



M A R K

The Gift of God





The Testing of Faith

Mark 6:30-56



- It is tempting to *mash* the Gospels together
 - But each had a specific audience
 - And each had a specific purpose
 - Things are included on purpose
 - Things are left out on purpose
- Mark's focus: building the disciples' faith

Mark 6:30-56



1. The Test on the Turf (30-44)
2. The Test on the Surf (45-52)
3. The Bookend (53-56)



The Test on the Turf

- The disciples return from their short-term missions trip (30a; see 6:7-13)
 - They report everything they did and everything they taught (30b)
- Too mobbed to eat (31b; see 3:20)
- Time for some *R&R* (31a, 32)



The Test on the Turf

- Another large crowd (34)
 - Jesus felt compassion because they were like *sheep without a shepherd*
 - Num. 27:17; 1 Kings 22:17; Ezekiel 34
 - So Jesus began to teach them *at length*
 - I.e. - *long into the day*



The Test on the Turf

- The disciples saw another need (35-36)
 - *Quite late* = between 3 pm and sunset
- The TEST: “*You* give them something to eat”
 - Humanly-speaking, this was impossible
 - But think of all they had seen and done
 - “We can’t! ~~But You can!~~”



The Test on the Turf

- Jesus did *the impossible*
 - He fed 5,000+ with five dinner rolls and two small fish
 - And there were leftovers!
- What were the disciples thinking?



The Test on the Surf

- Immediately Jesus *compelled* the disciples to leave (probably around sunset – 7 pm)
 - They were obeying Jesus (see 4:35-36)
- *Evening* = twilight
 - Disciples in the middle of the sea



The Test on the Surf

- About the fourth watch = around 3 am
 - They have been struggling for hours!
- Jesus came walking on the water
 - *and He intended to pass by them*
- Disciples saw Him and screamed in terror because they thought He was a ghost



The Test on the Surf

- Immediately Jesus spoke with them
 - *Have courage (be of good cheer)* -6x in NT
 - *It is I (I am)*
 - *Stop being afraid* (see 4:40)
- When He got in the boat the wind stopped
- *Very much exceedingly they were amazed*



The Test on the Surf

- For they had not gained any insight from the incident of the loaves
 - *To put together; to comprehend, perceive, make sense (see 4:12; 8:17; Acts 28:25-27)*
 - They should have *connected the dots*

Spiros Zodhiates



“The comprehending activity of the mind denoted by *suniami* entails the assembling of individual facts into an organized whole, as collecting the pieces of a puzzle and putting them together. The mind grasps the concepts and sees the proper relationship between them.”



The Test on the Surf

- But their heart was hardened
 - They were not *really* thinking about what they were being exposed to
 - Spiritually sluggish and unperceptive
 - Jesus' expectation: 4:9, 13; 8:14-21
 - This incident was a *wake-up call*



D. Edmond Hiebert

“The two miracles just recorded were clearly intended by Jesus to be part of His training of the Twelve. They were well suited to lead the disciples into a fuller and truer understanding of His own unique person. ...



D. Edmond Hiebert

“The supernatural way in which Jesus revealed Himself to them that night was obviously intended to bolster their faith. Even if they could not understand His ways, it let them maintain their confidence in Him because of what they knew Him to be.”



The Bookend

- Vv. 53-56 serve as a bookend for Chapter 6
 - Stark contrast to Nazareth (1-6)
 - As in 5:21-43, they at least saw Jesus as a *healer*, and He was willing to start with that and call them to more
 - Remember *The Soils* (4:1-20) and *The Growing Seed* (4:26-29)

So What?



- God will allow circumstances into your life to test your faith (James 1:2-4)
 - How you respond reveals the depth of your insight and the maturity of your faith (see Mark 4:38, 40; 6:51-52)

So What?



- God expects us to learn from our tests
 - *Insight* requires effort
 - Proverbs 2 – desire, seek, ask
 - 2 Tim. 2:7 – ponder (meditate)
 - Why do we need it?
 - Col. 1:9-11 – to live rightly