**The Gospel of Mark: A Disciple’s Mirror**

***Reflections on Following Jesus***--From A Handbook on Cross-Bearing

**Mark 6:6b–56**

***Misjudging Messiah. . .*** Or, Can we do Jesus’ work without knowing who He is?

**What’s (happening in) the story?** Jesus trains The Twelve.

Once again Mark knits seemingly disconnected stories to make a point. Jesus commissions and empowers the disciples, who return, successful. But both rejection and misunderstanding are still lurking in the background as both believers and unbelievers respond to the Word. The disciples see and work with Jesus, but remain in the dark about who He is and the implications of what that means. They are busy in God’s work, but not yet applying His power and Person to their experience.

**What’s the challenge in the story?** Have I “seen” that Jesus is God?

We, too, can be busy in God’s work without truly applying His powerful words and presence to our present moments. The result is fear, not faith, and bewilderment rather than worship.

**What are the key elements in the story?**

 **First,** Jesus commissions His disciples for faith ministry. 6:6b-13

“They cast out demons and healed many who were sick.”

Taking nothing with them, all necessary resources were provided. Jesus graciously gave them both power and provision (as He does for us).

 **During** their mission, deadly opposition arises. 6:14-29

 “King Herod heard of it, for Jesus’ name had become known.”

John’s gruesome death foreshadows Jesus’ own. Both proclaim the same message (Mark 1:4, 14): turn from sin and embrace God’s grace and Kingdom (which is our message as well, the Gospel). Matthew 10:16-18.

 **Then**, a restful retreat becomes a working vacation. 6:30-44

“You give them something to eat!”

After crowds cut short their getaway, Jesus teaches the people. When it is late, and no food is available, Jesus challenges the disciples to pro-vide it. In spite of all they have seen, they cannot conceive of a way, but Jesus can, feeding thousands with five flat breads and two smoked fish.

 **Finally,** Storms 102 reveals Jesus’ as the great “I am.” 6:45-56

 “They did not understand about the loaves, but their hearts were hardened.”

Jesus walks “toward” the disciples’ boat to “pass by,” which makes sense only if it means a visitation or epiphany, as when God “passed by” Moses and Elijah (Exodus 33:19-23; 34:6; 1 Kings 19:11). Jesus’ words, “It is I” can be translated, “I am.” The disciples learned nothing from the miracle, but Jesus resumes His healing ministry by responding to the touch of faith.

**What’s the big idea (main point) of the story?**

Jesus fully equips and empowers us for His service amid great opposition, revealing Himself to the eye of faith as the great “I AM,” who is our Security and Sufficiency.

***So let’s take a look at ourselves in Mark’s mirror. . .***

Do I realize that Jesus has FULLY equipped me to serve others?

(Or am I hiding behind my “inadequacies” in false humility?) 1 Cor. 12:4-14

Do I rest in the reality that Jesus FULLY resources ALL His works?

(Or am I exhausted from leaning on my own creativity?) Psalm 147:1-11

Do I rely on Jesus’ promises of strength and presence?

(Or am I living in fear, doubt, and worry?) Luke 12:22-34

Do I remember Jesus’ past blessings in my present moments?

 (Or am I so sad that I have forgotten His fountain of grace?) Lam. 3:19-33