



Mark 6

Mark 6
Tape #8034
By Chuck Smith

*And when Jesus went out from thence (6:1),
the “thence” would be the sea of Galilee, the area of Capernaum,
He came into his own country (6:1);
which would be the area of Nazareth, His hometown, the city of Nazareth;
and his disciples followed him (6:1).*

And as we said this morning, don't think in terms of twelve, think in terms of multitudes for there were many disciples following Jesus. Of those disciples, and the disciples included men and women, and of the disciples, He chose twelve of them to be called apostles. Later on, we read in the book of Acts when there was sort of the reorganization of the church or probably just the organization of the church, it was nothing to “re” about, they just organized; Peter, as they were waiting for the Holy Spirit, stood up and said, You know, it's necessary that we get someone to take the place of Judas Iscariot. And so they said, Let us choose someone who has accompanied with us from the beginning. Someone who's been a part, a disciple from the beginning, who also can bear witness to the resurrection of Jesus from the dead. And they chose two and then they cast lots to see which of the two would be the Lord's choice. But there were many who had accompanied from the beginning. So when it says, His disciples, that's all inclusive of the broader group, more than just the twelve apostles. So they came to His hometown of Nazareth and we read,

When the sabbath day was come, he began to teach in the synagogue: and many hearing him were astonished, saying, From whence hath this man these things? and what wisdom is this which is given unto him, that even such mighty works are wrought by his hands (6:2)?

This coming to the synagogue is not to be confused with the account that we have in Luke's gospel. For Luke's gospel chapter four tells us that when Jesus was baptized by John in the Jordan river, and after He was led by the Spirit into the wilderness, and fasted for forty days, and then was tempted by Satan, that Jesus returned to Nazareth.

And in verse sixteen, we read, “And he came to Nazareth, where he had been brought up: and, as his custom was, he went into the synagogue on the sabbath day, and he stood up to read the scriptures. And they delivered unto him the book of the prophet Isaiah. And when he had opened the book, he found the place where it was written, [they handed to Him the scroll of Isaiah, He turned in the scroll to the prophecy of chapter sixty-one in our Bible, where it reads,] The Spirit of the Lord is upon me, because he has anointed me to preach the gospel to the poor; he has sent me to heal the brokenhearted, to preach deliverance to the captives, and the recovering of the sight to the blind, and set at liberty those that are bruised, And to preach the acceptable year of the Lord. And he closed the book, and he gave it again to the minister, and he sat down. And the eyes of all of those that were in the synagogue were fastened on him. And He began to say unto them, This day is this scripture fulfilled in your ears. [So having read the prophecy concerning the Messiah, He then declared, This day this scripture is fulfilled, and an announcement which of course, evidently, passed over them, that He was the Messiah.] And they all bore witness and wondered at the gracious words which proceeded out of his mouth. And they said, Is this not Joseph's son” (Luke 4:16-22)? [And so then He went on to say other things that they did not interpret to be so gracious. They became angry and verse twenty-nine,] “They rose up, and thrust him out of the city, and led him unto the brow of the hill whereupon their city was built, that they might cast him down headlong. [They were going to throw Him over the cliff.] But he passing through the midst of them went His way. And he then went on down to Capernaum where He began His ministry around the sea of Galilee” (Luke 4:29-31).

Now He has been ministering for a period of time. He has been doing marvellous works of God. In fact, He has been doing exactly what the prophecy of Isaiah said the Messiah would do. He was preaching the

gospel to the poor, He was setting at liberty those that were bound by the powers of darkness, unclean spirits; He had been doing many marvellous works and His fame had spread around. And now, He comes back to Nazareth, no longer obscure or an insignificant person but with a reputation of a man who was able to do marvellous miracles and marvellous works. And again on the sabbath day, He goes into the synagogue as was His custom. And again, He began to teach in the synagogue. And this time the people were again amazed saying, Where did He learn these things? And what is this wisdom and the mighty power whereby He is able to do these marvellous works?

Is not this the carpenter (6:3),

Before, Is not this the son of Joseph? But here, Is not this the carpenter? Their knowledge of Jesus, their familiarity with Him stumbled them. They knew Him as a carpenter. They knew Him as a neighbor. They knew Him as a craftsman. They perhaps had bought some of the yokes that He had made or the plows or the chairs or the tables. Is not this the carpenter?

the son of Mary (6:3),

Remember in Luke, it was the son of Joseph. Now they are saying, the son of Mary. This could indicate that Joseph had died in these intervening time between His first and second visit. But more probably as the fame and reputation of Jesus grew, and as word came back in Nazareth of the wonderful things that He was doing, some of the earlier whispers, some of the earlier suspicions of the people were brought up. How that Mary became pregnant before she and Joseph were married. And how that the child was born so rapidly after they were married. So that, Is this not the son of Mary? Not this time, the son of Joseph.

And are not his brothers with us (6:3),

This of course mitigates against the dogma of the Catholic church of the perpetual virginity of Mary. They have established many different dogmas concerning Mary, the, how that Mary is one of the mediators between you and Jesus, the mediation ministry of Mary, the dogma of the perpetual virginity of Mary, the dogma of the sinlessness of Mary, she also was born without sin, and the dogma of the assumption of Mary into heaven. How that she ascended into heaven, that's a rather recent dogma that has been declared by the church and it created a little problem because they had a beautiful church in Jerusalem on Mount Zion which used to be known as the Church of the Tomb of Mary. And so, that became a problem when they decided that she wasn't entombed but ascended into heaven. So the dogma of the perpetual virginity is shattered by this statement, Are not his brothers,

James, and Joses, and of Juda, and Simon? and are not his sisters here with us (6:3)?

They're still living here in town.

And they were offended [they were troubled because of this]. But Jesus said unto them, A prophet is not without honour, but in his own hometown, and among his own family, and in his own house (6:3,4).

It would appear that His brothers did not believe that He was the Messiah until after His resurrection from the dead. And then this brother James became one of the major leaders in the early church. James the disciple who was called to be an apostle, the brother of John, one of the sons of Zebedee, was martyred very early in the history of the church.

When Herod stretched forth his hand against the church and had James beheaded, and saw that it pleased the Jews, so he imprisoned Peter intending to do the same to him, but Peter was delivered by the prayer, Peter was delivered by the Lord, I don't know that the prayers of the saints had anything to do with it because they really were praying without faith. When Peter knocked on the door, and the young girl Rhoda went to the door and said, Who is it? It's Peter, let me in. She went running in to those that were praying for Peter and said, Peter's outside of the door. And they said, Are you kidding, it must be a ghost, can't be Peter, he's in jail. And so surely it wasn't their faith that got Peter out. And so James, the brother of John, was martyred early in the church history but then there arose this other James, who presided over the first church council and is the one who issued the decision of the church council to be sent to the Gentiles at Antioch.

The James who wrote the epistle by his name in the latter part of the New Testament, the epistle of James, was written by James, the half-brother of Jesus technically, because Joseph was the father of James. And Jude, the little epistle of Jude, who was the brother of James, and so after the resurrection of Jesus they became believers, they became disciples, and they became leaders in the early church. But their familiarity

with Jesus, their thinking that they knew Him, offended them. It was hard for them, it was a stumbling block to them.

Then he could not there do any mighty work, except that he laid his hands upon a few sick folk, and healed them (6:5).

It was not that their lack of faith hindered His power. God can work sovereignly by His power and it wasn't that their lack of faith hindered or restricted His power to do works. It was their unbelief kept them from coming to Jesus to receive His help. How many people there in Nazareth could have been helped if they had only had the faith to come to Jesus. If they had only had the faith to bring them to Jesus. They could have seen some marvellous works but their unbelief kept them from Him. Even today, unbelief keeps people from seeing the marvellous work of God in their lives that they could experience and they could know if they would only come to Jesus.

Now Jesus marvelled because of their unbelief (6:6).

They had heard, they knew the works that He was doing, and the fact that Joseph wasn't His father should have only been a stronger confirmation that He was the Messiah because the prophet Isaiah said, "God will give to you a sign; a virgin will conceive, and bear a son, and they shall call his name Immanuel" (Isaiah 7:14), which is interpreted, God with us. And they should have realized that He was that promised Son of the virgin, and He was God dwelling with man. He marvelled at their unbelief.

Unbelief is oftentimes a rather marvellous thing not in a good sense, but in an interesting sense. Marvel. How is it that a person doesn't believe? What is it that keeps a person from believing? When there is so much to be gained by believing in Jesus, why would a person not believe? With all of the evidence there is, the witness of the thousands upon thousands of people whose lives have been transformed by the power of Jesus Christ, how is it that people still don't believe? How is it that people are so opposed to Jesus that they want to destroy Him? It's not a thing that a person is usually very passive about, a person it seems has difficulty being passive with Jesus. Either they are passionately in love with Him or they have very strong negative attitudes towards Him. He marvelled at their unbelief.

And he went around in the villages, teaching. And he called unto him the twelve (6:6,7),

That is, the twelve that He had chosen to be apostles,

and He began to send them forth by two and two; and He gave them power over unclean spirits (6:7);

So now to spread further the gospel and the work of God. He sends these apostles out two by two, and I think there's wisdom in that. A partner, someone with you, is a great assist. There is power when you have someone with you who shares equally your love and your faith in Jesus Christ. And so, "He gave them power over the unclean spirits,"

And He commanded that they should not take anything [that is in way of provision] for their journey, save only their walking stick; don't take any scrip [that is, that which was used for the exchange of goods], don't take bread, or take any money in your purse (6:8):

Just go out, He's sending them out in faith. I'm amused sometimes at the request that we receive from people who feel that they are called of God to go on the mission field. They send their list of requests to the board. And they want money for a large shipping crate to be shipped on the Madison Lines, they want money for a nice apartment in Rio de Janeiro which costs \$1,250 a month, they need \$400 a month for a servant, and the list goes on and on and on. And I think, Wow, they'd never have made it as one of Jesus' disciples, He said, Don't take a purse, don't take any scrip, don't take any money, just take your walking stick and go. People would think you were abusing them today if you just send them out, you say, Take your venture in faith, just go, the Lord's guiding you, He's going to be with you and He'll take care of you. Oh, no, I don't want that. I want to be guaranteed a salary. So He said,

Be shod with sandals; but don't take two coats. And he said unto them, In what place soever you enter into a house, there abide until you depart from that place (6:9,10).

In the east, hospitality was a marvellous thing. You weren't really required to go and, when you came into a village, to go and look for a place to stay, the villagers felt obligated to find the stranger and invite them in. Eastern hospitality was a beautiful thing. So whosoever receives you, just enter into the house and abide until you depart from there.

But whosoever will not receive you, nor hear you, when you depart from there, just shake the dust from under your feet for a testimony against them (6:11).

It's interesting, the Jewish people did not want any kind of contact with the Gentiles. And so as they would enter the land of Israel from Gentile territory, when they came to the border, they would always shake the dust off their sandals, they didn't want to bring the dust from the Gentile territories into Israel. And they would go through a ceremony, shaking the dust off because they felt that if they brought the dust of the Gentiles into Israel, it would defile the land. So there was this idea of just shaking the dust off your sandals, just sort of a creating this breach or the separation, the bridge between. And so shake the dust off your sandals as a testimony against them.

And I tell you the truth, It will be more tolerable for Sodom and Gomorrah in the day of judgment, than for that city (6:11).

There is a day of judgment coming. This is what the text teaches. And all are to be judged, those of Sodom and Gomorrah will stand before the judgment of God. Those who have rejected or will not receive the truth of God will face a greater judgment, a more severe judgment than those who were not exposed to the truth of God, and yet did things that were horrible. You can't get much worse than Sodom and Gomorrah. It was so bad God ordered the city destroyed. And yet when those people stand in judgment, because they did not have much understanding or light of the law of God, it will be easier on them than those who have known the truth and turn from the truth, or those who listen and reject the truth, or those who just close their minds to the truth.

So that so often, we meet people and they have that stock question about, What about that heathen who lives in some remote area of Africa and who has never heard the gospel of Jesus Christ and he dies, will God, a loving God, punish that man eternally in hell when he has never had a chance to hear the gospel? Well, it is always warming to my heart to realize that people are so concerned for that poor heathen in Africa and I think that's very good and I'm surprised that they don't go as a missionary if they are so concerned, to tell them the truth of Jesus Christ. However, they better be more worried about themselves because it's going to be a lot easier on that person than it's going to be upon them when they stand before the Lord, having rejected the truth. And so Jesus is saying, When the day of judgment comes, those of Sodom and Gomorrah will have an easier time than those who have rejected, refused to receive the light of the gospel.

And so they went out, and they preached that men should repent (6:12).

That was the Gospel message. Change, turn, don't live any longer after the flesh. Don't live any longer in the lust of your flesh. Don't give in to the anger and to the malice and the wrath and the strife that is a part of human nature. But you can be transformed by the Spirit of God, you need to be loving and forgiving and patient and kind and gentle.

And they cast out many devils, and they anointed with oil many that were sick, and healed them (6:13).

And so we find the practice of anointing with oil in healing and in praying for the sick. In the epistle of James, he said, Is there any sick among you? let him call for the elders of the church; and let them anoint them with oil in the name of the Lord: And the prayer of faith will save the sick, and the Lord shall raise them up" (James 5:14,15). And so the idea of anointing with oil and praying for the sick, it's biblical, it was here in the gospels, it was taught in the epistles.

King Herod, when you get into this Herodian family, you get into a real mess. I mean, it's so hard to sort things out. It all started with this guy, Herod the great. But the problem was, he had so many wives and he was a paranoid little guy. And he was fearful that his sons were plotting against him. He killed so many of his sons that they had a common saying, It's safer to be a pig than the son of Herod. One of his wives that is probably one of the best known, because he seemed to genuinely love her, she bore him two sons, one whose name was Aristobulus. But he thought that Aristobulus and his brother, along with their mother, Miriam, were plotting against him so he had them killed. And then he had remorse and he built a beautiful tower for Miriam there at the Joppa gate in Jerusalem. But Aristobulus, the son of Herod by Miriam, who was called the Hasmonian because he married another Miriam, like the name, I guess, Aristobulus before he was killed by his father, had a daughter whose name was Herodias. This other Miriam who was called the Bethusian, she had a son whose name was Herod Philip. Herod Philip didn't care for ruling and so he moved to Rome

and lived in a palatial home and was in the social scene in Rome. But Herod Philip married his niece, Herodias. Herod the Great had another wife named Malthace. She had a son that they called Herod Antipas. Herod Antipas went to Rome to visit his half-brother, Herod Philip. There he seduced his niece, and would be sister-in-law, Herodias, to leave Herod Philip and to come back to the land with him to be his wife. And so he took and seduced Herodias, his brother Philip's wife, and she came back with him, having really the ambitions of being the first lady of the territory. While she was married to Herod Philip, she had a daughter named Salome who came back with her to live there in Tiberias at the sea of Galilee.

Herod the Great, back to the originator of all this, had another wife whose name was Cleopatra, he had another wife named Doris and her son he killed too, and he felt he was conspiring against him, but he had another wife named Cleopatra and she was called Cleopatra of Jerusalem to distinguish her from the Cleopatra of Egyptian theme. And she had a son called Philip the tetrarch. And he married Salome who was his niece and his grandniece both at the same time. So the whole thing gets so twisted and intertwined. So now as we read the story, maybe we can put a few things in our minds together. King Herod, that is, Herod Antipas who had gone to Rome and seduced his sister-in-law who was also his niece, it's one of those things I'm my own grandpa or something, when King Herod heard of Jesus; evidently, as the apostles were going out and doing the miracles, word came back to Herod of this movement in his territory. He was the tetrarch of the Galilee region.

And so when he heard of Jesus; (for his name [that is, the name of Jesus] was spread abroad:) he said, John the Baptist has risen from the dead, and therefore the mighty works do show forth themselves in him (6:14).

I think he was hoping that John the Baptist was risen from the dead. He really felt badly over the execution of John.

But others said concerning Jesus, It's Elijah. And others said, That it is a prophet, or as one of the prophets. But when Herod heard of it, he said, It is John, whom I beheaded: he is risen from the dead. For Herod himself had sent forth and he had laid hold upon John, and bound him in prison at the urging of Herodias, for the sake of his brother Philip's wife (6:15-17):

We told you he went to Rome and seduced her, his brother Philip. So she was, this Herodias, was upset, *Because John had said unto Herod, It's not lawful for you to have your brother's wife (6:18).*

He was speaking against this union and made Herodias mad. And you don't want to get a woman mad at you.

So therefore Herodias had a quarrel against John the Baptist, and would have killed him; but she could not (6:19):

She was so angry with him because of his preaching and all that she wanted to kill him. But she couldn't.

For Herod feared John (6:20),

He respected him, and the word "feared" here is that of he had respect for John.

knowing that he was a just man and a holy man, and he listened to him, he watched him; and when he heard him, he did many things, and he heard him gladly (6:20).

He was fascinated by John. John was a character. And John was a straight shooter and he knew it and he was fascinated by him. But because of the pressure from Herodias, he had John put in prison.

Now when a convenient day was come, Herod's birthday, he made a supper for his lords, his high captains, and the chief people of Galilee; And when the daughter of the said Herodias [whose name was Salome] came in, and danced before Herod, it pleased him and those that sat with him (6:21,22),

For a princess to degrade herself in this kind of a dance, for it was a very sexually seductive type of dance and the whole purpose was, it was a pantomime kind of a thing and the whole purpose was to arouse and he became aroused and those that were with him,

the king said to the damsel (6:22),

Sort of a strip tease kind of a dance,

Ask of me whatsoever you will, and I will give it to you. And he swore unto her, Whatsoever you will ask of me, I will give it to you, unto the half of my kingdom. And so she went out, and she said to her mother,

What shall I ask? And she said, The head of John the Baptist. And so she came in immediately with haste to the king, and she asked, saying, I wish that you would give to me by and by in a charger [or on a platter] the head of John the Baptist. Now king Herod was exceedingly sorry; but because of his oath, and for the sake of those that were with him, he would not reject her. And immediately the king sent an executioner, and commanded his head to be brought: and he went and beheaded him in the prison, And he brought his head in a platter, and he gave it to the damsel: and the damsel gave it to her mother. And when the disciples of John heard of it, they came and took his corpse, and laid it in a tomb (6:22-29).

And so the end of John the Baptist.

Now the apostles gathered themselves [that is, the twelve] unto Jesus, and they told him all of the things, both what they had done, and what they had taught (6:30).

They came back with their reports of what had happened to them. What they had done and the things that they taught, the experiences, it was a time of sharing.

And he said unto them, Come ye yourselves apart into a deserted area, and rest for a while: because there were so many people coming and going, that they had not enough time to even eat (6:31).

They were given no leisure time at all. Jesus could see that they had been through some strenuous experiences, they were sort of weary and so He is suggesting to them, Let's just go over to a deserted area that you might just be refreshed and all. So they got in a little ship,

And they departed to the deserted area privately. And the people saw them departing, and many knew him, and ran afoot from out of all of the cities, and they outwent them, and came together unto him (6:32,33).

As you're going from Capernaum, it's not very far to the other side, maybe a distance of five miles and probably a ten-hour or so journey in a little ship. So that the only rest they really got was while they were in the ship. There's something about sailing that is very restful, you're just out there, just with the wind and the lapping of the water, it is a restful experience, and so their rest was in going to the other side because by the time they got to the other side, here was a huge crowd of people waiting for them. I can see the disciples just shaking their head and saying, Come on, give us a break.

But Jesus was moved with compassion when He saw the multitude (6:34),

It's easy to watch the direction the ship is going. There at Capernaum you can see all the way to the other side, over to the area of Bethsaida where they had gone, you could watch the ship the whole way. You could see it landing on the other side. So as soon as the people got the direction the little ship was going, they started running around the upper part of the lake. And it isn't really that far. And as they were going through the various cities, the villages, the cities in the Decapolis, people were joining them. It became like the Boston Marathon. And people joined with them. What's happening, where are you going? Jesus is going to be there. Really, and they were all taking off. So here as they pull in the shore, in this deserted area just beyond Bethsaida, crowd of people waiting. Thousands of them. Probably as many as fifteen thousand people waiting for the little ship to land there. "And when Jesus came out and saw the many people, He was moved with compassion toward them"

because they were like sheep that had no shepherd (6:34):

hungry, wandering, no one to guide them, no one to lead them.

and so he began to teach them many things. And when the day was now far spent (6:34,35),

It was probably in April that this took place, the sun sets there at the sea of Galilee about six o'clock in the evening, so as it was getting towards sunset,

his disciples came to him, and said, This is a deserted area, now the time is far passed [it's getting late, Lord], Send them away (6:35,36),

get rid of them, you've been here all day. Get rid of them.

that they might go into the countryside round about, and into the villages, and buy themselves some bread: for they've had nothing to eat. And He answered and said unto them, Give them to eat. And they said unto him, Shall we go and buy two hundred pennyworth of bread, and give them to eat (6:36,37)?

Lord, what are You saying?

And he said unto them, How many loaves do you have? go and see. So they went out and they came back

and they said, there are five, and two fish. And so he commanded them to make the people sit down in companies on the green grass (6:38,39).

That is, in rows and in sections.

And they sat down in these rows, by the hundreds, and by the fifties (6:40).

Group of a hundred, group of fifty sitting together in these clusters.

And when he had taken the five loaves and the two fish, he looked up to heaven, and he blessed, and broke the loaves, and he gave them to his disciples to set before the people; and the two fish he divided among them all. And they did all eat, and were filled (6:41,42).

The word “filled” in Greek is gluttony. You know what that is, Thanksgiving Day, where you eat until you can hardly move.

And they took up twelve baskets full of fragments, and of the fishes (6:43).

They ended up with more than they started with.

And they that did eat of the loaves were about five thousand men (6:44).

Plus of course the women and the children.

And immediately he constrained his disciples to get into the ship, and to go to the other side before unto Bethsaida, while he sent the people away (6:45).

There were two Bethsaidas, one that was over there on the northeastern side and the other on the western side of the sea. So He commanded them to get into the ship and go on over and I’ll dismiss the people.

And when he had sent them away, he departed into a mountain to pray (6:46).

It is interesting that this has been a heavy day. A day of ministry, a day of pressure, crowds of people not giving them the rest that they had come to seek. And Jesus, giving of Himself, ministering to the people until the evening hours, and then this marvellous miracle of taking the five loaves and the two fish, and with them feeding the multitudes. And now He sends the disciples, He said, Go on across the sea and He dismisses the people, and then what does He do to refresh Himself and to gather strength? He goes up into the mountain to spend time with the Father. The strength that comes through fellowship with God. The strength that comes through waiting upon God.

I used to always be troubled when I would wake up at night through some disturbance and couldn’t go back to sleep. And I think, Oh, I need my sleep so desperately. This is terrible, to be awake, I need my sleep. But I have learned that if I wake up at night, just to spend the time in prayer and I am as strengthened or even more so than if I had slept. I had a pressured weekend, we went to Salt Lake city on Friday, we had a very interesting experience with some of the Mormon leadership there at the headquarters of the Mormon church, we had the large conference in which I was to speak twice on Saturday. In order to conserve funds I volunteered to share my room with another man who snored very loudly. Now only did he snore but he would sort of grunt and all with it. and so I spent a good part of Friday night in prayer because about the time I would fall off to sleep, then I would be awakened with this noise and I’d realize, Oh my, and I prayed for his wife and, but Saturday morning I was as refreshed and strengthened as if I had slept soundly all night long because of just spending the time in communion. There’s such tremendous strength in time spent with the Lord in prayer. Tremendous strength. If you have problem with insomnia, be thankful and use the time to pray. Because you don’t have to sleep, you can be just as refreshed and strengthened in prayer as you can in sleeping.

And Jesus oftentimes, after the hard days, after the great pressure, rather than saying, I need a good night’s sleep, He would go out and spend the night in prayer. Found more strength in that than He did in sleeping. And so here we find Him, a strenuous day, a lot of pressures, He has just received word that Herod now knows about Him. And He sends the disciples away and He goes into the mountain to pray.

And when the evening was come, the ship was in the midst of the sea, and he was alone on the land. And he saw them (6:47,48).

It was probably a full moon, and actually again in a full moon, clear night there in the Galilee, you can see across the Galilee. You can see the objects out on the sea because of the reflection of the moon on the water. You can see there at night on a full moon. “And he saw them,”

toiling in rowing; for the wind was contrary unto them (6:48):

It's interesting to me, they were toiling, they were going through hardship, they were trying to row against the seas because they were obeying the command of Jesus. Now the easy thing to do and the wisest thing to do in a situation like that is rather than just labor out there, trying to row against the seas, is to just turn around and go with the seas. Come on back, land and get over there the next day. But it was because they were seeking to obey the command of Christ, they were finding themselves in trouble, having hardship, trying to go against the seas. It is interesting that the Lord doesn't always direct us into the easy, soft places. But in following the command of the Lord, we oftentimes find ourselves going against the current. We find ourselves in hard places as we seek to obey the Lord.

Now about the fourth watch of the night (6:48),

and this is the last watch of the night, the night was divided into four watches and the first watch was 'til nine o'clock; from nine to midnight, the second watch; midnight to three, the third watch; from three to six in the morning was the fourth watch. So sometime around three o'clock in the morning.

he came to them, walking upon the sea, and he acted like He was just going to walk right past them (6:48).

They were trying to go through the water, they were having a hard time because of the wind blowing against them, but He was able to walk on it, it was just like He was going to walk right past, I'm going to the other side.

And when they saw him walking on the sea, they thought it was a ghost, a spirit, they cried out: For they all saw him, and were troubled. And immediately he talked with them, and he said unto them, Be of good cheer: it is I; don't be afraid. And he went up unto them into the ship; and the wind stopped: and they were amazed beyond measure, [and I can believe that] and they wondered. For they considered not the miracle of the loaves: for their heart was hardened (6:49-52).

Interesting, they didn't seem to comprehend what had happened with the loaves and the fish. It didn't seem to sink in what Jesus had done. How He demonstrated His power over the elements in multiplying the loaves and the fish. He demonstrated His power over the elements. Here again that same night or early in the next morning, He again demonstrates His power over the elements so that as He gets into the ship, immediately it's calm, again demonstrating power over the elements. And they were marveling, they didn't stop to realize, He just fed five thousand people plus the women and children with five loaves and two fish. They were blinded to that.

I wonder how many times we're blinded to the miraculous work of the Lord around us. God is doing such wonderful things and so often we don't even seem to observe it. We don't realize it. The miracles that God performs almost daily around our lives. But many times our hearts are hardened. It doesn't penetrate, it doesn't seem to effect us or stick.

And when they had passed over, they came to the land of Gennesaret, and they drew to the shore (6:53).

Probably in the area of Magdala between Capernaum and Magdala there on the northwestern shore of the Galilee.

And when they were come out of the ship, immediately the people there knew him [that is, Jesus], And they ran through that whole region round about, and they began to carry in beds those that were sick, where they heard he was. And wherever he entered, into villages, or cities, or the countryside, they laid the sick people in the streets, and they begged him that they might touch if it were but the border of his garment: and as many as touched him were made whole (6:54-56).

Again, it takes us back to the chapter where the woman made her way through the crowd and touched the hem of His garment in chapter five, and back to chapter three where we are told that people were touching Him in order to be healed. And wherever He was going, people were grabbing hold of Him and as many as touched Him were healed. So you can imagine how this could be trying on a person to be constantly being touched.

We all seem to like our space. We don't like to get into crowds where we are being pushed and shoved and we like our space. Well, I like my space, I can't speak for all, you may like that but I sort of like my space. I don't like it when I'm standing in the line in the grocery store and the person behind me is so close

that they're pushing me. They're up against me and I don't like that. I like, I want to say, Give me my space. Don't stand so close to me. I like my space.

And so you can imagine how it must have been that everywhere Jesus was going there was just that press towards Him. He would look up and He would see the crowds of people and all of them were trying to get close, pushing, shoving, getting near, reaching out and grabbing Him, touching Him. How did He respond? How did He react? Was He sort of, Give me my space, stand back!?! No, He looked with compassion, He saw their needs. And He was always willing to be touched by a needy person.

And so tonight, if you have needs, He's available, He doesn't mind you touching Him. In fact, He sort of likes it. He wants you to reach out and touch Him that you might be healed, that you might be helped. Whatever might be a problem, they knew that all we have to do is just touch Jesus and the problem will be gone. And how true that is, all you have to do is just touch Him. Just touch Him. The touch of faith is something He always responded to. And if you reach out to touch Him by faith, He'll respond to you tonight.