

Mark 6:30-56
November 5, 2023

Open with Prayer

HOOK:

Q: Can you think of a time when you had to do something that you thought was impossible? What happened? [Let people engage]

Q: Why do you think God tells us to do things that seem to be impossible? [Let people engage]

Transition: If you grew up in the pews, then you know about the miracle of Jesus feeding 5,000 and Jesus walking on the water! The setting in today's text is in the wilderness. The reason they are going into the wilderness is for rest. They have been so busy with the crowds that they have been unable to even eat. As Jesus and the disciples go away by boat, many people recognize them and run along the shore to follow them. What I hope we see today is how Jesus responds in this moment. He is not disappointed, or frustrated, or angry. Instead, he has compassion on them because they were like sheep without a shepherd. Let's begin.

BOOK:

Jesus Feeds the Five Thousand

³⁰ The apostles gathered around Jesus and reported to him all they had done and taught. ³¹ Then, because so many people were coming and going that they did not even have a chance to eat, he said to them, "Come with me by yourselves to a quiet place and get some rest."

³² So they went away by themselves in a boat to a solitary place. ³³ But many who saw them leaving recognized them and ran on foot from all the towns and got there ahead of them. ³⁴ When Jesus landed and saw a large crowd, he had compassion on them, because they were like sheep without a shepherd. So he began teaching them many things.

³⁵ By this time it was late in the day, so his disciples came to him. "This is a remote place," they said, "and it's already very late. ³⁶ Send the people away so they can go to the surrounding countryside and villages and buy themselves something to eat."

³⁷ But he answered, "You give them something to eat."

They said to him, "That would take eight months of a man's wages (200 denarii)! Are we to go and spend that much on bread and give it to them to eat?"

³⁸ "How many loaves do you have?" he asked. "Go and see."

When they found out, they said, "Five—and two fish."

³⁹ Then Jesus directed them to have all the people sit down in groups on the green grass. ⁴⁰ So they sat down in groups of hundreds and fifties. ⁴¹ Taking the five loaves and the two fish and looking up to heaven, he gave thanks and broke the loaves. Then he gave them to his disciples to set before the people. He also divided the two fish among them all. ⁴² They all ate and were satisfied, ⁴³ and the disciples picked up twelve basketfuls of broken pieces of bread and fish. ⁴⁴ The number of the men who had eaten was five thousand.

Jesus Walks on the Water

⁴⁵ Immediately Jesus made his disciples get into the boat and go on ahead of him to Bethsaida, while he dismissed the crowd. ⁴⁶ After leaving them, he went up on a mountainside to pray.

⁴⁷ When evening came, the boat was in the middle of the lake, and he was alone on land. ⁴⁸ He saw the disciples straining at the oars, because the wind was against them. About the fourth watch of the night he went out to them, walking on the lake. He was about to pass by them, ⁴⁹ but when they saw him walking on the lake, they thought he was a ghost. They cried out, ⁵⁰ because they all saw him and were terrified.

Immediately he spoke to them and said, “Take courage! It is I. Don’t be afraid.” ⁵¹ Then he climbed into the boat with them, and the wind died down. They were completely amazed, ⁵² **for they had not understood about the loaves; their hearts were hardened.**

⁵³ When they had crossed over, they landed at Gennesaret and anchored there. ⁵⁴ As soon as they got out of the boat, people recognized Jesus. ⁵⁵ They ran throughout that whole region and carried the sick on mats to wherever they heard he was. ⁵⁶ And wherever he went—into villages, towns or countryside—they placed the sick in the marketplaces. They begged him to let them touch even the edge of his cloak, and all who touched him were healed.

Process Observations/Questions:

Q: What did you most like about this passage? What resonated with you? [Let people engage]

Q: What did you least like about this passage? [Let people engage]

Q: What did you find in this passage that you didn’t understand? [Let people engage]

Q: What do we learn about Jesus in this passage? [Let people engage]

LOOK:

Jesus is the true Bread of Life sent by our Heavenly Father. In our world today, we face nearly overwhelming human need, and like Jesus’ disciples, we have a tendency to tell God what we can’t do rather than believing what He can do through us.

Close in Prayer

Commentaries for Today's Lesson:

Wiersbe, W. W. (1996). *The Bible Exposition Commentary (Vol. 1, pp. 131-133). Wheaton, IL: Victor Books.*

The Unbelief of His Disciples (Mark 6:30–56)

Jesus took His disciples to a secluded place so that they might rest after their labors. He wanted to discuss their ministry with them and prepare them for their next mission. As Vance Havner has said, “If you don’t come apart and rest, you will come apart.” Even God’s Servant-Son needed time to rest, fellowship with His friends, and find renewal from the Father.

Another factor was the growing opposition of both the political and the religious leaders. Herod’s murder of John the Baptist was evidence enough that the “climate” was now changing and that Jesus and His disciples had to be careful. In the next chapter, we shall encounter the hostility of the Jewish religious leaders, and, of course, the political enthusiasm of the crowds was always a problem (John 6:15ff). The best thing to do was to get away.

But the overzealous crowds would not leave Him alone. They followed Him to the area near Bethsaida, hoping to see Him perform some miraculous cures (Luke 9:10–11; John 6:1ff). In spite of the interruption to His plans, the Lord welcomed them, taught them the Word, and healed those who were afflicted. Having experienced interruptions many times in my own life and ministry, I marvel at His patience and grace! What an example for us to follow!

Mark recorded two miracles that Jesus performed.

The feeding of the 5,000 (vv. 33–44). Jesus sent the 12 Apostles out to minister because He had compassion on the needy multitudes (Matt. 9:36–38). This time, the needy multitudes came to them—and the disciples wanted to send them away! As yet, they had not learned to look at life through the eyes of their Master. To them, the crowds were a problem, perhaps even a nuisance, but to Jesus, they were as sheep without a shepherd.

When D.L. Moody was building his great Sunday School in Chicago, children came to him from everywhere. They often passed by other churches and Sunday Schools to be with Mr. Moody. When asked why he walked so far to attend Moody’s Sunday School, one boy replied, “Because they love a fella over there!” The children could tell the difference.

The disciples had two suggestions for solving the problem: either send the people away to find their own food, or raise enough money to buy a bit of bread for everybody. As far as the disciples were concerned, they were in the wrong place at the wrong time, and nothing could be done! With that kind of approach, they would have made ideal committee members! Someone has defined a committee as a group of people who individually can do nothing and collectively decide that nothing can be done.

Jesus looked at the situation, not as a problem, but as an opportunity to trust the Father and glorify His name. An effective leader is someone who sees potential in problems and is willing to act by faith. Acting on the basis of human wisdom, His disciples saw the problem but not the potential. How many times God’s people have complained, “If we only had enough money, we could do something!” Two hundred pence (denarii) would be the equivalent of a year’s wages for the average laborer! The first step is not to measure *our* resources, but to determine God’s will and trust Him to meet the need.

It was Andrew who found the lad with the lunch (John 6:8–9). The Lord had the people sit down in organized groups on the green grass (see Pss. 23:2; 78:19), quite a contrast to Herod’s glittering sensual feast. Jesus took the little lunch, blessed it, broke it, and gave it to the disciples to distribute to the hungry people. The miracle took place in His hands, not in theirs; for

whatever we give to Him, He can bless and multiply. We are not manufacturers; we are only distributors.

John tells us that Jesus used this miracle as the basis for a sermon on “the bread of life” (John 6:22ff). After all, He did not perform miracles just to meet human needs, though that was important. He wanted each miracle to be a revelation of Himself, a sermon in action. For the most part, the people were amazed at the miracles, appreciated the help He gave them, but failed to get the spiritual message (John 12:37). They wanted the gift but not the Giver, the enjoyment of physical blessings but not the enrichment of spiritual blessings.

The stilling of the storm (vv. 45–56). A number of miracles were involved in this event: Jesus walking on the water, Peter walking on the water (Mark did not record this; see Matt. 14:28–32), Jesus stilling the storm, and the boat arriving on shore the instant Jesus entered it (John 6:21). It was certainly a “night of wonders” for the Twelve!

Why did Jesus compel His disciples to leave? Because the crowd was getting restless, and there was danger they might start a popular uprising to make Jesus King (John 6:14–15). The Twelve were not ready to face this kind of test, because their ideas of the kingdom were still too national and political.

There was a second reason: He wanted to teach them a lesson on faith that would help prepare them for the work that lay ahead of them after He was gone. The disciples had just completed a very successful mission, healing the sick and preaching the Gospel. They had shared in the miraculous feeding of 5,000 people. They were on a “spiritual high” and this in itself was dangerous. It is good to be on the mountaintop if you don’t get careless and step off a cliff.

Spiritual blessings must be balanced with burdens and battles; otherwise, we may become pampered children instead of mature sons and daughters. On a previous occasion, Jesus had led His disciples into a storm following an exciting day of teaching (Mark 4:35–41). Now, after a time of miraculous ministry, He again led them into a storm. In the Book of Acts, it is interesting to note that the “storm” of official persecution began after the disciples had won 5,000 people to Christ (Acts 4:1–4). Perhaps while they were in confinement, the Apostles recalled the storm that followed the feeding of the 5,000, and they must have encouraged themselves with the assurance that Jesus would come to them and see them through.

Each new experience of testing demands of us more faith and courage. In that first storm experience, the disciples had Jesus in the boat with them; but this time, He was on the mountain praying for them. He was teaching them to live by faith. (For that matter, even when He was in the ship with them, they were still afraid!) The scene illustrates the situation of God’s people today: We are in the midst of this stormy world, toiling and seemingly ready to sink, but He is in glory interceding for us. When the hour seems the darkest, He will come to us—and we will reach shore!

The waves that frightened the disciples (including the fishermen in the group) were only stairsteps to bring the Lord Jesus to them. He waited until their situation was so desperate that they could do nothing to help themselves. But why did He act as though He would pass them by? Because He wanted them to recognize Him, trust Him, and invite Him into the ship. They did not recognize Him, but instead screamed with fear because they thought He was a ghost!

Jesus reassured them with His word: “Take courage; it is I, do not be afraid” (Mark 6:50, NASB). At this point, Peter asked Jesus to let him walk on the water; but Mark omits this detail. Tradition says that Mark wrote as Peter’s spokesman, so perhaps Peter was reticent to include this experience lest it give people the wrong impression. It is easy to criticize Peter for sinking—but have you ever gotten out of the boat yourself?

The disciples had failed their test because they lacked spiritual insight and receptive hearts. The miracle of the loaves and fishes had made no lasting impression on them. After all, if Jesus could multiply food and feed thousands of people, then surely He could protect them in the storm. Even a disciple of Jesus Christ can develop a hard heart if he fails to respond to the spiritual lessons that must be learned in the course of life and ministry.

As you review these two miracles, you see that Jesus Christ brings *provision* and *protection*. “The Lord is my shepherd; I shall not want ... I will fear no evil” (Ps. 23:1, 4). If we trust Him, we will always have sufficiency and security, no matter what the situation might be. The important thing is that we trust Him.

Mark closed this section on a positive note as he described the people who brought their sick for Jesus to heal. These people had faith and their faith was rewarded. This scene is in contrast to that in Nazareth where very few were healed because the people lacked faith.

“And this is the victory that overcomes the world, even our faith” (1 John 5:4). Trust the Servant! He never fails.

Grassmick, J. D. (1985). *Mark*. In J. F. Walvoord & R. B. Zuck (Eds.), *The Bible Knowledge Commentary: An Exposition of the Scriptures* (Vol. 2, pp. 129-132) Wheaton, IL: Victor Books

3. THE RETURN OF THE TWELVE (6:30–31) (LUKE 9:10A)

6:30–31. **The apostles** (*apostoloi*, “delegates, messengers”) returned to **Jesus**, probably at Capernaum by prearrangement, **and reported to Him all they had done** (they mentioned their “works” first) **and taught** (“words”) in fulfilling their commission (cf. vv. 7–13). The designation “apostles” for the Twelve occurs only twice in Mark (cf. 3:14). It is used in a nontechnical sense to describe their function as “missionaries” (cf. 6:7–9; Acts 14:14) rather than to denote an official title (cf. Eph. 2:19–20).

Jesus directed them to **come with Him** for a brief, well-earned **rest**. This was necessary **because so many people were coming and going that they had no time to eat** (cf. Mark 3:20). They were to come **by themselves** (*kat’ idian*; cf. 4:34) **to a quiet** (*erēmon*, “remote”; cf. 1:35, 45) **place** (cf. 6:32).

C. Jesus’ self-disclosure to the Twelve in word and deed (6:32–8:26)

This section highlights a period in Jesus’ ministry when He made several withdrawals from Galilee to minister elsewhere (cf. 6:31; 7:24, 31; 8:22). During this time He showed the Twelve and Mark’s readers how He cares for His own.

1. THE FEEDING OF THE 5,000 (6:32–44) (Matt. 14:13–21; Luke 9:10b–17; John 6:1–14)

6:32–34. These verses are a transition from the successful mission of the Twelve to the resultant presence of **a large crowd** in a remote place. Two phrases in the fulfillment of Jesus’ directive provide the connecting links: **by themselves** (*kat’ idian*, Gr. idiom meaning “privately”), a phrase Mark used for Jesus’ private instruction of individuals (cf. 4:34a; 6:31–32; 7:33; 9:2, 28; 13:3); and **to a solitary** (*erēmon*, “remote”) **place** (cf. 1:3–4, 12–13, 35, 45; 6:31–32, 35). The place where they sailed, though unnamed by Mark, was near Bethsaida Julias, a city across the Jordan River on the northeast side of the Sea of Galilee (cf. Luke 9:10).

Many people anticipated their destination and arrived there **on foot ... ahead of them**. Their planned rest was interrupted by people in need.

When Jesus ... saw the large crowd, **He** felt **compassion** (not annoyance) toward **them**. This inner emotion moved Him to help them (cf., e.g., Mark 6:39–44). He viewed them as **sheep without a shepherd**, lost and helpless, without guidance, nourishment, or protection. In several Old Testament passages (Num. 27:17; 1 Kings 22:17; Ezek. 34:5, 23–25) the sheep/shepherd image is associated with the “wilderness” (*erēmos*; cf. Mark 6:31–32). This crowd, representing the nation of Israel, received compassion, extensive **teaching** concerning God’s kingdom (cf. Luke 9:11), and the provision of their needs (Mark 6:35–44) from Jesus, the true Shepherd (cf. John 10:1–21).

6:35–38. These verses present a significant dialogue between Jesus and the Twelve after He had taught the crowd all **day**. Since **it was late** (after 3 P.M. Jewish time) and they were in a **remote** (*erēmos*; cf. vv. 31–32) **place**, the **disciples** asked Jesus to dismiss **the people ... so they could buy** food in **the surrounding ... villages** before sunset.

Unexpectedly, Jesus told them to feed the crowd. He emphasized the word **you** (*hymeis*). The disciples’ caustic reply showed the inadequacy of their resources and the impossibility of meeting His demand. According to their calculations, to feed such a crowd would take, literally, 200 denarii (NIV). The denarius, the basic Roman silver coin used in Palestine, was the average daily wage for a farm laborer. Consequently 200 denarii was roughly equivalent to **eight months of a man’s wages**, a sum beyond the disciples’ means.

Jesus insisted they find **out** what bread was available, probably back at the boat and also in the crowd. The disciples returned with the answer: a mere **five** loaves of bread **and two fish** (salted and dried or roasted).

6:39–44. Mark’s vivid description of the miracle indicates an eyewitness report, perhaps Peter’s.

To insure orderly distribution, **Jesus** commanded the disciples **to have** everyone **sit down in groups on the green grass** (suggesting springtime). The words “in groups” in verse 39 could be rendered “table company by table company” (*symposia symposia*, lit., “drinking or eating parties”). But the words “in groups” in verse 40 are literally, “garden plot by garden plot” (*prasiai prasiai*); they are used figuratively, picturing well-arranged plots of people, perhaps colorfully dressed, seated on the grass **in groups of 100s and 50s**. The command was a challenge to faith for both the disciples and the crowd.

Jesus, serving as Host, spoke the customary Jewish blessing over **the five loaves** (round wheat or barley cakes) and **two fish** (cf. Lev. 19:24; Deut. 8:10). The words **gave thanks** are from *eulogeō* (lit., “to praise, extol” [God], or “to bless”; cf. Mark 14:22). The object of the blessing in such a prayer was not the food, but God who gave it. Jesus looked **up to heaven**, regarded as where God is (cf. Matt. 23:22), in dependence on the Father for a miraculous provision of food.

Then He **broke the loaves** into pieces, **divided** the **fish** into portions, and **gave** (lit., “kept giving”) **them to His disciples to set before the people**. How the miracle itself took place is not stated, but the imperfect tense of the verb “gave” indicates the bread multiplied in Jesus’ hands (cf. Mark 8:6).

The provision was miraculous and abundant. Mark emphasized that **all ate and were** fully **satisfied**. This was confirmed by the fact that **the disciples** collected **12 basketfuls** (*kophinoi*, small wicker baskets; contrast 8:8, 20) of leftovers, probably a basket for each disciple. The count of 5,000 men (*andres*, “males”), a very large crowd by local standards, did not include

women and children (cf. Matt. 14:21), who were probably grouped separately for the meal according to Jewish custom.

The usual theme of astonishment at the close of a miracle story is not included here. This, plus subsequent comments in Mark 6:52 and 8:14–21 on this event, indicate that Mark regarded it as an important disclosure to Jesus' disciples of who He is. But they failed to understand its meaning (cf. 6:52).

2. JESUS' WALKING ON THE WATER (6:45–52) (Matt. 14:22–33; John 6:15–21)

6:45–46. **Immediately** (*euthys*; cf. 1:10) after feeding the 5,000, **Jesus made** (lit., “compelled”) **His disciples** return to their **boat and** set sail (lit., “go before [**Him**] to the other side”) to **Bethsaida** (“house of fishing”). The verb “made” implies an unexplained urgency; but John 6:14–15 states that the people recognized Jesus as the promised future Prophet (cf. Mark 6:14–15) and were determined to make Him King, by force if necessary. Jesus sensed the potential danger of this “messianic enthusiasm” and its effect on the disciples, so He compelled them to embark **while He dismissed the crowd**.

There is a geographical difficulty about the location of “Bethsaida” (cf. 6:32; Luke 9:10; John 12:21). The simplest solution seems to be that Bethsaida Julias (east of the Jordan) spread across to the western side of the Jordan and was called “Bethsaida in Galilee” (cf. John 12:21; 1:44; Mark 1:21, 29), a fishing suburb of Capernaum (cf. John 6:17). The disciples sailed for this town from the northeastern shore of the Sea of Galilee but were blown off course southward, eventually landing at Gennesaret on the western shore (cf. Mark 6:53).

After dismissing the excited crowd, Jesus **went** up on a nearby hillside **to pray** (cf. comments on 1:35).

6:47. At **evening** (sunset till darkness) **the disciples' boat was** well out **in the ... lake** (not the geographical middle) **and** Jesus **was alone on land**. When He was absent (or appeared to be), the disciples often experienced distress and demonstrated a lack of faith (cf. 4:35–41; 9:14–32).

6:48. Jesus continued praying well past midnight. Meanwhile **the disciples** had made little headway out on the lake **because** a strong north **wind** blew **against them**. In the dim light of early dawn, **the fourth watch of the night** (by Roman reckoning, 3 to 6 A.M.; cf. 13:35), Jesus **saw** them **straining at the oars** and **went out to them, walking on the choppy water's surface**. The words **He was about to pass by them** do not mean He was going “to bypass” them. He intended “to pass beside” them in the sense of an Old Testament theophany (cf. Ex. 33:19, 22; 1 Kings 19:11; Mark 6:50b) to reassure them.

6:49–50a. The disciples **cried out** (cf. 1:23) with terror at Jesus' appearance on the water. **They thought He was a ghost** (*phantasma*, a water phantom). Mark explained that they responded this way **because they all saw Him** (not a hallucination by a few) **and were terrified**.

6:50b–52. **Immediately** (*euthys*; cf. 1:10) Jesus calmed their fears and spoke words of reassurance. **Take courage!** (*tharseite*) **Don't be afraid** (lit., “stop fearing”) are familiar Old Testament words to people in distress (cf. the LXX of Isa. 41:10, 13–14; 43:1; 44:2). The first command occurs seven times in the New Testament, always on the lips of Jesus except for Mark 10:49 (cf. Matt. 9:2, 22; 14:27; Mark 6:50; John 16:33; Acts 23:11). The words **It is I** (lit., “I am,” *egō eimi*) may simply convey self-identification (“It is I, Jesus”), but they are probably intended here to echo the Old Testament formula of God's self-revelation: “I am who I am” (cf. Ex. 3:14; Isa. 41:4; 43:10; 51:12; 52:6).

When Jesus joined the disciples **in the boat ... the wind died down** (*ekopasen*, “stopped, rested”; cf. Mark 4:39), an additional demonstration of His mastery over nature (cf. 4:35–41).

The disciples **were completely amazed** (*existanto*, lit., “out of their minds”; cf. 2:12; 5:42) among themselves at this revelation of Jesus’ presence and power. Mark alone explained (*gar, for*) **they had not** caught on to the meaning of **the loaves** miracle (cf. 6:35–44) as a pointer to His true identity. So they did not recognize Him when He walked on the water; they were spiritually imperceptive (cf. 3:5).

3. SUMMARY STATEMENT: JESUS’ HEALING MINISTRY AT GENNESARET (6:53–56) (Matt. 14:34–36)

This summary statement marks the climax of Jesus’ Galilean ministry just before His departure for the coastal region around Tyre and Sidon (cf. Mark 7:24).

6:53. Jesus and His disciples **had crossed over** the Sea of Galilee from the northeast to the west (cf. v. 45) **and anchored** (moored) **at Gennesaret**, a fertile, populous plain (two miles wide and four miles long), south of Capernaum on the northwestern shore of the lake. Rabbis called this plain “the Garden of God” and “a paradise.” A small town there was also called Gennesaret.

6:54–56. Immediately (*euthys*; cf. 1:10) **people recognized Jesus**. As He moved through the **region**, they **carried the sick on mats** to Him for healing. **Everywhere He went ... the sick** were **placed in marketplaces** (open spaces). Several medicinal mineral springs in this area made it a resort for invalids.

They kept begging again and again (*parekaloun*; cf. 5:10, 23) to **touch even the edge of His cloak** as He passed by. The “edge” or “fringe” was a border of blue tassels worn by a loyal Jew on his outer cloak (cf. Num. 15:37–41; Deut. 22:12).

All who touched Him were healed (lit., “were being saved”; cf. Mark 5:28). These words iterate Mark’s earlier reference to a personal faith relationship between Jesus and a sick person (cf. 3:7–10; 5:25–34). Healing was not effected by a touch but by the gracious action of Jesus who honored this means of expressing their faith in Him.

Church, C.L. (1998). *Mark In D. S. Dockery (Ed.), Holman Concise Bible Commentary (p. 434). Nashville, TN: Broadman & Holman Publishers.*

“Sheep without a shepherd” serves as an image for God’s people without spiritual leadership. Jesus’ initial response to the crowd’s need was teaching. The details of the crowd seated on “green grass” and fully satisfied recall the shepherd of Psalm 23 who made his sheep lie down in green pasture (Ps. 23:2, 5). The miraculous feeding of the five thousand establishes Jesus as the true Shepherd of God, but it also points to the future ministry of the disciples. Jesus’ use of the Twelve to feed the crowd of five thousand suggests a pattern for future ministry in which Jesus provides the disciples with resources for ministry.

HOPE IN LIFE’S STORMS (6:45–56)

Jesus saw the disciples’ struggle at the oars and came to them walking on the water. Jesus did not call disciples into the storm to abandon them there. The disciples characteristically failed to “see clearly.” They thought He was a ghost. “It is I” suggests the covenant name of God (Exod. 3:14; Isa. 43:10). The reassurance “Do not be afraid” is common in God’s Old Testament appearance

(for example, Gen. 15:1; 21:17; 26:24). Mark did not clarify just what the disciples did not understand “about the loaves.” Perhaps they thought Jesus was the Shepherd who would care for their needs and lead them through the dangers of death or that He was a new Moses who would lead them across the sea just as He had miraculously fed them. The disciples’ failure to recognize Jesus contrasts sharply with the Gennesaret crowd who recognized Jesus “at once” and appealed to Him for aid.

Leavell, L.P. (1972). Mark. In H. F. Paschall & H. H. Hobbs (Eds.), The Teacher’s Bible Commentary (pp. 623-624). Nashville: Broadman and Holman Publishers.

Crowds and Miracles (Mark 6:30–56)

The passage—Every human periodically needs rest and relaxation. Jesus called the twelve apart to refresh themselves or to rest up. In addition to the tension created by the crowds, perhaps they were distracted over the death of John the Baptist. Chapter 6, verse 32 states the Pharisees’ purpose, but their plan was aborted.

In verses 33–44 the record of the feeding of five thousand appears. Clearly, Mark recorded this as a miracle. To hold otherwise brings the integrity of Mark and the divinity of Jesus into question.

Another miraculous event is found in verse 45–52. It was about three hours before sunrise, with a stiff wind blowing, that Jesus walked to the boat on the water. The amazement of the disciples led to the hardening of their hearts. This could be due to the attempted imposition of the role of an earthly ruler upon Jesus. Whatever the cause, they hardened their own hearts.

The final four verses of this chapter describe a return to Galilee. Word had reached these people concerning the healing of the woman with the issue of blood. They also desired to touch the tassel of his garment. They gladly followed Jesus as long as he fed and healed them. When he outlined the claims made by discipleship, the crowds melted away. The greater blessings, those of the spirit, were sublimated to physical concerns then and now.

The Holy Bible: New International Version. (1984). Mark 6:30-56. Grand Rapids, MI: Zondervan.