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#### IN NEED OF A VACATION

##### MARK 6:30-32

The apostles had returned from their first missionary journey. Naturally, they wished to report to Jesus on how they had fared and to swap experiences. A report meeting was held, at which they told Jesus “all that they had done and taught.”

Jesus must have noticed how exhausted they were. They were desperately in need of a vacation. He spoke the now famous words, “Come away by yourselves to a desolate place and rest a while.” However, there was no chance of rest where they were, “for many were coming and going, and they had no leisure even to eat” (6:31).

“And they went away in the boat to a desolate place by themselves” (6:32).

#### THE CROWD FOLLOWS BY LAND

##### MARK 6:33-34

But the secret departure by ship did not go off unnoticed. Some who had met Christ on previous occasions and knew Him well told folks which way the ship was heading. By the hundreds, yes, by the thousands, they followed on foot. When Jesus landed on the north shore, 5,000 men (in round numbers), not counting women and children, were closing in upon Him.

When the Lord looked over the milling crowd, He was moved with compassion toward them, “because they were like sheep without a shepherd.” He immediately began to teach them. He “spoke to them of the kingdom of God and cured those who had need of healing” (Luke 9:11). He was busy the greater part of the day.

### FEEDING THE 5,000

*MARK 6:35-44*

*MATTHEW 14:14-21*

*LUKE 9:12-17*

*JOHN 6:5-13*

When the sun began to decline, His disciples cautioned Jesus, saying in effect, “Lord, it’s getting late. We are in a remote place where food is not readily available. The people must have already consumed what little food they brought along. Dismiss them now while it is still light, and let them procure bread and victuals from the farms and villages round about, for they have nothing to eat.”

Jesus answered them, “You give them something to eat.” “That’s impossible, Lord,” they replied. “Even if we had 200 dollars in the treasury, that wouldn’t be enough to feed these thousands.” Jesus inquired, “How many loaves and fish do you have?” “Just five loaves and two fish.” “That’s enough,” Jesus undoubtedly assured them.

He gave directions to have the people seated in orderly fashion, in groups of hundreds and fifties, so as to prevent

some from rushing up for a second helping before others got their first. After blessing the food, He distributed it. What He normally does in mediated fashion through sunshine, rain, and the fertility of the soil, He now does immediately, i.e., directly. The bread and fish are multiplied, and all are fed.

There was more than enough food for everybody. The leftovers or fragments filled each basket of the twelve who picked up the scraps. “Waste not, want not.” How were the scraps disposed of? This is a conjecture: perhaps to feed the birds or the fish of the sea.

As then in a physical way, so now in a spiritual way, the Lord provides the bread of life, the Word. His modern disciples have to distribute it to the hungry. There is more than enough to satisfy all.

Some of the people that day desired to make Jesus their “Bread King,” for what could be more convenient than to have a Messiah who could supply all the things that are necessary for life? (John 6:14-15).

### JESUS YEARNED FOR SOLITUDE

*MARK 6:45-46*

After feeding the multitude, Jesus put pressure upon His disciples to leave at once by ship for Bethsaida while He stayed behind. He wanted to be alone with God. Therefore, He also sent the people away and “he went up on the mountain to pray.”

*“Lord, if it is you, command me to come to you on the water.”  
“Come,” Jesus replied, and Peter came.*

### A THIRD MIRACLE OVER NATURE

*MARK 6:47-52*

*MATTHEW 14:22-33*

*JOHN 6:16-21*

How long did Jesus pray? How much sleep did He get? We don't know. Between three and six o'clock in the morning (TLB, TEV, NEB), He noticed His disciples were in trouble, rowing against the waves into the wind. He decided to go to their rescue. He walked upon the water as though it were solid ground. He made it a point not to walk toward them directly, in a straight line. If He had, they would have become frightened, thinking they faced inescapable doom. Instead, He moved in a manner so that He would bypass them. Even so, they screamed in terror at the sight of that shadowy figure, “for they all saw him and they were absolutely terrified” (Phillips). To calm them at once, He called out, “Take heart; it is I. Do not be afraid.”

Matthew adds at this point that Peter, impetuous as ever, answered Him and said, “Lord, if it is you, command me to come to you on the water.” “Come,” Jesus replied, and Peter came. He had the surprise of his life. He actually walked on the water to go to Jesus. However, his confidence was soon dissipated. When he took his eyes off Jesus and fastened his attention upon the boisterous wind, his heart sank, and he sank. If he had engaged in a long-winded prayer, as someone commented, he might have drowned. But he spoke only three words: “Lord, save me.” Immediately Jesus stretched forth His hand and caught him, and said unto him, “O you of little faith, why did you doubt?” The two entered the boat, and the wind stopped. The men in the boat worshipped the Lord, saying, “Truly you are the Son of God” (Matt. 14:28-33). Maybe Peter asked Mark not to include this episode in his gospel. Mark didn't. He certainly did not want to embarrass his mentor and good friend.

The disciples seem to have been dissatisfied with themselves for not grasping sooner that this man was the Son of God. They should have recognized that fact right after the feeding of the 5,000. Why didn't they? They must have suffered from veiled minds. “Their hearts were hardened” (6:52).

**WALKING ON WATER? YES***MARK 6:45-52*

Walking on water is easily accomplished by One who fashioned the laws of nature, whose will is supreme in the cosmos He created. “All things were made through him, and without him was not any thing made that was made” (John 1:3).

Even humans can accomplish what to the uninitiated appear to be “miracles.” Sending the shuttle into orbit is accomplished by the higher law of thrust, scientifically determined and utilized to hold in abeyance the lower law of earth’s gravitational pull.

Water skiers manage to stay on top of water — with exceedingly short skis, or one ski, or no skis at all, just with the heels of their feet — if the speed by which they are drawn is sufficient to put into suspense and render ineffective, for a certain time, the law of gravitation.

If the assertion is made that Jesus could not possibly have walked on water, then the next conclusion may logically be reached that He could not possibly have risen from the dead. And the next, He could not possibly have ascended into heaven, with no rocket boosters on either side of Him to lift Him aloft. Yet He did spurn earth’s

drawing power and ascend on high, all by Himself, in the hush of His majesty.

If it is so that “in him the whole fullness of deity dwells bodily” (Col. 2:9), we can certainly believe that, with Him as God, all things are possible (10:27b; Matt. 19:26b). Possible are the incarnation, the sinless nature of Jesus, and the transcendent reality of His transfiguration (9:2; 2 Peter 1:16–18; Matt. 17:2; Luke 9:29). We can also believe His miracles over disease, death, demons, and nature; His perfect keeping of the law in our stead (Gal. 4:4–5); redemption by His blood (1 Peter 1:18–19); and His promissory note that we shall live with him throughout heaven’s endless day. “Because I live, you also will live” (John 14:19b). “Where I am, there will my servant be also” (John 12:26).

Inasmuch as Jesus walked on the water, operating not against nature but above the laws of nature, we have the surety that His other supernatural works in behalf of mankind’s redemption are effective as well. Like the disciples in the boat on Galilee’s Sea, we are amazed beyond measure, full of wonder (6:51b), and we are willing to profess, “Truly you are the Son of God” (Matt. 14:33b).

*They laid the sick before Him and asked permission to touch only the fringe of His garment. And as many as touched Him were made whole immediately.*

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#### THE HEALER IS SWAMPED WITH WORK

*MARK 6:53-56*

Sure enough, when they arrived at their destination and disembarked, the Great Physician was immediately recognized and inundated with requests for help. News of His presence spread fast and wide throughout Gennesaret and the whole region round about. Relatives and friends carried those who were sick and brought them to Jesus. Jesus was constantly on the move. Whichever village or city or countryside He entered, they laid the sick before Him and asked permission to touch only the fringe of His garment. And as many as touched Him were made whole immediately.

Indefatigable was Jesus in preaching, teaching, and healing. Mark's aim in beaming the story of Jesus to Gentile readers was to portray Jesus as the tireless Servant of the Lord. Assuredly, Mark succeeded very well.

## PERSONAL APPLICATION

MARK 7:1-37

*O Lord Jesus Christ, who lived and died to reclaim us from our sinful state and to have fellowship with You eternally, by Your Holy Spirit place our full confidence in Your redemptive work and not in any pious routines we set up ourselves. In Your blessed Name we ask it. Amen.*

Mark 7:1-23

1. What fault did the local Pharisees and some scribes from Jerusalem find with Jesus because He did not “correct” what some of His followers were doing?  
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2. Describe the traditional ceremonies these scribes and Pharisees followed.  
\_\_\_\_\_
3. What complaint did they register with Jesus for not taking action against some of His non-conforming followers?  
\_\_\_\_\_
4. State briefly how Jesus answered them.  
\_\_\_\_\_
5. Jesus cites one example of how the Pharisees invalidated God’s injunction by substituting one of their own. Explain.  
\_\_\_\_\_
6. Jesus called all the people unto himself. He told them a “parable” (7:14-23). He made a comparison between “into” and “out of.” How did He explain the difference between the two?  
\_\_\_\_\_
7. Check the items which you think make a person unclean or defiled according to Jesus’ explanation of the parable.
 

___ eating pork	___ wicked intentions	___ alcoholic beverages in moderation
___ lust	___ greed	___ drinking coffee or tea
___ pride	___ wearing jewelry	___ excess of candy or sweets
___ malice	___ purse snatching	___ fornication
8. Five withdrawals of Jesus are mentioned in Mark’s Gospel. To which five places did He withdraw, either to preach the gospel of the kingdom or to seek privacy and rest?  
5:1  
\_\_\_\_\_

6:31–32

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7:24

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8:10

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8:27

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Mark 7:24–30

9. What was the nationality of the woman whose daughter was grievously vexed by the demon and what was her plea?

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10. Jesus at first gave her the “silent treatment.” How is that expressed in Matt. 15:23a?

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11. Next, Jesus took hold of her faith as though it were a young tree and shook it, to indicate that it was firmly rooted. Then, by implication, He classified her with certain animals, a term commonly used by Jews in referring to non-Jews. What was that term?

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12. How did she turn that seemingly humiliating reference to her advantage?

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13. How did the Lord compensate her for her unswerving faith?

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14. What lesson in prayer did you as a Christian learn from this woman?

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Mark 7:31–37

15. The third withdrawal of Jesus is now recorded. Where did He go after leaving Tyre and Sidon?

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16. Who was brought to Him by newly-converted friends?

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17. Jesus did not employ the same routine in working miracles. He used variations. What “sign language” did He use in connection with healing the deaf-mute?

18. What does Ephphatha mean?

19. Through what means does the Holy Spirit open our ears to hear and receive the Gospel and loosen our tongues to tell others the Good News?

Matt. 28:19–20

Rom. 6:4

Rom. 10:17

1 Peter 1:23

In what way is this helpful to you?