

Day 71, Mark 6

by David Servant

Faith is the key to effective ministry, obedience, and provision, and it requires trusting in God's sovereignty and inviting Him into our lives.

Scripture: Mark 6:5-48, James 5:14

Topics: "Faith And Obedience", "Divine Intervention"

Description

David Servant preaches on Jesus' visit to Nazareth, where His ability to perform miracles was hindered by the residents' unbelief, emphasizing the importance of faith in experiencing God's power. The sermon highlights the necessity of faith in obeying God's calling, as seen when Jesus sent out the twelve without provisions, showing that God meets the needs of those who step out in faith. Faith is also crucial for healing and casting out demons, as demonstrated by the apostles' actions. The passage concludes with a powerful lesson on inviting Jesus into our struggles to receive His help and intervention.

Transcript

From Capernaum, Jesus walked about 25 miles to the town where He grew up and where His family still lived, Nazareth. We learn that He had at least four younger brothers and two younger sisters, and He was known in Nazareth as a carpenter (6:3). According to Luke's Gospel, during an earlier visit, Jesus had offended the people of Nazareth during His sermon, and they attempted to murder Him then (Luke 4:16-30). Quite mercifully, Jesus made this second visit some months later, perhaps hoping that the reports of His many miracles throughout Galilee would have softened the hearts of the people in His hometown. Nothing, however, had changed.

As a consequence of their unbelief, we read that Jesus "could [not would] do no miracle there" (6:5). Jesus' ability to do miracles in His hometown---certainly a place where He wanted to do miracles---was limited by the unbelief of the residents there. Once again we see that God's sovereignty cannot be blamed for lack of miracles. God is searching for faith.

Not being enlightened to the truths of Calvinism, Jesus "wondered at their unbelief" (6:6). Had Jesus known what so many Calvinists understand today, He would not have wondered, knowing that God sovereignly grants faith to those whom He has preselected. Their unbelief was simply a consequence of their not being sovereignly chosen by God. Too bad Jesus didn't understand that!

Obviously, I speak in jest. God has sovereignly wired human hearts to be free-willed. This is why in Scripture He so frequently bemoans people's resistance to Him, why He holds them accountable for their choices, and why He ultimately judges them for their choices, three things that would make no sense at all if the doctrines of Calvinism were actually true.

This chapter in Mark's Gospel contains additional lessons about faith. Jesus sent the twelve out in pairs to preach to the villages of Galilee, but He did not allow them to take along any provisions for their journeys (6:8-9). God would meet their needs as they obeyed Him. I have never known the Lord to work any other way. He calls people to a task, they take steps of faith, and He then meets their needs to accomplish their God-given task. So many, however, are "waiting on God" to give them provision before they take their first step. Tragically, some wait all their lives. The truth is, God is waiting on them.

It takes faith to obey God's calling, and the first step is always the scariest! But as God proves His faithfulness, our faith grows, enabling us to trust Him for greater things.

Faith was also necessary for the apostles to heal people successfully or cast out demons. Before anyone was healed, the apostles first had to anoint sick people with oil, and before anyone was delivered from a demon, the apostles first had to command it verbally to come out (6:13).

Like the early apostles, church elders/overseers/pastors have been given a ministry of healing by means of anointing with oil and prayer, but faith is required of them:

Is anyone among you sick? Then he must call for the elders of the church and they are to pray over him, anointing him with oil in the name of the Lord; and the prayer offered in faith will restore the one who is sick, and the Lord will raise him up (Jas. 5:14-15).

Elders/overseers/pastors who never anoint the sick with oil and pray for them are motivated by their lack of faith. Sick people who never ask the elders/overseers/pastors to anoint and pray for them are similarly motivated.

Feeding the 5,000 was an act of faith, as the crowd was arranged in groups of hundreds and fifties so that all could be efficiently served, and that was done when there were only five loaves and two fish!

Finally, did you notice that Jesus "intended to pass by" the struggling disciples as He walked across the Sea of Galilee (6:48)? What a lesson for us! Jesus will let us struggle against the wind if we fail to invite Him into our boat! I wonder how many times He's walked right by me?

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