exposed to every question and iteration of questions imaginable to be as prepared as we could.
  - During study sessions, he would give us problems to solve that mimicked the exam to measure where we were.
    - However, with this particular teacher, it wasn't just about getting the answer correct, it was about following the progression of work, step by step.
    - There would be times when in answering the question we had a general idea of the answer, but if we missed those steps we didn't get the answer correct.
  - These simple mistakes or misunderstandings in the process were the defining line for if the question was partially correct or fully correct.
    - What was most frustrating was when you get to the end and the paper has been graded and you realize that because the answer was missing a negative or positive sign, he would say "You were so close, yet so far"
  - This is where we find the disciples tonight on their continued journey with Jesus.
    - They have walked with Him for some time, witnessed Him do mighty things but have not yet connected Him to being "The Son of the Living God".
    - We will see that, like a compassionate teacher, Jesus will bring the disciples through a test so they may see what He has been trying to show them all along.
  - Let's look at the first two verses together.

**Mark 6:45 Immediately Jesus made His disciples get into the boat and go ahead of Him to the other side to Bethsaida, while He Himself was sending the crowd away.**

**Mark 6:46 After bidding them farewell, He left for the mountain to pray.**

- Mark picks us up at the later end of where we left off last week, and that is the scene of Jesus having just fed a crowd of over 5,000 people.
  - It was at the demonstration of this great miracle that the crowd who had received this generous meal from Jesus recognized a familiar sign from the Old Testament.
    - That sign we discovered was connected to the words of Moses in Deuteronomy 18:15-18.
    - This statement was Messianic in nature and spoke to the fact that the Lord would raise up a Prophet like Moses "whom the people shall listen to".
  - We also discovered in the Mishnah that this Prophet would be a greater Moses and

that He would feed the people an abundance of bread as Moses did centuries ago.

- So, with the people seeing this sign and realizing that the bread in which the disciples were supplying was not running out, they connected this work to that of the promised Messiah.
- However, their understanding of Jesus' identity and person was more fixated on a physical/political rule rather than a spiritual/transformational one.
- To the crowd they were expecting Messiah to be this political, militant, conquering King.
  - In other words, they wanted their physical release and freedom from the bondage of Roman rule.
  - However, Jesus' first coming was not focused on their physical liberation from Rome but rather their spiritual freedom from sin and its consequences.
- So, in the crowds' finite understanding of Jesus' authority and power, they attempted to capture Jesus to put Him where they wanted Him and that was in power.
  - Little did the people know that the way in which the physical manifestation of the Messianic Kingdom would come would first be through the death and resurrection of its King – Jesus Christ.
  - The only way in which one could experience this not-yet, but coming physical Messianic Kingdom is if they were made spiritually alive through Faith in Christ Alone.
- It would be this pre-mature attempt to make Jesus King right then that would resemble a similar pre-mature offer from Satan in the wilderness during Jesus' testing.
  - So it is because of this misunderstanding from the crowd, and as you will also see, the disciples, that we can better understand Mark's use of wording in verse 45.
- You can sense that there is this immediacy of dismissal of the disciples here in the text.
  - What is most interesting is that Mark tells us that Jesus "made" the disciples go to the boat and sail away to the other side.
  - The word "made" in the Greek is *anankazo* (an-an-kazo) which means to compel someone or force them to do something.
  - The question becomes: Why must the disciples move with such haste and force and not the crowd? Why such immediacy?
- Well it becomes apparent from the scene we just spoke about that the disciples themselves have somehow become potentially influenced by this Messianic upheaval.
  - *Anankazo* (an-an-kazo) suggest that there was possibly some reluctance from the disciples to leave (potentially agreeing with the crowd), however they obey and follow His instructions.
  - We will see later on why Jesus sending them away was vital for their growth as disciples.
- Mark continues by mentioning that as Jesus has dismissed the disciples hastily,

He bids the crowd farewell and leaves for the mountain to pray, alone.

- As you may remember, whenever scripture mentions this pattern of Jesus going to pray alone, it usually leads to a major demonstration of His person and identity but most importantly a major lesson to be learned.
- Let's look at verses 47-52 to see what that lesson will be.

**Mark 6:47** When it was evening, the boat was in the middle of the sea, and He was alone on the land.

**Mark 6:48** Seeing them straining at the oars, for the wind was against them, at about the fourth watch of the night He \*came to them, walking on the sea; and He intended to pass by them.

**Mark 6:49** But when they saw Him walking on the sea, they supposed that it was a ghost, and cried out;

**Mark 6:50** for they all saw Him and were terrified. But immediately He spoke with them and \*said to them, "Take courage; it is I, do not be afraid."

**Mark 6:51** Then He got into the boat with them, and the wind stopped; and they were utterly astonished,

**Mark 6:52** for they had not gained any insight from the incident of the loaves, but their heart was hardened.

- At this point in the story, there seems to have been some time that has passed from the conclusion of Jesus' dismissal of the disciples and the crowd to verse 47.
  - The text tells us that evening had come and along with the evening came the strong surge of winds and tumultuous tides.
    - What is most interesting in all of this is that while the disciples are in the middle of the storm, Jesus is nowhere in sight (He is on land.)
    - The disciples are in the boat in the middle of the sea with no sign of relief while experiencing overwhelming headwinds.
  - However, unknown to the disciples, Jesus is on the land observing and watching these men while in the chaotic waters.
    - One question that should come to mind at this point is: "How long have the disciples been out at sea?"
  - To best understand their time out at sea we need to have a better understanding of the phrase "at about the fourth watch of the night".
    - Here is an excerpt from Julius Scott from his book, "Jewish Backgrounds of the New Testament":

**"A watch was the period of time a group of soldiers stood guard before being relieved."**

- ◦ Lachs in his writing in "A Rabbinic Commentary on the New Testament" states this:

**“According to Roman usage of time, there were four watches at night, which, as we know from Mark 13:35, were called “evening, midnight, cock crowing, and morning...” the evening ran from 6-9PM, midnight ran from 9PM – 12AM, cock crowing ran from midnight to 3AM, and the last stretch was from 3AM to 6AM.”**

- So based upon the Roman usage of time and the fact that by evening the boat was in the middle of the sea till the moment Jesus arrived to them by the fourth watch, that puts these men on the sea for approximately 9 hours.
  - These men have been toiling and struggling torturously with the boat in the chaotic waters and are more than likely exhausted.
  - This scene may begin to recall a time where the disciples were in a similar condition in the same water, but with a sleeping Jesus.
    - The only difference now is that Jesus is on the land observing them while the disciples are on the sea in a similar condition, but by themselves.
  - So where Jesus’ sleeping served as a means of testing their trust (faith) in Him then, what do you suspect His absence from the boat is doing?
    - What is most captivating to me at this point is not that these men have been in the boat for 9 hours, but that Jesus has been watching them and aware of their condition the entire time. Why?!
    - This reality is both comforting and startling and brings up a very important applicational point!
  - And that is: Our God is both keenly aware of our situation and personal storms in our lives, and at the same time He allows us to go through it, yet not alone.
    - The word “straining” in verse 48 is the Greek word *basanizo* (bas-an-izo) which in this context speaks to the strain and struggle of the disciples in the storm.
    - The question you may be asking is: “Why would Jesus look at their situation and not respond immediately as He compassionately did with the needs of the crowd?”
    - What would make Jesus look upon their suffering, but yet not move with haste?
  - This brings us to an important note and that is this: God’s willingness to keep you in the storm is for the purpose of refining you to see Him more clearly, but most importantly that you may call on Him while in it.
    - Having a proper perspective of suffering in your life better produces right character in us.
    - It allows us to grow in our faith and maturity as followers of Jesus.
    - James 1:2-4 tells us this:

**James 1:2 Consider it all joy, my brothers and sisters, when you encounter various trials,**

**James 1:3 knowing that the testing of your faith produces endurance.**

**James 1:4 And let endurance have its perfect result, so that you may be perfect**

**and complete, lacking in nothing.**

- Verse 48 offers us a very “personal view” of our Lord and Savior as He comes to meet them in the chaotic waters.
  - Mark tells us that as Jesus sees them struggling in the storm He moves to respond, but in a way that would grasp their attention.
  - So instead of walking towards the boat, the text tells us that Jesus intended to “pass by them”.
  - This phrase “pass by them” is an exact expression that we see in the Old Testament – two places in particular.
    - We first see this phrase when Moses ask Yahweh to show him His Glory (Exodus 33:18-23).
    - In response to that, Yahweh hides Moses under a clef in the rock and only shows him his backside.
    - He does this because if Moses saw all of His glory in its fulness, he would have died.
    - So this showing is a partial revealing which is why Moses returns down from the mountain in the powerful glow.
    - This is how Moses responded after witnessing the Glory of God: Turn quickly to Exodus 34:6.

**Exodus 34:6** Then the Lord passed by in front of him and proclaimed, “The Lord, the Lord God, compassionate and gracious, slow to anger, and abounding in lovingkindness and truth;

- We then see yet another example of Yahweh “passing by” in Job 9:11.
  - It is here where Job does not feel that God is present in His circumstances and doesn’t understand why he is suffering. Check out the text:

**Job 9:11** “Were He to pass by me, I would not see Him;  
Were He to move past me, I would not perceive Him.

- Job is struggling with the reality of his present suffering and is not understanding why he is going through what he is going through.
  - But as he wrestles with the reality of his present suffering, he holds true to the nature and character of God.
  - Check out Job 23:8-10:

**Job 23:8** “Behold, I go forward but He is not there,  
And backward, but I cannot perceive Him;

**Job 23:9** When He acts on the left, I cannot behold Him;  
He turns on the right, I cannot see Him.

**Job 23:10** “But He knows the way I take;

### When He has tried me, I shall come forth as gold.

- One thing that we can see from Jesus passing by in the midst of this storm is not just speaking to His Sovereign power, it speaks to His compassion for His children.
  - That although He is watching and allowing His disciples to struggle for a period of time in their physical situation, the Lord was bringing about spiritual illumination.
  - This storm was simply a test to show them where they are in light of who He is!
  - Tests simply reveal areas of refinement for the purpose of full maturity.
  - I find this most encouraging friends, because the reality is we oftentimes separate God's activeness or feeling of His presence from our personal storms.
    - When the truth of the matter is: God is both divinely sovereign outside of our circumstance as well as intimately aware of where we are.
    - Take courage that this “storm of perfection” is simply pointing us to see Christ all the more clearly that we may know Him well and more intimately.
  - This leads us into the other point that Jesus is making here which we see in verses 49 and 50.
    - Check out verses 49 and 50 again:

**Mark 6:49 But when they saw Him walking on the sea, they supposed that it was a ghost, and cried out;**

**Mark 6:50 for they all saw Him and were terrified. But immediately He spoke with them and \*said to them, “Take courage; it is I, do not be afraid.”**

- Mark tells us that as Jesus is passing by, the disciples begin to see a figure of some sort walking on the water. They assume it is a ghost and become panicked.
  - If the waves were terrifying them at this point most certainly an unidentified person walking on the water would get their attention.
  - It is in the disciples' fear that Jesus compassionately reminds them of their faith in Him.
  - Now before we gloss over this, remember that Jesus' demonstration of power and miracles always leads to revelation to who He is!
    - So to the disciples, someone walking on water was something that no person could do.
    - At worst they ate some bad fish and are seeing a ghost of some sort, however that's not the case.
    - These men are very aware of their surroundings yet they are still somehow not aware of the One they have been walking with, fully.
    - Friends, Jesus walking on the water was much more than a simple “short cut” to the boat, it was a personal demonstration for His disciples to see who He really was!
  - Interestingly enough, check out what Job 9:8 says regarding the very power and might of Yahweh. Check out the text:



**Job 9:8 Who alone stretches out the heavens  
And tramples down the waves of the sea;**

- The word trample in Hebrew is *drk* (de-rok), which means, to tread upon or on top of.
  - In other words, one of the defining characteristics of Yahweh is His ability to walk on water.
  - Jesus is showing them that He is more than a multiplier of bread, He is greater than a Prophet – He is the provider of all things.
    - Mark speaks directly to the identity and authority of Jesus!
  - The question one must ask themselves is: “Lord, how are you using my present sufferings or storms to see you more clearly.”
    - How is this storm being used for me to know you more, walk with you closely, and worship you more passionately?
  - Life’s storms are an opportunity to gauge our view of Christ!
    - Do we have a clear view of who He is even when the winds are forcefully blowing and the waves steadily crashing?
    - Or is your view of Him a bit blurry to the point that, like Peter, you have to ask, “If that is you Lord, let me out of the boat?”
  - Matthew’s gospel includes Peter’s experience outside of the boat with Jesus and what is most telling is, the moment that Peter takes His eyes off Jesus he begins to sink.
    - Why? Because Peter takes his eyes off the One who is His Provider and present help and looks at the things that are around him.
    - Rather than Peter recognizing who is with Him, he focused on the physical reality around him.
  - And as workers in ministry and disciples of Christ, the reality is we can do nothing apart from Jesus.
    - John 15:5 tells us this:

**John 15:5 I am the vine, you are the branches; he who abides in Me and I in him, he bears much fruit, for apart from Me you can do nothing.**

- In ministry we can become so accustomed to doing for Jesus that we miss what it means to be with Jesus or to abide in Him.
  - We get so used to doing the work in our own strength that we forget it is God Himself who is both allowing us and providing for us to do these things (both willing and working in us).
  - Paul tells the church at Philippi these words in Philippians 2:12-13:

**Philippians 2:12 So then, my beloved, just as you have always obeyed, not as in my presence only, but now much more in my absence, work out your salvation with fear and trembling;**

**Philippians 2:13 for it is God who is at work in you, both to will and to work for His good pleasure.**

- ○ But where the disciples went wrong was seeking to find their provision outside of the one who provides their every need.
  - It is the disciples' failed test at the feeding of the five thousand that prompted this test to come about.
- If you remember in John 6:5, as Jesus sees the large crowd coming, He looks to Philip and asks him a question.
  - The question that Jesus asks was "Where can we buy bread so that these people can eat?"
  - The text then tells us that Jesus asks the question to test Philip.
  - Looking at the overwhelming number of people there, Philip responds as Jesus knew He would and Philip speaks to the physical limitations and cost versus realizing that Jesus, their provider was with them.
- That before Jesus had sent them on their trial mission with nothing, in effort for them to realize that all they needed was provided by Him. (Mark 6:7-13)
  - Yet it seems as though with Philip's answer, this reality did not click for him or the other disciples.
- So the only way in which true understanding and maturity in their understanding could come about would be through their testing – and a test this was.
  - You have to love how Jesus responds to their fear. He reassures them of who He is. Look at verse 50.
  - He says "Take courage, it is I, do not be afraid."
- When Jesus makes that statement, He not only reassures them that they need not be afraid but that He is with them.
  - It is important to see this phrase in the original language.
  - The statement "it is I" in Greek is *ego eimi* which means "I AM" which is identical with God's self-disclosure to Moses in Exodus.
- For example, when Moses asked the question, "When Pharaoh asks who has sent me, what do I tell him?"
  - Yahweh responds by telling Moses, "Tell him that "I AM" has sent you!"
- In other words, Jesus lets the disciples know that the God-man is with you. You need not fear for I am all that you need.
  - It's almost as if the disciples needed a "rocky reminder" of who Jesus was:
    - He was more than a healer for the sick.
    - He was more than a miracle worker.
    - He was more than just a provider for the inconvenienced.
    - He was God in flesh dwelling amongst His people to provide the rescue and deliverance they needed.
- And it became clear that the disciples "had not yet gained that understanding

from the feeding of the 5,000.”

- Verse 51 and 52 tell us that after Jesus assures the disciples that it is Him, He comforts them with His presence by getting into the boat.
- It is at that point that the storm ceases immediately.
- Once again, a reminder of what Jesus has done before while in the boat, except this time Jesus uses no words, He simply enters the boat and nature responds accordingly.
  - Isn't it interesting how the moment that we set our affections upon Jesus in the midst of the storm or trial, peace meets us in that place.
- The biggest storms of my life, ones I didn't think I would get through soon enough...
  - The moment I called on Jesus,
  - The moment I turned my worry to worship,
  - The moment I opened my word,
  - The moment I fixed my eyes on Jesus, what seemed as a rushing mighty wind of defeat turned into a rushing wind of peace.
- Friends Jesus is the buoy in the storm, the anchor that will keep us steady and secure.
  - Mark tells us that although Jesus has calmed the sea, once again, that these works weren't registering in their minds.
  - Mark tells us the reason being is because “their hearts were hardened”.
- Now before we jump to conclusions, we could look at this word “hardened” and assume by its typical usage and definition that it speaks to the unbelief of men.
  - However, we must understand the use of this word with the audience addressed and in the proper context.
- In this context, regarding the disciples, the word “hardened” simply refers to them being insensible.
  - In other words, the disciples were not able to connect the dots between Jesus and these profound miracles He was performing.
  - It's like having a brain fart. You see the signs and the information but the picture is just not adding up yet.
- So, through Jesus bringing about this testing in the sea, He uses it as a means to bring about revelation of His person.
  - Now before we begin to walk around saying “How did the disciples not see all of these signs?”, we have to realize what these men and the people were combating before.
  - They have been inundated with pharisaical teachings and doctrine and have not been taught the truth about God until Jesus comes on the scene.
  - They are being constantly shown, in teaching, about Jesus and His mission but yet they have not fully come to the realization of His person.
- And in a way this is quite telling of our growing walk with Jesus, day by day.
  - That we can get so accustomed to walking with Jesus that it becomes easy to

miss His true identity because we think we have grasped all there is to know about Him.

- And there is a true danger there because our comforts about knowing Jesus cannot outweigh our daily intimacy (abiding) with Jesus.
- May we never get so comfortable that we miss the power of the Person of Jesus in our lives daily.
- This constant demonstration of who He is in His person and identity serves to point us to who Jesus truly is! And that is the Son of God!
  - Now, you have to imagine the frustration of Jesus at this point.
  - Time and time again making His power and works known.
  - Speaking to the disciples, not in parables, but explaining what He is teaching them.
- So this hardening of their hearts is not tied to their belief, it is tied to their understanding.
  - It's like getting married to your spouse.
- Initially, you did not know everything there is to know about your spouse – you just know they are the one for you.
  - That trust and growth in your relationship happens over time.
- And over time, your marriage gets tested, and through the test of life, the trials are meant to refine you and shape you to conform you more to Christ and ultimately closer to each other.
  - In the same way, Jesus is making Himself known more and more to the men that He has selected in making known the Kingdom of God and how one enters.
- The beautiful thing about this storm that Jesus had them in is that it gave them the opportunity to realize another aspect of the character and nature of Jesus.
  - Have you ever gone through a difficult storm in your life which you never expected, yet when you came out of it, your view of God became clearer.
  - It's almost as if you didn't go through that storm, your intimacy and deeper knowledge of God would have been stifled.
  - This is what the discipleship relationship with Jesus looks like – it is to conform us into the image of Jesus and to mature our faith.
- Maturity in our faith in Jesus is like exercising a weak muscle. It requires constant and consistent development in which one grows in Christian Character.
  - Mark continues by transitioning to the next scene in which Jesus has instructed the disciples to go. Check out verses 53-56.

**Mark 6:53 When they had crossed over they came to land at Gennesaret, and moored to the shore.**

**Mark 6:54 When they got out of the boat, immediately the people recognized Him,**

**Mark 6:55 and ran about that whole country and began to carry here and there on their pallets those who were sick, to the place they heard He was.**

**Mark 6:56** Wherever He entered villages, or cities, or countryside, they were laying the sick in the market places, and imploring Him that they might just touch the fringe of His cloak; and as many as touched it were being cured.

- Mark lets us know that after the storm has ceased and the winds have calmed that Jesus and the disciples have now arrived to a place called Gennesaret which is not too far from Capernaum.
  - And upon arrival to this place, as they are moving the boat to shore, the people recognize the motley crew of disciples and Jesus.
    - It almost seems that this was a scene of great excitement.
  - Verse 55 tells us that once the people recognized Jesus they ran to tell the whole countryside that He was there and they responded by bringing all their sick.
    - From every corner of the villages and cities, the people were coming to receive healing from Jesus.
  - In one way, this speaks to the growth of Jesus' ministry as a whole.
    - From the sending out of His disciples to the feeding of the 5,000, His work and miracles become known more and more.
  - The question that one must ask in all of this is: Will this demonstration of Jesus' work lead the people to know His identity and purpose of His coming.
    - Mark leaves us at the end of Chapter 6 with the question we have to face week after week:
      - And that is "Who is Jesus and what has He come to do, but most especially, do you believe He is who He has shown Himself to be time and time again?"
  - It's more than knowing what He can do and being familiar with Him in a convenient way, but do you know Him!
    - Convenient Christianity is not real Christianity. True faith in Jesus is a faith that costs you your convenience, and your perceptions about Jesus.
    - It is about truly abiding with Him and growing to know the bride Groom well.
    - Let's Pray.