

Blessings in Bethsaida

Mark 6: 53-56

Our text today immediately follows the miraculous, and yet frightening night the disciples had spent upon the sea. While we too would likely have responded much the same or worse, we cannot overlook their lack of faith. Jesus had commanded them to get into the boat and go to the other side, but the storm caused an attitude of fear and doubt.

I was also reminded of the events surrounding Jesus' visit to Gadara. The maniac among the tombs was glad Jesus had come and wanted to depart with Him, but the people of Gadara desired Jesus to leave them. He was not wanted or welcomed among them. As we will discover, the people of Gennesaret, and Bethsaida in particular, possessed great faith and welcomed Jesus. They reacted to the presence of Jesus much differently than the disciples or the people of Gadara had. We need the faith and desire of those within Bethsaida.

As we continue in Mark's gospel, I want to examine the [certainties](#) within the text as we consider: [Blessings in Bethsaida](#).

I. The Arrival of Jesus (53) – [And when they had passed over, they came into the land of Gennesaret, and drew to the shore](#). The people of Gennesaret were unaware of the harrowing night the disciples had spent upon the sea. However, Jesus' arrival with the disciples would have been long remembered by the disciples, and surely served to increase their faith. Regarding Jesus' arrival, we discover:

A. It was Intentional – Our text reveals that they passed over, coming into the land of Gennesaret, and landing upon the shore. The disciples had wondered if they would survive the night, and maybe had given up hope of reaching the shore. Jesus knew He would make it to Bethsaida; that was His intention from the beginning. [Mark 6:45 – And straightway he constrained his disciples to get into the ship, and to go to the other side before unto Bethsaida, while he sent away the people](#). While the storm had the potential to alter their course, Jesus arrived exactly where He had planned. The storm did not hinder or alter His plan.

- This is often difficult for us to remember as we journey the sea of life and face the storms that come our way. It is easy for us to get distracted and even off course. We need the faith to rest in the power and provision of our Lord. He has a sovereign plan for each of our lives that will be carried out according to His divine will. Jesus is not surprised at where you are in the journey. As long as we are walking in fellowship with Him, we can rest knowing that He is guiding our path.

B. It was Influential (53) – *And when they had passed over, they came into the land of Gennesaret, and drew to the shore.* The text doesn't record the response or emotion of the disciples as they made it to shore, but there can be no doubt that it impacted their lives. They had stood in awe and wonder of Jesus as He walked on the water and calmed the raging sea. I am sure they never forgot this difficult night and the provision they received in Christ.

- We talk of this principle often, and yet it reveals a profound truth. Our lives are shaped and our faith is increased as we endure the trials of life. If we never had to depend on the Lord, our faith in Him would be weak. We often forget about the easy seasons in life, but we will always remember those times when the Lord brought victory and deliverance!

C. It was Immediate (John 6:21) – *Then they willingly received him into the ship: and immediately the ship was at the land whither they went.* John revealed an interesting aspect of this same account. As Jesus entered the boat that night, they immediately came to shore. His power brought deliverance and an immediate end to the trial they faced.

- I want to speak clearly here and avoid any confusion. I am in no way insinuating that the Lord will always bring an immediate end to our trials. Some are accused of a lack of faith because their trial continues for an extended period. Our Lord doesn't always bring an immediate end to our difficulties, but we can always rest in His grace. Like the disciples, those who are in Christ will make it safely to the other side. As long as Jesus is in the boat with us, what does it matter if the storm continues to rage? I know that is easy to say while I'm enjoying the sunshine, but we can always trust the Lord to guide our lives according to His sovereign will.

II. The Anticipation for Jesus (54-55) – Here we see the great anticipation those in Gennesaret had regarding the arrival of Jesus. We find that:

A. He was Recognized (54) – *And when they were come out of the ship, straightway they knew him.* As Jesus and the disciples stepped out of the boat, He was immediately recognized by the people – they knew Him. They knew exactly who He was. This has the idea of “*knowing through experience.*” There was no doubt or confusion; they knew the man who stepped out of the boat was none other than Jesus Christ. Apparently some of them had encountered Jesus before. He was known of many in Gennesaret.

- This presents quite a challenge for us today. If you are saved by grace, you know Jesus; you have personally experienced His power and grace. We know who He is and the power He possesses. Yet there are many times when we fail to recognize Him, even when He is near to us.

We doubt His ability and allow fear to grip our hearts. We need to approach Jesus with the same anticipation and enthusiasm that they people of Gennesaret had.

B. He was Revealed (55) – [And ran through that whole region round about, and began to carry about in beds those that were sick, where they heard he was.](#) Those who saw Jesus step out of the boat did not remain quiet and go on about their daily routine. They immediately went throughout the region, bringing those who were sick and afflicted to where Jesus was. The news quickly spread that Jesus had come to Gennesaret.

- How often do we share the Good News with others? Do we possess the faith and anticipation of these? Are we doing all we can to get those who stand in need of salvation to Jesus? I pray we will be more like those in the text and proclaim Jesus to a world that needs to hear of His saving grace!

C. He was Respected (55) – [And ran through that whole region round about, and began to carry about in beds those that were sick, where they heard he was.](#) Unlike those in Gadara, the people of Gennesaret brought their sick to Jesus expected Him to heal them. They knew Jesus had power and they were committed to getting their friends and loved ones to Jesus.

- There once was a time in America when Jesus was regarded and respected by the majority. Even unbelievers had heard of Him, and for the most part, respected the church. Now America responds much like Gadara, desiring Jesus to depart. We must do our part to honor Jesus with our lives and present a faithful witness for Him. We cannot expect the world to desire Jesus and believe in Him if the church never reveals any enthusiasm for our Lord.

III. The Authority of Jesus (56) – [And whithersoever he entered, into villages, or cities, or country, they laid the sick in the streets, and besought him that they might touch if it were but the border of his garment.](#) Mark spoke of the awesome power and authority of Jesus as He walked among the towns and villages of Gennesaret. Consider:

A. The Presumption – The people knew who Jesus was. They were convinced of His power and ability to heal. They brought their sick and laid them along the streets, hoping by chance Jesus might pass by their way. These were acts of faith, knowing without doubt that Jesus could heal.

- We have been blessed beyond measure. We have experienced the power of Christ and received His abundant blessing. We know He has the ability to perform whatever He chooses, and

yet many times we live in fear and doubt. We need the faith of these. We must be willing to step out in faith, trusting the Lord to meet our needs according to His will.

B. The Plea (56a) – *And whithersoever he entered, into villages, or cities, or country, they laid the sick in the streets, and besought him that they might touch if it were but the border of his garment.* They actively pursued Jesus, requesting their sick might just touch the hem of His garment for healing. They were asking, literally begging Jesus to meet the needs of their loved ones. They interceded for those in need, knowing Jesus was able to heal.

- I appreciate the willingness of Fellowship to intercede on behalf of others. I hope we never lose our desire to pray for the varied needs of others. We must be willing to passionately pursue the Lord in prayer for the needs of our day. We must not limit our prayers to physical needs however. We must be willing to earnestly pray for the unsaved, and for the Lord to equip us to be effective in sharing our faith. We must be willing to pray for the needs of our nation and the world at large. Jesus has the power to provide what we need. We must do our part and seek Him!

C. The Power (56b) – *and as many as touched him were made whole.* Like the woman with the issue of blood, these only needed to touch the hem of His garment for healing. One touch and they were made whole. Jesus recognized their faith and granted healing unto them.

- I continue to be amazed at the power of Christ our Lord. One touch is all it takes. We come to Him by faith for salvation, and He immediately and eternally transforms our lives. All who come to Him by faith in salvation are offered His gift of grace. He doesn't always choose to heal physically, but He certainly has the power to do so. One touch from the Master and lives are never the same. We serve one who loves and cares for us. He is more than able to provide whatever we need. We need to come to Him in faith, believing and trusting His ability.

Conclusion: This passage challenges all who read it to develop and show great faith. It is difficult at times to walk by faith, but we must trust the Lord to provide for us. Are there needs in your life? Do you know Christ as your personal Savior? If so, come to Him by faith!