

MARK

Please turn in your Bibles this evening to Mark chapter 5 as we continue our study through the Word of God. In our last study, after a busy day of ministry, after sharing several parables, Jesus told His men to get into the boat and cross over to the other side.

And Jesus fell asleep and then this ferocious wind storm blew upon them and the ship was sinking. And the men were angry with Jesus for sleeping while they were drowning and they awoke Him and He rebuked them for their lack of faith and stilled the wind!

That is where we will pick up our study this evening, as they are sailing to the east side of the Sea of Galilee and they are coming to the country of the Gadarenes as we will see. And as they arrive there, they will encounter some demon possessed men.

With that as our introduction, let's begin reading in Mark chapter 5 beginning in verse 1 and let's see what the Lord has for us as we study through His Word.

MARK 5**VERSES 1-5**

As I have said, they are now on the eastern shores of the Sea of Galilee in the area of the Gadarenes. This is the area the tribe of Gad settled, outside of the promised land. Today this area is called Kursi.

At the time of Jesus this area was populated by mostly Gentiles, but there were some Jews there that raised pigs for the Gentiles to eat. It was a good market, not much competition but it was unlawful for the Jew to be in this business because a pig was an unclean animal according to Leviticus 11:7.

So as Jesus and His men arrive, as soon as they get out of the boat this demon possessed man comes at them. Now Mark and Luke focus on one of the two men that were demon possessed, maybe the more violent one, and Matthew tells us there were two. They were violent, chains couldn't hold them, people avoided the area because of them, and all the world could do for these men is avoid them, but Jesus came to set them free!

Now think about their lives and how they changed. I am sure they grew up among the people, played in the streets, maybe even worked for a time, until they were demon possessed and lived alone, no friends, no family anymore. They are living in seclusion, hiding in the tombs like the dead, causing people to fear them. A life destroyed.

Now when we speak of demon possession today people laugh, but it is real. This man was not just crazy as some think, but demons were controlling his life and destroying his life and that is exactly what the Devil does!

I like what C. S. Lewis wrote in his preface to his book, *Screwtape Letters*. He wrote,

There are two equal and opposite errors into which our race can fall about the devils. One is to disbelieve in their existence. The other is to believe, and to feel an excessive and unhealthy interest in them. They themselves are equally pleased by both errors and hail a materialist and magician with the same delight.

- C. S. Lewis, *Screwtape Letters*, p. 9

We need to have a balance here. Yes, demons are real but don't be consumed by them. Remember what John said, **“You are of God, little children, and have overcome them, because He who is in you is greater than he who is in the world. They are of the world. Therefore they speak as of the world, and the world hears them. We are of God. He who knows God hears us; he who is not of God does not hear us. By this we know the spirit of truth and the spirit of error.”** I John 4:4-6.

VERSES 6-8

Notice that Jesus does not go and seek this demon but this demon comes seeking Jesus. And as this demon possessed man comes forward he bowed down before the Lord acknowledging who Jesus is, God. Why did he bow before Jesus? Because the demons know that Jesus is God and before they fell with Lucifer they worshiped the Lord. And even now, they must bow the knee before their Creator!

And keep in mind that one day every knee will bow and every tongue confess that Jesus is Lord, either out of love or just acknowledging who He is.

I also find it interesting that these demons don't want to be tormented by Jesus and yet they have no problem putting this man through Hell, destroying his life as well as causing pain and suffering for the family and friends of these men who were possessed.

They also know they are not going to win, that judgment is coming for them. But before they lose this battle, they are going to destroy as many lives as they can, take as many people to Hell with them as they can!

VERSES 9-13

This guy was not possessed by just one demon, but many, for a Roman legion was made up of 6,000 men! Now that does not mean he had 6,000 demons in him, but he did have many.

We also see that some demons want or need to inhabit a body and thus, they ask Jesus to cast them into these swine or these pigs, some 2,000 of them! And as soon as Jesus casts them into the swine, these 2,000 pigs run off the cliff into the Sea of Galilee and die!

Why would Jesus do this? First of all, to show the people that Satan and his forces just want to destroy life, any kind of life. Secondly, this was not something Jews were to be involved in, raising pigs. And the number of pigs that were destroyed here could have taken care of a family of four for some 15 years. So this was a big loss and we will see how the people respond to what took place in a minute.

One more point and this just shows us how accurate the Scriptures are. When we were in Israel we visited this place and as you travel along this area there is only one place along the Sea of Galilee that slopes down, and it is in the area of the Gadarenes! Not only that, but there are tombs located in the same area, just as we are told here.

Now let's read on and see the response of the people and it is surprising to me and I bet to you as well.

VERSES 14-17

Again, this amazes me and it is very sad. You see, as word spreads of what Jesus did, the people come out and ask Him to leave town. Kind of a strange response since He just set this man free, or really men free! What's going on?

I think the people were more concerned about their economic loss than they were with these men. This pig business was not Kosher and Jesus shut it down and the people were not happy.

Make no mistake about it, the same happens today. A person who is into drugs, their life is a disaster. And then God saves them. And you think great, and it really is. But their family is upset that they are involved with this Jesus thing, they liked him better when he was into drugs.

Why? Because the light of God exposes their darkness, their sin and they don't like it. They looked much better when they compared their life to this drug abuser, but now that is changed and they don't like it. How sad!

We haven't changed, people are people and they many times love darkness rather than the light, and they will try to put out, extinguish the light. But it is very sad when people are more afraid of what Jesus will do in their lives than what Satan does. And in the end, they push Jesus away as we see here.

VERSES 18-20

Make no mistake about it, Jesus does not stay where He is not welcomed. So He leaves the area.

And I love this. As He prepares to leave this man who has been set free wants to go with Jesus, and you can't blame him. Who wouldn't! But Jesus tells him to go and spread the Good News of how God has set him free, be a witness to your family, your friends.

And this man shares the Good News with the people living in the area of the Decapolis, or the ten cities on the eastern shore of the Sea of Galilee, mostly a Gentile area! This is what Stedman tells us, “The Decapolis was ten Greek cities on the eastern side of the sea of Galilee, including Damascus. It was to this gentile community that Jesus commanded this man to go and bear witness.”

Now was there fruit from his labor? I believe so, for in Luke 8:40 we are told, **“So it was, when Jesus returned, that the multitude welcomed Him, for they were all waiting for Him.”** As Jesus heads back to this region, multitudes come out to meet Him. I believe this is the fruit of his ministry! The people saw what Jesus had done in this man’s life and they too were drawn to Jesus!

Listen to how Darby concludes this section. He says, “The world beseeches Jesus to depart, desiring their own ease, which is more disturbed by the presence and power of God than by a legion of devils. He goes away. The man who was healed . . . would fain [willingly] to be with Him; but the Lord sends him back . . . to be a witness of the grace and power of which he had been the subject.”

Look at what Jesus has done in our life. He has set us free from the bondage of sin and thus, we should go and share Jesus with others, we should be a witness of Him!

VERSES 21-24

Now Jesus is back in Jewish territory and a man by the name of Jairus, who was one of the rulers of the Synagogue in Capernaum, on the west side of the Sea of Galilee, came seeking Jesus.

You see, he has a hopeless situation before him, his daughter is ill, she is about to die. And for him to come to Jesus he was committing religious and social suicide. He was risking it all, but his daughter was more important to him than all the superficial religious and social activities he was involved in.

And I am sure he went to the Jewish religious leaders for help, but they were of no help and when there is nothing left, he goes to Jesus. And as Jesus hears the request of Jairus, He begins to follow him home, through the crowds of people that were all around Him.

But before Jesus gets to the house of Jairus, there is a woman with a need that encounters Him and seeks His touch. Listen to what transpires.

VERSES 25-34

Another desperate person comes to Jesus, a woman who was hemorrhaging for 12 years with this female problem. She must have been physically weak with all that blood loss, difficult to even get up and move around. She went to the physicians for help, spending all of her money, and they could not help her. For 12 years this went on and no cure!

Also, she was considered unclean for those 12 years, unable to touch or be touched by anyone! In regards to this, we are told, “By the very law of her people, she was divorced from her husband, and could not live in her home; she was ostracized from all society, and must not come into contact with her old friends; she was excommunicated from the services of the synagogue, and thus shut out from the women’s courts in the temple.” (Morgan)

She has tried everything and now she is at the end of her ropes, she has no place to go except to Jesus. In fact, the synagogue even threw her out because she was unclean! And hearing about Jesus she comes to Him with the hope of touching the hem of His garment and being healed. But to do that she had to go through the crowds, and in doing that she would touch people and they would touch her, but what else could she do? She stepped out in faith to Jesus.

Why the hem of His garment? I believe she knew what the prophet Malachi said, “**But to you who fear My name The Sun of Righteousness shall arise With healing in His wings; And you shall go out And grow fat like stall-fed calves.**” Malachi 4:2. The Hebrew word for “**wings**” can speak of the hem or edge of a garment and I believe that is how this woman saw it!

You see, Malachi is saying that the Messiah will bring healing in the hem of His garment and thus, she understood what the prophet had said and she now believes that Jesus is the Messiah and touches the hem of His garment and she is instantly healed!

It was a step of faith on her part. We too by faith obey what the prophets and the apostles have said and there is healing in Jesus. And when we reach out and touch Jesus you might say, we are instantly healed of our sin, as His blood cleanses us!

Now think about this for a minute, think about what this unclean woman did. You see, according to the thinking of the day, when this unclean woman touched Jesus it would make *Him* unclean. But because of the nature of Jesus and the power of God, that wasn't how it worked.

When she touched His garment, Jesus wasn't made unclean; the woman was made whole. When we come to Jesus with our sin and lay it upon Him, it doesn't make Him a sinner, but it makes us clean.

Now in the midst of this crowd, with people pushing all around Him, Jesus felt someone touch Him with a hand of faith, not like the crowds who were trying to grab hold of Him. And the disciples didn't get it, but this woman did. And as Jesus turned around looking over the crowd, she realized her secret was about to be exposed!

And now she began to fear because of what she had done. You see, she was not to be touched or touch others, she was unclean. But now, seeing the love of Jesus, she comes forward and tells her story and her healing by Jesus.

And that fear she had is now replaced with the peace of God. You see, not only was she physically healed by Jesus, but also spiritually. You can't have the peace of God without first making peace with God and that is done through Jesus!

Now in the midst of all of this going on, don't forget about Jairus. You see, he is still waiting and not patiently for Jesus. Would you be if your child was dying and the person who was to come and save her was delayed? Of course you wouldn't be patient. Why did Jesus wait? Because Jairus needed to see and hear the faith of this woman because of the news he is about to receive.

VERSES 35-43

I can't imagine how Jairus felt when the news came, "**Your daughter is dead. Why trouble the Teacher any further?**" His heart must have sunk inside of him. No more hope, no more life, it is over. It is just too late now!

But, in this hopeless condition here comes Jesus with words of hope, words of comfort. The words of Jesus were, "**Stop fearing (in unbelief), just keep believing!**" He had the faith to come to Jesus and Jesus doesn't want that faith to end.

Jesus wants this man to remember what happened to the woman, what Jesus said to her. He is now saying to Jairus. He saw what happened to this woman and Jairus was to use that to give him hope for his daughter.

The point is this, no matter what you are going through, you have to hang in there, hang on to God and His promises. Don't take your eyes off of Him!

Jehoshaphat was King over the Southern Kingdom of Judah, and the Moabites and Ammonites, plus others, gathered to attack them. The army of the enemy was larger than theirs, they couldn't win. So what did Jehoshaphat, what did the King, do? He brought it to God in prayer and said, **“. . . For we have no power against this great multitude that is coming against us; nor do we know what to do, but our eyes are upon You.”** II Chronicles 20:12. He recognized they had no power, but God did. Thus, what else are you going to do but give it to God!

Now as they head out we see that Jesus leaves the crowds behind and takes Peter, James and John with Him to the house of Jairus to see this man's daughter. And as they arrive the professional mourners are out with the flutists, and with Jairus being wealthy, they had many of these professionals. And can you imagine the noise as they were walking to the house of Jairus, he heard what was going on, he knew what it meant, his daughter was dead!

Of these professional mourners of this day, we are told, “Since even the poorest man was required by common custom to hire a minimum of two flute players and one professional mourner in the event of his wife's death, it is probable that one who held the rank of synagogue-ruler would be expected to hire a large number of professional mourners.” (Lane)

And as Jesus arrives and sees all this going on He says, “**Why make this commotion and weep? The child is not dead, but sleeping.**” And now the people went from wailing to laughter at what Jesus said. And they were mocking Jesus for His foolishness, they knew when someone was dead and this girl was dead! But, those words of Jesus were only foolishness if He could do nothing about her condition, but Jesus could!

We then see Jesus go into the house, leaving the mourners behind, and He takes the little girl by the hand and calls for her to arise and she did. And they were amazed. And I am sure the mocking stopped once these mourners saw this little girl come forward.

And then Jesus tells them to tell no one of this but how could you hold something like this back? You couldn't! You see, as God raises us from the dead, spiritually speaking, we should shout that from the rooftops. But many times we don't.

Understand this, what God has done in us is just as big a miracle as Jesus did with this little girl, let us not forget that.

Listen to these words from Psalm 113, where we read, “**Praise the LORD! Praise, O servants of the LORD, praise the name of the LORD! Blessed be the name of the LORD from this time forth and forevermore! From the rising of the sun to its going down the LORD'S name is to be praised.**” Psalm 113:1-3. May we share the Good News with those around us, giving praise unto God, for once we were dead, but now we are alive, once we were blind, but now we see. Praise the Lord!

MARK 6**VERSES 1-3**

Now Jesus is moving southwestward from Capernaum to Nazareth, about 20 miles away and His hometown. He grew up there, worked there as a carpenter, but He is not the local boy returning home. He is coming back as a teacher, a rabbi, as the Messiah with His followers around Him. Will it make a difference?

As we can see, it did not! Now it was common practice for teachers or rabbis to read a portion of Scripture and then expound on it. That is what Jesus is doing here except the rabbis would speak on the authority of other rabbis, what they had to say regarding the portion of Scripture they were reading.

But not Jesus, He spoke with His own authority the Words of God and the people were blown away by it, they never heard anything like that before.

And then there is the problem, and that is usually the case. You see, they had all the right information before them, but how were they going to process that information? As we have seen, they are not able to get beyond what they knew of Jesus, that He grew up right before their eyes, and that is going to be a stumbling block to them.

As the people try to process all these things regarding Jesus they saw Him as a tradesman like many of them were, a carpenter. Maybe they thought the Messiah would come with all the pomp and circumstance of a King and not a common laborer. This offended them.

Secondly, they could not get past the fact that He was the "**Son of Mary.**" You see, in that culture you were known by your father so this was a put down, they were saying He is an illegitimate child so how could He be the Messiah!

One writer put it like this, “The additional phrase ‘the son of Mary’ is probably disparaging. It was contrary to Jewish usage to describe a man as the son of his mother, even when she was a widow, except in insulting terms. Rumors to the effect that Jesus was illegitimate appear to have circulated in his own lifetime and may lie behind this reference as well.” (Lane)

And lastly, He had brothers and sisters and in their minds they couldn’t accept the fact that the Messiah would have brothers and sisters! Yes, they were amazed at what Jesus said but they talked themselves out of believing He is the Messiah, it did not fit in with what they believed of the Messiah, even though their concept was wrong and what they heard and saw Jesus do they couldn’t deny!

Now in verse 2 we see that they were amazed at His teaching but in verse 3 we see that they were “**offended at Him.**” It is the Greek word SKANDALIZOMA and it speaks of causing to stumble or repel someone. You see, as I have said, their familiarity with Jesus caused them to turn from Him. And whenever a person rejects Jesus, is offended by Him, there are consequences and we will see.

VERSES 4-6

How true that is. It seems that the greater distance you go from home the greater honor you tend to have. People can become so familiar that they lose the emotion they once had. And folks, that can happen to us when we become so familiar with the Lord that we take Him for granted. We can go through all the motions without any emotion.

With the football season starting let me ask you this question. Are you more passionate about football or the Lord? And granted, you can put anything in there but if you are more passionate about something other than the Lord, something is wrong!

I am not saying we can't enjoy things, we can. But we have to be careful that we don't replace them for the Lord. He has to be the priority in your life! And think about it. It is a privilege to be a child of God and to come and worship Him. It is a privilege to read His Word and to have His Spirit teach us. It is a privilege to pray and the Lord hears us, and-so-on!

And because of their unbelief, we see that there were consequences to their actions. Their lack of faith resulted in the fact that Jesus, **“... could not do mighty works there, except that He laid His hands on a few sick people and healed them.”**

I wonder how many things we miss out on because of our lack of faith, our unbelief! Lord, help us with our unbelief!

One more thing. Jesus was rejected by His own, and I am sure that hurt but He did not pout, He did not stop the work He was sent to do, but He continued on with the work as we are told, **“... Then He went about the villages in a circuit, teaching.”** May we continue in the work that God has for us no matter what we face!

VERSES 7-13

It was time for a road trip for the apostles! Jesus is preparing His men for ministry and they now need to go out and put into practice those things that they have learned. They were sent out to be witnesses of Jesus just as we are. And one of the best ways to learn is to go out and do, you can practice all you want, but when you do it, it is so much more valuable and you tend to grow more as you put those things into practice.

And I like the fact that He sent them out by two. One to share the other to pray I think is the idea here. But why did Jesus send them out with just a few of the basic necessities of life? I believe He wanted them to live by faith, to learn to trust in the Lord.

It is as Paul said in Philippians chapter 4, **“I can do all things through Christ who strengthens me. . . . And my God shall supply all your need according to His riches in glory by Christ Jesus.”** Philippians 4:13, 19.

You see, if God is going to use you He will provide for you to do those things, He will equip you for the work. Just as Jesus wanted their faith to grow He wants our faith to grow and that is done as we read the Word of God and apply it to our lives, taking those steps of faith!

Also, they were not to be looking for the best place to stay, you know, the four star Sands motel with free camel parking. They were to be satisfied with what God has provided for them and so should we. What a great lesson for us.

Now here is something that we probably all have to learn. When people refuse to listen to what you are saying, what are you to do? Cram it down their throats, right? Wrong! Argue with them, right? Wrong!

You are to move on, don't waste your time if they don't want to listen. Be sensitive to God's leading in this area. Pray and listen to what God is saying. Don't cast your pearls, the things of God before swine is the idea here.

And if they didn't listen, they rejected the truths of God found in the Word of God, then move on and shake the dust off your feet. You are moving on and for them, the judgment of God was coming and that is not a good thing!

And notice what they were preaching. They were preaching repentance, a turning from sin. Morgan put it like this, “First they preached that men should repent. That is a declaration that needs careful consideration. It does not mean that they told men to repent, but that they preached in such a way as to produce repentance.”

Not only did they preach for them to repent but we see miracles take place. The miracles authenticated their ministry but their ministry was one of repentance, that people would turn to the Lord which would then lead to a change in their actions, their behavior.

And we too must speak forth the Words of God letting the miracles of God authenticate our ministry! Yes, God still does miracles today, look at your own life, my life, and what He has done and is doing!

VERSES 14-16

As the ministry of Jesus grew the talk of the town was *“Who is this Jesus?”* Some said that He was Elijah for He was able to do many miracles. Others said it was the prophet, like Moses or one of the other prophets.

But Herod is thinking this is John the Baptist who has risen from the dead. Why? Because Herod had John put to death and now he had a guilty conscience. He had no peace, he was worried and uncomfortable, and that is good. When you are comfortable when you do evil that is bad, you no longer can feel right from wrong, your conscience is seared with a hot iron you might say.

VERSES 17-29

Why was John so upset with Herod’s lifestyle? See if you can follow me on this one. Herod Antipas married his half-niece Herodias who was the daughter of his half-brother Aristobulus. Prior to her marriage to Herod, Herodias was married to Philip, the half-brother of Herod Antipas, but she divorced him and Herod divorced his wife and they married each other. As sand through the hour glass, so go the days of our lives!

It was this lifestyle that John came against which got him thrown in prison. This prison, located near the fortress of Machaerus was near the northeast shore of the Dead Sea and it is still there today. This dungeon has its hooks still hanging where the prisoners were kept! The thing we need to remember is when we stand up for the Lord, for righteousness, we might get ourselves in trouble for the world likes to live in the dark so that their sin is not exposed. Thus, when we expose it, they don't like it. That should not stop us!

Now Herod had a strange fascination with John the Baptist. He recognized that John was a good man, he even came to talk to John from time to time, but, as we have seen, his actions are driven by his wife, Herodias, for she hated John.

He was going to be influenced by others as so many are today in a negative way. You see, Herod knew what was right, but he was wishy washy in his actions and, like I said, many do the same today. They hear the Word of God and their conscience is stirred, but their life is unchanged, they don't apply it to their lives and they find themselves in darkness, as we see happened to Herod. They let others influence them away from the Lord and His Word!

Here is how John was put to death. It was Herod's birthday and thus, Herod threw himself a birthday bash and with all the drinking that took place, he had his step-daughter Salome dance a seductive dance for him and all of his guests.

And as she did this Herod was so pleased, so turned on by this, he offered her anything, even half of his kingdom if she wanted it. Salome then goes to her mom and asks what she should do, and Herodias tells her to ask for the head of John the Baptist. How wicked this mother and daughter were!

Herod knew it was wrong and yet because of the guests who heard him make this offer to Salome he was going to violate the conscience that God had given him. He knew this was wrong but he now had to go through with his promise and he has John beheaded! His conscience is now dead!

The last picture we have of Herod in the Scriptures is some 13 or 14 months later, after the events of Mark chapter 6. It is the trial of Jesus where we read in Luke 23:6-12, **“When Pilate heard of Galilee, he asked if the Man were a Galilean. And as soon as he knew that He belonged to Herod's jurisdiction, he sent Him to Herod, who was also in Jerusalem at that time. Now when Herod saw Jesus, he was exceedingly glad; for he had desired for a long time to see Him, because he had heard many things about Him, and he hoped to see some miracle done by Him. Then he questioned Him with many words, but He answered him nothing. And the chief priests and scribes stood and vehemently accused Him. Then Herod, with his men of war, treated Him with contempt and mocked Him, arrayed Him in a gorgeous robe, and sent Him back to Pilate. That very day Pilate and Herod became friends with each other, for previously they had been at enmity with each other.”**

You see, he no longer feared God or the things of God. He wants Jesus to entertain him instead of Jesus transforming his life. He was comfortable with his lifestyle, he no longer wanted to change or felt the need to change. And what does Jesus do for Herod? ***NOTHING!***

Why? Because, as sad as it may be, Jesus saw nothing in Herod to respond to, his conscience was dead even though he was physically alive. Jesus has not come to amuse us or entertain us but to save us and make us a holy people who will worship Him. We can either accept that or reject that, the choice is ours. As Jesus said in Mark 8:36-37, **“For what will it profit a man if he gains the whole world, and loses his own soul? Or what will a man give in exchange for his soul?”**

Now as the disciples of John the Baptist hear of what happened to John, they go and take his body and bury it, and they tell Jesus all that transpired, what Herod did to John.

For Herod, things could have turned out differently if he didn't let peer pressure, the desire of being loved by the world be more important than God, but like many today, he refused to respond to God's calling.

Jesus in the book of Revelation tells us, **“Behold, I stand at the door and knock. If anyone hears My voice and opens the door, I will come in to him and dine with him, and he with Me.”** Revelation 3:20. May we respond to His call and not harden our hearts to Him!

One writer put it like this in regards how this is something that we need to look at. He wrote,

But there is also a message for the believer. A neglected conscience will suffer progressive desensitization to God so that we do not hear him when he speaks. We need to cultivate our conscience by filling our minds with God's Word and then obeying it. This is an educated conscience which is in balance with the Word of God. Let us pray that God will give us a conscience worthy of our position in him.

- R. Kent Hughes, Mark Volume One, Jesus, Servant and Savior, p. 145

VERSES 30-32

Keep in mind that the apostles were returning from their road trip and as they return they are telling Jesus of all the things that took place as they shared their faith. Yes, they were excited but they also were exhausted. Many times they didn't even have time to eat. And Jesus recognizes this and calls for them to follow Him to a deserted place where they can be refreshed and renewed. They needed it! The place they go to, according to Luke 9:10, is the area of Bethsaida on the northeast side of the Sea of Galilee, not the Bethsaida on the western side of the Sea of Galilee.

For me, rest is a four letter word. I struggle in this area a lot. But rest is not wrong, it is not being lazy, it is just needed because ministry can be physically, emotionally and even spiritually draining.

The only cure, the only remedy for that is getting alone with Jesus, spending time with Him so you will be refreshed, refilled, renewed. If you don't, you will burn yourself out.

There is a little saying at the Bible College that goes like this, "Mary had a little lamb, 'twas given her to keep. But then it joined a local church and died for lack of sleep!"

There is a balance out there or it will become a burden for us, and the Lord does not want ministry to be like that. Now the other extreme is doing nothing for the Lord and then you become spiritually overweight because you are not exercising the gifts, the talents that God has given you. Find that beautiful balance in your life with the Lord!

I am not saying you will not be tired in the work, but we should never get tired of the work. We are told in II Corinthians 4:8-11, **“We are hard-pressed on every side, yet not crushed; we are perplexed, but not in despair; persecuted, but not forsaken; struck down, but not destroyed - always carrying about in the body the dying of the Lord Jesus, that the life of Jesus also may be manifested in our body. For we who live are always delivered to death for Jesus' sake, that the life of Jesus also may be manifested in our mortal flesh.”**

And in II Corinthians 7:5-7 Paul tells us, **“For indeed, when we came to Macedonia, our bodies had no rest, but we were troubled on every side. Outside were conflicts, inside were fears. Nevertheless God, who comforts the downcast, comforted us by the coming of Titus, and not only by his coming, but also by the consolation with which he was comforted in you, when he told us of your earnest desire, your mourning, your zeal for me, so that I rejoiced even more.”**

Ministry is tough but our rest is in the Lord and we need to take that time each day to be with Him. We need to take that time and get away and rest these physical bodies.

VERSES 33-44

When the people saw Jesus get into a boat and sail the four miles or so to Bethsaida, they ran to catch up with him. And they ended up beating Jesus there!

Now please understand what they wanted from Jesus, their physical needs met and yet, their spiritual needs were not a concern! You see, according to John chapter 6 they came for the miracles that Jesus was doing. They were interested in the supernatural to heal their physical bodies when Jesus wanted to heal their hearts! They came for the wrong reasons.

What would you do in a situation like that? What did Jesus do? It says He had “**compassion**” on them. It is a word that literally means “I feel it in the pit of my stomach” or “to climb into the skin of another.”

You see, Jesus felt their pain, their loneliness, their fear, their disappointments and-so-on. These things moved Jesus. They were lost and Jesus wanted to guide them as their Shepherd. That is the love of God, and that is what He wants to do in our lives, even when we may come to Him for the wrong reasons, He wants to guide us back on the path that He has for us.

Now here is the problem. It was sometime after three in the afternoon and darkness would soon be coming as John tells us it was close to the Passover. And they ran to catch up with Jesus but they had no food and it was a long way home to get food.

And, keep in mind that the apostles were tired, they wanted to rest after a long day, and thus, their solution to this problem was to send all these people home!

Why was that the solution to their problem? Because, how in the world are you going to get enough food to feed some 15 to 20 thousand people? From a human standpoint this was impossible and thus, the only solution is to get rid of them, send them home.

The problem was that they had taken God out of the picture and yes, with man it is impossible but with God all things are possible! Now, before we are too hard on the apostles here, how often do we see situations and because it seems humanly impossible to accomplish, we walk away? We need to put God into the picture because He can do exceedingly abundantly above all that we ask or think! He can accomplish it as we see here!

It is interesting what Jesus does here. He tells them, “**you give them something to eat.**” That is an impossible mission! Why would Jesus tell them this? To stretch their faith, to help them to grow.

Philip, probably speaking for all of them, basically asks where they are going to get enough money just to feed these people a little bread. A denarius was the daily wage of a worker in those days and so 200 denarii was about 8 or 9 months' salary. But Jesus didn't ask them how much it was going to cost them to feed these people but He told them just to give them something to eat!

And like I have said, the problem with accomplishing this through human effort is that you are left high and dry. But for these men, keep in mind that they had just come back from this road trip and saw the awesome power of God, and now, with this overwhelming problem before them, they forgot about the Lord. Thus, their solution was to send everyone home before it got dark outside. We too tend to look at the impossible and walk away instead of bringing it to the Lord who can take the impossible and make it very possible, as I have said!

John tells us in John chapter 6 that Andrew found this young boy who had 5 barley loaves, like wafers or crackers, and 2 small fish like sardines, and he brought this young boy to Jesus. And Andrew's response to this was, "**. . . but what are they among so many?**" John 6:9. Not much faith on his part!

Now, did it really matter how much this boy had, his resources? Not at all! All that really mattered was he gave to Jesus all he had and God multiplied it! What a great lesson for us to learn. It doesn't matter how much ability, resources you have, only your availability to be used by God and your willingness to give what you have to the Lord so He can take it and do great things with it. This young boy was willing to trust God with what he had and look at the blessings that flowed from this act of faith!

Now before the Lord fed them He made them **“all sit down in groups on the green grass”** and the idea here is that it was like rows of vegetables being planted, all lined up in these groups. There was order not chaos and God is not the God of chaos, but of order, never forget that.

And this is how God works. The people are fed as they sit down and we must also take the time to sit before the Lord and be fed by Him.

Also, the apostles had to go to Jesus before they could feed the people and so must we. You see, you can't give what you don't have! If you don't come to the Lord to receive from Him, your work will be in the flesh and not by the Spirit of God. And look at how satisfied the people were as they were fed by the Lord. They were filled, they couldn't eat any more. God desires to fill us overflowing if we would only sit down in His green pastures and be fed by Him.

And not only were the people filled but they had 12 baskets of left-overs. The lesson is simple, if you give to the Lord He will give back to you more than you started with because His resources go far beyond ours. It is as Paul said in Ephesians 3:20, **“Now to Him who is able to do exceedingly abundantly above all that we ask or think, according to the power that works in us.”** God is our sufficiency!

VERSES 45-46

This is interesting to me. Why in the world did Jesus drive His men away from the people? John tells us **“Then those men, when they had seen the sign that Jesus did, said, ‘This is truly the Prophet who is to come into the world.’ Therefore when Jesus perceived that they were about to come and take Him by force to make Him king, He departed again to the mountain by Himself alone.”** John 6:14-15.

They wanted to make Him King so that He would free them of the Roman bondage they were in. But Jesus did not come the first time to set-up a literal, physical kingdom but a spiritual, internal one.

It is as Luke 17:20-21 says, **“Now when He was asked by the Pharisees when the kingdom of God would come, He answered them and said, ‘The kingdom of God does not come with observation; nor will they say, “See here!” or “See there!” For indeed, the kingdom of God is within you.”**

The people wanted Jesus as King, as I have said, they weren't interested in repenting of their sins. And possibly the crowds were chanting *“Jesus! Jesus!”* and thus, Jesus wanted His men out of there, for they were already arguing who would be the greatest in the kingdom. He didn't want them to get caught up in all of this, they were already struggling. So He sends them away by force, He is forcing them out of there!

And it says that He was sending them to Bethsaida. I thought they were already in Bethsaida, that is where the 5,000 men were fed. So how can they be going to Bethsaida? The simplest explanation is that Bethsaida extended and spread across from the eastern side of the Jordan to the western side of the Jordan and according to John 12:21 the western side is called **“Bethsaida in Galilee.”** So they were moving towards Bethsaida in Galilee and then, John 6:16-17 tells us they were going to move onto Capernaum.

So Jesus forces His men to get into this boat, to sail across the Sea of Galilee leaving this area of Bethsaida, and He goes up on a mountain to pray. Keep that in mind as we move on where Jesus is at when His men are sailing across the Sea of Galilee.

VERSES 47-52

As Jesus is up on the mountain praying He can see His men down below as they are struggling to cross over to Bethsaida and then according to John 6:16-17 they were going to move onto Capernaum, and they were fighting against the wind on the Sea of Galilee.

And Jesus could see them for it was the time of the Passover, which meant there was a full moon. The time frame is the fourth watch of the night or between 3 am and 6 am. And as hard as they tried, they were rowing nowhere fast! What was the problem here? Weren't they doing what the Lord commanded them to do?

Yes, but they were attempting to do it in their own strength, their own power. They tried to fight against the wind without the power of God and right before them, in the boat with them was an example of the power of God, the 12 baskets of leftovers. And yet they still forgot about the Lord!

Make no mistake about it, as you serve the Lord you will encounter storms of life to help you to grow, deepen your faith. Now many don't like that, often I don't like it. But think of it this way. If you don't play baseball you will never strike out, but you also won't know the joy of hitting a home run. If you don't serve Jesus, you may escape some trials but you will never experience that abundant life that He has for you.

I like the way one writer put it as he wrote,

If we are obedient to Christ, there will be plenty of storms. There will be danger and difficulty and weariness and exposure and anxiety and dread and sadness. We will be open to an index of sorrows and stresses which are unknown to the uncommitted heart. But take cheer: Christ sees all and knows when we feel we are alone and fear that no one knows or cares. He prays for us, even while we are in the storm. He comes to us in the midst of the gale, treading across the problems that afflict us.

This brings great blessing to us. We learn more about Christ as we venture out onto the troubled waters. And we worship as never before.

Jesus calls all of us who are in the boat to follow his course. Today, with eyes wide open, will you commit yourself to sailing where he directs? Will you commit yourself to following him when the inevitable storms come? Those who keep their lives pointed in the direction that Christ dictates will encounter contrary winds. But they will also experience the wind of the Holy Spirit in their sails, bearing them on in power, healing, and blessing to a needy world.

- R. Kent Hughes, Mark Volume One, Jesus, Servant and Savior, p. 161

Also, keep in mind that these guys worked hard all night getting nowhere without Jesus and then here comes Jesus and He just comes along and walks right over their trial. You see, what is overwhelming to us, Jesus walks right over, let us not forget that!

Now why did they scream when they saw Jesus? Because they were not expecting Him, they were not praying, seeking God in the midst of this storm. So when He shows up it catches them by surprise.

And as we look at verse 52 here in Mark 6 we see that the disciples still didn't get it. The people didn't get it, they were there only for the miracles. But Jesus will continue to reach out to the people in love because He has compassion on them. And the disciples will get it, and so too will the people. God does not give up on us, and I thank God for that, don't you?

Now Peter, in sharing with Mark to write this Gospel, does not speak of the fact that he got out of the boat and walked on the water to Jesus. Maybe some humility here.

Also, in John 6:21 we are told, "**Then they willingly received Him into the boat, and immediately the boat was at the land where they were going.**" The implication here is that as soon as Jesus got into the boat, the wind stopped and they were at their destination. We need to let the Lord on board in our lives so He may calm those storms and see us through to our destination.

VERSES 53-56

Jesus brings them to the area of Gennesaret, just south of Capernaum, they arrive at the destination they need to be. It seems that the people there needed to be touched by Jesus, and Jesus did reach out to them, and so they come on shore near Gennesaret.

As I close this evening let me ask you this. What is the Lord calling you to do? What steps of faith is He calling you to take? Here is the challenge, get out of the boat, walk by faith and see the salvation that the Lord will bring to what He has called you to do!

Remember what Paul said in Hebrews 12:2, **“looking unto Jesus, the author and finisher of our faith . . .”** May we do that because He brought you here. He is praying for you. He will come to you. He will help you to grow. And He will see you through. Thus, as Paul said, **“I can do all things through Christ who strengthens me.”** Philippians 4:13. May we not forget that and may we heed the call of Christ to ***“COME!”***