

The Lord will Provide

A Meditation on Mark 6: 45-52

By James Zekveld

⁴⁵ Immediately Jesus made his disciples get into the boat and go on ahead of him to Bethsaida, while he dismissed the crowd. ⁴⁶ After leaving them, he went up on a mountainside to pray.

⁴⁷ Later that night, the boat was in the middle of the lake, and he was alone on land. ⁴⁸ He saw the disciples straining at the oars, because the wind was against them. Shortly before dawn he went out to them, walking on the lake. He was about to pass by them, ⁴⁹ but when they saw him walking on the lake, they thought he was a ghost. They cried out, ⁵⁰ because they all saw him and were terrified.

Immediately he spoke to them and said, "Take courage! It is I. Don't be afraid."⁵¹ Then he climbed into the boat with them, and the wind died down. They were completely amazed,⁵² for they had not understood about the loaves; their hearts were hardened.

Why am I sick all the time? Why do I have this financial struggle now? Why did God send me here? These are questions we ask when God sends hardships our way. We confess that God ordains all things. This is a comfort, but at the same time, it makes us wonder why God is doing things that seem inexplicable.

Whatever happens, we can be assured that the Lord will provide. Throughout scripture, the Lord teaches us that he cares for his own. Think of David. The Lord provides for him, as he is being chased by Saul, as he is stuck in the desert. The Lord promises, "I am with you. I will be your God. You will be my people." The person of Jesus reveals that truth. Jesus is Emmanuel, "God with us." If God is with us, will he not provide for us? Did not Jesus himself teach us to pray, "Give us this day our daily bread?"

Mark teaches us about God's providence in the story of Jesus walking on water. It begins with

Jesus sending his disciples across to the other side while he stays on land in order to pray. Jesus is led by the Spirit. He has a good reason for sending them out onto the other side. He is going to display his power.

But there is more: Notice that while the boat is going out into the lake Jesus is praying on the mountain. The disciples have no reason to fear. Their Lord is praying for them.

When evening comes, the boat is in the middle of the lake and Jesus is on the shore. Then – the wind sweeps down upon the boat. The disciples are struggling to keep afloat. While they struggle a figure appears. He is walking on the sea. Is it a ghost? The ghost says, "Have courage, it is I, don't be afraid." It's Jesus. What is going on? Jesus gets on the boat and the storm ceases. In a moment, he brings peace to the situation. The disciples are astounded and so would we be in their situation. Even though Jesus is doing miracle after miracle, this miracle stands out. Even though he has calmed the sea before, this time they thought they had left him behind. Now he is suddenly here; out of nowhere.

Then Mark adds a rather interesting observation. "They had not understood about the loaves. Instead, their hearts were hardened."

What is Mark saying? If we read the preceding section of Mark we realize that he is referring to the multiplication of the loaves and the fish. In Mark 6: 30-44, Five thousand people had followed Jesus out into the middle of nowhere. Then Jesus had miraculously fed the whole crowd. What was it that the disciples hadn't understood?

Jesus was teaching them something about himself: Jesus will provide. Just as God had, so long ago, led the people out into the wilderness and had fed provided for them with manna, so Jesus had provided for five thousand men (Mark 6:44) along with their wives and children. They

didn't realize that Jesus would be with the disciples when he sent them out. The disciples had seen all the miracles. They had seen Jesus calm the sea. They had seen Jesus heal the blind, even raise the dead. What shocked them was that Jesus had been there for them even after they had left him on the other side of the lake.

They were trying to get through the storm on their own strength. The last time they had had the storm, Jesus had been in the boat. They were able to go to Jesus and ask him to help them. In our story, Jesus wasn't here, so he couldn't help them. But Jesus had sent them into the storm so he could demonstrate his care and power to them. The disciples didn't understand that, in some sense, Jesus had been with them all along.

He was not only teaching them that he was the one who would send them into the storm but he would also be the one who would get them through the storm. In the same way, he had fed the five thousand. Before his incarnation, he had provided for the Israelites as they made their way through the desert. He is our full salvation.

Just as he sent out his disciples into the Sea of Galilee, so Christ has sent his church out into the world. But now Christ has been exalted to the right hand of God. All things have been put under his feet. From his throne in heaven, he prays for us and he directs our comings and goings. He will provide our daily bread. He will give us the emotional strength to survive our storms. Death, cancer, broken relationships and bankruptcy do not keep the Lord Jesus Christ from bringing his peace to our situations. He is with you. He will rescue you. Like the disciples, we don't always understand this. We are struggling at the oars, hoping to weather the storm that God has given us. Just know, that by his Spirit, Christ has promised that he will always be with you.



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