**BCM Bible Study – Sept. 22/23, 2021**

**Mark 6:7-56**

*Last week’s challenge: Spend some time thinking about some of the ways that you currently are seeing Jesus as Lord in your life and some of the ways that you have previously done that.*

**Life on Mission**

**Read Mark 6:7-13**

* Jesus is finally sending His disciples out on their own “short-term mission trips,” but He gives them some seemingly strange instructions.
  + If you were going on a short trip like the disciples, what would you want to bring?
  + How would you react if someone told you to travel in the way Jesus describes?
  + Why do you think Jesus commanded the disciples to travel so lightly?
    - *“The overlying reason was so they would be dependent upon Christ for strength. The minimum of provisions was meant to call out the maximum of faith.” (Hughes, 133)*
  + Is dependence easy for you to accept? Why or why not?
* In v.12-13, the disciples preached, cast out demons, and healed the sick, just like Jesus. They were Jesus’s ambassadors and represented Him to the people. **Read 2 Cor 5:20**. As Christians, we have been sent out as Christ’s ambassadors just like the disciples.
  + What does being an ambassador for Christ look like now?
  + How do you reflect God well? In what ways would you like to reflect Him better?

**Read Mark 6:14-30**

* Mark interjects an account of John the Baptist’s beheading in the middle of his story about the apostles and their missionary efforts. This may seem random, but Mark is actually using a technique known as bracketing to convey that the stories are related. Knowing this, what does John’s beheading reveal about the nature of living on mission?
  + *According to Garland, John’s story “foreshadows the suffering that comes to God’s messengers. What happens to John will happen to Jesus in his mission and to the disciples in theirs” (p. 246).*
  + Is the possible cost of mission work something you consider often?
  + What types of “costs” do we often have to pay as Christians in America?
* John willingly gives up his freedom, dignity, and life for the sake of Christ. In contrast, Herod suppresses his conscience and beheads John, whom he knows is righteous, in order to protect his reputation in the court.
  + What often tempts you to act like Herod? What external pressures make it hard for you to stand firm on God's truth like John?
  + What would you struggle to give up if God asked you to leave it behind in order to serve Him?

Mark ends this section by returning to the disciples’s story and sharing about their success. This is extremely encouraging because it highlights an important truth: Evil will always try to subvert God’s mission because it does not want to recognize Him as king (just as Herod did not), but God will always triumph. Herod killed one prophet, but God raised up 12 more men to take his place (Garland). His work advances even in the face of opposition.

**Jesus on Mission**

**Read Mark 6:31-44**

* Jesus was trying to find a place to rest with His disciples, but He stopped to minister to the crowd on the shore. Why does He do so? (see v. 34)
  + Do you find it challenging to trust in Jesus’s compassion and love for you? Why?
  + When you are weary or feel stretched thin (physically, financially, emotionally, etc.), do you tend to respond with compassion when others ask you for help? If not, how do you respond?
* **Read James 2:15-16 and 1 John 3:17-19** What is the main point of these verses?
  + Is it easy or hard for you to make sacrifices to meet others’ needs? Why?
  + Are there any needs you have seen recently that you have been reluctant to try to meet? What has been holding you back?
* What types of needs does Jesus meet in this passage?
  + Do you tend to focus more on meeting others’ physical or spiritual needs? Why?
  + Do you think the church meets both needs adequately? Why or why not?

**Jesus is God**

**Read Mark 6:45-52**

* The disciples obeyed Jesus and then found themselves sailing through a storm. Have you ever faced hardships because of a choice to obey God?
  + How did you feel during those hardships? Abandoned? Angry? Weary?
  + Jesus finally reveals Himself to the disciples at the end of the night. Do you find it comforting that He eventually appears or frustrating that He waits so long? Why?
* **Read Exodus 33:18-23; 34:5-7 and 1 Kings 19:11** What happens in these passages?
  + *God reveals Himself to His servants (Moses and Elijah)*
  + In the oldest Greek translation of the Old Testament, both of these passages use the same verb for “to pass by” as Mark does in v. 48. In addition, Jesus’s claim, “It is I,” is from the Greek term “ego eimi,” which means “I am.” Does that sound familiar?
  + **Read Exodus 3:14** “I AM” is the name God uses to reveal himself to Israel. How do these three passages add meaning to this miracle?
    - *Jesus is trying to reassure the disciples by revealing His divinity. He is literally claiming to be the great I AM, the one true God!*
    - Jesus further solidifies this claim through His display of creation power. When have you needed to be reminded of how powerful God is?
    - Does God’s power tend to scare you (like it did the disciples), or does it encourage you?
    - Take some time to reflect on God’s power and compassion. How does the combination of these attributes affect your view of God?

**Conclusion**

Living for God can be hard, but God is bigger than our challenges. For the challenge this week, find a way to reflect Jesus’s compassion by meeting someone else’s needs, even if it requires you to sacrifice something.

**Extra Notes**

* Num 35:30, Deut 17:6, and Deut 19:15 all state that 2 witnesses are required to validate a story. Traveling in pairs allowed the disciples to meet that requirement, adding further validity to their witness for Jesus.
* Interestingly, the staff and sandals that the disciples were expected to bring with them were the same items that God commanded the Israelites to have with them when they ate the first Passover meal (Akin).
* Shaking the dust off one’s feet was a common Jewish tradition when returning from pagan lands. As a result, the disciples doing so when leaving a village that had rejected them would have been the equivalent of calling that village pagan (Hughes). It was intended to awaken the village to the seriousness of its rejection of Christ and hopefully lead the villagers to future repentance.
* It is also important to note that the short nature of Jesus’s earthly ministry limited how much time He could spend ministering to people who were not ready to believe (Garland). We also need to be willing to warn of judgement and move on when necessary. However, we often have more time to continue ministering and thus should be wary of giving up too early, particularly in long-term relationships. It may be that we are called just to be patient.
* Herod was not actually a king, but he wanted the title so badly that he required his people to call him their king. He only ruled a quarter of the kingdom, making him a tetrarch. Ironically, his second formal request for kingship resulted in his exile (Garland).
* Herodias was Herod’s half-niece (the daughter of Herod Aristobulus, Herod’s half-brother) in addition to the former wife of Herod’s half-brother Phillip (Garland). Their marriage violated Leviticus 18:16 and Leviticus 20:21 (Akin).
* The feeding of the 5,000 is the only miracle besides the resurrection that is included in all four Gospels (Matt 14:13-21; Luke 9:10-17; John 6:1-13).
* The feeding of the 5,000 portrays Jesus as a second Moses
  + Desolate place>dessert
  + Bread and fish>manna and quail
  + Seated regimentation>Mosaic camp in the wilderness
  + Provision of food (symbolizes God’s saving grace)
* Jesus also reflects Elijah (1 Kings 17:8-16) and Elisha (2 Kings 4), but as a greater version
* This miracle is also a physical example of Psalm 23 (Garland)
* Jesus walking on water displays His power as the Creator(Job 9:5-10, Habakkuk 3:15, and Isaiah 43:1-2, 10-11)
* Water is considered a place of danger, so Jesus’s display of power on the water reveals God’s presence in all dangers and highlights His control over all of creation (Garland)
* For the sake of time, I did not dive into v. 53-56. However, these additional healings demonstrate Jesus’s compassion and willingness to save all who come to Him (Akin). They also provide further evidence of His patient grace as He continues to serve those who do not understand who He is (Garland).