

Lake Cities Community Church
Pastor Craig Schill
Series: On Your Mark!
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“Lesson Learned”
Mark 6:33-56

I always enjoy following some of the NBA playoffs this time of year. It is intense and exciting –everyone gives 110%. And that causes me to reflect on my own basketball season, which ended in February when our 2-3rd grade Upward Basketball team played its final game. My friend and neighbor Mark Craggett was the coach and I was the “assistant coach”- doing whatever needed to help out. Our team began practices last November and Upward designs the teams so that there is a variety of skill levels. Some boys had played basketball already for several years, while for others it was their first time. So Coach Mark would design drills and lessons for each of our weekly practices. Drills on how to dribble the ball, pass the ball, slide their feet, in-bound and shoot the ball. Lessons on the rules of the game, how to avoid double-dribbling and traveling. It was gratifying, so see the progress week after week as the boys would grasp the lessons and put them into action during the games.

And when you think about that process – the process of a coach teaching a lesson to a player; the player understanding the lesson and applying in the game – that is very similar to God’s process of discipleship. God has lessons he wants you to learn, and like a good coach he teaches you – through the local church – teaching in Sunday School or the sermon, or perhaps through a personal experience or a friend’s exhortation. God wants you to learn and apply spiritual lessons, and thereby grow more like Jesus Christ, over time.

With that background, take your Bibles out and turn with me to Mark chapter 6, verses 33-56. As we finish chapter six, we will examine three stories – (1) the feeding of the 5,000, (2) Jesus walking on water and (3) a healing episode. What unifies these stories is that Jesus is interested in teaching his disciples a lesson. This is an important lesson and Christ expects them to grasp his point and then apply in their lives.

Feeding the 5,000 (33-44)

The first story of the feeding of the 5,000 begins in verse 33. It has the distinction of being the only miracle that is recorded in all four-gospel accounts. It is one of the most famous of all of Jesus' miracles. Mark 6:33 *The people saw them going, and many recognized them and ran there together on foot from all the cities, and got there ahead of them.* If you glance back at verses 30-32 you will recall that the 12 disciples had just returned from being sent out to do ministry, and Jesus calls them away to rest. That goal is thwarted by the needs of the people who recognize them and are there waiting for Jesus and his disciples when they arrive. Mark 6:34 *When Jesus went ashore, He saw a large crowd, and He felt compassion for them because they were like sheep without a shepherd; and He began to teach them many things.* Rather than being annoyed, Jesus feels compassion for the crowd, because they lack leadership and as a result He begins to teach them the truth about God. He teaches them many things, and this takes some time, so Mark 6:35 *When it was already quite late, His disciples came to Him and said, "This place is desolate and it is already quite late; Mark 6:36 send them away so that they may go into the surrounding countryside and villages and buy themselves something to eat."* *"OK, great work everyone – let's call it a day, get some shut-eye and maybe meet back here, say after*

lunch tomorrow.” It is like when one of our worship services goes long I start to worry – people have to eat, they have other plans, we want to stay within our contract with the school, the nursery workers have run out of material and snacks. These are the kind of things the disciples are worried. Logistically, if the people are not dismissed they have a whole new set of problems on their hands. [Mark 6:37](#) But Jesus answered them, “You give them *something to eat!*” James Edwards states “Rather than relieving the crisis, Jesus intensifies it” (192). Jesus says, “I have taught them – now you feed them.” [And they said to Him, “Shall we go and spend two hundred denarii on bread and give them *something to eat?*”](#) 200 denarii was a year’s wages. In the US currently the median income is around \$47,000. Basically, the disciples are protesting Jesus’ command: “Jesus perhaps you do not see the magnitude of this problem? I mean we don’t have \$47,000 just lying around!” [Mark 6:38](#) [And He said to them, “How many loaves do you have? Go look!”](#) (OK – let’s start with what we have) [And when they found out, they said, “Five, and two fish.”](#) [Mark 6:39](#) [And He commanded them all to sit down by groups on the green grass.](#) [Mark 6:40](#) [They sat down in groups of hundreds and of fifties.](#) [Mark 6:41](#) [And He took the five loaves and the two fish, and looking up toward heaven, He blessed *the food* and broke the loaves and He kept giving *them* to the disciples to set before them; and He divided up the two fish among them all.](#) [Mark 6:42](#) [They all ate and were satisfied,](#) [Mark 6:43](#) [and they picked up twelve full baskets of the broken pieces, and also of the fish.](#) [Mark 6:44](#) [There were five thousand men who ate the loaves.](#)

And so, my question to you, through this amazing miracle, is “What lesson is Jesus trying to teach His disciples? What point is He hoping they grasp?” Jesus is trying to impart something to them that will change the way they view people, view ministry and view

Himself. If you were there – the 13th disciple – what would this experience have taught you that should change the way you react next time you are facing a difficult situation?

Jesus Walking on Water (45-52)

Think about that as we go to the 2nd story: [Mark 6:45](#) Immediately Jesus made His disciples get into the boat and go ahead of Him to the other side to Bethsaida, while He Himself was sending the crowd away. [Mark 6:46](#) After bidding them farewell, He left for the mountain to pray. [Mark 6:47](#) When it was evening, the boat was in the middle of the sea, and He was alone on the land. This seems on the surface an odd departure – but a comment from John’s gospel help us to understand. After the crowd sees this power miracle they “Intended to come and make him king by force” (John 6:15). Edwards notes that, “Rural Galilee was a stronghold of the Zealot movement” (194). Especially here, the people were looking for a military messiah leader. To discourage this, Jesus quietly sends the disciples out while he personally dismisses the crowds (perhaps reminding them what he had been teaching them about the Kingdom of God) and then, finally he is able to have some quiet time, in prayer.

And in the meantime, the disciples run into a strong storm between 3am and 6am, the 4th watch of the night: [Mark 6:48](#) Seeing them straining at the oars, for the wind was against them, at about the fourth watch of the night He came to them, walking on the sea; and He intended to pass by them. Jesus saw the crowd and has compassion on them. Jesus sees his disciples struggling and likewise comes out to help them. What do we do then with the comment that “he intended to pass them by”? I don’t think the idea is that Jesus is trying to sneak by them; just the opposite, Mark is connecting us to the Old Testament

when God would pass by and reveal His glory – as he did to Moses in Exodus 33. One more quote from Edward: “The God of Israel, majestic and awesome, but unknowable face to face, is now “passing by” believers in Jesus of Nazareth. Jesus’ walking on the water to his disciples is a revelation of His glory that he shared with the Father...It is a divine epiphany” (199). It is like Jesus is saying, “I saw you, and there is no need to worry, I am coming in my glory – walking on water – to help you!”

Mark 6:49 But when they saw Him walking on the sea, they supposed that it was a ghost, and cried out; Mark 6:50 for they all saw Him and were terrified. But immediately He spoke with them and said to them, “Take courage; it is I, do not be afraid.” Mark 6:51 Then He got into the boat with them, and the wind stopped; and they were utterly astonished, Mark 6:52 for they had not gained any insight from the *incident of the loaves*, but their heart was hardened.

Failing to learn a lesson and to apply it to real life is perhaps adequately illustrated by the square dance training that took place at our Hallelujah Hoedown, Friday night. For those who were not there, our very skilled instructor would teach us one lesson at a time and we would practice (w/o the music) – then he would turn the music on, and we would implement what we learned: promenade, dosado, allemande left. But then he tried to teach us something called “right and left grand.” We tried it twice and really messed up - so badly he said, “Go back to your original partner.” You could tell he was a little disappointed so much that when he moved us into our smaller squares, he told us that he would run us through all the moves that we learned except the right and left grand.

But he was a patient teacher and finally we did learn the right and left grand! And we hope here that the disciples finally too will learn their lesson. Jesus is a good and patient teacher. But let me ask the question again: "What lesson should they have learned from the feeding of the 5,000 that they should have applied in the stormy sea? What did they miss because their hearts were hard?"

Healing at Gennesaret (53-56)

We will begin to answer that as we look at our final story - a healing episode that Mark tells us about in summary fashion: [Mark 6:53](#) When they had crossed over they came to land at Gennesaret, and moored to the shore. [Mark 6:54](#) When they got out of the boat, immediately *the people* recognized Him, [Mark 6:55](#) and ran about that whole country and began to carry here and there on their pallets those who were sick, to the place they heard He was. [Mark 6:56](#) Wherever He entered villages, or cities, or countryside, they were laying the sick in the market places, and imploring Him that they might just touch the fringe of His cloak; and as many as touched it were being cured.

Like the first story because the crowd recognized who Jesus is and acts on that knowledge to gather a crowd. But, rather than a teaching ministry Jesus here heals the people who are sick. The story is punctuated by the statement that His presence is so powerful that those who would even touch the fringe of His cloak were healed. The crowd in this story are presented in contrast to the disciples. The disciples see Jesus and are afraid and astonished. The crowd sees Jesus and comes to Him, believing that He will be able to help them.

Application:

Let me share with you what I believe is the big-picture lesson that Jesus was trying to teach His disciples during the feeding of the 5,000 and during the storm on the sea – that is ironically illustrated in this final healing story.

This may not be the most eloquent way to state it but here it is: **“Don’t stress out - Jesus will take care of it.”** And a key word in the passage you may have noticed is “saw”. Jesus saw the crowd’s spiritual need, but the disciples stressed out when they saw the logistical problems. Lesson? Don’t stress – Jesus will take care of it. In the second story. Jesus saw his disciples in trouble and goes to help them. The disciples saw the storm and saw Jesus and panicked. Lesson? **“Don’t stress – Jesus will take care of it.”** The crowd in Gennesaret may not have been sophisticated, but in contrast to the disciples when they saw Jesus – they bring their sick out and I can imagine them telling those dear people on the road, *“Don’t worry – we are taking you to Jesus – He will take care of you.”*

I do not mean to be a Polly Anna – believing that Jesus will heal every disease, and feed every hungry person. Of course he does not – he allows the problems to come, just as he did to the disciples. But in the midst of the trial, *He will take care of you.* One of my professors Dr. Ramesh Richard says – “The difference between American Christians and Christians in developing countries is that in developing countries actually believe God answers prayer and intervenes in the daily lives of His children.”

So what is stressing you out? Something at work? At home? Some of you have battled greatly with sickness, or unemployment. Some very hard things. The disciples have given us this morning a picture of worry, fear and anxiety. The disciples talk back to Christ

– they challenge Him and advocate for a different solution. And I want you to remember the words that Jesus speaks to them: “**Stop, take courage; it is I Do not be afraid.**” Don’t stress – I can handle it and I will take care of it. What is “It” for you?

Civilla Martin and her husband Walter were in seminary together in New York in 1904. Civilla was sick in bed, and her husband was busy with seminary studies – he was actually doing pulpit supply. But rather than feeling sorry for herself on that Sunday afternoon – she actually felt the Lord speaking to her and she grabbed a pencil and paper and wrote a poem that would be set to music and become a favorite hymn of the faith, called:

God’s Goodness

Be not dismayed whate’er betide,
God will take care of you;
Beneath His wings of love abide,
God will take care of you.

Through days of toil when heart doth fail,
God will take care of you;
When dangers fierce your path assail,
God will take care of you.

All you may need He will provide,
God will take care of you;
Nothing you ask will be denied,
God will take care of you.

No matter what may be the test,
God will take care of you;
Lean, weary one, upon His breast,
God will take care of you.

God will take care of you,
Through every day, over all the way;
He will take care of you,
God will take care of you.

Great words – the question is – do you believe them? Will you take that lesson from the practice field and put them into practice in the game of life?