

MORE LIKE JESUS

Mark 6: 30-56 (ESV)

- If you have your bibles, turn with me to the Gospel of Mark chapter 6 as we continue our study of this Gospel
- And we left off the week before last, with Pastor Mark breaking down the first half of chapter 6, showing the rejection that Jesus faced, the disciples could face, and that John the Baptist faced.
 - Which is kind of a hard topic to talk about because rejection has to be one of the greatest fears that we face today
 - Especially in the midst of the information age and the height of social media we have an increased sensitivity to need to feel the acceptance and the approval of others
 - Even those we will never meet
- But the reality is, especially if we are genuinely following Christ, we are all going to face rejection in some form or fashion
- Jesus assured us that some people will hate us, because of His Name's sake
- And so when Jesus sends out His young apostles and sent them out two by two to go minister in various towns, He gives them some instructions of how they should carry themselves if, and when, they do face rejection on behalf of the Gospel
- And if you missed it, you can go to our website and listen to Pastor Mark break down that passage
- However, in the next half of this chapter, we see that followers of Jesus will still face, not only rejection from time to time, but other types of obstacles and struggles as well.
- Because the Disciples may have experienced some rejection, but they experienced a lot of success as well. They were now much more recognizable to the community, because they

had gone out to preach and to heal and cast out demons like Jesus had been doing.

- So they had started to make a name for themselves also.
- And if you look with me in Mark chapter 6, verse 30, we see the disciples returning to Jesus:
- ***“The apostles returned to Jesus and told Him all that they had done and taught. And He said to them, “Come away by yourselves to a desolate place and rest a while.” For many were coming and going, and they had no leisure even to eat. And they went away in the boat to a desolate place by themselves. Now many saw them going and recognized them, and they ran there on foot from all the towns and got there ahead of them. When He went ashore He saw a great crowd, and He had compassion on them, because they were like sheep without a shepherd. And He began to teach them many things. And when it grew late, His***

disciples came to Him and said, “This is a desolate place, and the hour is now late. Send them away to go into the surrounding countryside and villages and buy themselves something to eat.” But He answered 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 it to them to eat?” And He said to them, “How many loaves do you have? Go and see.” And when they had found out, they said, “Five, and two fish.” Then He commanded them all to sit down in groups on the green grass. So they sat down in groups, by hundreds and by fifties. And taking the five loaves and the two fish, He looked up to heaven and said a blessing and broke the loaves and gave them to the disciples to set before the people. And He divided the two fish among them all. And they all ate and were satisfied. And they took up twelve baskets full of broken pieces

and of the fish. And those who ate the loaves were five thousand men.” Mark 6:30-44 (ESV)

- You know, when I read this account, I can't help but think of how little I have to offer
 - What do I have to give, to Almighty God??
 - Do you ever have those moments where you just feel so inadequate, completely in over your head?
 - You wonder why in the world you are where you are, why God has you where He has you?
 - Sometimes we go through life, and things have seemed to be good, but then all of the sudden we feel so overwhelmed
 - Maybe we got placed into a new job, but then we start to question if we are actually qualified
 - Maybe your family is growing and even with how exciting that is, you start to worry about how you're going to keep up
- Maybe it feels like your whole life is starting to fall apart because of the choices of other people
 - Maybe you get caught up feeling inadequate, inferior, or unappreciated...
- Maybe you're not there yet, maybe you have been on the opposite extreme.
 - Where we have those times whenever we get to feeling ourselves and allow pride to swell up a bit and begin to think things like, "Man, God would sure be lucky to have me on His team!"
 - How many of us have been there? Where we feel like we need a sales pitch, to come to church or get involved in church, or even come to faith, because we need to make sure that God's worth our "very important time"
 - But then eventually, there will come those moments where we are faced with a circumstance or a situation that's a little bit bigger than we've ever imagined it could get

- And that's when God may tell us to do something that seems impossible! Like when He told His disciples to go and get food for thousands of people!
- And then, like the disciples, we just start pointing out the magnitude of the situation
 - We know from the Gospel of John, that Philip is specifically the one that says, "Even if we had 200 days worth of wages, it still wouldn't be enough!"
 - And then Andrew says, "Well all we have here is one boys little lunch, that has 5 rolls and 2 slabs of fish...what could that even do?!"
- But I think that this passage is so relatable to us because many times we will find ourselves in a situation where we could be telling God:
 - "I only have a little bit of experience!"
 - "I only have a little bit of Bible knowledge!"
 - "I only have a little bit of talent!"
- "I don't really have a great track record of doing the right things the right way very often!"
- "What's THAT going to do in the context of a new job!"
- "What's THAT going to do in the context of sharing my faith with others??"
- "What's THAT going to do in the context of serving in church or raising my children in the way they should go!"
 - "My problem is too great, my hurt is too deep, this task is too large!"
 - "I don't have enough to give and I'm not enough myself"
- And this is the point where a lot of people would tell you, "Yes you are! You gotta stop speaking that over yourself! You ARE enough! You CAN do it!"
 - And that is what many people would expect the pastor to say in a moment like this as well.

- But I think Jesus would take the opposite approach, I think Jesus would say, “No, no, no, no, no...you’re right where you need to be. At the point of realization, that you CAN’T do it on your own, that you DO need help, and you REALLY need a Savior”
 - You need Someone to do the things for you that you cannot do for yourself.
- And it doesn’t matter how little we may have to offer, because in His Greatness, God loves to take the little that we have....and do big things with it!
 - And He loves to do this, because He never wants us to question where the power really comes from, and Who the One with the solution really is
- So give Him the little bit of experience you have, give Him the little bit of bible knowledge you have, give Him the little bit of talent, the little bit of wisdom, the little bit of desire you may have over to Him
- And say, “God use it for Your Glory, use it in whatever way You can to impact other people,”
- Because if we know anything about God, He can do A LOT with a little
- He can take something small and make it significant
- And it doesn’t matter how big or how great, our problem, circumstance, or situation may be....because Our God is Bigger than anything this world could ever throw at us
- Feeding over 5 thousand people with just one little boy’s lunch? No problem!
 - He took this monumental situation, and provided a simple solution, which took care of all of those people...but the disciples still weren’t getting the lesson that they needed to get.
- ***“Immediately He made His disciples get into the boat and go before Him to the other side, to Bethsaida, while He dismissed the***

crowd. And after He had taken leave of them, He went up on the mountain to pray. And when evening came, the boat was out on the sea, and He was alone on the land. And He saw that they were making headway painfully, for the wind was against them. And about the fourth watch of the night He came to them, walking on the sea. He meant to pass by them, but when they saw Him walking on the sea they thought it was a ghost, and cried out, for they all saw Him and were terrified. But immediately He spoke to them and said, "Take heart; it is I. Do not be afraid." And He got into the boat with them, and the wind ceased. And they were utterly astounded, for they did not understand about the loaves, but their hearts were hardened." -Mark 6:45-52 (ESV)

- Here I believe that we learn that Jesus see's the struggle, He allows us to struggle, and He is the answer to the struggle.

- So first: **JESUS SEES THE STRUGGLE**

- Mark says that Jesus was alone on the land and could see that they were making headway painfully.
- They were going the direction that they were supposed to be going, but it wasn't easy.
 - It was difficult, it was painful...and Jesus saw it all. He wasn't surprised by it.
- That word, "see" can also be translated to perceive with the mind, to become acquainted with through experience
 - It can be one of the most comforting things in the world to know that God doesn't just see what you're going through, He understands what you're going through
 - Hebrews tells us that we do not have a High Priest who is unable to sympathize with us
 - Because He's been there

- He's experienced temptation, He's experienced hardship, He's experienced rejection, He's experienced loss, He's experienced hunger, He's experienced injustice and life being unfair to Him!
- And He sees when you experience those things too....and He does deeply care!
- John 11:35 might be the shortest, but one of the most theologically profound verses in the New Testament....where it says two simple words: *"Jesus Wept."* -John 11:35 (NKJV)
 - If you're not familiar with the passage, the context of this verse is when Jesus arrives at Lazarus' tomb.
 - He is there to raise Him from the dead. He was very clear with His disciples that was what He was making that trip to do!
 - He had gotten word that Lazarus was sick: then after waiting two days, He made the trip to go raise him up after he had already been dead for four days.
- While He's there, he addresses both of His sisters.
- And when He addresses Mary, she says to Him: ***"Lord, if You had been here, my brother would not have died." Therefore, when Jesus saw her weeping, and the Jews who came with her weeping, He groaned in the spirit and was troubled. And He said, "Where have you laid him?" They said to Him, "Lord, come and see." Jesus wept. Then the Jews said, "See how He loved him!" -John 11:32-36 (NKJV)***
- My question is, why would He weep?
- Because if I'm Jesus in this situation, I'm arriving on this scene ready to perform an incredible miracle that's gonna blow everyone's mind!
- And in just a few short moments they were going to go from crying to celebrating! We

about to turn mourning to Dancing, PRAISE GOD!

- I'd be saying, "Where's your faith! Dry your eyes, and watch what I'm about to do!"
- But that's not the heart of our Savior
- Yes, He knows the Victory that's going to come, He knows that the pain won't last forever, He knows that He is ultimately going to take care of all of it, but yet He still takes the time to see the pain, to feel the pain, and cry with you.
 - To some of us that will be the most encouraging thing that you could hear...but others might just get more frustrated, thinking: "Well if He sees the pain, and feels the pain...why doesn't He DO something about it!"
- Its so interesting that Jesus, sees the disciples struggling from afar. He goes out to them, but His intention was to just keep walking.

- Look at verse 48 again: "**And He saw that they were making headway painfully, for the wind was against them. And about the fourth watch of the night He came to them, walking on the sea. He meant to pass by them,**" -Mark 6:48 (ESV)
- So Jesus, goes up to the mountain to pray by Himself, He comes down looks out over the sea and noticed that they haven't made much progress because they're struggling rowing through the strong winds
- And then, somewhere between 3 and 6 am... which means that they had been struggling in this boat for 8 or so hours!!
- And THEN....He starts walking, ON TOP of the water out toward them.
- BUT....it says, He meant to just pass on right by them?
- He was just going to go ahead Himself to the other side, and see them when they finally got there!

- What in the world is Jesus doing??
- It can be one of the most mind-boggling, frustrating, yet Gracious things that Jesus could ever do for us.
- Because yes, He see's the struggle, He feels the Struggle...but at the same time:
 - **JESUS ALLOWS THE STRUGGLE**
 - Jesus could have stilled those winds from back there on the shore, but He didn't, He allowed them to struggle
 - Jesus could have left right away when He heard Lazarus was going to die, and healed him before he actually did...but He waited.
 - One translation says that Jesus saw the disciples "straining" and that word can also be translated as tormented
 - These disciples were being tormented by these winds, trying to do what Jesus told them to do, but they were making very little headway and it was more difficult than they thought it was going to be
- And yet, Jesus is just letting them struggle
 - But you see, if there is never a struggle, we will never be strengthened
 - If there's never uncertainty, there will never be faith
 - James goes as far as to say that without struggles and trials there can be no spiritual maturity.
 - That's why he says, ***"Consider it pure joy, my brothers and sisters, whenever you face trials of many kinds, because you know that the testing of your faith produces perseverance. Let perseverance finish its work so that you may be mature and complete, not lacking anything."*** -James 1:2-4 (NIV)
- Remember, like we talked about last week, our relationship with God can be described as us being just toddlers trying to grow up to be like dad the best way that we can.

Sunday, June 22, 2025

- We are children of God that need to be molded, shaped, guided, and strengthened
 - And like any good parent, He allows us to struggle some so that we can grow the way that we need to grow
 - A child will never learn to walk if their parents just carry them all of the time
 - The child has to be able to have their legs struggle against the floor in order to be strengthened so that they can eventually be strong enough to walk
- And it can be really hard as a parent to let your child struggle, but we have a choice: We can take the easy way out and just never let them struggle which will hinder their development
 - Or we can let them struggle, within reason... Like Pastor Mark likes to say, “We allow them to fail, safely,” so they can learn what they need to learn and grow the way that they need to grow
- Probably one of the hardest things in the early stages was sleep training Fletcher.
 - He was about 6 months old, we knew that it was time for him to be able to sleep in his own bed, but of course he didn't want to
 - But we had to let him cry. We had a plan, where we put him down, and then whenever he would get up crying we would give it 3 minutes and then go in and pat him, tell him it's ok, and then come out.
 - If he was still crying we would give it 5 minutes. And we weren't allowed to pick him up, we could only pat him and talk to him to try and calm him down
 - Then we would go 7 minutes...and we wouldn't go longer than that, but after a few times going through that 7 minute stint he would eventually cry himself to sleep
 - And we hated every second of it! It was terrible! At one point Rachel was literally in the fetal position at the end of our bed because it was breaking her heart

- But we knew that we had to let him struggle. And it only took 3 or 4 nights of doing that and being consistent about it and then he was sleeping 10 hours through the night in his own bed
- He was getting more, and better, rest than he had gotten in his life because he had to struggle to be able to learn how to be comfortable in his own bed and how to put himself back to sleep.
- And he would do good for a while, and then a vacation, holiday, or something to break the routine would happen and we would have to train him again.
- But it was never as difficult and dramatic as the first time, because we had set the foundation of teaching him, that even if he is uncomfortable, even if he's scared and can't see us...he knows that we are there.
- You see Jesus sees the struggle, He allows the struggle, because He is always there in the struggle.
- He's never missed a moment.
- Like David said, ***“Even though I walk through the valley of the shadow of death, I will fear no evil, for You are with me,” -Psalm 23:4 (ESV)***
 - He doesn't say, when You save me from the valley of the shadow of death
 - He doesn't say even though there is a valley of shadow of death, You help me avoid it
- He says, even though I am current in the valley of the shadow of death, I don't have to fear, because You are with me. He says, “Even though I am struggling within this valley....Your rod and Your staff they comfort me.”
- So we can gripe and complain, we can be yelling and crying at God, accusing Him of being unloving for allowing us to struggle!
 - Or we can appreciate His presence within the struggle.
 - And ask Him to teach us what we need to learn from this struggle

- Thank Him for using this struggle to grow us, to use it for our good and for His glory.
- I think one thing that I can appreciate about the disciples from what we read here in Marks account specifically, is that they were struggling, but they were struggling well
 - Mark doesn't indicate that they were afraid of the storm
 - They had been in a storm earlier that they were afraid of and they saw Jesus calm that storm once he had gotten woken up from His nap
- They weren't giving up because of the winds... they were still making headway even if it was little by little
- And even though Jesus was allowing them to struggle, He was only going to let the struggle go so much.
- While He's walking on the water, about to pass them, that's when we read about them getting afraid here.
- In verse 49 it says, ***“but when they saw Him walking on the sea they thought it was a ghost, and cried out, for they all saw Him and were terrified. But immediately He spoke to them and said, “Take heart; it is I. Do not be afraid.” And He got into the boat with them, and the wind ceased.”***
-Mark 6: 49-51a (ESV)
- Here I believe we see: **JESUS IS THE ANSWER TO THE STRUGGLE**
- Now, I don't blame the disciples here for getting scared one bit.
 - If I'm working really hard and struggling to row a boat, and then all of the sudden in the middle of the night I see a dark silhouette of a figure walking toward me on top of water....I'd probably freak out a bit too!
- But Jesus calms them down, he tells them to “Take Heart,” which means to be of good courage, or to be of good cheer

- It's almost as if Jesus says, "Calm down, lighten up, it's Me."
- But when He says, "It is I..." I don't think our English translations, properly depict the magnitude of that statement.
- Because this phrase is made up of two words in the greek which are, Ego Eimi- which is translated everywhere else: I AM
- This is the same wordage that John uses when he gives the 7 I AM statements in his Gospel:
 - When Jesus says: "I AM the Bread of Life"
 - "I AM the Light of the World"
 - "I AM The Door"
 - "I AM the Good Shepherd"
 - "I AM the Resurrection and the Life"
 - "I AM the Way, the Truth, and the Life"
 - "I AM the True Vine"
- When Jesus says all of these statements He is authoritatively declaring His deity as the God man.
- Because that phrase was reserved for God Himself...no one else would dare make a declaration like that about themselves.
- It goes back to when God met Moses at the burning bush in Exodus 3, after he had fled Egypt
 - God is telling Moses that He is sending Him back to Egypt to deliver the people of Israel out of slavery, and Moses is just offering a bunch of excuses as to why he shouldn't be the guy to do it
 - And at one points Moses says: *"Then Moses said to God, **'If I come to the people of Israel and say to them, 'The God of your fathers has sent me to you,' and they ask me, 'What is His name?' what shall I say to them?'**" -Exodus 3:13 (ESV)*

- He's asking who exactly are You? Who exactly should I say You Are?
- Now, Moses could be a bit theologically confused, because his Hebrew mother would have instilled his Hebrew heritage and faith in him the first 3 or 4 years of his life, but then when he entered the palace and he's learning about this plethora of Egyptian gods,
- So when the Egyptians would talk about god they would have to be specific about which god they were talking about
- So Moses could be looking for a more specific name and in verse 14, ***"God said to Moses, "I Am who I Am." And He said, "Say this to the people of Israel: 'I Am has sent me to you.'"***
-Exodus 3:14 (ESV)
 - Most scholars agree that the best translation for that phrase is God saying, I WILL BE THAT I WILL BE
 - If I'm Moses, I'm thinking "...what?"
 - God would be saying, "...Exactly."
- Which specific God Am I? I AM THE GOD, I'm The God over everything, I'm The God That is and That Will Be whatever I need to be in whatever situation I need to be it
 - I AM everything you're not. I AM THE ONE, THE ONLY, THE HIGHEST GOD OF ALL
 - So all you have to say is "I AM has sent you."
- God further proves this point when He enacts the 10 plagues over Egypt, in which each and every one of those plagues were either a direct shot at an Egyptian god specifically or an Egyptian pagan religious practice where He puts the whole world on notice that there is ONE TRUE GOD, THE GOD OF ABRAHAM, ISAAC, AND JACOB
 - I AM means that He is self-existent, He is self-sufficient
 - I AM means that all others are dependent upon Him for life, breath, and existence
 - I AM is dependent upon nothing, but everything is dependent upon HIM.

- He is YAHWEH, the Hebrew translation for I AM
 - This became the most sacred Name above all Names
 - It was so sacred that the Hebrew people would not pronounce it out loud
 - When they wrote it, they would leave out the vowels, because it was too sacred to fully write out
- But then Jesus comes on the scene, saying out loud for all to hear that He is The Great I AM!
- My favorite one comes from John chapter 8, where Jesus is teaching in the Temple, He's point out the prophecies that He is fulfilling, the people say, "What, do you think that you are greater than our father Abraham?"
- And in John 8:58: ***"Jesus said to them, 'Truly, truly, I say to you, before Abraham was, I Am.'" -John 8:58 (ESV)***
- I don't know about you, but I can feel the Power in that Statement
 - It's like the ultimate mic-drop moment
 - It completely stuns the people and crowd
 - I would be willing to bet that those present could feel a supernatural punch in the atmosphere with that declaration
- But to the people who weren't understanding and believing, that was the most blasphemous things He ever could have said, and because of His blasphemy He should be stoned!
- And verse 59, ***"Then they took up stones to throw at Him; but Jesus hid Himself and went out of the temple, going through the midst of them, and so passed by." -John 8:59 (NKJV)***
- Man, I want to know what that scene exactly looked like
 - Did He make Himself invisible? Did He confuse their sight?

- All we know is that there was this chaos because Jesus declared who He was, but there wasn't a thing that anyone could do about it, without His permission
 - Jesus saw the confusion that this would cause, He allowed the struggle to take place, but it didn't change the fact that He is still the answer to it all
 - He is still the Great I AM and NOTHING is beyond His power and His control
 - So Jesus says to His struggling Disciples, "Be of good cheer...I AM, so you don't have to be afraid.
 - And again in verse 51: ***"And He got into the boat with them, and the wind ceased. And they were utterly astounded, for they did not understand about the loaves, but their hearts were hardened."*** -Mark 6: 51-52 (ESV)
 - Yes, it is possible to be a genuine follower of Jesus and have your heart be hardened
- The word hardened means "to dull" or "to lose the power of understanding"
 - And this happens to us when we don't keep our focus where it needs to be.
- Our hearts become dull, we lose the power of understanding, namely whenever we keep our focus primarily on our success and our struggles.
 - Those tend to be the two main things that we focus on in our lives.
 - Whenever we experience some success we begin to think that we have everything that it takes to have continued success and whenever we experience struggles we tend to think that we can just work our way out of it ourselves...because we've had past success
 - And in turn, we begin to dull-fully think that we can have real success without Jesus, and then we fail to see Him as being bigger than our problems.

- Because remember, the disciples had been out preaching and healing in various towns.
 - And they experienced some success, now they're being recognized, it's not JUST Jesus anymore but them too!
- Then they're up on the mountain with those 5000+ people and then they start giving Jesus instructions
 - "Alright Jesus, it's getting late, it's time to get these people out of here so they can go get themselves something to eat..."
 - So Jesus says, "Why don't you just give them something to eat?"
 - "Well we don't have the money to do all of that..."
- Then Jesus performs the miracle, but they still share in His success
 - They sat the people and delivered the food to the people...and undoubtably the people are thanking them as they do...telling them

the stories about how the ministry has impacted their lives

- Maybe how one of those disciples had come to their town, and healed a loved one of theirs or how they were impacted by something that they said
- And after all of this success, Jesus allows them to struggle on the boat, and for hours and hours they try to handle it themselves
- Because they missed the lesson in the loaves
 - That He is the one that provides, that He is the source of all success and the answer to every struggle
- The struggle was real, the wind was raging that is until Jesus steps into the boat while declaring I AM!
 - I AM the God over the storm
 - I AM the Lord of Creation
 - I AM the Strength that you need
 - I AM the Calmer of the Chaos

- I AM the One Who Provides for You
- I AM the One Who See's you in the Struggle, who is Here in the Struggle, and is the Solution to the Struggle
- And we will grow dull to that Truth, if we are only focusing on what is in front of us.
 - Think about it. We talked about the disciples focusing on *their* success, and *their* struggles
- So what does Jesus do in the very next passage?
- ***“When they had crossed over, they came to land at Gennesaret and moored to the shore. And when they got out of the boat, the people immediately recognized Him and ran about the whole region and began to bring the sick people on their beds to wherever they heard He was. And wherever He came, in villages, cities, or countryside, they laid the sick in the marketplaces and implored Him that they***

might touch even the fringe of His garment. And as many as touched it were made well.” -Mark 6:53-56 (ESV)

- The disciples got benched this time. This time He is doing all of the preaching and healing.
 - This was a time that the disciples could just sit back and watch how Jesus was moving in the lives of other people
- You see, our hearts and understanding of the Lord, His will, and His work, will become dull if we are only focusing on how He is moving in my life
- Because if I am only focused on what's in front of me, and I am getting such a limited view of the visible movements of God in and around me because I am solely focused on what is happening to me right now
- But that's exactly why God wants us to be in and around community because if I am actively involved and care about the lives of other

people, I will see how God is working in their life...and their life... and their life

- And then I can see God moving in all kinds of crazy ways and be able to get a much more well rounded view of His Heart and His Goodness and His Power because now I am not just focused on myself and what He is doing for me anymore
- But now I see a movement of His power in the lives of others, and I can have an increased faith in how He truly does provide for and strengthen the lives of His people.
- Then I can be much more encouraged to know that He sees my struggle, He allows this struggle for a purpose, and He is the solution to the struggle
 - And I know He's only going to let this struggle go so far before He shows His power in it and I learn what I need to learn from Him
 - That I grow the way I need to grow in Him

- And serve others the way I need to serve others through Him