



THE GOSPEL ACCORDING TO MARK

Week 20: Shepherding the Faithless

Read Mark 6:45-56

1. Jesus Is Relentless With The Faithless

- Read Mark 6:45 & vs. 51-52

Even though the disciples had just been involved in the miracle of feeding the 5000, they still did not understand Jesus' identity as God. So in order to stir up their faith, Jesus sent them out onto the water without him. He knew he was sending them into a difficult situation, but he did so because he knew that real heart-faith could only be grown in such a way. As the Good Shepherd, Jesus did not leave them in their faithlessness, but instead pursued them relentlessly.

- ❖ Q: Why did Jesus send the disciples onto the lake, knowing that they would encounter great difficulty again?
- ❖ Q: Why is it difficult for us to accept that God can and sometimes does lead us into difficult circumstances?
- ❖ Q: Why do difficult circumstances provide opportunities to grow our faith in ways that nothing else could?

2. Factual Belief Does Not Equate To Heart Belief

- Read Mark 6: 51-52

The disciples had seen Jesus do countless miracles. They had even been given his power to do miracles of their own when he sent them out on mission. Then, just before they were sent out on the lake, they had personally seen the fish and loaves multiply before their eyes and yet none of it managed to create true faith in their hearts. Some of us refuse to believe and surrender to Jesus as God because we feel that we need more proof of his divinity. But this passage shows us that though facts may help us to believe intellectually, they do not necessarily ignite faith in the heart. Many of us believe the Bible. We believe that Jesus is God. But our *hearts* are not filled with faith.

- ❖ Q: Why do you think the disciples still did not understand who Jesus was even though they had just witnessed the feeding of the 5000?
- ❖ Q: Do you think it is enough to provide people with the facts about Jesus in order to win them to true faith in Christ?
- ❖ Q: What is the difference between having an intellectual belief in Jesus and having heart full of faith in Jesus?
- ❖ Q: How do we know if our hearts are full of faith or not? And what should we do if we realise that we only have an intellectual belief in Christ?

3. Jesus Is Relentless In Praying For The Faithless

- Read Mark 6:46-48, Romans 8:33, Hebrews 7:25

Jesus didn't just lead the faithless disciples into a trial hoping that it would teach them a lesson. He sent them off and then went and prayed. Jesus doesn't leave us alone in our faithlessness either, he prays for us. We see this in other New Testament texts too. This should be incredibly encouraging to us as we encounter trials and wrestle with our faith.

- ❖ Q: Why is it good news that Jesus prays for us in our faithlessness?
- ❖ Q: What circumstances have caused you to question your faith in Christ?
- ❖ Q: When you wrestle with you faith, how can you go about it so that you don't spiral down into further unbelief?
- ❖ Q: Why is it important for us to share with each other when we are struggling with doubt about God's goodness and control in our lives?

4. Jesus Helps The Faithless With Their Faith

- Read Mark 6:48-50

Jesus didn't get into the boat just to calm the storm. He got into the boat to help them with their faith. After displaying his divinity yet again by walking on the water, he encouraged and comforted them with who he was, and that was enough.

- ❖ Q: Why do you think Jesus walked across the water towards them and then intended to pass them by?
- ❖ Q: Why did the disciples still not recognize Jesus but instead thought he was a ghost?
- ❖ Q: What can we learn from the fact that Jesus comforted them with himself?