



THE GOSPEL OF

MARK



Sermon Series Notes

“Progressive Faith” (Mark 6:30-53)

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v.30 See Mark 6:6b-13

v.31 After a busy ministry endeavor, it is good to rest.

vv.32-33 Sometimes the intention to rest does not turn out like we planned. Can you imagine booking the hotel in Orlando, and when you head down to the pool to chill, everybody around the pool are people who have followed you there for you to minister to them?

Wendy & I were on a cruise for our 15th wedding anniversary, and the first day, as I was walking the ship just checking things out, I heard a voice I did not want to hear – “Pastor Danny!”

v.34a What an example Jesus is of caring for others above ourselves. Lord help us to be like Him! My son Jairus shared a great message for communion this past Wednesday evening on how God’s love is not proud, and is completely others oriented. It was a good word!

v.34b See Mark 10:1

vv.35-37a It’s one thing to get great Bible teaching, and none was better than from the lips of Jesus, right? But it’s another thing to live out by faith what we hear. See Acts 28:26-27; Isaiah 6:9-10.

vv.38-40 Why did Jesus have them sit in groups? More manageable for the disciples to serve them; To promote community among them, especially in light of what He is about to do; He is having them act as though they are going to be served a meal, even though there is not enough for all them to eat.

II Cor.4:18 So we fix our eyes not on what is seen but on what is unseen...

Rom.4:17b Calls things as not as though they were.

vv.42-44 That’s a lot of people! Please note that they all ate and were satisfied. See Exodus 16:17-18; I am not a prosperity preacher, however, we need to understand that our God is a generous God! When God gives, He gives generously!

Luke 6:38 Give, and it will be given to you. A good measure, pressed down, shaken together, and running over, will be poured into your lap. For with the measure you use, it will be measured to you.

Malachi 3:10 Bring the whole tithe into the storehouse, that there may be food in my house. Test me in this, says the lord Almighty, and see if I will not throw open the floodgates of heaven and pour out so much blessing that you will not have room enough for it.

v.45 Evidently Jesus had some trouble getting them into the boat, because the phrase indicates urgency and pressure. Why would the disciples be reluctant to get into the boat? See Mark 4:35-41.

vv.46-48 This is fascinating. Jesus was going to walk right by them. Why? Let me read you a section of my teaching notes from Mark 4:35-41, a text we covered just a few weeks ago.

“I don’t believe any of us doubt that God can calm any storm, anywhere, anytime. But our faith needs to grow so that, whether He calms the storm or not, we will make it to the other side. I don’t think it is stretching the Scripture to allow “the other side” to represent heaven. Between here and heaven, there will be storms, they are inevitable. And what gets me safely through every storm to the other side is faith; See John 6:16-24; If we add this account to our storm stories, we know that, not only can Jesus calm the storm, but He can, if He chose to, takes us immediately from the site of the storm to the other side. Wouldn’t that be nice? But that is not the reality of life. So here’s what we’re left with. We live in a world where storms are inevitable, especially if we are followers of Jesus. *Some storms come as a direct result of our obedience to Him.* For some, they will experience the miraculous in dealing with the storm. For others, they will need faith to endure the storm. But all will make it to the other side.”

Once they are out on the water, in the dark, what they feared most, and perhaps the very reason they were reluctant to get in the boat, happens.

Note: Jesus sees them, though they cannot see Him; He comes walking on the water, in the darkest part of the night, when they had exhausted their energies and were in deepest despair.

Have you noticed the times in the Bible where God orchestrates things in such a way that we are forced to either have faith, or drown, or have faith that it is God’s will for us to drown? The Red Sea, etc.

Have you come to realize the lie that is still being spread through the church by sometimes well-meaning but Scripturally ignorant people?

From website “Got Questions” – “God is always faithful, and He will not allow us to suffer or be tested above what we can withstand and will also make a way to escape so that we are able to bear up under it ([1 Corinthians 10:13](#)).”

See II Cor.1:8, I Kings 19:7

vv.49-52 See Mark 8:1-10, 14-21

Mark 6:52 makes a clear connection to their hardened hearts and failure to trust the Lord in the storm. This is very interesting to me, and at times in the past very puzzling. But I trust that, having read this passage, taught it, and meditated on it many times over the years, I now understand the connection.

A hard heart is not always backsliding into the old lifestyle, it can be the hindrance and even prevention of growing in faith.

It will help us to look at a parallel account of this miraculous feeding of so many people, so turn with me to John 6:1-6. This was a prearranged test for the disciples, a test of faith. Specifically, it is a test regarding physical resources, but not just any resources. It's one thing to not have the resources to purchase a car, a house, etc. The resources needed here are resources that sustain life, resources necessary to live.

See Deut.8:1-5; Why did God repeatedly lead Israel into circumstances where they had no food, no water, or were facing difficult and sometimes impossible obstacles? To develop their faith, and to bring them to maturity. See also James 1:2-4.

You don't need a lot of faith when you have everything you need, right? And you don't mature if you are never disciplined, or are pampered your whole life. So how is God going to develop faith & maturity in us? By sovereignly arranging the circumstances of our lives to be difficult, & sometimes impossible.

Notice with me exactly what had to happen for this miracle of provision to occur. They had to take the meager resources they had, and put them into the hands of Jesus. Let me say that again...

Now think about this with me. The most difficult time to "give something to Jesus," is when the very thing I'm giving Him is what I need to survive in life.

According to John's account of this story, the owner of the barley loaves and fish was "a boy." See John 6:8-9. I heard someone teaching on this a few years ago, and they suggested that others in the crowd may have had some food, but they were not willing to offer it to Jesus, or to anyone else for that matter. I don't know if that's true, but it is certainly possible. We have a tendency to hoard what we have. See Exodus 16:17-27. A hoarding heart, and a lack of faith.

If I want to see the Lord miraculously multiply the resources that sustain my life, I must be willing to offer those resources to Him, however meager they may be.

He cannot multiply it until you offer it to Him. As long as it's in your hand, the Lord cannot perform a miracle.

The widow of Zarephath, I Kings 17:1-16.

What I fresh revelation I received from the Lord from the story of this widow, in the context of our study in Mark 6. See I Kings 17:17-24.

Let me ask you a question, which situation required more faith for this widow, the faith to offer the meager resources she had and trust the Lord to miraculously provide what she and her son needed to live, or faith in the Lord as her son was now dead? The answer is obvious.

See Mark 5:36; Warren Wiersbe in his commentary on this story says that what Jesus literally said to Jairus in verse 36 is "Don't be afraid, keep on believing." He came to Jesus with faith that Jesus could heal his daughter. Now he needed to have faith that Jesus could raise the dead.

Faith is intended to be progressive (advancing, improving, growing). Jesus was in the boat but asleep, on the mountain praying (but sees the disciples straining), and later bidding Peter to step out of the boat.

God repeatedly leads us into situations that require faith. Once faith has a foundation, He then leads us repeatedly into situations to *increase* our faith.

If we do not have faith to trust the Lord regarding physical/financial resources to sustain our lives, how are we going to trust Him in the storms of life? See Matthew 6:19-34.

Until we "Let go and let God," He cannot do for us what He desires.

The development of my faith as a Christian included giving from the very beginning.

Luke 16:10-11 Whoever can be trusted with very little can also be trusted with much, and whoever is dishonest with very little will also be dishonest with much. So if you have not been trustworthy in handling worldly wealth, who will give you true riches?

As I thought about this, I thought of examples in the Scriptures where offering the Lord physical/financial resources was an integral part of growth in faith. Gen.14, Abraham was early in his journey of faith; Gen.28, Jacob was very young in his relationship with the Lord; The Israelites had to be faithful with the firstfruits of Jericho before they could move on in possessing the Promised Land; I Kings 17:7-24, the widow of Zarephath and the progression of faith she needed began with offering her meager resources to the Lord, through the prophet Elijah. That's interesting. She gave to support a minister, and a ministry, and by doing so she was giving to the Lord.

In the OT, there was a system through which people gave unto the Lord. There was also freewill giving, and even much of that was through a system. But some freewill giving was more personal. For example, Deut.24:19-22.

In the NT, the church is the system through which we are to give to the Lord. But just as in the OT, there is freewill giving, and some is more personal than others. There is freewill giving through the church and Christian organizations that are extensions of the church. There is Good Samaritan giving, etc.

I believe the tithe is the starting standard for every Christian, OT, NT, and No Testament. Gen.14, 28, the Law, Hebrews 7. I believe we should give the tithe through the local church we are part of, where leadership has been established, and an accountable system of giving put in place. It is clear that the

churches in the NT had a system by which they gave through, and there was financial accountability within the system. See I Cor.16:1-4; II Cor.8:16-21; I Cor.9:4-11, 13-14; I Tim.5:17-18, 16 (context of v.16, widows).

II Cor.8:7 But just as you excel in everything – in faith, in speech, in knowledge, in complete earnestness and in your love for us – see that you also excel in this grace of giving.

Proverbs 3:9 Honor the Lord with your wealth, with the firstfruits of all your increase...

II Chron.31:5...the Israelites generously gave the firstfruits of their grain, new wine, oil and honey and all that the fields produced. They brought a great amount, a tithe of everything.

We give to the Lord, through the church. We can of course give in other ways, through a variety of means, but our first priority should be the church, which by the way is the body of Christ.

CONCLUSION

A memory popped into my head Friday morning as I was preparing for this message. Viv Laird and I were sitting at a Bank of America drive through when a transformer just a short distance from us blew. It scared me to death, and I physically jumped in the driver's seat of my car. Viv never blinked, never moved a muscle. That memory is imbedded in my brain, and every time I think about it, I think of what maturity and faith Viv Laird had. I was privileged to know him, and this church fellowship was privileged to have him serve on our pastoral staff for the many years prior to the Lord taking him home. I've always wanted to have the level of faith and maturity that he had. By God's grace, perhaps one day I will.

See Philippians 3:15-16.

As the Lord the Israelites into one difficult situation after another, a whole generation spent 40 years wandering in the wilderness, never allowing faith to develop in their lives. I pray that is not the future of anyone hearing this message today.

Begin honoring the Lord with your wealth, even if to do so makes no sense on paper.

For those of us blessed with an abundance of resources, are we giving generously? See I Tim.6:17-19; I Cor.9:6; 16:1-2.

In a storm? Keep your eyes on Jesus - BY FAITH. He sees you, even though you do not see Him.

I John 5: 4 For everyone born of God overcomes the world. This is the victory that has overcome the world, even our faith. 5 Who is it that overcomes the world? Only he who believes that Jesus is the Son of God.

Hebrews 2:8-9...In putting everything under him, God left nothing that is not subject to him. Yet at present we do not see everything subject to him. But we see Jesus...

