

“You just don’t get it do you?”

Mark keeps weaving together bread stories and boat stories to show us one thing:
the disciples just don’t get who Jesus is.

Jesus is God Incarnate who has come to serve & save

Does this matter and does it mean anything for us?

It matters profoundly and has practical applications to each of our lives. Think about this:

If God truly walked among us, it means He sees the mess and pain, He knows it close up;
He knows our struggles, pain, and fears. He came and overcame everything we could not-

Then He says, *‘Follow me, I’ve made a way’*-

- a way for the overlooked of the family,
- a way for the unappreciated employee at their company,
- a way for the black sheep and the lost sheep,
- a way for the weary singles, and the frustrated spouse, and the tired parents,
- a way for the wicked and sinners to be made righteous and whole,
- a way for the hopeless to know hope- in this life, and for eternity.

This text shows us that: **God meets us, where we are, in Jesus Christ**

Mark 6:45-46 Immediately he made his disciples get into the boat and go ahead of him to the other side, to Bethsaida, while he dismissed the crowd. ⁴⁶After he said good-bye to them, he went away to the mountain to pray.

To Jesus, prayer was of the utmost importance- communion with the Father & intercession

You may not have the best prayer life, find encouragement in this:

Christ is praying for you even when you neglect prayer yourself

Hebrews 7:25 ...he is able to save completely those who come to God through him, **since he always lives to intercede for them.**

Can you picture Jesus praying for you, right now? -how comforting that is!

And how much more it should provoke us to prayer

John Piper- “Until you believe that life is war, you cannot know what prayer is for”

Mark 6:47-48a Well into the night, the boat was in the middle of the sea, and he was alone on the land.

⁴⁸He saw them straining at the oars, because the wind was against them.

This storm doesn’t appear to be life treating, as the previous one Mark told us about,
but the disciples do find themselves *stuck* and without being able to make any progress.

Remember, Jesus is the one who put them in this situation (v.45)

Obedience doesn’t spare us from struggle, sometimes it sends us into it

Perhaps you’ve shared similar situation, trying to do right by God, yet feeling stuck—

We might be tempted to question *‘why did I ever leave shore?’ ‘Why did I get into this ‘boat’?’*

The text tells us in v48 that He saw them (across the darkness, beyond the shore)

He sees them, even when they do not see Him

This truth would do us well to remember- **God never turns a blind eye to the struggles of His children**

Are you tempted to leave the marriage God blessed His union over?

Don't go back now. The Lord sees and is coming to save.

Are you tempted to give up your faith now that the feelings have dwindled and trouble has raged?

Don't go back now, the Lord sees and is coming to save.

Are you tempted to abandon ministry, feeling like it's all too much with little reward?

Don't go back now, the Lord sees and is coming to save.

Are you tempted to seize praying for your loved ones because it seems there is no answer?

Don't go back now, the Lord sees and is coming to save.

The Lord sees your toil and your struggle

J.I. Packer (Knowing God)- "The true God is great and terrible just because He is always with me and His eye is always upon me. Living becomes an awesome business when you realize that you spend every moment of your life in the sight and company of an omniscient, omnipotent Creator."

Mark 6:48b-50 Very early in the morning (lit. the 4th watch- Roman measure of time; between 3-6 am) **he came** toward them walking on the sea and wanted to pass by them. ⁴⁹When they saw him walking on the sea, they thought it was a ghost and cried out, ⁵⁰because they all saw him and were terrified. Immediately he spoke with them and said, "Have courage! It is I. Don't be afraid."

He didn't come right away, He comes in the "fourth watch"—In His timing, not ours

Here's what the disciples missed that day that I pray we don't-

To the Christian, struggles aren't setbacks, but spotlights that reveal God's splendor

V48 '**wanted to pass them by them**' – this might seem like a small and bizarre detail- but it's loaded with meaning!

Theophany- a visible manifestation of God (The invisible God showing Himself)

"pass by" in v48 is the same language that occurs in two O.T. theophanies (both on same Mt. btw)

- **Exodus 33:18-22** Then Moses said, "Please, let me see your glory." ¹⁹He said, "I will cause all my goodness **to pass** in front of you, and I will proclaim **the name 'the Lord'** before you. I will be gracious to whom I will be gracious, and I will have compassion on whom I will have compassion." ²⁰But he added, "You cannot see my face, for humans cannot see me and live." ²¹The Lord said, "Here is a place near me. You are to stand on the rock, ²²and when my glory **passes by**, I will put you in the crevice of the rock and cover you with my hand until I have passed by.
- **1 Kings 19:11** Then he said, "Go out and stand on the mountain in the Lord's presence." At that moment, the Lord **passed by**.

Jesus intended to pass by so they would see His majesty- that **This Jesus is that God**

Colossians 1:15 He is the image of the invisible God...

But they missed it. They didn't recognize what God was revealing to them, they weren't ready.

Job 9:4, 8, 11 God is wise and all-powerful. Who has opposed him and come out unharmed?

⁸ He alone stretches out the heavens and treads on the waves of the sea.

¹¹ If he passed by me, I wouldn't see him; if he went by, I wouldn't recognize him.

They were more afraid of His presence than they were of His absence- but He pulls back the veil once more

V50 'Have courage! **it is I**' (ego eimi)= 'I AM'- the Name God has chosen for Himself (remember Ex. 33?)

He's not just a helper that's come to them in time of trouble- He's God Himself!

Jesus' greeting is echoing the words spoken through the prophet Isaiah-

Isaiah 43:1b-3a "Do not fear, for I have redeemed you; I have called you by your name; you are mine.

² When you pass through the waters, I will be with you, and the rivers will not overwhelm you.

When you walk through the fire, you will not be scorched, and the flame will not burn you.

³ For I am the Lord your God, the Holy One of Israel, and your Savior.

Could it be that God sent you into the storm of struggle you're going through, as an invitation to help you understand that He is greater than waves and stronger than the wind?

"Lord, what am I missing that you want me to see?"

Mark 6:51-52 Then he got into the boat with them, and the wind ceased. They were completely astounded, ⁵² because they had not understood about the loaves. Instead, their hearts were hardened.

The storm ceases, but the real problem all along was really their hardened hearts.

Ephesians 4:18 They are darkened in their understanding, excluded from the life of God, because of the ignorance that is in them and because of the hardness of their hearts.

Despite all of the disciples' failures and their lack of understanding, Jesus never gives up on them. He just takes them through the whole process again and again so that they might understand.

And you know what? He does the same with you and I

He doesn't consider us a lost cause because we still can't get it right.

He climbs into our boat and prepares us for another opportunity to finally see what we've missed

Mark 6:53 When they had crossed over, they came to shore at Gennesaret and anchored there.

They had intended to go to Bethsaida (northeast) but ended up in Gennesaret (northwest).

They are unable to go to Bethsaida just as they are unable to understand about the loaves.

Interestingly, they won't reach Bethsaida until Chapter 8, when they finally begin to understand who Jesus is (8:29).

Mark 6:54-56 As they got out of the boat, people immediately recognized him. ⁵⁵ They hurried throughout that region and began to carry the sick on mats to wherever they heard he was. ⁵⁶ Wherever he went, into villages, towns, or the country, they laid the sick in the marketplaces and begged him that they might touch just the end of his robe. And everyone who touched it was healed.

Word about His previous miracles has spread here

'carry the sick on mats' (Mark 2); 'touch the end of His garment' (Mark 5)

V56 'Wherever he went'- it wasn't just in religious buildings- people met with Jesus out and about

JC Ryle- *“Let us see here a pattern for ourselves. Let us go and do likewise. Let us strive to bring all around us who are in need of spiritual medicine to Jesus, the Great Physician, that they may be healed. Souls are dying every day. The time is short. Opportunities are rapidly passing away. The night comes when no man can work. Let us spare no pains in laboring to bring men and women to the knowledge of Jesus Christ, that they may be saved. It is a comfortable thought that as many as touch Him will be made whole.”*

*Street Fair Outreach

These people rushing to Jesus to find healing might not fully understand who He is and who it is that is healing them, but **their great faith in Jesus is meant to be a contrast with the little faith of their disciples.**

They will eventually understand- and most will lay down their lives because of it
And they will remember the day God met them in the deep

I hope when you face struggles, when you feel stuck & forgotten, you too can remember that-

- Jesus sees you and prays for you.
- Jesus comes towards you and joins you.
- Jesus brings healing because He is the Great I AM.

Main Takeaway- When I am in the storm, I AM is in the storm with me

The storms uncover what calm seas never could:
They expose our lack of faith in Him
They reveal the gracious glory of God to us

***CALL UP WORSHIP TEAM

Think back to Jesus' journey towards them- they didn't see it, but it was a glimpse of the gospel!

- **From high** on the mountain, in communion with His Father, He looks out to see through the darkness of the night into the expanse of the stormy sea, His disciples, struggling, unable to reach shore on their own.
- **So He descends!** He marches across the troubled waters and against the violent wind.
Despite the deep darkness, He knows right where they are and He understands exactly what they're going through, because He's entered the storm.
He goes straight for them, to save them- to bring them to shore.

God looked out into creation and saw you and I

We weren't simply drowning and in need of a lifeline. We were dead at the bottom of the sea!
Jesus descends into the depths to not only rescue us, but revive us, giving us His own life

Today, if you seek Jesus, you can find Him.

Today, if you've missed His glory in your struggle, He says to you: "Have courage, I AM"

BULPEN-

How many times has God met us, but we were too dense to comprehend?

V49b-50a they are more frightened of His presence than they were of His absence

E.J. Rawlinson- *"...faint hearts may even have begun to wonder whether the Lord Himself had not abandoned them to their fate, or to doubt the reality of Christ. They are to learn from this story that they are not 'forsaken'; that the Lord watches over them unseen, and that He Himself- no phantom, but the Living One, Master of wind and waves- will surely come quickly for their salvation, even though it be in the 'fourth watch of the night.'"*

Habakkuk 3 tells of God marching to save His people, trampling mountains in an unstoppable stride; defeating the forces of wickedness and v15 'You tread the sea with your horses'

This feature in the story, so strange to us, served originally to make more vivid the fact that Jesus was diverted by their evident distress from his purpose of following and overtaking the disciples in the morning on the other shore;

It would seem Jesus wanted to pass them by, but their state of distress caused him to reconsider his plans. The ESV Study Bible goes further on this interpretation, giving the following reason:

He meant to pass by them, not so that they would fail to see him (in which case he would have stayed farther away from them), but so that they would see him "pass by" (Gk. *parerchomai*), walking on the water, thus giving visible evidence of his deity (and thus answering the question they asked after he stilled the sea in Mark 4:41: "Who then is this ... ?"). The passage echoes the incident where God "passed" before Moses (the same verb, *parerchomai*, occurs in the Septuagint of Ex. 33:19, 22; 34:6), giving a glimpse of his glory.

Joel Marcus, in his commentary on Mark, addresses this. "Pass by" is a technical phrase for a theophany: it's an aborted transfiguration scene. They weren't ready for it; they thought he was a spirit; they needed to recognize him as the Christ first, as happens in Mark 8 just prior to Tabor. "Pass by" is what the Lord does to Moses when Moses ascends Sinai and the Lord "passes by" him; the Sinai-Tabor connection is rather obvious.

The fourth watch (very early in the morning) is the same hour which He would deliver His people by rising from the grave

One commentator wrote- *"Pass by" is a technical phrase for a theophany: it's an aborted transfiguration scene. They weren't ready for it; they thought he was a spirit; they needed to recognize him as the Christ first*

In Matthew's account, he tells us about Peter also walking on water (then beginning to drown). But interestingly enough, Mark, who got his material from Peter, leaves this out.

I think Peter, and Mark, intended to put the focus on what the identity of Jesus meant.

Miracles don't always produce faith—but recognizing Jesus as God does.