

耶稣究竟是谁——马可福音 6:45-56

Who On Earth Is Jesus?— Mark 6:45-56

Introduction, outline

- Scripture reading: Mark 6:45-56; John 6:22-69
- Teaching text: Mark 6:45-56
- **45** Immediately Jesus made His disciples get into the boat and go ahead of Him to the other side to Bethsaida, while He Himself was sending the crowd away. **46** After bidding them farewell, He left for the mountain to pray. **47** When it was evening, the boat was in the middle of the sea, and He was alone on the land. **48** Seeing them straining at the oars, for the wind was against them, at about the fourth watch of the night He came to them, walking on the sea; and He intended to pass by them. **49** But when they saw Him walking on the sea, they supposed that it was a ghost, and cried out; **50** for they all saw Him and were terrified. But immediately He spoke with them and said to them, “Take courage; it is I, do not be afraid.” **51** Then He got into the boat with them, and the wind stopped; and they were utterly astonished, **52** for they had not gained any insight from the incident of the loaves, but their heart was hardened. **53** When they had crossed over they came to land at Gennesaret, and moored to the shore. **54** When they got out of the boat, immediately the people recognized Him, **55** and ran about that whole country and began to carry here and there on their pallets those who were sick, to the place they heard He was. **56** Wherever He entered villages, or cities, or countryside, they were laying the sick in the market places, and imploring Him that they might just touch the fringe of His cloak; and as many as touched it were being cured.
- As we learn to know the Lord, a very common obstacle is preconceived notions, thinking He must be this way or that way. When we see God's work in the Bible or in life doesn't align with our preconceptions, we are surprised and confused.
- Outline:
 - Title: Who On Earth Is Jesus?
 - 1. The Man Who Relies upon the Father (vv. 45-46)
 - 2. The Lord Who Cares for the Followers (vv. 47-48)
 - 3. The God Who Acts in Unexpected Ways (vv. 49-52)
 - 4. The King Who Shows Mercy and Grace (vv. 53-56)

The Man Who Relies upon the Father (vv. 45-46)

- “Immediately Jesus made His disciples get into the boat”: Jesus just fed the five thousand with five loaves and two fish, and immediately, He urged His disciples to get into the boat. The word “urged” in the original text carries a sense of reluctance, implying the disciples didn’t want to do it. They didn't understand Jesus' command. They'd just crossed the sea from the other side a few hours ago (v31), and now, it’s getting late, and they’re tired. Why do we have to go again at such a late hour? Meanwhile, the crowd were shouting with great zeal, “This is truly the prophet who is to come into the world!” (John 6:14). They thought Jesus was here to lead them to overthrow Rome, to become independent and to have a very good life. The disciples were celebrating with the crowd, but

suddenly, Jesus took them aside and said, "Hurry! Get into the boat. Go to the other side. Do not linger here."

- “Send the crowds away”: Go home now, do what you should. Your family needs your service. Don't stand here daydreaming about your kingdom fantasy.
- “Go up to the mountain to pray”: This is the key point! The Gospel of John says that Jesus withdrew to the mountain alone to pray because "He knew that they were about to come and take Him by force to make Him king." Jesus responded to the temptation of the applauding crowd with earnest prayer.

【Ponder】 The applauding crowd is a temptation to Jesus' human nature, tempting Him to bypass the cross and become king before the time. An applauding crowd is a temptation for anyone, and those without spiritual discernment will undoubtedly fall into it.

Luke 6:26 “Woe to you when all men speak well of you, for their fathers used to treat the false prophets in the same way.”

Proverbs 27:21 “The crucible is for silver and the furnace for gold, And each is tested by the praise accorded him.”

Hebrews 4:15 “For we do not have a high priest who cannot sympathize with our weaknesses, but One who has been tempted in all things as we are, yet without sin.”

How did Jesus resist every temptation and never sinned? By prayer! He saw things weren't going well, that the crowd completely misunderstood his teachings and miracles, so he knew he must seek help from the Father immediately. So, he immediately urged his disciples to leave and went up Himself to the mountain to pray.

Hebrews 4:16 “Therefore let us draw near with confidence to the throne of grace, so that we may receive mercy and find grace to help in time of need.”

Jesus' prayer here undoubtedly included intercession for his disciples. When the large crowd left disappointed the next day, Peter said, “Lord, to whom shall we go? You have the words of eternal life”. Where did such faith come from? Jesus' prayer.

Hebrews 7:25 “Therefore He is able also to save forever those who draw near to God through Him, since He always lives to make intercession for them.”

The Lord Who Cares for the Followers (vv. 47-48)

- “When it was evening... at about the fourth watch of the night”: Evening is 6 to 9 PM, and the fourth watch is early morning from 3 to 6 AM. They rowed all night, for at least six hours. The Sea of Galilee is not that large! When the disciples got on the boat, they definitely didn't expect to be rowing on the lake all night long. If they had known, they could've walked there by now. Jesus had their faith tested by a whole night of storm.
- “Because the wind was against them, and they were making headway painfully”: Compared to the previous storm (Mark 4:35-41), this one was even harder to endure, and it lasted longer. Every minute added to the intensity of their test of faith.

【Principle】 When we go through trials and difficulties, it's not difficult to hold onto our faith at the beginning; the challenge lies in persevering through the entire process. Sometimes, God allows trials to be prolonged to help our faith grow.

James 1:3-4 “knowing that the testing of your faith produces endurance. And let endurance have its perfect result, so that you may be perfect and complete, lacking in nothing.”

- “The boat was in the middle of the sea, and Jesus was alone on the land”: This is another difference from the previous storm. Last time, Jesus was in the boat, so when the disciples were scared, they could at least wake Him up and scream at Him, "Teacher, do you not care that we are perishing?" This time, they couldn't even find anyone to vent their frustration. The intensified trial was meant to test whether they had grown in knowing God.

【Lesson】 Jesus is the omnipresent God; His preservation of the disciples is not limited by any physical obstacle.

- “Saw them”: The Scripture doesn't say that Jesus knew about their struggle; instead, He saw it with His own eyes. He saw the disciples' struggle with the oars vividly before His eyes. Can you see the loving care of Jesus here?

【Insight】 Jesus not only possesses divine attributes like omnipresence and omniscience, but He uses these attributes in a way that genuinely shows His love for His disciples. By His divine attributes, Jesus clearly sees everything the disciples are going through and takes timely action to teach the disciples to trust in Him. What a wonderful Savior!

- “Walking on the sea”: As far as the disciples' practical difficulty is concerned, doesn't this step seem a bit redundant? Couldn't Jesus just command the storm to stop? Why did He have to do this to startle His disciples? The answer is:

【Insight】 Jesus is not a pragmatist; He is a relationist. His goal is not merely to solve practical problems but to help His disciples know Him more deeply and have a closer relationship with Him, for that is their greatest benefit.

- “to pass by them”: Literally, "to go by their side," depicting a scene of walking alongside them. It's not just about solving practical problems.

The God Who Acts in Unexpected Ways (vv. 49-52)

- “They supposed that it was a ghost, and cried out”: Jesus was merely using some of His divine power, and they mistook Him for a ghost.
- “Jesus immediately spoke to them”: Knowing the disciples' state of mind, Jesus immediately comforted them with just the words they needed at this moment.
- “Take courage; it is I, do not be afraid.”: Three short and powerful sentences. In moments of crisis, people need short and powerful reminders rather than lengthy speeches. The first sentence, “Take courage” and the third sentence, “Do not be afraid,” convey the same idea in opposite ways. The emphasis is on the second sentence: “It is I!” Not someone else! It's me!

【Insight】 The original text reads “I am” which is a declaration of divinity. In the Old Testament, God’s name is Yahweh which, when translated literally, means “He is” In Exodus 3:14, the Lord explains His name, saying, “I AM WHO I AM.” Jesus is saying, “Take heart; I AM! Do not be afraid! I am Yahweh who walks on water!”

Job 9:8: “Who alone stretches out the heavens and tramples down the waves of the sea;”

Psalm 77:19: “Your way was in the sea and Your paths in the mighty waters, and Your footprints may not be known.”

- “He got into the boat with them, and the wind stopped”: Last time, Jesus rebuked the wind and the waves (Mark 4:39), but this time, He didn't say a word; as soon as He got into the boat, the wind ceased. The scene’s the same, but Jesus works in different ways. He is the God who acts in unexpected ways.
- “They were utterly astonished, for.....” Just the previous night, they had experienced the miracle of the five loaves and two fish. If they had any understanding, they shouldn't have been so astounded by what happened here. There’s nothing new; it’s the same simple truth, expressed in three words: IT IS I! God! The same truth, just a different manifestation.

【Application】 Christians often experience unnecessary panic, don't they? If we truly know God, why should we panic? Christians who panic easily are spiritually immature, not knowing God well enough. Mature Christians will become increasingly steady because their knowledge of God grows deeper and richer.

- “But their heart was hardened”: “Hard heart” is a term used to describe the Pharisees (Mark 3:5)! Christians can also have hard hearts!

【Caution】 Why is their heart so hard? Because they have a set of preconceived notions and believe that God must be this way or that way, and they just don’t want to be corrected! How often has your heart been hard over some specific matter that you just won’t acknowledge God as God? What are some of the things where you really need to hear Jesus say, "Take courage; it is I. Do not be afraid"?

The King Who Shows Mercy and Grace (vv. 53-56)

- “Coming to land at Gennesaret.....””: The healing miracles were to demonstrate Jesus' identity as the Messiah-King (as prophesied in Isaiah 35:5-6), and to perform healing on such hard-hearted people was purely out of the depths of His mercy.
- “Touch the fringe of His cloak””: This is pure superstition, treating Jesus as if He were the lamp of Aladdin, where wishes are granted just by touching it.
- “And as many as touched it were being cured.””: What grace and mercy! Undoubtedly, they would’ve abused such grace, thinking it was their own touch that healed them. Nevertheless, Jesus still allowed them to experience temporary physical healing.

【Insight】 Human kings are often fierce, cruel, violent, and merciless, especially toward their enemies. This King is totally different. He not only bears up with His enemies, He even shows them such mercy and grace as to heal their diseases.