

# [ you better recognize ]

## :: mark 6 ::

Big chapter this morning. Let's get into it. Mark chapter 6.

**Mark 6.1-56 -Then He went out from there and came to His own country, and His disciples followed Him. And when the Sabbath had come, He began to teach in the synagogue. And many hearing Him were astonished, saying, "Where did this Man get these things? And what wisdom is this which is given to Him, that such mighty works are performed by His hands! Is this not the carpenter, the Son of Mary, and brother of James, Joses, Judas, and Simon? And are not His sisters here with us?" So they were offended at Him.**

**But Jesus said to them, "A prophet is not without honor except in his own country, among his own relatives, and in his own house." Now He could do no mighty work there, except that He laid His hands on a few sick people and healed them. And He marveled because of their unbelief. Then He went about the villages in a circuit, teaching.**

**And He called the twelve to Himself, and began to send them out two by two, and gave them power over unclean spirits. He commanded them to take nothing for the journey except a staff—no bag, no bread, no copper in their money belts— but to wear sandals, and not to put on two tunics.**

**Also He said to them, "In whatever place you enter a house, stay there till you depart from that place. And whoever will not receive you nor hear you, when you depart from there, shake off the dust under your feet as a testimony against them. Assuredly, I say to you, it will be more tolerable for Sodom and Gomorrah in the day of judgment than for that city!"**

**So they went out and preached that people should repent. And they cast out many demons, and anointed with oil many who were sick, and healed them.**

**Now King Herod heard of Him, for His name had become well known. And he said, "John the Baptist is risen from the dead, and therefore these powers are at work in him."**

**Others said, "It is Elijah."**

**And others said, "It is the Prophet, or like one of the prophets."**

**But when Herod heard, he said, "This is John, whom I beheaded; he has been raised from the dead!" For Herod himself had sent and laid hold of John, and bound him in prison for the sake of Herodias, his brother Philip's wife; for he had married her. Because John had said to Herod, "It is not lawful for you to have your brother's wife."**

**Therefore Herodias held it against him and wanted to kill him, but she could not; for Herod feared John, knowing that he was a just and holy man, and he protected him. And when he heard him, he did many things, and heard him gladly.**

**Then an opportune day came when Herod on his birthday gave a feast for his nobles, the high officers, and the chief men of Galilee. And when Herodias' daughter herself came in and danced, and pleased Herod and those who sat with him, the king said to the girl, "Ask me whatever you want, and I will give it to you." He also swore to her, "Whatever you ask me, I will give you, up to half my kingdom."**

So she went out and said to her mother, "What shall I ask?"

And she said, "The head of John the Baptist!"

Immediately she came in with haste to the king and asked, saying, "I want you to give me at once the head of John the Baptist on a platter."

And the king was exceedingly sorry; yet, because of the oaths and because of those who sat with him, he did not want to refuse her. Immediately the king sent an executioner and commanded his head to be brought. And he went and beheaded him in prison, brought his head on a platter, and gave it to the girl; and the girl gave it to her mother. When his disciples heard of it, they came and took away his corpse and laid it in a tomb.

Then the apostles gathered to Jesus and told Him all things, both what they had done and what they had taught. And He said to them, "Come aside by yourselves to a deserted place and rest a while." For there were many coming and going, and they did not even have time to eat.

So they departed to a deserted place in the boat by themselves.

But the multitudes saw them departing, and many knew Him and ran there on foot from all the cities. They arrived before them and came together to Him. And Jesus, when He came out, saw a great multitude and was moved with compassion for them, because they were like sheep not having a shepherd. So He began to teach them many things. When the day was now far spent, His disciples came to Him and said, "This is a deserted place, and already the hour is late. Send them away, that they may go into the surrounding country and villages and buy themselves bread; for they have nothing to eat."

But He answered and said to them, "You give them something to eat."

And they said to Him, "Shall we go and buy two hundred denarii worth of bread and give them something to eat?"

But He said to them, "How many loaves do you have? Go and see."

And when they found out they said, "Five, and two fish."

Then He commanded them to make them all sit down in groups on the green grass. So they sat down in ranks, in hundreds and in fifties. And when He had taken the five loaves and the two fish, He looked up to heaven, blessed and broke the loaves, and gave them to His disciples to set before them; and the two fish He divided among them all. So they all ate and were filled. And they took up twelve baskets full of fragments and of the fish. Now those who had eaten the loaves were about five thousand men.

Immediately He made His disciples get into the boat and go before Him to the other side, to Bethsaida, while He sent the multitude away. And when He had sent them away, He departed to the mountain to pray. Now when evening came, the boat was in the middle of the sea; and He was alone on the land. Then He saw them straining at rowing, for the wind was against them. Now about the fourth watch of the night He came to them, walking on the sea, and would have passed them by. And when they saw Him walking on the sea, they supposed it was a ghost, and cried out; for they all saw Him and were troubled. But immediately He talked with them and said to them, "Be of good cheer! It is I; do not be afraid." Then He went up into the boat to them, and the wind ceased. And they were greatly amazed in themselves beyond measure, and marveled. For they had not understood about the loaves, because their heart was hardened.

**When they had crossed over, they came to the land of Gennesaret and anchored there. And when they came out of the boat, immediately the people recognized Him, ran through that whole surrounding region, and began to carry about on beds those who were sick to wherever they heard He was. Wherever He entered, into villages, cities, or the country, they laid the sick in the marketplaces, and begged Him that they might just touch the hem of His garment. And as many as touched Him were made well.**

Huge amount of content, so I'd like us to focus on one theme that emerges throughout the chapter. Because we've got like 5 or 6 different stories in these verses. But a constant theme is whether people recognized Jesus or not. Not just if they recognized who He was as a Person. Though there are 2 stories specifically listed where people didn't physically recognize Jesus. First, Herod, who thought He was in fact John the Baptist raised from the dead and then there toward the end of the chapter the disciples don't recognize who He is as He walks on the water.

But more importantly, there are some here in the text who do not recognize what Jesus is about and what it is that He's doing in His ministry.

In fact, as we look at these different people and situations, we find there is a wide variety regarding what people thought about the Lord and His work. And a good exercise when reading a text like this is to evaluate who you might be in the story. Obviously we know who we *want* to be. We know how we *want* to respond to Christ, but throughout these verses there is a wide array of responses and assumptions made about the Lord. Some good, some bad. And our part is to recognize first who Jesus is and what He wants to do, and then to realize that we have the same potential to miss Him in our own lives if we're behaving like some of these examples we're given.

Specifically, from our text, we should be concerned about the hardness or softness of our hearts. As we read in verse 52:

**Mark 6.52 - For [the disciples] had not understood about the loaves, because their heart was hardened.**

If we don't recognize who Jesus really is and what He's really about and what He's really trying to teach us today as His disciples, then we're not going to be able to understand what's going on in our lives and we're going to be denying the power of God and the work that He wants to do. That's what happened in Nazareth, which we saw in verse 5:

**Mark 6.5 - He could do no mighty work there, except that He laid His hands on a few sick people and healed them.**

Now, on the flip side, there are tons of people in this text who *did* understand who Jesus was and what He was capable of. They believed and had their lives changed. The crowds that gathered in Gennesaret and the 5,000 men with their families there in the remote place. They recognized the power of God and their need for Him. And for them, Christ was able to do great things. Because their hearts weren't hardened or disbelieving. They recognized who Jesus was and what He was doing.

So, what we want to know is how to be more like those folks and less like the others who didn't seem to get it in this chapter. We want to know how to avoid that hardness of heart. And if we're looking for the attitudes of the heart that draw us away from God, then we get some very clear examples here in these stories.

First, you have the hometown crowd in Nazareth, who were offended at Jesus.

The problem was they thought they knew Him. Or, more importantly, these people thought they knew everything they *needed* to know about Jesus. They didn't want to hear all this Kingdom talk and they didn't want to go out and listen to His teaching. They knew all they wanted to know. And that is a dangerous mindset that we're all capable of falling into. Not so much that we're rejecting Jesus as Messiah, obviously that's not what we're doing. But if we get into this mindset that we've got this all figured out. We got Christianity into a quick, simple little system and there's not really more for us to discover by the Spirit about what the Lord intends for our lives. If we're not careful, we make ourselves unteachable real fast. "Lord, I know what I need to know about this passage or that book. I know what I need to know about living the Christian life." When we get ourselves in that mindset we're denying the power of the Spirit whose desire for us is a continual growth and continual intimacy. We're to *grow* in the knowledge of God and in the Spirit of God. And we have to operate under the attitude that we've never exhausted God's word or God's leading or God's potential in any area of our lives. Because if we don't, then we're like these people from Nazareth. They brushed Jesus off and sort of shooed Him away because they were convinced that they knew what they needed to know to be adequate followers of God.

It says He taught in a circuit. Meaning that God intends to continually teach us things about our lives and about holiness and all the other things we read about in the Word. Instead, what can happen sometimes is that we are convinced we know what we need to know and before we know it we're getting *offended* by something we're hearing from the Lord. That's not a good place to be, because that signals a heart that is hard and shut off from the power of God and the growth that He intends for us.

Another reason people sometimes fail to recognize Jesus and the work He's doing in their lives is because they're blinded by sin. We see this in Herod. Now, Herod was no believer. Not by a long shot. But you see that he had heard about who Jesus was and what He was doing. And on top of that, he frequently went to hear John the Baptist preach. But he was so steeped in sin and perversion, he was so blinded by his sin that he was unable to understand what was going on. And that sin not only kept him from really knowing Jesus, but it also took control of his actions and led to the brutal murder of John.

Now, as Christians we're not really looking at Herod as a model or anything like that. But we *do* need to understand just how deadly sin is. It blinds us. It binds us. And it causes us to miss out on what Jesus is doing in our midst. Because we cannot simultaneously betray Christ with our sin and glorify Him with our service. Sin hardens the heart.

But let's get to the 12. They're more relatable for us. We see them called by Jesus, just as we are. They're empowered by Jesus, just as we are. Then they're sent out by Jesus, just as we are. Now, as they went throughout the region healing and teaching and casting out demons, a great amount of ministry was done.

But when they got back to the home base and the situation wasn't quite so glamorous, they started to miss the point of Jesus' heart and ministry. They didn't recognize the work He was doing.

This multitude of 8 or 10 thousand people show up and the disciples' response to the Lord was to ask Him to get rid of them. When they were tired and inconvenienced they didn't recognize the fact that Jesus still had compassion, He still had a work to do, He still had power to transform the situation. Because ministry wasn't just a hobby.

And you see there some exasperation on the part of the disciples. They ask the Lord to kick these people out, and then when He invites them to be a part of this incredible work He was about to do, they sort of get in His face and say,

**Mark 6.37b - Shall we go and buy two hundred denarii worth of bread and give them something to eat?**

They're getting a little testy. They were offended that He would suggest that they minister to this crowd. And what we discover is that when the screws of life start turning on us, if we're not careful and if we're not soft-hearted, we're going to get frustrated. John the Baptist did. It isn't recorded in this Gospel, but it's the same time period. When he was imprisoned by Herod, at one point he sent some of his guys to go ask Jesus, 'Hey, what's going on here?'

And if we're not recognizing the fact that Jesus wants to work all over the world in each situation of life, not just when it's convenient, then eventually we're going to get offended that our circumstances aren't as restful as we'd like. Or as prominent as we'd like. They're going to include suffering and hard work and compassion. But if we get narrow minded or fall into the trap of thinking that ministry is meant to make me feel good, then we run the risk of Jesus passing us by. The opportunities He brings us or the encounters He wants for us. We need to watch for them and expect them and understand them.

Because what's clear in this chapter is that the Lord really wanted His disciples to be a part of what He was doing. He wanted them to understand what He was teaching and to be a part of the mission that He was on.

Today, right now, the Lord is excited to give us opportunities to partner with Him in His work on the earth. But these heart attitudes can really shift our spiritual vision and cause us to not get it. A hard heart removes our trust in Christ and our faith in His power. A hard heart sees people as an inconvenience, not an opportunity. A hard heart thinks it knows everything it needs to know and ignores the tender cultivation that God wants to do in us.

Jesus Christ is recognizable. The work He wants to do is right out in the open. We're invited to partner with Him and be an incredible part of what He's doing, but it requires that we stop, take inventory of our lives, listen to what He's saying and actually allow Him to change us and empower us, not for our own benefit or our own comfort, but for His glorification and the service of the people around us who are searching for the Savior.