

Mark 6

Written by K B Napier
Monday, 23 August 2010 11:05

In human terms, Jesus' miracles become more radical in this chapter. Yet, the disciples found it hard to understand and even accept what they themselves witnessed! They saw and heard Jesus first-hand. Today, we rely on trust in the written word of God, but we, too, fail to understand. That is why true faith in modern churches is so hard to find. Many claim it but few have it. It is so obvious to those with an eye for truth!

If you read these chapters with awe, but as one who is watching a fantasy film, you will only know awe for a short while. Then, you will sink into the usual pretend-mode of most Christians, saying you believe with your lips, but unbelieving in your heart. This is the lot of most Christians I have ever come across, including myself. It can be seen in their eyes and in their words; it is found in their lives and in what they do, even if they outwardly seem to 'do' things for God. Real faith is far deeper than words and actions, but its reality is found in utter trust in God, a profound linking of your spirit with His Spirit. How real is this in your life?

Verses 1-7

1.

And he went out from thence, and came into his own country; and his disciples follow him.

2.

And when the sabbath day was come, he began to teach in the synagogue: and many hearing him were astonished, saying, From whence hath this man these things? and what wisdom is this which is given unto him, that even such mighty works are wrought by his hands?

3.

Is not this the carpenter, the son of Mary, the brother of James, and Joses, and of Juda, and Simon? and are not his sisters here with us? And they were offended at him.

4.

But Jesus said unto them, A prophet is not without honour, but in his own country, and among his own kin, and in his own house.

5.

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And he could there do no mighty work, save that he laid his hands upon a few sick folk, and healed them.

6.

And he marvelled because of their unbelief. And he went round about the villages, teaching.

After some time away from His home-town and area, Jesus returned to Nazareth and district, with His 12 disciples. The next Saturday, the Sabbath, He entered the local synagogue and taught. Those who heard Him were amazed – He had preached in many synagogues elsewhere, but this was the first time his own neighbours had heard Him.

Typically, because He was not sponsored by the synagogue or by any rabbinical council, Jesus was rejected. They demanded to know how this local man could say such amazing things, and with what power He was able to do miracles. The mere fact that He spoke with authority and did things no other man could do seemed beside the point! His neighbours just wanted to be critical and deny Him any good response.

Of course, they pointed to Jesus' humble background: isn't this the carpenter from Nazareth, son of Mary, and brother of James, Joses, Juda and Simon? Are not his sisters also with us? The hearers were not interested in Jesus and His obvious power and authority; they only wanted to denigrate Him because of His background!

This goes on throughout the Christian churches today. A man who speaks with power and lives a life full of authority is cast aside, if he is not 'one of the gang', a person accepted by the local preachers' fraternity, speaking as they do!! They will keep him out of 'their' pulpits and away from 'their' congregations', for fear that he will turn their heads with truth. This has happened to me over the past 35 years.

I am always intrigued by the many Christians who quote the criticism against Jesus, that He never had brothers and sisters; or their belief in the Romanist garbage that His mother remained a virgin all her life! Scripture says otherwise. Here we read, very clearly, that Jesus was one of a large family. It is obvious by his non-mention that Joseph was now dead. But,

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Jesus had at least four brothers, and a number of sisters, all conceived and born in the usual way.

Note that Jesus is called a carpenter; the word is foundational to our English word, technician, and can mean a joiner, carpenter or builder. Thus, Jesus was probably a local construction worker and woodworker. He was the son of Mary or Miriam, and his brothers are named: James ('supplanter'), Joses ('exhalted'), Judah ('he shall be praised'), and Simon (Peter: 'the stone'). We are not given the names of Jesus' sisters. Some insist that his brothers and sisters were half-brothers and half-sisters, because He only shared the same mother with them. In a sense they are right, but it makes no real difference to them being His family.

The crowds who heard Jesus were "offended". The word for this is the same as our English word for being scandalised. That is, they disapproved of Him and judged Him unjustly. But, a more interesting meaning emerges, for it also means that to them Jesus was a stumblingblock; they cast Him aside because His words proved their sinfulness. They therefore were condemned out of their own mouths, as Jesus Himself indicates.

When they cast Him out of their midst, Jesus told them that a prophet is honourable – but never in his own country, or amongst his own family and kinsmen. There is much truth in this. It is a fact that few within my own family know anything of what I say or do!! They are simply not interested. To them I am not a 'proper' preacher or teacher, because I do not have a church building and I do not move amongst the 'favoured few' who constitute the local preaching Mafioso! (It is a correct title, for they can make or break a local preacher by their support or rejection). Yet, I am known extensively throughout the world!! Is it not odd, and rather silly?

But, note what Jesus said: the prophet is "not without honour". He is esteemed by God and by those elsewhere, but not close to his own home. My own estrangement from the local preacher's den began when I stopped preaching as they did, and instead taught what God's word said. This is what Jesus did! So I am in good company and do not care about the estrangement... except that so many local Christians imbibe lies, deception, or just bad theology and poor Bible teaching.

Then we see a very important fact: because of their unbelief, Jesus "could there do no mighty work". Yes, He healed a few sick people, but He did no other miracles. Instead, He went about other villages to preach and teach. By 'unbelief' is meant apistia – faithlessness and outright unbelief in what was said to them. Jesus' words were filled with godly power, and they still

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rejected Him. This tells us that where people deliberately will not hear, nothing can be done. God will not do anything divine in their midst.

By this we know that charismatic gatherings and huge campaigns, which are godless, CANNOT, by definition, know miracles! God WILL NOT work His might amongst them because they are unfaithful. Jesus marvelled at such unbelief from fellow Jews, who already knew the truth of the Old Testament. In the next section we see an even more condemnatory statement by Jesus, concerning those who refuse to listen... teaching us a truth few Christians bother to listen to!

Verses 7-13

1.

And he called unto him the twelve, and began to send them forth by two and two; and gave them power over unclean spirits;

2.

And commanded them that they should take nothing for their journey, save a staff only; no scrip, no bread, no money in their purse:

3.

But be shod with sandals; and not put on two coats.

4.

And he said unto them, In what place soever ye enter into an house, there abide till ye depart from that place.

5.

And whosoever shall not receive you, nor hear you, when ye depart thence, shake off the dust under your feet for a testimony against them. Verily I say unto you, It shall be more tolerable for Sodom and Gomorrhah in the day of judgment, than for that city.

6.

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And they went out, and preached that men should repent.

7.

And they cast out many devils, and anointed with oil many that were sick, and healed them.

Jesus now began to send out his disciples. He knew time was short and the work was great. He sent them out in pairs, giving them power over demons and sickness. This is where we see real faith at work, for Jesus told them to take nothing at all with them on their travels, except for a long walking stick. They were not to take food, provisions, or money! A 'scrip' was a leather bag used to carry provisions on a journey. This is what happens today when we totally have faith in God: He will provide if we do His bidding. This should give full assurance to all Christians, who should know that God *will* look after them if they are true to their saved state, nothing wavering... though God's predestination means He will even look after them when they go astray.

The disciples were also told to take only the sandals they wore; they were not to pack an extra coat, but to travel in the one coat on their back. When they reached a town or village, they were to be put up in a house there by those who were sympathetic to Jesus' preaching, until they left.

Then comes a very important command: one that modern Christians should take serious note of! Jesus told them that if someone did not want to listen, or did not wish to apply the Gospel to their lives, the disciples were to walk away and leave them. The term "shake the dust under your feet" is a contemporary saying meaning never to go back again – those who refused to listen or comply were to be left to their own devices and treated with contempt. Because of the inroads made by Arminianism, Christians today think they should continually speak to people they know about Jesus and the Gospel, This is not so: if they refuse to listen, reject what is said, or otherwise speak against the Gospel, they must be shunned and left alone.

The emotional idea that we should keep speaking to them is irrelevant – if God wishes to move them, He will, regardless of how many times someone visits them! This is then a "testimony against them"... they regard the Gospel and its allied teachings as a stumblingblock. The seriousness of all this is in the next statement by Christ: "It shall be more tolerable for Sodom and Gomorrha in the day of judgment, than for that city." (or people). Do not underestimate the call of God, nor overestimate your own powers to persuade (as Alpha teachers do)!

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The disciples then went out to preach the Gospel. As they preached they commanded men to repent. You might think this is Arminian but it is not, for only those called by God, chosen, predestinated and elect, will respond spiritually. Those who appear to respond and fall away will not have been saved in the first place... a very common condition brought about by hyped-up campaigns.

As they travelled the disciples "cast out many devils" and healed the sick. Note that they used oil to anoint them, a practice that continues to this day, so is legitimate.

Verses 14-20

1.

And king Herod heard of him; (for his name was spread abroad:) and he said, That John the Baptist was risen from the dead, and therefore mighty works do shew forth themselves in him.

2.

Others said, That it is Elias. And others said, That it is a prophet, or as one of the prophets.

3.

But when Herod heard thereof, he said, It is John, whom I beheaded: he is risen from the dead.

4.

For Herod himself had sent forth and laid hold upon John, and bound him in prison for Herodias' sake, his brother Philip's wife: for he had married her.

5.

For John had said unto Herod, It is not lawful for thee to have thy brother's wife.

6.

Therefore Herodias had a quarrel against him, and would have killed him; but she could not:

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7.

For Herod feared John, knowing that he was a just man and an holy, and observed him; and when he heard him, he did many things, and heard him gladly.

Such was the fame of Jesus by this time that news of His exploits came to the ears of king Herod. Herod wondered if Jesus was actually John the Baptist, who he had killed not so long before. Had John risen from the dead as Herod supposed, and was therefore able to do miracles? But, others thought Jesus was Elijah come back, or some other prophet. Herod, however, was convinced Jesus was John the Baptist, the one he had beheaded.

It was Herod who ordered John to be imprisoned. Christians suppose he did so out of sheer hatred, but this is not what scripture says. He captured John because his wife, Herodias, had complained. A granddaughter of Herod the Great, Herodias was married to Herod Philip, son of Herod the Great. However, she had an adulterous relationship with Herod Antipas, Philip's brother, and married him. Of course, this was illicit, and John stood outside the palace shouting his warning to the couple, and calling them adulterers... imagine if such honesty was used today! Herodias was fuming against John for his words and wanted to kill him, but could not organise it herself.

Herod Antipas, on the other hand, knew John was right and feared him. It ought to be remembered that the Herods were, at least notionally, Jewish, and believed God. Herod saw John as just and holy, and so feared his own spiritual status before God. Herod actually watched John and listened to whatever he had to say. He knew he was in the wrong, but still listened and "heard him gladly". This was as close as Antipas got to salvation! So, we see that Herod Antipas was not the bloodthirsty terror he is made out to be – he did not order the death of John the Baptist out of hatred. Rather, he made a very foolish promise, and, being a king, he could not retract it, and so Herodias triumphed with trickery.

Verses 21-25

1.

And when a convenient day was come, that Herod on his birthday made a supper to his lords, high captains, and chief estates of Galilee;

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2.

And when the daughter of the said Herodias came in, and danced, and pleased Herod and them that sat with him, the king said unto the damsel, Ask of me whatsoever thou wilt, and I will give it thee.

3.

And he sware unto her, Whatsoever thou shalt ask of me, I will give it thee, unto the half of my kingdom.

4.

And she went forth, and said unto her mother, What shall I ask? And she said, The head of John the Baptist.

5.

And she came in straightway with haste unto the king, and asked, saying, I will that thou give me by and by in a charger the head of John the Baptist.

What happened is this: it was Herod's birthday, so he held a feast, inviting all the nobles, army leaders and rich people. During the feast Herodias' daughter danced for the assembled guests. All enjoyed the dance and so Herod promised the girl gifts – anything she wanted, even if it meant half his kingdom! It is supposed that this was the dance of the seven veils, a dance enacted even today. It is also supposed that the dance was essentially a strip-tease, but this is very unlikely at a formal palace function! The dance is full of symbolism. It is a belly-dance so it would have been sensuous, but not explicit. Veils were removed, but not all the clothing. One veil was probably draped over the chief feast maker.

Obviously, the girl's dance was appreciated and perhaps even excited the males, and so Herod was foolish enough to promise half his kingdom. Such is the stupidity of men when seduced by females! He promised the girl anything she wanted. So, she went to her mother, Herodias, and asked her advice – what should she ask for? Her mother, full of hatred for John the Baptist, told her to tell Herod she wanted the prophet's head on a plate.

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Be very careful what you promise and what you offer to others. Always think of possible consequences! You might not be audience to a belly-dance, but there are many ways you can come to grief by making promises.

Verses 26-29

1.

And the king was exceeding sorry; yet for his oath's sake, and for their sakes which sat with him, he would not reject her.

2.

And immediately the king sent an executioner, and commanded his head to be brought: and he went and beheaded him in the prison,

3.

And brought his head in a charger, and gave it to the damsel: and the damsel gave it to her mother.

4.

And when his disciples heard of it, they came and took up his corpse, and laid it in a tomb.

When the girl made her demand, Herod was horrified, and he probably realised he had been caught! He was "exceeding sorry". That is, he was very sad and overcome with grief. He did not want to kill John, but he knew that as king his promise was law and witnessed by everyone. He had no choice, and immediately sent an executioner (one of Herod's attendants) to do the deed and bring him the head.

The head was put on a plate and presented to the girl, who gave it to her mother. Soon, word came to the disciples of John, who asked for the body, which they then buried in a tomb. Never underestimate the hatred unsaved men and women have for believers! Even those you think are your friends. If they are unsaved, the closest of friends can turn on you in an instant and bring you down. This is one reason we are warned never to form close relationships with those who are unsaved.

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Verses 30-34

1.

And the apostles gathered themselves together unto Jesus, and told him all things, both what they had done, and what they had taught.

2.

And he said unto them, Come ye yourselves apart into a desert place, and rest a while: for there were many coming and going, and they had no leisure so much as to eat.

3.

And they departed into a desert place by ship privately.

4.

And the people saw them departing, and many knew him, and ran afoot thither out of all cities, and outwent them, and came together unto him.

5.

And Jesus, when he came out, saw much people, and was moved with compassion toward them, because they were as sheep not having a shepherd: and he began to teach them many things.

The disciples went out and preached, then returned, probably excited and elated. They told Jesus everything they had said and done, including their teaching. As Jews they already knew their Old Testament, but they had also been taught by Christ, so they passed-on this valuable Gospel message as well.

Jesus was experienced in the rigours of continual preaching, so He recognised the need for His disciples to rest, and counselled them to go into the desert to “rest a while”, because so many people were pressing them, they could not even have time to eat. Too many modern churches, because they pay their pastors, think the pastor must work non-stop, at any time of the day or

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night. The churches want their 'money's worth'! This is not how it ought to be.

A pastor, preacher, teacher, etc., is worthy of his hire, but he must have rest and recreation time. I am just as guilty as others in my position and rarely have time off from my ministry. Including my Sunday teaching, I have no actual days off. But, in the past few months I have attempted to cut down my time... it is very hard as I am so used to working 'flat out' 12 hours a day! Others will know what I mean. But, lesser health and strength tends to give a newer perspective! Now I make sure I take off my 'day of rest' whatever day it is.

All pastors and ministers must rest. Even until recently, with my background of staunch anti-Arminianism, I used to think "My time is short and getting shorter. I must push on and double my efforts." But, this is Arminianistic thinking! God will do through or by me exactly what He has planned! If I do not do something by my life's end, it will not be for want of trying, but because God has determined it that way. So now I rest more. In between I work very hard for as long as I can and *still* have not really learned my lesson!

Jesus took them by ship along the coast, to a deserted place, for rest. But, it was to no avail, for the people saw them going, and the direction in which the ship travelled. They ran along trying to catch the ship, which moved fairly slowly. We know this because the people got to the destination before them! The crowd Jesus wanted to get away from simply followed them. Imagine that kind of desire in Christians today! How we all need this bubbling-over zeal.

Rather than be angry at loss of privacy, Jesus was moved by compassion for the people. He knew their spiritual states, and knew that those who should have looked after them were incapable of doing so, by reason of unbelief and legalism. So, He taught them the things of God. He put aside the tiredness of Himself and the disciples, so that the huge crowds could receive many blessings.

Verses 35-40

1.

And when the day was now far spent, his disciples came unto him, and said, This is a desert place, and now the time is far passed:

2.

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Send them away, that they may go into the country round about, and into the villages, and buy themselves bread: for they have nothing to eat.

3.

He answered and said unto them, Give ye them to eat. And they say unto him, Shall we go and buy two hundred pennyworth of bread, and give them to eat?

4.

He saith unto them, How many loaves have ye? go and see. And when they knew, they say, Five, and two fishes.

5.

And he commanded them to make all sit down by companies upon the green grass.

6.

And they sat down in ranks, by hundreds, and by fifties.

As the day neared dusk, the disciples asked Jesus to send the people away so they could find villages and buy food. But, it was a remote place. Jesus' reply was just as remarkable as any He had given before, only the disciples did not yet know it! Jesus told them to give food to the crowd. They asked if they should find a village and buy 200 pennyworth of bread. Jesus, however, had divine plans!

As I have personally noted over the past several years – I might pray earnestly for answers from God, but when He responds it is always far above and beyond anything I could even remotely think of! The disciples could only think along the lines of what they knew, but in Jesus they had the full power of God Himself, for Christ was, and is, God. His response was so off-beat no-one could have thought of it.

Intriguingly, Jesus asked the disciples how many loaves they had with them. They counted and

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said they had five loaves and two fish. Jesus then told them to tell the crowd to sit down in orderly groups, which they did, in hundreds and fifties. Thus far, the disciples were mystified. They trusted Jesus to come up with an answer, but they had no idea what that answer would be.

As believers we need to follow Jesus like this – just obey. Let *Him* deal with how to respond to a situation! God never *reacts* to anything. This is because nothing takes Him by surprise, and He has the answer to everything. That is why no Christian should ever be afraid or worried; God knows and already has His answers ready.

Verses 41-44

1.

And when he had taken the five loaves and the two fishes, he looked up to heaven, and blessed, and brake the loaves, and gave them to his disciples to set before them; and the two fishes divided he among them all.

2.

And they did all eat, and were filled.

3.

And they took up twelve baskets full of the fragments, and of the fishes.

4.

And they that did eat of the loaves were about five thousand men.

Jesus held the five loaves and two fish; He looked up to the sky, blessed the bread and broke it into pieces. He then handed the pieces to the disciples to hand out to the people. This is how it appeared to the asdisciples... they were given five loaves broken into pieces, probably on some kind of platter. The fish were also torn into a few pieces. As they handed out the pieces, there was no change to the platter! It was as if nothing was removed, for each piece was replaced by another piece. And so the five loaves and two fish were handed out to the huge crowd.

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Comprising of about 5,000 men. It is possible there were also women and children there, so they swelled the crowd numbers well above 5,000.

Can you imagine cutting up a cake into ten pieces on a plate, and offering them to thirty people? Each time someone took a slice, another took its place, but you didn't see it occurring... the slices just kept on replacing themselves! It was even better, for after everyone had eaten their fill, the pieces left filled 12 baskets with bread and fish... so they ended up with more food than they started with!

This is incredible. But, it is God. We expect God to work in ordinary ways, but when He acts it is often extraordinary, and outside our expectations. And whatever He gives is always greater than we ask for. The feeding of the 5,000 is a good example of the maxim given by Christ Himself, that when God gives to mankind, he does so in abundance, so that whatever we need is given, *plus more* – He gives to overflowing. This is what the miracle shown here tells us. And this is why I dare to ask God not just to supply my needs, but to give me a great intervention, for God is above and beyond our meagre thoughts and desires... He gives abundantly, breaking the bounds of human expectations and requests.

Verses 45-50

1.

And straightway he constrained his disciples to get into the ship, and to go to the other side before unto Bethsaida, while he sent away the people.

2.

And when he had sent them away, he departed into a mountain to pray.

3.

And when even was come, the ship was in the midst of the sea, and he alone on the land.

4.

And he saw them toiling in rowing; for the wind was contrary unto them: and about the fourth watch of the night he cometh unto them, walking upon the sea, and would have passed by them.

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5.

But when they saw him walking upon the sea, they supposed it had been a spirit, and cried out:

6.

For they all saw him, and were troubled. And immediately he talked with them, and saith unto them, Be of good cheer: it is I; be not afraid.

Leaving the people to marvel at what they had just seen with their own eyes, Jesus told the disciples to get back into the ship, as it was getting dark. He commanded them to go to the opposite shore whilst he sent the people home. Then, he climbed a nearby mountain to pray to the Father... before He performed another divine miracle.

Now dark, Jesus saw the ship with the disciples still in mid-lake. They were rowing hard because the wind was against them. Jesus saw they were still having a rough time in the middle of the night. So, about three o'clock, He did a remarkable thing; yet, though remarkable, we should by now expect it from Jesus, for He is God!

Jesus left the shore and, despite the waves and wind, He walked on the water to meet them. There is no way to mistake what is being said – Jesus walked “upon the sea”. No, it was NOT a sandbank! No, the disciples were NOT deluded! Jesus walked on the water. The words mean what they say.

The disciples were terrified, for they did not know in the darkness who it was. They thought He was a ghost or spectre (phantasma, from which we get our word phantom). I have no doubt whatever that modern people would probably think the same thing, for many are more than ready to believe in ghosts, but unready to acknowledge the reality of Jesus or God. And that often goes for ‘Christians’, too! This is why so many Christians claim to have faith, and yet pray as if they had none. They feel safer with a Jesus they can contain in the pages of a Bible than with a Christ Who is God, able to give them gifts and answers exceeding anything any human being can think of.

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The disciples, already struggling with the elements, “cried out”. That is, they were afraid and shouted in anxiety. Every one of the disciples was afraid. The word ‘troubled’ means to be disturbed with dread and distress. Is this not how many react to life’s ‘problems’? As minds race continually trying to find solutions, God just waits patiently until we finally run out of ideas, so that we at last turn to Him alone. In this He shows His mercy to feeble human beings.

Seeing their distress, Jesus spoke calmly to them: “Be of good cheer – it is me! Do not be afraid!” Can YOU see Jesus in the midst of what seems to be your darkest hour? He is there, waiting to speak to you, but in your fear your ears are deaf. It does not matter what the situation is, Jesus says: “Do not be afraid – I am here”. And the mere fact that Jesus is with us means He already has our situation under control and answers have already been dispatched.

This is what I have found in my own life, so it is not a platitude. It is real, it is counsel based not on theology but on actual day-to-day reliance on God. Remember what happened before this event? Jesus could do no mighty works because the people did not believe. Never let a Christian be in such a self-destructive position.

Verses 51-56

1.

And he went up unto them into the ship; and the wind ceased: and they were sore amazed in themselves beyond measure, and wondered.

2.

For they considered not the miracle of the loaves: for their heart was hardened.

3.

And when they had passed over, they came into the land of Gennesaret, and drew to the shore.

4.

And when they were come out of the ship, straightway they knew him,

5.

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And ran through that whole region round about, and began to carry about in beds those that were sick, where they heard he was.

6.

And whithersoever he entered, into villages, or cities, or country, they laid the sick in the streets, and besought him that they might touch if it were but the border of his garment: and as many as touched him were made whole.

Jesus climbed into the ship and immediately the wind stopped. He did not even give a command. The commands of God need not be by word or action – things are made to happen by His will. The disciples were absolutely amazed, beyond words!

We find that though they had witnessed the miracle of the loaves, they were already, just a few hours later, distanced from God's power and might: "their heart was hardened." I am sometimes asked how it is possible for Christians to slowly go downhill... here we see disciples who were *with*

Jesus

, in the same position! We have not witnessed, or been a part of, the miracles of Jesus, but *they*

were. We were not sent out to preach and do miracles – but they were. Yet, a short while later, their hearts were hardened. That is the 'old man'; the poison of sin. That is how any Christian can go downhill!

I have known remarkable interventions by God in my life and yet soon afterwards I have known fear or anxiety! Unfortunately, that is the human frame. Yet, knowing our frame and ability to lack faith, God acts in our lives. Even when we really mess things up He will give us benefits and loving gifts. Why? Because we are elect and we are predestinated! God will bring about His will (including His grace and mercy) in our lives even when we do silly things. Now *that* is truly amazing! This emphasises the fact that we deserve nothing and have no merit of our own on which God can give us things.

The hearts of the disciples were hardened, or dulled; they had no understanding. If this happened to the disciples who were actually with Jesus, not just seeing, but themselves practising, miracles... do you really think you, as a modern Christian far removed from these

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things, cannot fail or 'crash' miserably? Then think again. It is only God's mercy that allows us to live in any holiness at all. Never assume you will always be as holy as you might be today. Any holiness you have is not there because it is your right – it is a *privilege*, a gift, given by God for a reason... that you might serve Him wholly, 100%. You are not holy because of something you have done, but because God determined it to be so, and you have complied with His will. The disciples had yet to learn this basic fact. Will YOU learn it, now?

The ship finally landed at Gennesaret on the east coast of Galilee. You will remember that the people asked Jesus to leave their area after he cast out demons from the demoniac. Even so, as soon as Jesus and the disciples landed, the people recognised Him and quickly spread word that the 'miracle man' had returned. Obviously, they had reconsidered their hasty reaction to his previous visit. Jesus' fame had reached them and now they, too, wanted to experience His might. Everywhere Jesus went in that area sick people were carried out to Him on their beds, ready for healing. You might ask why unbelievers would come to Jesus. The answer is simple – if you saw healing taking place without a single failure, YOU would want the same thing, whether or not you believed the one working the miracles was God, or not.

As Jesus progressed through the whole land, sick people were brought out onto the streets where He walked. Relatives and friends begged Jesus to heal them. They even asked for permission for the sick to touch the end of Jesus' clothing, knowing that such a touch would bring healing. Which it did.

Do you believe in God? I am not talking to unbelievers, but to you, a believer! If you truly believe, why do you not believe in a miraculous God? Why do you claim to pray but yet you see no results of prayer? Do you have the courage to admit you see no results? And do you have the spiritual honesty to ask why? The answer is this – if God prompts you to pray for something, you WILL receive an answer. This is because the prayer is in accord with His will. If there are no answers (and any honest Christian will admit few of his prayers are answered) it can only mean the prayers were not of God anyway. Of course, God will, at times, cause you to wait for an answer – but an answer MUST come, for Jesus said so in Matthew.

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