

They Supposed It Had Been a Spirit

Mark 6:1 – 56



~ We travel back to Nazareth in this chapter of our Spiritual Safari as Jesus sends the twelve apostles out to preach; walks on water; feeds the five thousand; and we also have that awful incident to deal with as Herodias demands the murder of John the Baptist. The Gospel of Mark is an account in action. The first event we see in this section of Scripture can be compared to that in Luke chapter four; and a contradiction has been imagined. What we are presented is one of the accounts of two – or more – visits back to Jesus hometown of Nazareth. The visit Luke records has Jesus returning alone; here, we see in verse eleven, that His apostles were with Him on this occasion as He commissions them for service. On the first visit we have no miracle performed. Here we are told Jesus healed the sick.

On His first return visit to Nazareth, He left suddenly when they tried to kill him! This time, we find Jesus remaining in the area. Jesus did enter the synagogue and teach in both accounts, however; and He was consistently rejected by His fellow townsfolk both times. We find Jesus going to the synagogue everywhere He goes. I believe Jesus felt the need to worship God His Father in this way! So, what we have are two different records of two separate visits Jesus made to His hometown of Nazareth. This was, naturally, the place to reach the people of that day.

Nazareth hadn't produced anything good – ever – and people were skeptical of any Nazarene that was claiming they kept the law. Remember, the law meant a razor never came upon Jesus. Well, that was a little extreme even for the fanaticism of the Pharisees. Nobody could accept the Savior was Someone like the Lord Jesus – plain and simple! They said amongst themselves, "... there's no way this is Emmanuel, our Messiah!" They wouldn't have had faith in ANYONE of their own because they all knew that none of them could be trusted!

Moving on, we know Mary had other children that were half-siblings to the Lord Jesus. I think Jude, who we meet here, is THE Jude of the epistle of Jude. Jesus half brothers and sisters – and even Mary – were all scandalized by Jesus because they knew Him; and familiarity with Him was their stumbling stone! There is a real danger today of believing we can get familiar with Jesus. We have no idea Who Jesus really is and what He really does in this universe – NO concept whatsoever. The Lord Jesus Christ just happens to be One Person we won't get too familiar with in eternity; we just do not know Him! The problem with these people at the time in which we are studying is that they thought they knew Him, but they had NO clue what that really meant! They have all known Jesus as a boy, and they've seen Him grow up and go to work and function around town....

1 And Jesus went out from thence, and came into his own country; and his disciples follow him.

2 And when the Sabbath day was come, he began to teach in the synagogue: and many hearing him were astonished, saying, From whence hath this man these things? and what wisdom is this which is given unto him, that even such mighty works are wrought by his hands?

3 Is not this the carpenter, the son of Mary, the brother of James, and Joses, and of Juda, and Simon? and are not his sisters here with us? And they were offended at him.

4 But Jesus said unto them, A prophet is not without honour, but in his own country, and among his own kin, and in his own house.

~ Interestingly, humans perceive an expert to be any ordinary person from another city! When we have a trial, if we can just bring in someone from out-of-town, then it appears somehow that they are automatically super smart! People pay a lot of money for that kind of service, too, by the way. The further away they come from, the more knowledge they are erroneously perceived to possess, too. Well, the last time Jesus was here He was nearly run out of town as they asked Him to politely leave; but here He hangs around for a little while. Still, He could do no mighty works there because of their unbelief! Friends, the only limitation to the omnipotence

of God being unleashed in your life is YOUR unbelief. Faith is the one requirement to unlocking the power of God in salvation in our lives! Unbelief insults and insulates and, literally, shuts off the direct power of God in our lives. Whom hath believed our report and to whom is the arm of the Lord revealed? That was Isaiah's question; that's my question, too....

5 And he could there do no mighty work, save that he laid his hands upon a few sick folk, and healed them.

6 And he marvelled because of their unbelief. And he went round about the villages, teaching.

~ There are two occasions where we find Jesus marveling. In Matthew, Jesus marveled at the man's faith. Here, Jesus is marveling at the unbelief of these people. Well, we're apt to pass over this verse and miss the fact that Jesus went about the villages teaching. There is a great lesson for Christian workers in that statement. Most people who feel they are called to the mission field think they are called to the big places; no one ever seems called to the mud huts of China anymore – I wonder why? The clergy of today suffers from megalomania. Why didn't Jesus just book the amphitheater or the coliseum and do all this teaching at once where He could have taken a collection? I don't think we should decide where we teach by the size of the venue, as most preachers do today. We need to teach where we are led by the Holy Spirit. I'm not telling anyone where or how to preach; I'm saying you might want to ask God in prayer where He would call you to today....

7 And he called unto him the twelve, and began to send them forth by two and two; and gave them power over unclean spirits;

8 And commanded them that they should take nothing for their journey, save a staff only; no scrip, no bread, no money in their purse:

9 But be shod with sandals; and not put on two coats.

10 And he said unto them, In what place soever ye enter into an house, there abide till ye depart from that place.

11 And whosoever shall not receive you, nor hear you, when ye depart thence, shake off the dust under your feet for a testimony against them. Verily I say unto you, It shall be more tolerable for Sodom and Gomorrhah in the day of judgment, than for that city.

12 And they went out, and preached that men should repent.

13 And they cast out many devils, and anointed with oil many that were sick, and healed them.

~ So, Jesus now sends the apostles out with the message of repentance that He has been teaching them. Matthew didn't mention they were sent out by two's - and neither will Luke – I wonder why they forgot? Well, either way, they were given power over spirits. That appears to be the highest power the apostles could exercise. These miracles also seemed to authenticate their message. That's great, but they are told to travel lightly. I feel that indicates the urgency of moving and the importance of the mission they are being given to do; and it also speaks of them being totally dependent upon God for their provision! Later, when they are sent to the Gentiles also, they are told to take all of these things at that time for very definite reasons. Their commission, however, at this time is limited to the lost sheep of the house of Israel; so, this is not the pattern of a message for today; although repentance is ordained in the command to believe....

14 And King Herod heard of him; (for his name was spread abroad); and he said, That John the Baptist was risen from the dead, and therefore mighty works do shew forth themselves in him.

15 Others said, That it is Elias. And others said, That it is a prophet, or as one of the prophets.

16 But when Herod heard thereof, he said, It is John, whom I beheaded: he is risen from the dead.

17 For Herod himself had sent forth and laid hold upon John, and bound him in prison for Herodias' sake, his brother Philip's wife: for he had married her.

18 For John had said unto Herod, It is not lawful for thee to have thy brother's wife.

19 Therefore Herodias had a quarrel against him, and would have killed him; but she could not:

20 For Herod feared John, knowing that he was a just man and an holy, and observed him; and when he heard him, he did many things, and heard him gladly.

21 And when a convenient day was come, that Herod on his birthday made a supper to his lords, high captains, and chief estates of Galilee;

22 And when the daughter of the said Herodias came in, and danced, and pleased Herod and them that sat with him, the king said unto the damsel, Ask of me whatsoever thou wilt, and I will give it thee.

23 And he sware unto her, Whatsoever thou shalt ask of me, I will give it thee, unto the half of my kingdom.

24 And she went forth, and said unto her mother, What shall I ask? And she said, The head of John the Baptist.

25 And she came in straightway with haste unto the king, and asked, saying, I will that thou give me by and by in a charger the head of John the Baptist.

26 And the king was exceeding sorry; yet for his oath's sake, and for their sakes which sat with him, he would not reject her.

27 And immediately the king sent an executioner, and commanded his head to be brought: and he went and beheaded him in the prison,

28 And brought his head in a charger, and gave it to the damsel: and the damsel gave it to her mother.

29 And when his disciples heard of it, they came and took up his corpse, and laid it in a tomb.

30 And the apostles gathered themselves together unto Jesus, and told him all things, both what they had done, and what they had taught.

~ We got the sordid details in Matthew for this account where the record is longer and much more detailed. Old man Herod sure had a superstitious reaction to all of this. Jesus gets the same reaction from people today. If you ask a hundred people who Jesus is, you'll get 97 different answers. It was the same with these people at this time; they all had different confused explanations and ideas of who Jesus was. I don't think recounting the lustful, perverted and conceited orgy we saw take place in Matthew on the night of John the Baptists murder will advance our safari. This woman was given a blank check that Herod did not anticipate her cashing. Mark makes it clear that Herod liked John. I think Herod had heard him before and John made a lot of sense. John condemned what Herod was doing with his brother's wife; but that didn't bother Herod! Actually, I'm sure Herod just laughed it off. Herodias, however, wasn't laughing! This was a diabolical plot hatched specifically to accomplish the ends that it did....

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.

32 And they departed into a desert place by ship privately.

33 And the people saw them departing, and many knew him, and ran afoot thither out of all cities, and outwent 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.

35 And when the day was now far spent, his disciples came unto him, and said, This is a desert place, and now the time is far passed:

36 Send them away, that they may go into the country round about, and into the villages, and buy themselves bread: for they have nothing to eat.

37 He answered and said unto them, Give ye them to eat. And they say unto him, Shall we go and buy two hundred pennyworth of bread, and give them to eat?

38 He saith unto them, How many loaves have ye? go and see. And when they knew, they say, Five, and two fishes.

39 And he commanded them to make all sit down by companies upon the green grass.

40 And they sat down in ranks, by hundreds, and by fifties.

41 And when he had taken the five loaves and the two fishes, he looked up to heaven, and blessed, and brake the loaves, and gave them to his disciples to set before them; and the two fishes divided he among them all.

42 And they did all eat, and were filled.

43 And they took up twelve baskets full of the fragments, and of the fishes.

44 And they that did eat of the loaves were about five thousand men.

45 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.

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.

49 But when they saw him walking upon the sea, they supposed it had been a spirit, and cried out:

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.

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.

~ Simon Peter gave Mark his information about this Gospel, but he conspicuously left out the part about the water walking. I wonder if Peter considered himself a failure. I don't consider him a failure because the account says Peter walked on water – and that's not a failure on this safari. What's really impressive to me is that Jesus saw them down there "toiling in rowing." Those waves were crashing over the bow and these men are soaked with salt water; they're rowing so hard from pure adrenaline their muscles will be sore tomorrow; another wave breaks over their heads as they strain at the oars and they're in a panic because they thought they were going to the bottom. Jesus saw them toiling and rowing.

I'm not sure where you're toiling and rowing today, friends; and you may be on a dark and stormy sea right now, feeling like the whole thing is going under. Temptations and problems may be dogging you that are just too great to bear! Well, Jesus saw them toiling and rowing and He sees you. God knows your problems. What you need to do is commit your ways to Him in a very real and definite way. Many of us need to do that and many of us need to do it again! If we could only commit our ways to Christ during the dark and stormy crises in life, we could learn that He sees us toiling. Only Mark makes this observation; and only he captures that they were

amazed beyond measure. Well, we remember Jesus came to them and helped Peter back into the ship and calmed the seas....

52 For they considered not the miracle of the loaves: for their heart was hardened.

53 And when they had passed over, they came into the land of Gennesaret, and drew to the shore.

54 And when they were come out of the ship, straightway they knew him,

55 And ran through that whole region round about, and began to carry about in beds those that were sick, where they heard he was.

56 And whithersoever he entered, into villages, or cities, or country, they laid the sick in the streets, and besought him that they might touch if it were but the border of his garment: and as many as touched him were made whole ~

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