

In Mark 6 we have several significant incidents that took place during the ministry of Jesus. It begins with Jesus being rejected in his home town of Nazareth. After leaving there, he sent his twelve on what we might call a limited commission as they were to go only to the house of Israel in their preaching the message of repentance. From there, we learn about the beheading of John the Baptist.

Finally the twelve returned from their venture and were anxious to share with Jesus what had happened, but Jesus was busy with the multitudes. ***Mark 6:31 And he said unto them, Come ye yourselves apart into a desert place, and rest a while: for there were many coming and going, and they had no leisure so much as to eat.*** Jesus suggested that they go to a private place where they could talk and maybe even get time for a bite to eat. So they got into a boat privately and departed for a desert place, but the people saw where they were going and walked around the shoreline of the sea to where they were. Jesus got no rest and rarely had time to himself. ***Mark 6:33-34 And the people saw them departing, and many knew him, and ran afoot thither out of all cities, and out went them, and came together unto him. (34) And Jesus, when he came out, saw much people, and was moved with compassion toward them, because they were as sheep not having a shepherd: and he began to teach them many things.***

Wanting some private time with his twelve, the multitude was coming. Here we see the compassion of Jesus. Many of us would be bothered that the crowd was intruding and was invading on our privacy; but not Jesus. Still no indication that they had taken time to eat because as Jesus came out of the boat; he saw the people and was touched. He saw them as sheep without a shepherd.

Sheep without a shepherd are helpless and vulnerable to predators. They tend to wander from place to place without direction. This is what Jesus saw in these people, so he set aside his wishes to visit with his twelve and gave his attention to teaching the multitude. As his disciples, sometimes we too are called upon to set aside our wishes for the sake of others.

It was in this setting that Jesus fed the multitude with two fish and five pieces of bread that a lad had brought. After feeding the 5000 plus, the people wanted to make Jesus a king, but Jesus did not want to be involved in a forced political kingdom. ***John 6:15 When Jesus therefore perceived that they would come and take him by force, to make him a king,***

***he departed again into a mountain himself alone.*** Mark tells us that Jesus sent the multitude away and sent his disciples across the sea before he departed into the mountain alone to pray. ***Mark 6:45-46 And straightway he constrained his disciples to get into the ship, and to go to the other side before unto Bethsaida, while he sent away the people. (46) And when he had sent them away, he departed into a mountain to pray.***

Finally some quite time, but even then there was no time for rest and relaxation – it was a time of prayer. Jesus displayed remarkable stamina. Jesus went up into the mountain to pray. Fifteen times in the gospels it mentions Jesus praying. He felt the need to spend time with his Heavenly Father alone in prayer. Prayer was a vital part of Jesus' life as it should be of every person claiming to be a Christian.

***Mark 6:47 And when even was come, the ship was in the midst of the sea, and he alone on the land. (48) And he saw them toiling in rowing; for the wind was contrary unto them: and about the fourth watch of the night he cometh unto them, walking upon the sea, and would have passed by them.*** During the evening hours, while alone with his heavenly Father, Jesus saw his disciples in the midst of sea in a storm.

Jesus saw his disciples struggle with the strong wind that was blowing against them. This was about the fourth watch which would be around three in the morning. One wonders if Jesus had gotten any rest at all; but he sees his chosen that was in trouble and he cared for their well-being.

This serves as a reminder to us that he sees us in our storms of life also. Listen to what Peter tells us. Now Peter could speak first hand because he was one of those that were battling the storm. ***1 Peter 5:7 Casting all your care upon him; for he careth for you.*** Can we come to grips with the gravity of that passage? The Lord cares enough for us and our well-being that we can cast all of our burdens and cared upon him. He will be there; He will not forsake us. ***Hebrews 13:5 Let your conversation be without covetousness; and be content with such things as ye have: for he hath said, I will never leave thee, nor forsake thee.***

Jesus saw his disciple in that small boat out in the middle of the sea; so he goes to them. Once again we see the compassion of Jesus and his willingness to put others before his personal will. He left his privacy to go. But he went in

the most unusual way. He walked out to them on the water. Of course this defiles nature. People cannot walk on water; but Jesus did. And as he walked on the water, he overtook his disciples who were struggling in the boat and when they saw him, they were afraid. **(49) *But when they saw him walking upon the sea, they supposed it had been a spirit, and cried out:*** They cried out with fear because they thought they were seeing a ghost. Artists portray Jesus wearing white clothing and if that is accurate, then try to visualize Jesus in the darkness of the night wearing white and walking across the water. If we were to see that we might think the same thing.

But once again we see Jesus showing concern as he immediately said, *“Be of good cheer: it is I; be not afraid.”* **(50) *For they all saw him, and were troubled. And immediately he talked with them, and saith unto them, Be of good cheer: it is I; be not afraid.*** He talked with them. The calming voice of the shepherd comforted them. What he said was “be of good cheer, it is I; be not afraid.” Perhaps these are the most comforting ten words ever spoken. It seems that they were not only afraid of the winds, but rather what they saw coming across the water; so Jesus comforts them with the word, “It is I.”

We see Jesus near his disciples to deliver them from the tempest, but they did not recognize him or even knew that he was near. In a sense, Christ may be near people today, and they not know him; as the Lord was in the place where Jacob was, and he knew it not (**Gen 28:16**) and as Christ was standing by Mary Magdalene at the sepulchre, and she took him to be the gardener.

**(51) *And he went up unto them into the ship; and the wind ceased: and they were sore amazed in themselves beyond measure, and wondered.*** We get a bit more information from John and Matthew’s account of this event. John tells us that they were 25-30 furlongs out into the sea. This would be three to four miles. They had starting rowing right about dark and now it was about 3:00 in the morning and they had only rowed some three to four miles. The distance to where they were going was about five to six miles so they were literally only about half-way.

But Matthew adds an interesting element that the other accounts do not mention. He tells us about Peter walking on the water. ***Matthew 14:27-30 But straightway Jesus spake unto them, saying, Be of good cheer; it is I; be not afraid.***

*(28) And Peter answered him and said, Lord, if it be thou, bid me come unto thee on the water. (29) And he said, Come. And when Peter was come down out of the ship, he walked on the water, to go to Jesus. (30) But when he saw the wind boisterous, he was afraid; and beginning to sink, he cried, saying, Lord, save me.*

After Jesus identifies himself, Peter said, “**Lord, if it be thou, bid me come unto thee on the water.**” Notice it was Peter that initiated this. The same is true today with people coming to the Lord. The first move is ours. While the Lord wants all to be saved, he does not force his plan of salvation on anyone. Notice two passages of scripture. **1 Timothy 2:4 Who will have all men to be saved, and to come unto the knowledge of the truth.** The knowledge of truth comes from knowing the Word. On one occasion Jesus said “thy word is truth.” The second passage is **James 4:8 Draw nigh to God, and he will draw nigh to you ...** Here we see that the first move toward God is ours to make. In our story today, Peter makes the first move.

*(29) And he said, Come. And when Peter was come down out of the ship, he walked on the water, to go to Jesus.* I comment Peter for his great faith yet I wonder why he wanted to do such a thing. Nonetheless, he stepped out of the boat into the treacherous water of the stormy sea and walked toward Jesus. I wonder how many steps he took. In that environment, Jesus would have had to be close to see as visibility would be limited because of the darkness and the turbulent waters. But Peter was focused on Jesus and was walking on top of the water.

*(30) But when he saw the wind boisterous, he was afraid; and beginning to sink, he cried, saying, Lord, save me.* While walking on the water, somewhere along the way Peter lost his focus on Jesus and refocused on the boisterous winds that were around him. Now understand this was not a calm sea where the water looked like glass. Instead it was rolling waves going up and down. There is no way you would be out on that water with getting soaking wet. When Peter saw and felt the waves, he lost his faith and began to sink.

Now remember, Peter was a fisherman by trade and made his living out in this sea. Surely he had been in storms before and surely also he could swim. So I wonder why he didn’t swim back to the boat. My guess is he was sinking like a rock and try as he may, he could not make it back to safety. Realizing his condition he cried, “**Lord save me.**” He

yelled out to Jesus to save him for he was about to drown in the depths of boisterous waters of the Sea of Galilee.

It's only when people today recognize that they are drowning in depths of sin that they recognize the need of a savior. Only then will they cry out, "*Lord Save Me.*" You see, it is your sin that separates you from the God of heaven and if you do not reach out in obedience to Jesus teaching on redemption you will drown in that sin. When Peter took his eyes off Jesus and looked at the effect of the wind, he became afraid; when Peter quit trusting he began to sink.

***Matthew 14:31 And immediately Jesus stretched forth his hand, and caught him, and said unto him, O thou of little faith, wherefore didst thou doubt?*** Jesus was ready and willing to help Peter. He stretched forth his hand and caught him. Then to our amazement Jesus rebuked Peter with the words, ***O thou of little faith, wherefore didst thou doubt?*** It was Peter's lack of faith that caused him to sink. In the lives of us today, doubt must be replaced by trusting faith. ***2 Timothy 1:7 For God hath not given us the spirit of fear; but of power, and of love, and of a sound mind.***

***Matt 14:32-33 And when they were come into the ship, the wind ceased.*** Once Peter and Jesus were in the boat, the winds ceased and the disciples were amazed and worshipped Jesus. ***(33) Then they that were in the ship came and worshipped him, saying, Of a truth thou art the Son of God.*** For the first time, the disciples of Jesus acknowledge that he was indeed the Son of God.

Mark's account tells us that they were amazed at the calming of the sea and had forgotten that Jesus had just fed the 5000 plus with a couple of fish and five pieces of bread. Mark goes on to say that it was a heart problem. ***(Mark 6:52) For they considered not the miracle of the loaves: for their heart was hardened.*** Let me suggest to you that it is the hardening of the heart that keeps people from obeying the gospel message today and a hard heart leads to spiritual destruction.

Invitation: Where do you see yourself today spiritually? Is your heart hardened? Are you sinking or are you in the safety of the Savior? Let us understand that the cost of a harden heart is spiritual death.