

“Not a Rescue Mission”

Mark 6:45-52

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All Scripture quoted from ESV unless otherwise noted

In Mark 6:45-52, we see an event in which Jesus miraculously feeds a massive crowd despite having nothing but 5 loaves of bread and 2 fish. This crowd was comprised of 5000 men, in addition to many women and children. It would take an average working man 40 weeks of full-time labor to earn enough to feed the crowd just once. Observing the situation, the disciples advised Jesus to disperse the crowd so they could go get themselves something to eat. But instead, Jesus took the 5 loaves and 2 fish, blessed and broke it, and began distributing food to the crowd. Everyone in the whole crowd ate and ate until they were full, and afterwards, they gathered up 12 baskets full of leftover food. Maybe each disciple had one full basket, reminding them of how a little is a lot in the hands of Jesus.

After this miraculous meal, Jesus dismissed the disciples and ordered them to the boat to cross the sea, while He stayed behind to further instruct and then dismiss the crowd. Jesus wasn't done with the crowd, but the disciples' work there was now complete. Sometimes God calls you to the *next* thing before the *now* thing is complete. Sometimes leaving a task or ministry, such as a mentoring relationship or leading a small group with a sense of incompleteness is the hardest thing to do, isn't it? In those moments, it's important to know that you can trust God to finish what He started.

Hours later, the disciples set out across the Sea of Galilee toward Bethsaida and Jesus, after dismissing the crowd, went up to the mountainside to pray. Hours later, we find Jesus onshore, and the disciples out on a boat in the middle of a huge storm. They were in trouble, too. They were straining at the oars – this was hard work; they were in trouble, and they knew it. But being in trouble does not mean being out of Jesus' sight. Jesus saw them. The original language uses a word that carries connotations of not just seeing, but knowing. Jesus didn't just see them the way you might see a hummingbird at a feeder; He actually knew what they were feeling and thinking.

There is a strength that only comes through struggles. Just as a weightlifter increases strength and stamina by pushing against the resistance of weights of a weight machine, so too do we increase our strength and stamina by forging ahead when difficulties arise (Isaiah 40:29-31) – **“29 He gives power to the faint, and to him who has no might he increases strength. 30 Even youths shall faint and be weary, and young men shall fall exhausted; 31 but they who wait for the Lord shall renew their strength; they shall mount up with wings like eagles; they shall run and not be weary; they shall walk and not faint.”** When you do face trials, know that Jesus is aware of your situation and has promised to be with you; yet at the same time, He expects you *to keep on rowing*. How often have you wanted Jesus to rescue you *from* your rowing instead of rescuing

you *through* your rowing? Don't always expect God to bail you out of a jam – start asking Him to walk with you through it instead.

Maybe it seems like Jesus should have gone out to the boat sooner. I mean, if He can walk on water (Editor's note: Jesus can do anything He wants to) then why did He wait until it was so late? Mark 6:48 tells us he went out during the 4th watch of the night; this would be between 3am-6am. Does it seem like He arrived a little late? Ah, but no; God is never late! He shows up in whatever way is most appropriate and at whatever time is best.

The disciples were in the middle of a storm; no inflatable raft, no life jackets, no escape plan. Have you ever felt that way? Like you're in trouble with no escape plan, and God is running late; maybe you're not sure He's going to show up at all. You're facing a storm of financial pressure; a storm of addiction; a storm of depression; a storm of sickness. Sometimes Jesus walks you out of those storms, but other times, Jesus walks with you through them.

Did you notice that Jesus wasn't planning to rescue them? The original language makes it clear that, "He intended to pass them by" (v.48, NASB). *He didn't go out there to rescue them, but to remind them* – to remind them that He was still there, that He knew what they were going through, that no storm was going to take Him under, that they were to keep on rowing. Have you had that experience? Try to remember a time in which Jesus stepped into your storm, not to rescue you from it, but to remind you that He is there in it with you. This is not the false idea that, "God helps those who help themselves." Bro – that's not even Biblical. Rather, this is the truth that God is able and ready to answer, but there are times that you also have a role in obtaining that answer. Imagine you were praying for a job but not bothering to put in an application anywhere – God can provide, but you also have a role to fulfill.

Sometimes when you face storms, your heart might resonate with the Psalmist, who declares (13:1-2) – "**1 How long, Lord? Will you forget me forever? How long will you hide your face from me? 2 How long must I wrestle with my thoughts and day after day have sorrow in my heart? How long will my enemy triumph over me?**" The night is not so dark and so long that Jesus cannot see you. Your pain is real, but it is not so powerful that God cannot heal.

When the disciples cried out to Jesus, He gave them a word of encouragement and climbed into the boat, and instantly the wind died down, which completely amazed the disciples. Have you ever wondered why they were amazed? They just saw Jesus feed thousands with just 5 loaves and 2 fish, right?

Well, sort of. Mark 6:52 says that they had missed something; they '**didn't understand about the loaves.**' So, what did they miss? Put simply, they missed Jesus. He is the God of the storm; the God of the fish and of the loaves; the God of the mountain and the God of the valley; the God who heals, who is always there, who fights for you, who provides,

who commands angel armies. This is the God who has promised to be with you in the middle of the storm. Trust Him now, for He is able to deliver and strengthen and heal... right where you are today.

Takeaways from this message.

A little is a lot in the hands of Jesus

Sometimes God calls you to the NEXT thing before the NOW thing is complete.

- ✓ Trust God to FINISH what He STARTED.

Being in TROUBLE does not mean being out of Jesus's SIGHT.

- ✓ It is possible to everything RIGHT and still face storms; still walk-through valleys.

STRENGTH often comes only as the result of STRUGGLE.

- ✓ Jesus expects me to KEEP ROWING.

God is never LATE.

- ✓ Jesus didn't go out to rescue them. But to REMIND them.

DIG IN!

Here are some farm-fresh questions that will help you to personalize and apply this morning's message.

1. *What was most surprising, unexpected, or helpful from today's passage/message? Why?*
2. *When have you had to trust God with something that you were unable to see through to completion? Was that difficult or easy? If difficult, what made it so?*
3. *How would you advise someone who was asking about how to know the will of God? What Bible passages would you refer them to?*
4. *What would you do if you found the biggest frog in the whole world?*

5. *Describe a time in which you had to wait on God. Was it worth it? Why or why not?*
6. *Observe and summarize the difference between how Jesus 'saw' the disciples and how they 'saw' him. Reflect on the original Greek language for this question?*
7. *What have you learned through your personal time of Bible reading this week?*