

The Gospel of Mark

Eliminating Walls
Chapter 6&7



Chapter 6

Going Home 6:1-6

Jesus has just come through His shining hour. In quick succession, He has stilled a storm at sea, cast demons out of a mad man, healed a woman of an incurable disease, and raised Jairus' daughter from the dead. As a result, His fame spreads like wildfire and wherever He goes, the common people hear Him gladly. It is time to go home.¹

 **What do you think he taught in the synagogue?**

Maybe it was Jesus idea of kingdom that received the vote of no-confidence.

The 12 Go Out 6:7-12

It is interesting to consider that even Judas was sent out and that we can assume he had the same results as the rest of the disciples. I wonder what that says about Judas and does it say anything about how the Gospel might be spread?

“Shake off the dust under your feet” (v. 11) is its own symbol of rejection. The picture of disciples standing at the outskirts of a village and shaking the dust of that village from their feet compares to the action of Jews crossing the border of Samaria into Judea. Every speck of dust is shaken or brushed from their sandals in order to avoid contaminating the Holy Land with the dirt of dogs.²

Irrespective of what exactly ‘casting out demons’ was the healing of the people in different ways was a sign that the Kingdom of God was breaking into the world.

¹ David L. McKenna and Lloyd J. Ogilvie, 119.

² David L. McKenna and Lloyd J. Ogilvie, 125.

The Beheading of John the Baptist 6:14-29

This conversation about who Jesus was with Herod is surprisingly similar to the conversation Jesus is about to have with his disciples. Who is Jesus?

 What value might this story have had for Mark's original readers?

5000 Fed 6:30 - 44

'Sheep without a shepherd' is a regular biblical way of describing the people of Israel when they have no leader, no king (Numbers 27:17; 1 Kings 22:17; Ezekiel 34:5; Zechariah 10:2).

If, then, we repeat Jesus' command ('You give them something to eat') that doesn't just mean 'work a bit harder at famine relief, though that would certainly help. It will also mean that those who discover the living God in and through Jesus must be prepared to face up to the evil structures and powers that still dominate and control so much of God's world, and to challenge them in the name of Jesus and with the power of his victory on the cross. It isn't just a matter of 'he did supernatural things, so why shouldn't we?' It's a matter of the full achievement of Jesus, of which these strange acts were just a part and a signpost, being brought to bear, through prayer and faithful action, on the world that still waits for the kingdom.

William Wilberforce did it with slavery (it took him an entire lifetime, too); who will do it with world poverty and starvation?³

Jesus Walks on Water 6:45-56

Not only does Jesus show his power to create but he now shows his power over the creation. The Kingdom of God is not only about the salvation of humanity but also about the salvation of the creation. God does not wish to lose that which was 'very good'.

This sovereignty that Jesus has over fish and bread and over wind and waves, is not so much about his divinity, though that is there, but it is about the expectations of the Jews for the Messiah who will have control over the whole world.

³ Tom Wright, 80-81.
Riverview Church

Notice that the reaction of the disciples is similar to when Jesus calms the sea; they did not know who he was.

 **What does verse 56 tell you about someone telling their story of their encounter with Jesus?**

Chapter 7

Doing Away with Tradition? 7:1-23

In this multi-passage discussion Jesus is again challenged by the teachers (from Jerusalem) about how he and his disciples are living their lives.

Jesus response is clearly about the character of a person and not the actions of a person. We would use the word *integrity*.

The vantage point, from which a new perspective is offered, is Jesus himself. They are to look at it all again in the light of his teaching and (though they did not realize it yet) all that was yet to be in his overall ministry, including death and resurrection.⁴

For the Jews it was the traditions that had come to be the substance of what it meant to be Jewish rather than the condition of the character.

 **Can you identify any traditions that are a cause of separation between Christians and non-churched people?**
 **Are all traditions wrong?**

A Surprising Encounter 7:24-30

We've just heard Jesus say something which, when decoded, undermines the protective fence that first-century Jews maintained around their own identity; now here he is, in a decidedly Gentile town, trying to lie low for a while and then doing, with a healing miracle, what he'd just done with his cryptic sayings. This explains the very odd exchange between Jesus and the woman. The tone of voice throughout, though

⁴ Donald English, 145.
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urgent and (on the woman's part) desperate, is nevertheless that of teasing banter.⁵

Insiders and Outsiders:

Boat Scene

Demonica - Gentile

Jairus – maybe an outsider because of his response to Jesus

Woman – outsider because of health

Boat Scene

Syro-Phoenician - Gentile

Deaf Man – outsider because of health and 'curse'

Boat Scene

Blind Man - outsider because of health and 'curse'

Jesus works with those on the outside while those on the 'inside' are still confused.

⁵ Tom Wright, 95.