

## ***Session 15 Feeding the 5,000 and Walking on the Water (Mk. 6)***

### **I. INTRODUCTION**

*Mark 6 is one of the most important chapters in the Gospels on training leadership. Now that might surprise you at a quick read. You might read the title of this session, **Feeding the 5,000 and Walking on Water** and think, “Well, those are children’s church stories. What does that have to do with leadership?” I think that Mark 6 has great relevance for the end-time Church. I believe the Holy Spirit is going to breathe on it and develop it and mark the hearts of God’s people.*

*Now the context of Mark 6 is that Jesus has only a little over one more year before He goes to the cross. He has one more year. Of the three and a half years He is down to the last year. The issue is that the apostles do not believe He is the Son of God, not yet. They believe He is the Son of David, that He is the Messiah. They understand He is the most anointed Man on the earth, maybe the most anointed Man in history, but a Man and only a Man. Jesus knows that until they shift over and are convinced that He is more than the Son of David, that He is also the Son of God, they are not going to be equipped to lead the Church and to launch the Body of Christ so that it will be on the right path for history.*

- A. In this session, we will look Jesus’ final visit to Nazareth (Mk. 6:1-6a), His third (final) tour of Galilee (Mk. 6:6b), sending out the apostles (Mk. 6:7-13; see session 14), John the Baptist’s death (Mk. 6:14-29), Jesus feeding the 5,000 (Mk. 6:35-44) and walking on the water (Mk. 6:47-52).

*So, in Mark 6, Mark presents six episodes. These six episodes are deeply connected to one another, and they are very significant in preparing the apostles in that final year to be the leaders of the salvation story after Jesus is gone. We will start with just a brief glance at the six episodes, then we will spend a little bit more time on them. I have them listed here. What Jesus is wanting to do in this final year plus, for maybe a month or two He is wanting to expose the apostles to the positive and the negative dynamics of the kingdom of God. He wants them to see both of them up front, close and personal. He takes them first to Nazareth. I have no doubt they are a little bit excited to meet Jesus’ long-term friends. I mean that is the community He had been in for thirty years, a lot of stories and long-term friendships and affection and a lot of goodwill. In Nazareth, they see something I believe that is shocking to them: the city rejects Jesus. Jesus is in essence telling them that this will happen.*

*“Yeah, but Jesus, they told lies about You. Your long-term friends did. What happened?”*

*Jesus would say, “It is important that you grasp this because a year from now this will be your story. You have to know how I responded and what I faced, because you are going to face the same things. As the leaders of the Body of Christ you need to respond the same way.”*

*In the second episode, He goes on His final tour of Galilee. He wants them to understand God’s passion is to bring the message to as many as possible. It is not “us four and no more.” It must go broadly. The significance of this is that often when a person has been lied to and rejected by long-term friends and family, many times they draw back, kind of hunker down, and get into self-pity, and they quit. Jesus went the other way. He was completely undeterred. He went on boldly. He went out, and that was a remarkable reality that the apostles would have to face. It is a challenging reality to have emotional problems and rejections and to have zeal to bring the Word to others.*

*Then in the third episode He says, as it were, “Now I want you to see God’s commitment to partnership. He is going to anoint you as weak and broken men to do what I just did.” Then after that it is the encounter of John the Baptist and his death. Jesus gets the apostles together and says, as it were, “The stakes are going to go up.*

*You are going to face more than what I faced in Nazareth: rejection and lies, etc. John, the most godly man, touched the political arena, and they killed him.” Jesus looked at them and could have said, “You are going to touch the political arena on occasions.” Some of them were put to death because of it. In Acts 12 they were put in prison and they were beaten. He is saying that even the most godly will not be immune to this, but know that the kingdom will advance.*

*Undoubtedly as the six episodes of Mark 6 are unfolding over a short period of time, the apostles’ eyes are big and they are thinking, “Okay, are we up for the task?”*

*Then episodes five and six, which go together: the feeding of the 5,000 and Jesus walking on the water. As a matter of fact, these two events happened in a twenty-four-hour period. The purpose of these two events was to convince the apostles that He was God, not just an anointed Man, not just the most anointed Man, and that more than the Son of David, He was God. If they did not get this, they would not have a rationale to be faithful to the end. Not just faithful to bear reproach, but faithful to embrace His leadership because His leadership would not be politically correct to many in the nations. They need to embrace it. They need to stand for it.*

*The feeding of the 5,000 and the walking on the water that, again, happened in a twenty-four-hour period right about one year before Jesus died was the turning point in the apostle’s preparation, and Jesus knew it. This was the time when the issue of His deity was settled the first time in their life. Now they have been with Him for a couple years, but it is settled right here with only one year to go. Jesus felt urgency about this.*

*I believe that the issue of Jesus’ deity, though it brought great controversy to the religious community as we will see in a few moments in this context, will again bring great controversy in the religious community that even names the name of Jesus and claims His name. Even today the last few years in the Body of Christ the issue of His deity is coming to a forefront. Many are backing away and saying He is a good teacher, He is an amazing Man, but let’s not go heavy on the part that He is the uncreated God.*

*So Jesus did two great extraordinary miracles. They were two of the most dramatic miracles. They were creative miracles. They were of a different category than a deliverance or a healing or even the raising of the dead. These were miracles of the “Genesis 1 God type” caliber, creative. I mean taking five loaves and feeding thousands of people that we call multiplying, but in essence it is almost creating out of nothing. It is a Genesis-1-quality or caliber of miracles.*

*Walking on the water was not like calming a storm. This was a whole other level, walking on water, defying and transcending the laws of nature. Jesus convinced them of His deity. I believe in the generation the Lord returns there are going to be dramatic miracles parallel to this in the global controversy of “Is Jesus God? Is the Antichrist God’s representative?” When you study the Scriptures, the prophets, the book of Revelation, you see the miracles that will happen on a global level, which will settle the issue to those that have a heart to understand and will be as dramatic as these in Mark 6.*

*So of the six episodes in Mark 6 two of them are really negative: rejection in Nazareth and the death of John the Baptist. Two of them showed the value and the necessity of the work. They had to be about the work even bearing the burden of persecution and stigma. There is no room to draw back and lick their wounds and get into self-pity, no room to get into an angry retaliation spirit. They have to stay connected and focused to the task. Two of the episodes are about that, and two of them are about exceptional miracles above and beyond even the normal caliber of miracles in the life of Jesus. I believe that these six episodes will be parallel to how the Holy Spirit will be teaching the Church for the greatest hour of human history, of natural history, leading to the coming of the Lord.*

B. These events occurred in Galilee sometime between late AD 28 and the spring AD 29.

## II. JESUS WAS REJECTED IN NAZARETH (MK. 6:1-6)

*Let's look at the first episode. Each one of these deserves an entire session, but I am only going to give a couple minutes to each one. As Bible teachers—that is what we are training you to be, whether you teach a lot of people on a microphone or you teach a few people in a small group setting—you are called to be teachers of the Word. I just want to alert you to Mark 6 and its significance so that you do not rush over the chapter quickly and say, “Yeah, I learned that in children’s church. The multiplying of the bread and walking on water, that is really cool,” and you move on to Mark 7. No, no! Stop, go back, and say, “Holy Spirit, teach me what You are teaching the end-time Church in this remarkable leadership chapter, Mark 6.”*

A. Jesus was rejected in Nazareth (Mk. 6:1-6a; cf. Mt. 13:54-58). Jesus wanted His disciples to see that even He was rejected by those nearest and dearest to Him so that they should expect rejection as part of kingdom reality. Jesus was rejected twice by people in Nazareth (Lk 4:16-30; Mk 6:1-6).

<sup>1</sup>*Then He went out from there and came to His own country, and His disciples followed Him.*

<sup>2</sup>*...He began to teach in the synagogue. And many hearing Him were astonished, saying, “Where did this Man get these things? And what wisdom [Jesus’ new ideas] is this...that such mighty works are performed by His hands!” <sup>3</sup>*Is this not the carpenter, the Son of Mary, and brother of James, Joses, Judas, and Simon?...” They were offended at Him. <sup>4</sup>*But Jesus said to them, “A prophet is not without honor except in his own country...and in his own house.”***

<sup>5</sup>*He could do no mighty work there, except that He laid His hands on a few...and healed them.*

<sup>6</sup>*He marveled because of their unbelief. Then He went about the villages in a circuit, teaching. (Mk. 6:1-6)*

*Well, let's go to the first episode. Jesus had long-term friends and family members in Nazareth. He was bringing His new disciples to Nazareth with Him. Again, I imagine they were a little bit excited to meet His friends and family and hear some of the stories of what He was like. Jesus wanted them to do this. He knew what was going to happen, and He wanted them to see it. This is a kingdom reality: Do not be confused, do not be offended, do not get into self-pity, and do not get into retaliation when some who are nearest and dearest to you tell lies about you, accuse you, and create resistance against you.*

*Jesus would say, “It happened to me.” In a few more minutes we are going to see it happen to John the Baptist, though in a different context because it was not old friends but the political authorities. Jesus wanted them to see how He responded, again, with no anger, no retaliation, no quitting, no drawing back, no sulking.*

*The reason I am emphasizing this is because in my years of ministry I have heard it many times. A guy is in leadership or a gal in leadership, and they get really bad treatment from part of the Body of Christ. They say, “If this is how it is, forget it!”*

*I say, “No, we are not doing it so that people applaud us. We are doing it for the fame of His name, because of who He is. We are doing the work of the kingdom because the people need it and He deserves it.”*

*Well, verse 1, He went to Nazareth. I am going to add just a few words in here so I can be a little briefer. This was His second trip there since He had been anointed. He went two years earlier as recorded in Luke 4. Those are two completely different visits to Nazareth. This time He has His disciples; all of them are with Him.*

*Verse 2, I mean I really appreciate verse two where He teaches in the synagogue. Do you know what it means to teach? I have done this a couple times, so I know a little bit, just baby, poquito, you know? You know what it*

is like to teach in a group of people who are looking to trap your words to accuse you? When I see that He teaches in a synagogue, I think, "That is a remarkable verse." Many draw back and kind of retreat, and they get really passive. Jesus did nothing like that.

- B. **Where:** They questioned the source of His power and wisdom (6:2), knowing that the leaders from Jerusalem had declared that the source of His power was demonic (Mk. 3:22).

*When they heard Him in the synagogue, they were astonished. "Say, where did the Man get these things?" Now this word, astonished, can confuse you. It is a negative description, not a positive one. They are shocked. They are not saying, "Wow, where did He get that?" They are thinking, "Where did He get this kind of stuff?" They are angry, they are offended, and they are shocked. This is not positive.*

*When they asked, "Where did He get this?" they were saying, "What is the real source of His wisdom?" When you read the word, wisdom, in the next phrase you might think it means they thought He was wise. What they mean by wisdom is His doctrine, His teachings, His agenda, the things He is saying. Well, the word had been circulating for some months from the authorities in Jerusalem that His source was the devil. That was in Mark 3:22. They put the word out across the nation that the young carpenter from Nazareth was getting His teaching and His power from demons. So they are asking that question.*

*Verse 3, they said, "Is not this the carpenter?" As in, "He is one of us. Here He is pretending to have divine revelation and all these new ideas. No one else has ever taught what He taught. Who says He is right? He did not get it from us. He should have, because He was raised here. He did not get it from the authorities from Jerusalem. They say He got it from the devil."*

*Verse 4, "Jesus said, 'A prophet is not without honor except in his own country and house.'" I think He looked at His disciples and thought, "In a year the game is on for you because I am going to be gone." He did not say that, but He knew it. I imagine they looked at Him and He said, "Understand this little proverb. Do not be in it for honor among your old friends and family members and acquaintances." Too many people are too focused on that, and it will trip them up. It will be the cause of their discouragement and offense. He says that it does not work that way, that the kingdom does not go forth that way.*

- C. **He marveled:** For nearly 2 years, many testimonies of His powerful miracles had circulated. Matthew added that He did not do many mighty works there *because of their unbelief* (Mt. 13:58). God chose to limit His miracles in response to His people's response of faith in Him.

*Verse 5, "and He could do no mighty work there except He laid hands on a few and healed them. He marveled at their unbelief." Now the reason He marveled at their unbelief was because He had been doing miracles. He had announced—Luke 4—that "the Spirit of the Lord is upon Me" in that synagogue two years earlier. They have been paying really close attention to Him for those two years. The stories of His miracles have circulated around the nation. I mean remarkable stories, first-hand accounts of paralytics healed and blind eyes opened. His old friends and family did not believe in Him. Even His four brothers didn't believe until after the resurrection. Until He was raised from the dead they could not reconcile Mom's story about His virgin birth. They could not make sense of that. Like, "Mom, we love you, but we cannot really sort that one out." His own brothers, John 7:5 tells us. He marveled at their unbelief.*

- D. **Offended:** He had not received His new teachings from them or those in authority, He failed to do great miracles for them; they knew Him only as a manual laborer who was simply one of them. He referred to a well-known saying that highlighted a principle—*familiarity breeds contempt*.

*It says they were offended. They were offended because He had all of these new teachings, these new ideas. He did not receive it from them. They must have thought, "If you received something new and dynamic about God, it should have come either from us—we raised you up—or at least leaders of Jerusalem."*

*I mean He had strange new ideas. All you have to do is read John 2-3. He looked at one of the top leaders of Jerusalem and said, "You have to be born again," and that leader said, "I do not know what you are talking about," in John 3. Then a moment later He says, I am going to ascend to heaven," and the leader says, "Really? A carpenter from Nazareth? You are going to ascend to heaven?" Then Jesus went on and said, "They are going to lift Me up like the serpent was lifted on the pole and I am going to die. I am going to bring eternal life to the human race."*

*"Really?"*

*"By the way, the leadership of the Jerusalem temple is a den of thieves, God told me that. I am not going to obey your Sabbath traditions because God told Me to heal on the Sabbath." Then He taught the parables of the kingdom which were completely offensive to many of them. This was the wisdom that they are referring to.*

- E. ***In a circuit.*** Jesus' third and final tour of Galilee (Mk. 6:6; cf. Mt. 9:35-38) was in late AD 28. Jesus deeply desired that all hear the good news, so He traveled to many of their villages.

*Well, look at the end here in verse 6. It is episode two. I love this; it is the "circuit." He goes village to village, teaching. Again, many quit after they have been rejected, lied about, and treated wrongly, but Jesus has tremendous zeal because He deeply desires to see the Father glorified and the people delivered. That is major! I would like to spend thirty minutes on this point, but I am going to move on.*

- F. Jesus had commissioned and sent out the 12 apostles (Mk. 6:7-13; cf. Mt. 10:1-42; Lk. 9:1-6). He sent them out in early AD 29. (We looked at the sending out of the Twelve in session 14). He was passionate about partnership with His people, so He anointed them speak the good news.

***<sup>7</sup>And He called the twelve to Himself...to send them out two by two, and gave them power over unclean spirits...<sup>12</sup>They went out and preached that people should repent. <sup>13</sup>And they cast out many demons, and anointed with oil many who were sick, and healed them. (Mk. 6:7-13)***

*I am only going to mention the third episode for a moment because in our last session before at the semester break—session fourteen—I spent the entire session on it. He commissioned the twelve and sent them out. The message in here is not just that God has passion to bring the message and Jesus really entered that heart with the Father. The Father's passion to bring the message is connected to His commitment to partner with weak and broken vessels. He is even going to anoint them. It was important that they understood God's commitment to anoint them.*

*So that is what is going on here in Mark 6. Matthew 10 gives a far bigger report of this, only just a few verses here, but I am going to pass over it. I just wanted you to put it in context. He is training the leaders. Part of the training is the necessity to have confidence to operate in the anointing and not to get over-distracted by who is against them and how they are being treated. That is the context here in Mark 6.*

### **III. HEROD ANTIPAS KILLED JOHN THE BAPTIST (MK. 6:14-34)**

- A. Herod Antipas killed John the Baptist (Mk. 6:14-29; cf. Mt. 14:1-12; Lk. 9:7-9). Mark described John the Baptist's death in more detail than his ministry (Mk. 1:4-8). Why? Because John's death exemplified the reality that preaching God's word leads to persecution and sometimes to death. John the Baptist was a very great man (Mt. 11:11)—he is a premier example of being a faithful witness in the face of great persecution. He refused to draw back on the message God gave him.

**<sup>14</sup>Now King Herod heard of Him [Jesus]...he said, "John the Baptist is risen from the dead, and therefore these powers are at work in him"...<sup>17</sup>Herod himself had sent and laid hold of John, and bound him in prison for the sake of Herodias, his brother Philip's wife; for he had married her.**

**<sup>18</sup>Because John had said to Herod, "It is not lawful for you to have your brother's wife."**

**<sup>19</sup>Therefore Herodias held it against him and wanted to kill him... (Mk. 6:14-19)**

*Well, let's go on now to the fourth episode of this six-episode report in Mark 6. It is the story of Herod killing John the Baptist. The stakes have just gone up. Jesus is saying that it is going to go beyond them verbally putting you down like they did Him in Jerusalem. They might have thought, "Well, if you are real godly, and you are a prophet, and you are really God's anointed like John the Baptist was, maybe you will be immune to the severe treatment."*

*Jesus lets them know right on the front end, He says, as it were, "No, you have to be really sober about this. For some of you it will go beyond verbal mistreatment, lies, criticism, rejection, and stigma. It is going to be prison. For some of you it will be physical death."*

*Now John was the first martyr in this new era. We often talk about Stephen being the first martyr, but he is after the day of Pentecost, and so John is really the first one. The point is that John would not back down from what God was saying. He was speaking to the political authorities, to those who influence the political sphere. Jesus was talking to the religious ones. John did that as well, but he now was addressing the state political leaders. The apostles would do that as well in the days to come. They understood that the stakes were very high.*

*The apostles were getting a reality check, "How am I going to respond?" Again they are a year away from the cross and from being the top leaders in the book of Acts and the day of Pentecost. They do not know they are a year away, but Jesus knows they are only a year away. John was a premiere example of a man whose message was politically incorrect, but he would not back down. That was the leadership exhortation He was giving the apostles in this hour in Mark 6:14.*

*King Herod, again the political leadership, heard of Jesus. He was troubled because he thought John the Baptist had been raised from the dead, because in verse 17 he put John in prison. Most of you know the story. The reason he put him in prison, in verse 18, was because John would not back down from what he told Herod. I could imagine Herod saying, "John, just back off on this a little bit." It was a moral issue in Herod's life, the adultery with his wife because he had taken his brother's wife.*

*John said, "No, I am not backing down."*

*The wife was really angry. She told her husband, "Kill this guy."*

*The story was being rehearsed here. As Jesus was hearing the story, so were the apostles, and again it was a reality check. Jesus was training them that they were to see themselves **in** the story, not just as spectators. The day as coming when they would face these same pressures. Everybody's pressures will look different, but would they settle the issue? The only way they could settle the issue of faithfulness is if they settled the issue of Jesus'*

deity. Up until then they knew He was the Son of David. They knew He is the most anointed Man, again not only on the earth, probably in history, probably nobody like Him. They were big on that.

Jesus could have said, “That is not going to stabilize you under pressure. You need something stronger because there is more than just the pressure of people resisting them.” There was another pressure which Jesus was going to bring up in a minute in John 6. It was the pressure of Jesus’ own statements. A number of Jesus’ statements are beyond just that God loves people and forgives them. He had many other things to say.

Many in the Body of Christ stay really close to the two to three points: God likes you and has a wonderful plan for your life, and He forgives you, and salvation is free—we love it—and resurrection is coming, and hang in there. Jesus said a lot more than that. Part of the pressure they would bear would be saying what He said, not only in part, but in total. They had to know He is God before they would sign up to that degree, to that level.

B. Herodias waited for an opportune time to persuade Herod to kill John the Baptist (Mk. 6:21-26).

***<sup>21</sup>Then an opportune day came when Herod on his birthday gave a feast for...the chief men of Galilee. <sup>22</sup>And when Herodias’ daughter...danced, and pleased Herod...the king said..., “Ask me whatever you want...” <sup>24</sup>She said, “The head of John the Baptist! (Mk. 6:21-24)***

C. The apostles returned from ministry and reported to Jesus, then He withdrew with them by boat to a remote place just southeast of Bethsaida (Mk. 6:30-34; cf. Mt. 14:13-14; Lk. 9:10-11; Jn. 6:1-3). Jesus understood that one of their greatest needs was to receive teaching about God’s ways.

***<sup>30</sup>Then the apostles gathered to Jesus and told Him all things, both what they had done and what they had taught. <sup>31</sup>And He said to them, “Come aside...to a deserted place and rest a while.” For there were many coming...and they did not even have time to eat. <sup>32</sup>So they departed to a deserted place in the boat by themselves. <sup>33</sup>But the multitudes saw them departing, and many...ran there on foot...They arrived before them... <sup>34</sup>Jesus...saw a great multitude and was moved with compassion for them...so He began to teach them many things. (Mk. 6:30-34)***

Here are more details. This is for you to read a little bit more in detail later. It is explaining the context before the two great miracles. What happened was the twelve had gone out in twos and they had gone around. Now they have all come back, and they really had quite an intense several weeks, maybe a little bit longer than that. We do not know. Maybe two or three months of going city to city.

They came back, verse 30, and they were reporting to Jesus. Verse 31, Jesus said, “Hey, let’s go to a remote place over here so you guys can rest. You have been preaching night and day, and traveling, and crowds, and healing the sick.” For many people were coming to them. Everywhere they went, they did not have time to eat and they were fatigued.

So verse 32, they went to this remote, deserted place. Now think of the Sea of Galilee. The Sea of Galilee is up north in the land of Israel. Most of you have that clearly. Well, this whole story of Mark 6 was in the northern part of the lake area. The lake is in the north of Israel, and this whole drama unfolded in the northern part of the lake. There was a little bit of movement between two or three cities. I am not going to develop that, but I have it in the notes. Those of you who say, “Hey, I want to really get the drama and follow it,” I have more details on the notes. I am not going into it all.

Well, what happened is that they went to this deserted place, this remote place up north. Verse 33, the multitude saw they were departing to go rest, to give reports to Jesus, and to be refreshed physically and just reconnect to Him. Verse 33, the multitudes “ran on foot.” They saw Him, because Jesus got in a little boat and He just went

around a corner. I do not know; a sea does not have a corner, but you know just around an edge over there. He just took a little short cut by boat to go over there, pretty, pretty close. The crowd ran there, and they beat Him even before the boat got there. They are all there, "Here we are!"

Here is a remarkable verse. When Jesus saw them—now He was exhausted, the apostles were exhausted, and they were trying to get away. The multitudes figured out where they were going, and this was a total invasion of their privacy here. They needed rest—but Jesus felt compassion. I mean it would be normal to be annoyed and to say, "Hey, next week we will get back to you, I assure you. I will tell you where I will meet." You know, it is interesting Jesus never called a meeting. I think He is the only preacher that never called a meeting. Wherever He went was the meeting. You do not have to advertise a fire, one preacher said.

Here is the remarkable point of verse 34. Now I want you to grasp this as those who are being trained to engage in teaching ministry, again, whether it is to hundreds or thousands or twos and threes. He had compassion. The way He expressed His compassion was by exerting His energy to teach them. Now we always think of compassion related to physical healing, and it is.

Jesus understood that what they thought about God and God's heart and God's ways would affect the way they feel and how they act. Jesus was thinking, "I can heal your body, I can even give you food, but if I do not change the way you think, you never will change how you feel or act." So Jesus, exhausted, says, "Here is My compassion: I am going to explain God to you more clearly, line upon line." Now, again, at this stage just out of fatigue He could have backed away and said no. Out of just the whole atmosphere of the leadership of the nation accusing Him and lying, the controversies about Him, lies spreading everywhere, He could have just retreated and licked His wounds, so to speak, or said, "Hey, I am getting a bad deal." He said, as it were, "No, I am not going to do either one of those two responses."

I want to encourage you to value the teaching ministry. I do not mean just receiving teaching, but also value laboring in the Word so you can make ideas about God clear to people. That will be one of the most compassionate things you can do because if they do not think differently, they will not feel differently and act differently. That is why in Acts 2:42 it says they were devoted to prayer, to fellowship, to the teaching of the Word.

Today there is a kind of a popular sentiment that people do not need teaching. You know, "I have heard that story. I know that verse." I believe one of the great expressions of God's heart and compassion and your compassion for people is that you will invest in labor to excel in getting the Word clear so you can make it clear. That will be one of the compassionate expressions of God's heart for them.

#### **IV. FEEDING 5,000 AND WALKING ON WATER—THE GREATER MOSES**

- A. Jesus performed two miracles that are intended to be understood together—feeding the 5,000 and walking on the water. These miracles showed Jesus to be the Son of God as the greater Moses who supernaturally provided food in the wilderness and demonstrated His power over the sea.

Well, let's look at episode number five and episode number six: the feeding of the 5,000 and the walking on the water. I am going to give you just a little heads-up here. What is really happening is that Jesus is revealing Himself to them as the Son of God, but also as the greater Moses because Moses was their most esteemed leader. Moses was well known as the man who was on the mountain, came down, the people were fed with manna from heaven, the sea was divided, and through whom God's power was manifested over the sea and while they were in the wilderness. These are all the components of this story.

*He multiplied the bread which is more dynamic than the manna appearing. He showed His authority over the sea, paralleling the dividing of the Great Sea. They were in the wilderness, He as coming off the mountain, and it was at the time of Passover. It was a complete Moses story, and many of them got it. He could have said, "I am not just greater than Moses. I am God, in a whole different category than Moses. I am actually the God of Moses."*

- B. The feeding of the 5,000 presented Jesus as their *provider* and walking on the water as their *protector* in the face of fearful circumstances. These miracles expressed His provision when human resource is insufficient and His protection when human power is inadequate. These miracles revealed His deity as the Son of God and foreshadowed His end-time miracles (Mic. 7:15).
- C. These two miracles happened at the time of Passover (Jn. 6:4)—the historical event when God saved His people from Egypt. Passover reminded them of the time God miraculously sent manna and controlled the sea. God's power over food and water are a key part of Israel's salvation story.
- D. When Jesus multiplied the loaves and walked on the water, He was declaring that *He was God*, that nothing is impossible with God (Lk. 1:37), and that He was worthy of their love and obedience.

*When Jesus multiplied the loaves parallel to the manna being supernaturally provided when the children of Israel were under Moses, and when Jesus took authority over the sea, what He was declaring to them again was not that "I am Moses," but that "I am the God of Moses. I am the greater Moses." He is declaring He is God and therefore nothing is impossible with Him. He could have said that. He did not say that in this passage, but the idea is "I am God. My miracles, creative miracles, transcending the laws of nature, identifying with the God of Genesis 1" because Jesus is, in fact, the God of Genesis 1. When you read the details of creation, Jesus is the One who spoke, "Let there be light!" He was the voice that declared it. He was declaring here, "I am God; therefore nothing is impossible with Me. Therefore I am worthy of your love and your total obedience, and that is the bottom line. You may experience rejection like you witnessed in Nazareth, completely unjustified, by long-term friends and family members. You may touch authority structures like Herod with political power to imprison and even to kill. If you know who I am, you will have the boldness to say what I say, with confidence in My leadership because I am God."*

## **V. JESUS FED THE 5,000 (MK. 6:35-46)**

- A. Jesus multiplied food for 5,000 men (Mk. 6:35-44; cf. Mt. 14:15-21; Lk. 9:12-17; Jn. 6:4-13). It occurred in a remote area on the northeast side of the sea, just a few miles south of Bethsaida. Feeding the 5,000 is the *only* miracle recorded by all four Gospels, and Mark referred to it two more times (6:52; 8:17-21), emphasizing how important it was—revealing Jesus' identity as God.

<sup>35</sup>*...His disciples came to Him and said, "This is a deserted place, and already the hour is late.*  
<sup>36</sup>*Send them away, that they may go into the surrounding...villages and buy themselves bread; for they have nothing to eat."*<sup>37</sup>*But He...said to them, "You give them something to eat." And they said to Him, "Shall we go and buy two hundred denarii worth of bread...?"* (Mk. 6:35-37)

*Let's look at the feeding of the 5,000 just ever so briefly. We know there were 5,000 men. Now consider that 5,000 men meant probably 15,000 people because they would come with their families. So the crowd was ten to twenty thousand. He had five loaves. It is not as we commonly call it, and I even have it in my notes this way, the multiplying of the food. That is the popular way to say it, but it really is creating out of nothing.*

*The twelve apostles each have a basket, and they are circulating around the crowd distributing it. You know I am just picturing the basket. Let's just say—I am just making this up—the basket is three feet or two feet deep. There is a foot of fish and loaves, but it never goes down. They keep taking it out, but it never diminishes. It stays the same always.*

*What is ten or twenty thousand people? Think of the Onething conference. That is kind of the size of the crowd. You have a basket, you take a few pieces out, and you put it in twelve baskets. Some guys walk all the way to row fifty, row eighty, and it just keeps multiplying.*

*Now, most of the people themselves are not aware of the dynamics. A few of them catch on we find out later. The miracle was done mostly in the eyes of the apostles because Jesus knew the crowd would reject Him, which they actually did, literally the next day. We find in John 6 the crowd rejected Him because He said, "I am not just producing food for you. I am God."*

*They replied, "We will take Your food, but we are not taking You as God."*

*We find in John 6 the parallel passage to Mark 6. They go together, describing the same time frame and some of the same events. In John 6, Jesus gave an elaborate teaching, an application, and a description of what is going on. Many people wanted Jesus for blessing because they wanted the fish. They did not want Him as God. They did not mind Him as a teacher of virtue as long as it was virtue and we are not too intense on it. Jesus had a lot more to say than "I forgive you" and "Have virtue." When you read the fine print, not even the fine print but even the general teaching of Jesus, He says a whole lot more than that. They did not want that.*

*Well, the creative miracles required the Genesis 1 caliber of power. It is of a different order than healing the sick or even raising the dead. So verse 35, the disciples came to Him because—remember they went alone to this deserted place—the crowds came, ten or twenty thousand, 5,000 men plus women and children. The apostles said, verse 36, "Send them away. Tell them it is getting late in the day." It got dark about seven in the evening at that time of the year. It was at Passover time. It says in John 6 it was at the Passover, so you know it was March or April. It gets dark about seven o'clock in the evening. So maybe it was four in the afternoon or something like that, I do not know. The hour was late. The apostles said, "Go send them to the villages."*

- B. **Give them something to eat:** He called them to do something that was beyond their abilities and resources. He wanted them to *look to Him* as their source to accomplish His will. They looked to their own resources and concluded they were not able to do what He called them to do. A denarius was a day's wage for manual labor—200 denarii was nine months of wages, about \$20,000 today.

*In verse 37 Jesus said this very intentionally. I believe this is more than a one-time deal; I believe this is an end-time teaching as well. It has an application. I have heard stories through history, one here, one there, where this sort of thing has happened. I believe that Jesus' leadership in Mark 6 and these principles here are going to have a dynamic relevance in the generation He returns. I think it is more than just a public record of what happened. It is a declaration of who He is and what He does. I believe in the most dramatic important hour of human history Jesus will be Jesus in full color. He will show that He never changes. He says in verse 37, "You give them something to eat."*

*Now He knows that He is calling them to do something that is beyond their resources and ability. He knows that. They probably thought, "You are giving us an assignment"—in the kingdom in essence—"for which we have no physical ability or resources to obey the assignment."*

Jesus is saying in essence, “Look to Me,” because, beloved, whatever assignment He gives you, often it is beyond your ability or resource, and He knows it. It is not like He said, “Do it” and then said, “Oh, no! I forgot you are not really good at that.”

I remember my own little personal experience when the Lord spoke about twenty-four hour singers and musicians. My eyes got big! I thought, “I am not a singer or a musician.” Like I always say, I think I am, but they just will not let me do it on the stage. I said, “What?” Well, first I actually said, “Lord, I don’t even want to do that.”

The answer from the Lord was—well, not this language but—“Mike, I am not an American. You are not voting. I am the King, I said do it.” Sometimes we think God is American and that He is kind of democratic. He tells us what to do, and we say that we do not really like that one; give us another option. He would say, “No, you do not really understand: I am God.”

I remember thinking, “I have no ability at all.”

The Lord says, “Fine, that is perfect. You are the perfect man for the job then.” God will often give you an assignment. By “often,” I mean in your lifetime, on occasion there will be assignments that are above and beyond your natural resource.

- C. Jesus commanded them to sit down. This orderly arrangement of the multitudes into groups of hundreds and fifties is reminiscent of the camp of Israel under Moses’ leadership (Ex. 18:21).

***<sup>38</sup>But He said to them, “How many loaves do you have?... they said, “Five, and two fish.”<sup>39</sup>Then He commanded them to make them all sit down...on the green grass.<sup>40</sup>So they sat down in ranks, in hundreds and in fifties...<sup>41</sup>He had taken the five loaves and the two fish...and gave them to His disciples to set before them...<sup>42</sup>They all ate and were filled.<sup>43</sup>And they took up twelve baskets full of fragments...<sup>44</sup>Now those who had eaten...were about five thousand men. (Mk. 6:38-44)***

Jesus commanded them to sit down. Verse 38, He commanded them to sit down in fifties and hundreds. Even this is reminiscent of the camp of Israel under Moses, because Moses had them divided in the same way. The parallel was not lost on the people; they were grasping it because it was Passover time, when they celebrated this reality of the deliverance from Egypt, the manna coming from heaven, the dividing of the Red Sea, all of these things out in the wilderness. Here they were, out in the wilderness, Jesus came down from the mountain, and He was feeding them. I mean the whole story was right there in front of them again.

- D. **12 baskets:** Jesus’ provision was so abundant that there were 12 baskets of extra food. This may have represented the 12 tribes of Israel showing that Jesus was the One anointed to lead Israel. Each of the 12 apostles carried a basket, wading among the multitudes, distributing food to them.

- E. This miracle happened just before the Passover in AD 29 (Jn. 6:4). Passover was a time when Israel celebrated deliverance from the oppression in Egypt by God—who intervened with great miracles.

***<sup>4</sup>Now the Passover, a feast of the Jews, was near...<sup>11</sup>Jesus took the loaves, and when He had given thanks He distributed them...<sup>14</sup>Then those men, when they had seen the sign that Jesus did, said, “This is truly the Prophet who is to come into the world.”<sup>15</sup>Therefore when Jesus perceived that they were about to come and take Him by force to make Him king, He departed again to the mountain by Himself alone.<sup>16</sup>Now when evening came, His disciples went down to the sea,<sup>17</sup> got into the boat, and went over the sea toward Capernaum. And it was already dark,***

*and Jesus had not come to them.* <sup>18</sup>*Then the sea arose because a great wind was blowing.*  
*(Jn. 6:4-18)*

Now we are looking at John 6, a snapshot of the same event. I want you to see another detail or two. In John 6:4, John highlights the fact it is the Passover because he wants the connection that this is a greater-than-Moses reality. It was near the Passover; it was March or April.

Verse 11, Jesus took the loaves, He distributed them, and it is the same story of Mark 6. Here I want you to catch this: “Then those men”—these men from Galilee, the northern part of Israel, not men from Jerusalem; they are Galileans—“when they had seen the sign”—not everybody of the ten or twenty thousand connected the dots because they were in their little cluster, and they were just getting food. They did not know where it came from. They did not realize it was being produced as they were grabbing it. It was multiplied. Here is what they said in verse 14, “This is truly the Prophet.” What do they mean? All of Israel knew that Moses—I have the verse here in Deuteronomy 18—prophesied that there is a Prophet coming, like me, in the future. He will do the things I do and lead you to freedom. For the 1500 years from Moses to Jesus, Israel had been waiting for the Prophet. Well, they were actually right; Jesus is that Prophet because that Prophet was the Messiah. I do not think Moses knew that the Messiah was fully God and fully Man. I assume Moses thought He was only Man, but a very anointed Man like he was.

- F. **The Prophet:** The feeding of the 5,000 energized some of the Galileans to seek to force Jesus to be king as they saw Him as “the Prophet” (Jn. 6:14-15) of whom Moses had prophesied (Deut. 18:15).

Verse 15, Jesus perceived they had this zeal, this enthusiasm. They were coming—look at John 6:15; this is very important—to take Him by force—I mean there are thousands of them—to make Him King. In the sense of making Him King, declaring it, and sending the word through the nation as a done deal. They were thinking, “We have resources. We have connections. We are willing to declare the revolution is on and You are the King, that You are the Prophet. We have seen all the Moses miracles.”

Jesus could have said, “But you are not interpreting them rightly or coming to the right conclusion.” So Jesus departed. This angered them actually when He departed. This fervor was building. Jesus left and went to the mountain and disappeared.

- G. **Alone:** Jesus went up a mountain alone to pray (Mk. 6:46) and to avoid those seeking to make Him king. I would think He was praying for His disciples to receive revelation of Him as the God-man.

<sup>46</sup>*And when He had sent them away, He departed to the mountain to pray. (Mk. 6:46)*

Verse 16, He told His disciples, “I am leaving to go pray. I want you to go across the sea”—but it is just a little corner or edge of the sea. They just had to go from here to there; it was just a couple miles. It was not like on the opposite side of the sea. He said, “I will meet you a little bit later. I want you guys to leave.”

## VI. JESUS WALKED ON THE WATER (MK. 6:47-52)

- A. Jesus walked on the Sea of Galilee (Mk. 6:47-52; cf. Mt. 14:24-33; Jn. 6:16-21). The feeding of the 5,000 was a miracle that was meant to teach the disciples a lesson about Jesus’ identity as the Son of God and walking on the water confirmed this. The fourth watch was between 3 am to 6 am.

<sup>45</sup>*Immediately He made His disciples get into the boat and go before Him to the other side, to Bethsaida...* <sup>46</sup>*He departed to the mountain to pray.* <sup>47</sup>*When evening came, the boat was in the middle of the sea...* <sup>48</sup>*Then He saw them straining at rowing, for the wind was against them.*

*Now about the fourth watch of the night [3 am–6 am] He came to them, walking on the sea...  
<sup>49</sup>And when they saw Him walking on the sea, they supposed it was a ghost, and cried out...  
<sup>50</sup>but immediately He talked with them and said..., “Be of good cheer! It is I; do not be afraid.”  
(Mk. 6:45-50)*

*We are going back to Mark 6 because Mark 6 and John 6 are going back and forth, telling the same story. I want you to catch this in verse 45 where Jesus says something very unusual, a very unusual request. I do not think there’s anything else like this. He tells His apostles or it describes Him as “immediately He made” them leave now, because there was this fervor that was building.*

*The five thousand, the fifteen or twenty thousand people, have just eaten. They were connecting, “You are the Prophet. You could be the King. We are ready to make a national announcement. We are going to mobilize the people.”*

*The underlining principle is that He refused to accept a promotion that was out of the will of God. He said, “No.”*

*They said, “We want You to be King. We are all settled.”*

*Jesus said, “But God is not.”*

*Beloved, just because men offer you a big opportunity does not mean it is the will of God. The devil offered Him the same opportunity in the wilderness temptation in Matthew 4, “I will make You the leader of the nations.” In essence, “You will rule the nations.”*

*Jesus said, “No, I am going to do it God’s way in God’s time, and that is through the cross. I will be the observable, known leader at the millennial kingdom a couple thousand years from now, in God’s timing, God’s way.”*

*Even Peter said, “You cannot go to the cross. You must not do that,” in Matthew 16.*

*Jesus said, No, no, I am going to do this thing God’s way.” One of the key points to grasp here is the fact that He refused this promotion in order to do the will of God.*

- B. **Immediately:** Jesus immediately made His disciples depart for the other side of the sea (Mk. 6:45). He urgently sent the disciples away by boat, possibly to hinder them from stirring up the multitude even more by giving them further details about the miraculous aspects of feeding the 5,000 (since the apostles did not yet understand Jesus’ deity or mission). Also, He wanted to teach them about who He was in context to walking on the sea—only God has power over creation and its laws.

*So He told the apostles, “I want you guys to leave right now” because He did not want them stirring the crowd up. That is, because the apostles did not really get what is going on, Jesus said, “I need to get you guys out of here. I need to go up on the mountain and pray so they cannot seize the opportunity of Me being here.” When He went up to the mountain to pray, my opinion that is He was praying that the apostles would understand who He is and what is going on because He only has twelve months to go.*

- C. **The other side:** Mark described the disciples as going by boat to “the other side” (Mk. 6:45) simply because they had to “cross some water” to get there; however, they did not travel very far.

1. **Review:** After the disciples returned from their preaching tour and reported to Jesus, He withdrew with them by boat to a remote area just *southeast of Bethsaida* (Mk. 6:30-34; Lk. 9:10). It was close enough for people to walk there. Jesus fed the 5,000 in that remote area.
2. After feeding the 5,000, Jesus sent the disciples ahead of Him by boat and then went to a mountain to pray—the disciples rowed northward towards *Bethsaida* (Mk. 6:45), but a strong wind drove them slightly south-westward toward *Capernaum* (Jn. 6:16), and they landed at *Gennesaret* (Mk. 6:53). Capernaum was 6 miles west of Bethsaida—both cities are on the northern coast of sea in the same direction by sea.

<sup>16</sup>...His disciples...<sup>17</sup>went over the sea toward **Capernaum**. And it was already dark, and Jesus had not come to them. <sup>18</sup>Then the sea arose because **a great wind** was blowing.

<sup>19</sup>So when they had rowed about **three or four miles**, they saw Jesus walking on the sea.

<sup>21</sup>They willingly received Him into the boat, and **immediately the boat was at the land...**  
(Jn. 6:16-21)

- D. **Walking on Water:** This was a far greater miracle than when He calmed a storm (Mk. 4:35-41). This demonstrated His power over the laws of nature. He had power to enable Peter to do the same. In addition to walking on water, Jesus caused the boat to immediately be at the land (Jn. 6:21). God gave Adam dominion over the sea (Gen. 1:28)—he lost that privilege when he sinned. As the new Adam, Jesus walked in and restored God’s original purpose for humanity (1 Cor. 15:45).

*Well, verse 47, the boat was out in the middle of the sea. Now Jesus was up on the hill, on the mountain. He was looking out. They were about three to four miles out at sea it says. Jesus saw them. This big wind and this storm broke out. Jesus left the mountain in the middle of the night about three o’clock in the morning. He walked the three miles out on the sea. This was still the same day that He fed the 5,000. He fed the 5,000 in late afternoon, early evening. This is in the middle of the night; maybe it is six, twelve hours later. Who knows?*

*The wind, verse 48, was blowing against them. He was walking on the sea. So they had seen Him multiply food out of nothing for ten to twenty thousand. Now He was transcending the laws of nature a second time in twelve hours. Jesus was making a point to them. “I am the Genesis 1 God. I am not just giving you a children’s church story,” He could have told them. “I want you to connect the dots or you are never going to be able to be faithful in the assignment if you do not know who I am.”*

*Jesus not only transcended and defied the laws of nature, but I believe this is a declaration; it is a revelation of how He will manifest His leadership in a coming hour where the issue of His deity is even among the religious community who claims His name. I believe there are going to be dramatic miracles in a great pressing from above meaning the evidence of who He is and what He is about.*

- E. **Do not fear:** They feared that a ghost was coming toward them (Mk. 6:49), and Peter feared the wind when walking on the water (Mt. 14:30). Because Jesus is the Lord, we do not need to fear the most desperate need for provision or protection, even in seemingly impossible situations.
- F. Peter walked on the water (Mt. 14:28-31). Only Matthew reported this in his gospel. Peter boldly asked Jesus to enable him to walk on water (14:28). Jesus gave him a word of command and promise (14:29). Peter started out in faith with his eyes fixed on Jesus, but soon focused on the strong winds and became afraid, then doubted Jesus’ word to him, and began to sink (14:30).

<sup>28</sup>Peter answered Him and said, “Lord, if it is You, command me to come to You on the water.”  
<sup>29</sup>So He said, “Come.” And when Peter had come down out of the boat, he walked on the water to go to Jesus. <sup>30</sup>But when he saw that the wind was boisterous, he was afraid; and beginning to sink he cried out..., “Lord, save me!” <sup>31</sup>And immediately Jesus...caught him, and said to him, “O you of little faith, why did you doubt?” <sup>32</sup>And when they got into the boat, the wind ceased. <sup>33</sup>Then those who were in the boat...worshiped Him, saying, “Truly You are the Son of God.” (Mt. 14:28-33)

By this time He was standing out on the sea. Most of you know the story so we are not going through the details of the story. He commanded Peter to come out. So not only does Jesus have the ability to stand on water, He has the ability for somebody else to stand on water.

I like this story in Matthew 14. Matthew is the only one, by the way, who gives the story of Peter walking on the water. The other guys do not mention the “Peter part” of the story. Peter said in verse 28, “Call out to me.” Be careful what you ask for!

Jesus said, “Come.” Here is the good news: when Jesus gives a command, there is a promise of the enabling to fulfill the command. No matter how impossible it is in the natural, if God gives a command, there is a promise of the enabling.

Now verse 33, He is in the boat. Here is the first time, the turning point. The apostles are all in the boat. After the twelve hours of the feeding of the 5,000 and the walking on the water, the transcending the laws of nature, they are looking at Him. They say—look at verse 33; this is the turning point in their preparation—“You are more than the Son of David. You are God. We get who You are now.”

The very next day, in John 6, they are going to declare He is God a second time within a twenty-four-hour period. This is the great turning point of the apostles’ preparation. I believe this will be a critical issue that will be challenged by the powers of hell and strength of religious zeal and fervor. His deity will be challenged even among those who claim allegiance to His name. Great power will be released. The Lord will answer from heaven. This will be a core reality of the end-time Church.

1. Jesus corrected Peter (Mt. 14:31), implying that he had not yet believed Jesus was God.
  2. **You are the Son of God:** After seeing Jesus feed the 5,000 and walk on water, they now understood Jesus’ identity as the Son of God, and on the very next day they reaffirmed this belief (Jn. 6:69), but they did not yet grasp His mission to die on the cross (Mt. 16:21-23).
- G. **Hardness of heart:** Mark concluded his account of the miracles of feeding the 5,000 and walking on water by interpreting the root issue—they did not understand the main message He intended for them to see when He multiplied the loaves because their hearts were hardened (Mk. 6:52).

<sup>52</sup>**For they had not understood about the loaves, because their heart was hardened. (Mk. 6:52)**

This is very interesting, about the hardness of heart, though we are not going to spend much time on it. I would like you to read that later on your own because in Mark 6:52 Jesus makes a very important statement. He says that the reason they could not connect with the message when He multiplied the bread the next day—because this was the next day—the reason they could not connect with the message is because their heart was hardened. He was talking to the apostles. You think, their hearts were hardened? He explained, “You were unable to connect with what the miracles meant for you and your relationship with God because your heart was hardened.”

1. The message was that He is the *Sovereign Lord* with all authority and that He called His disciples to *partner with Him*, promising to be their *Provider* (feeding the 5,000) and *Protector* (power over the sea) so that they could complete God's will in their life.
  2. They had not yet believed that He was God, even after having been given sufficient reason to believe—He revealed His power over demons, sickness, death, food, seas, storms, and more.
  3. They did not take seriously the implications of divinely orchestrated events set before them.
  4. All His miracles—those in the Scripture and those released in our lives—reveal who He is.
- H. The disciples were corrected on several occasions for “hardness of heart”—this does not speak of them being rebellious, but of not properly esteeming the things that God said or did before their eyes and not holding on to the message intended for them in those events (Mk. 6:52; 8:17; 16:14).
- <sup>17</sup>But Jesus...said to them, “Why do you reason because you have no bread? Do you not yet perceive nor understand? Is your heart still hardened? <sup>18</sup>Having eyes, do you not see? And having ears, do you not hear? And do you not remember? <sup>19</sup>When I broke the five loaves for the five thousand, how many baskets full of fragments did you take up?” (Mk. 8:17-19)***
- <sup>14</sup>Later He appeared to the eleven...and He rebuked their unbelief and hardness of heart, because they did not believe those who had seen Him after He had risen. (Mk. 16:14)***

*When we think of someone's heart as being hardened, it does not mean the people are rebellious. He was not saying to the apostles, “You are rebellious.” What He was saying is that “You do not properly value or esteem the words and the activities I have done in your life. You do not connect them. They happen, you are excited for a day, but a month or a year later they mean nothing to you.” That is called a hardened heart. You forget it easily. You do not connect with it. You do not lay hold of it. You rejoice in it for a day or a week or a month, but it does not affect you for months and years to come. A hardened heart is not a rebellious heart; it is unresponsive to God's gracious activity in their life.*

*This is a challenge even as God is training the end-time Church in the generation that He returns, I believe. It is the issue they must connect with. What they see Him do with their own eyes and with their own ears they hear, whether in prophetic encounters or dreams or the Word of God or the Spirit touching their heart, they cannot just hear it, rejoice in a day, and let go of it. They must respond in a way that is worthy of who the God is who gave it to them. This was the disciples' big weakness.*

*I believe that this is an issue the Holy Spirit is highlighting. I look back over my life of forty years of pastoring. There were things that happened forty years ago, thirty years ago, twenty years ago, ten years ago. The Lord would say, “They were not for nothing. They were not to excite you for a day and a month. If I spoke it then, it is still Me. It is My Word, it is My activity.” Many of us in this room have whispers and impressions and words. The Lord would say that you let go of them too easily and you move on. Then when the trouble rises up from the “home crowd of Nazareth” or the “political authorities of Herod” or the crowds are not responding or they are demanding too much out of you, if you do not have the narrative clear between you and God regarding who He is and what He is saying to you and through you, you are going to respond with a dull heart. That was what was happening to them even then.*

*After the twelve hours—the feeding of the 5,000, the walking on the water—these tremendous miracles, He said, “Your heart is hard. You are not connecting the dots.” That is why they were afraid in the water. He told Peter,*

as it were, “Peter, you guys are afraid because you do not know I am God. If I am only the Son of David, I understand why you are afraid in the water. If I am the Genesis 1 God, why are you afraid in the water?”

They could have said, “Yeah, yeah, good point. We have not gone there all the way yet.”

## VII. JESUS’ BREAD OF LIFE MESSAGE (JN. 6:22-69)

- A. The feeding miracle set the context for Jesus to reveal Himself as the Bread of Life (Jn. 6:32-59). In the synagogue in Capernaum (Jn. 6:59), Jesus used this miracle to compare Himself to bread and to explain His identity as the Son of God to those who were following Him only because of His miracles. Many are *only* interested in Jesus because of His ability to bless their circumstances instead of honoring Him as God—seeing Him as worthy of our wholehearted love and obedience.

***<sup>22</sup>On the following day...<sup>24</sup>when the people therefore saw that Jesus was not there...they also got into boats and came to Capernaum, seeking Jesus...<sup>26</sup>Jesus answered them, “Most assuredly... you seek Me...because you ate of the loaves and were filled.” (Jn. 6:22-26)***

*It was the following day starting in verse 22. The multitude as there, and they were wanting to make Him King.*

- B. Jesus was bread *from heaven*, which was far superior to what Moses gave the children of Israel. He said seven times that He came *from heaven*—thus, He was divine (6:33, 38, 41, 42, 50, 51, 58). Jesus did not say He *had* the bread from heaven, but that He *was* that bread from heaven. They accepted Him as an anointed man of God, but not as One whose origin was in heaven—thus as God.

***<sup>32</sup>Jesus said to them, “...Moses did not give you the bread from heaven...<sup>33</sup>For the bread of God is He who comes down from heaven”...<sup>35</sup>Jesus said..., “I am the bread of life...<sup>40</sup>everyone who sees the Son and believes in Him may have everlasting life...”<sup>41</sup>The Jews complained about Him, because He said, “I am the bread which came down from heaven.”<sup>42</sup>And they said, “Is not this Jesus, the son of Joseph...? How is it then that He says, ‘I have come down from heaven?’” (Jn. 6:32-42)***

*Everybody was excited, but He kept telling them, “I am the Bread from heaven.” Seven times He told them, “I am the Bread from heaven.”*

*They thought, “From heaven? That is ridiculous! You are from Nazareth.”*

*He replied, “No, your origin is your mother’s womb in the city you were born. My origin is heaven because I am God.” When He insists in this passage, in this great controversy, is that He is from above. He is insisting on His deity.*

*They were saying, “We love Your power. We love Your virtue. We love Your kindness, but we do not go for the deity. Because, if You are God, then we need to obey You and receive You. Even when we do not understand You, we would still need to receive You.”*

*So He says over and over, seven times, in this passage that He is the Bread from Heaven. He is interpreting the events the next day as “I am the one that came from heaven.” They accepted Him as an anointed Man, but they would not accept Him as God.*

- C. Jesus compared the physical bread that Moses provided with His Person as the Living Bread from heaven. He spoke of eating His flesh and drinking His blood as a metaphor for believing on Him. When He referred to drinking His blood, He was signaling that He would one day shed His blood for them. Eating blood was offensive to the children of Israel (Lev. 3:17; 17:10-14).

***<sup>49</sup>“Your fathers ate the manna in the wilderness and are dead...<sup>51</sup>I am the living bread which came down from heaven. If anyone eats of this bread, he will live forever; and the bread that I shall give is My flesh...”<sup>52</sup>The Jews therefore quarreled among themselves, saying, “How can this Man give us His flesh to eat?”<sup>53</sup>Then Jesus said to them, “...unless you eat the flesh of the Son of Man and drink His blood, you have no life in you. (Jn. 6:49-53)***

*Then He intentionally pushed the point. Look at verse 53. He said, “Unless you eat the flesh of the Son of Man and drink My blood.” Like what? That is just the metaphor for believing. All He was saying is believe in Me. That is all that He was saying here. He called people to believe in Him by a number of different terminologies particularly in the gospel of John. He was provoking them on purpose.*

*They answered, “Eat Your flesh and drink Your blood?”*

*What Jesus was really saying is, “If you believe I am God, you can work out the terminology in what I am saying. If you don’t believe I am God, then My terminology and My doctrines will give you an excuse to leave Me.” I like to say that He is offending the mind to reveal their heart. He says, as it were, “If I am God, you have got to work through it. You may not get it, but you cannot leave Me. You got to wrestle through until you come to grips with what I said. If I am not God, but I am just a good teacher, then whenever you do not like something you can bail on Me and move on.” That is the crisis point in the controversy.*

- D. Many of Jesus’ followers were offended by His message on being the Bread of Life. Even today people are offended at Jesus for various reasons related to His message and leadership. They want to relate to Jesus *on their terms*, but Jesus requires that people relate Him as God *on His terms*.

***<sup>61</sup>...He said to them, “Does this offend you? ...<sup>62</sup>What then if you should see the Son of Man ascend where He was before?<sup>66</sup>From that time many of His disciples went back and walked with Him no more.<sup>67</sup>Then Jesus said to the twelve, “Do you also want to go away?”<sup>68</sup>But Simon Peter answered Him, “Lord, to whom shall we go? You have the words of eternal life.”<sup>69</sup>Also we have come to believe and know that You are the Christ, the Son of the living God.” (Jn. 6:61-69)***

*Then the great conclusion, verse 61. He asked them, “Are you offended at Me?” This is the religious community. This is the Messiah-seeking, Bible-believing community of Israel. This is not the Gentile idolaters. This is the Bible-believing community. He asked, “Does it offend you that I am insisting that I am God and that you relate to Me that way?”*

*Verse 66, many of His disciples said, “We cannot deal with this. You know we like You, but only as much as we get it and can process it do we like You.”*

*Jesus would say, “That is never going to be good enough. If you conclude I am God, and you cannot sort it out, you have to keep wrestling, and you cannot draw back. If I am not God, you can draw back. The issue is, who do you say that I am?”*

*I believe, in this controversy of His deity, that the Scripture makes it clear there will be a drawing back, an actual falling away of many in the generation the Lord returns over this issue. We are seeing it in the Church even now.*

So, verse 67, Jesus looked at the twelve. He said, "Do you want to go?" In other words, "I am not changing My message for you. I cannot. I am God, and I cannot change." What a lot of Israel was doing and even many today do is that they want to relate to Jesus on their terms. Jesus says, "No, you have to relate to Me as on My terms." There is a whole lot of controversy and complaint, which that happens all the way through John 6. They are all complaining against Him because they have not settled the issue of who He is.

Peter, in verse 68, says, "Where are we going to go?" As in, "Last night in the storm I saw You walking on water. I walked on water. You are more than a man; you are more than an anointed Prophet. I said last night and all of us agreed. 'You are God.' Here we are, twelve hours later or whatever, and we are seeing it again. We are not drawing back. You are the one from heaven. We will obey You on Your terms. No matter how politically incorrect or how disturbing Your plan is, if You are God, that is the end of the discussion. We are Yours."—verse 68—"Lord, to whom shall we go? Because You are God, You have the words that release eternal life to human beings. Nobody else has words or truths that can release eternal life to people. Now we have come to believe You are more than the son of David. You are, in fact, God. So now we relate to you as God on Your terms and not on our terms."

Jesus, in that twenty-four-hour period, I believe, had established the awareness that there will be controversy, persecution, setbacks, and even physical death. There is a labor in the kingdom, and there is an anointing they have to believe for, but He is God and He is going to give evidence of it in dramatic ways globally as this controversy of His deity unfolds. This very issue will stabilize and strengthen the Church to the glory of God.

E. Peter, speaking for the apostles, said that they now believed that Jesus was the Son of the God.

*Amen and amen! Let's stand before the Lord.*

*Father, here we are before You.*

*Now I went a bit long. I typically will not do that, but there is so much in the chapter I did not want to separate it over a couple of weeks. I wanted to bring all six episodes together, as Mark did, for leadership training. Though in one session you cannot grasp it all or get it all, I think you have enough to go on. If you are stirred, you say, "I am going to go back and check this out. I have to sort this out: Like what? How does this work now?"*

*So, Father, I ask You that You would mark our hearts. Lord, as You are preparing, I believe, the end-time Church, God, I ask You that in these six episodes You would touch us, God. You would settle the great controversy about the nature of Your Son.*

*I want to pray for folks whom the Lord told them this phrase: go, give them food. The Lord has called you to assignments that are bigger than your ability or your resources. That assignment may not be now; it may be in the future. It might be now. Just maybe it is something you are believing for or waiting for. The Lord would say, "I am God. I want you to honor My word to you and not let go of it. I want you to settle it, though it may be a time before it is released."*

*Folks that right now are saying, "You know, I need to retake a stand before the Lord on that point. Those things He told me in the past I let them go."*

*The Lord calls that hardness of heart, dullness of heart, not rebellion, but dullness of heart. The Lord would say, "I want to cure that. I want to reestablish a right response." If that is you, and you would like prayer, I want to invite you to come forward even now.*

*He gave you words a couple years ago, a couple decades ago. The Lord would say, "Those are still My words. Why did you let go of them? Do not have a hard heart! Be responsive. It was I who spoke to you in that dream. It was I who moved on your heart eight years ago when I gave you that word."*

*Holy Spirit, we ask You for Your leadership. Lord, we say yes to the reproach. We say yes to the rejection, to the stigma. We say yes to the labor and the work of the kingdom. We say yes to believing You for the anointing. We say yes to Your deity and therefore Your authority in our life. Holy Spirit, Lord, we invite Your presence. We invite Your renewing presence even now. Lord, I ask for Your manifest presence. I ask for the marking of the heart. I ask for the restoring of the heart that is hardened and unresponsive. Lord, I say yes to Your authority. I say yes to who You are. We say yes to Your deity, so we say yes to Your authority in our life.*

*Some of you are being mistreated. Some of you are being spoken evil of. The Lord would say that you cannot draw back. You cannot draw back in self-pity and say that if is how it is you are not going to do it. The Lord would say, "I am God. I gave you a kingdom mandate. Do it My way, unrelated to what they say."*

*You are God. God, I ask for a fresh sense of commissioning. I ask for a fresh commissioning on hearts to believe old words and old promises, to re-engage again. Lord, I ask for the renewing of the Holy Spirit in lives right now. God, revive, recommission, re-establish. Lord, release a new fire. Release a new engagement of the heart. Father, I ask You that You would revive with desire. Lord, come and ravish our heart again. We say yes to You, Jesus. We say yes to You, Jesus.*