

Gospel of Mark Chapter 6C

In truly American form the mid-term elections of 2014 brought about a changing of the guard in the House of Representatives as well as the Senate.

- It seems to me that whoever is NOT in power has all of the answers, that is of course until they get into power.

Dr Carl Trueman, A pastor and professor at Westminster Seminary who hails from Britten rightly describes the mentality of the American electorate when he says: “Every 4 years Americans get to elect either the Messiah or the Antichrist.”

As I read through the Gospel of Mark it seems to me that every generation is looking for a political Messiah.

- Someone who will feed them when they are hungry.
- Someone who will protect them from all of their enemies
- Someone who will provide a life of ease and bliss.

It was no different in Jesus’ day. Many of the Israelites were looking for a political messiah.

The Roman occupation of the land, the oppressive taxation and harshness of their rule precipitated what we have come to know as the Zealot movement.

Who were the zealots? They were a group of patriotic Israelites who promoted armed rebellion against Rome. They were always looking for a savior who would overthrow the Roman occupation.

- We know that one of Jesus’ disciples was Simon was a Zealot.

A Political Messiah may make our life on earth better but God’s messiah gives eternal life.

The purpose of ALL of the Gospels, including Mark, is to show that Jesus Christ is in fact the long awaited the Messiah of Israel. God has come in human flesh, not to overthrow corrupt human government but to deliver man from the bondage of sin. Today’s Outline:

1. He is our protector.
2. He sees our trouble and delivers us.
3. He treads upon the waves of the sea.
4. He reveals his glory as he passes by.
5. He is to be worshipped as God

1. He is our Protector: Guarding our hearts and minds.

The founder of the zealot movement (around AD 6) was a man who came to be known as Judas the Galilean.

- Judas hailed from the region around Bethsaida by the shores of the Galilee. And even after his demise the zealot movement remained strong in the region around Bethsaida.
- Where have you heard of Bethsaida before? (Does it ring a bell?)
- According the gospel writers, it is the same location where Jesus fed the 5000. (Last Week)

- SO the region where the miraculous feeding took place was a region that was full of revolutionary, anti Roman sentiments.
- That helps us understand the final detail of the narrative in the feeding of the 5000.

John 6: 14 **When the people saw the sign that he had done, (that miraculous feeding) they said, “This is indeed the Prophet who is to come into the world!”**

- What prophet are they thinking of? They are reflecting on a statement made by Moses in the book of Deuteronomy.

Deut 18:15 **“The LORD your God will raise up for you a prophet like me from among you, from your brothers—it is to him you shall listen—**

- The crowd rightly sees the Lord Jesus as the Prophet to whom Moses referred.
- His words are powerful and he is able to provide miraculous food in the wilderness, just like Moses.
- In their minds He is the prophet who will finally set them free from the bondage of Rome.
- BUT John tells us that Jesus knew what they were thinking.

John 6:15 **Perceiving then that they were about to come and take him by force to make him king,**

- There is a buzz in the crowd and they are ready to act. If they take Jesus as their king they can surely overcome this Roman occupation and never worry about where their next meal would come from.
- BUT Jesus knew what they were thinking and he acted preemptively.
- In doing so Jesus clearly expresses care and protection for his disciples.

Mark 6:45 **Immediately he made his disciples get into the boat and go before him to the other side, to Bethsaida, while he dismissed the crowd.**

- Knowing that his disciples were still immature and impressionable, knowing that he had a former zealot among his disciples, Jesus quickly sends them away.
- KJV - **“And straightway he constrained his disciples to get into the ship,”** Literally: He forced them, compelled them to get into the ship.
- There is an urgency and forcefulness in Jesus’ actions here. He wants to protect his sheep from the influences of the crowd.
- And with that same influence and forcefulness Jesus also disburses the crowd.

So Jesus protects his disciples from erroneous ideas and false expectations of his mission. He doesn’t want them to be confused about the salvation that he came to secure.

He did not come to establish an earthly kingdom. He was not interested in leading a coup against Rome.

- In his first advent he came to live a perfect life and die for the sin of his people.
- His disciples never quite understood that. Even after he had risen from the dead when they gathered on the Mount of Olives they asked, **“Lord, will you at this time restore the kingdom to Israel?”**
- They were still looking for an earthly kingdom. (sit on his right and left)

Stop for a minute and consider the Lord's gracious protection: How he GUARDS and keeps those who are his own. (Listen to the words of Peter)

1 Peter 1: 3 **Blessed be the God and Father of our Lord Jesus Christ! According to his great mercy, he has caused us to be born again to a living hope through the resurrection of Jesus Christ from the dead, 4 to an inheritance that is imperishable, undefiled, and unfading, kept in heaven for you, 5 who by God's power are being guarded through faith for a salvation ready to be revealed in the last time.**

While Peter ASSURES US of God's protecting grace, he DOESN'T promise us a care free, trouble free existence.

1 Peter 1:6 **In this you rejoice, though now for a little while, if necessary, you have been grieved by various trials,**

- So we see the Lord protecting his disciples from the erroneous influence of the crowd by pushing them into the boat.
- I am sure that the disciples did not understand why Jesus was sending them away and not going with them. BUT they faithfully obeyed and in their obedience they ended up struggling against a storm, laboring at the oars for 8 - 10 hours.
- Why am I enduring such a struggle, Why would God allow me to go through this hardship?
- Did Joseph ever question WHY he was in prison? (God meant it for good)
- Jesus protects his own! Sometimes we don't agree with his methods!!

2. He sees our trouble and delivers us.

Mark 6: 46 **And when he had sent them away, he departed into a mountain to pray.**

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

48 **And he saw them toiling in rowing; for the wind was contrary unto them:**

- When Even was come (2nd watch) 6:00 - 9:00 PM the disciples were in the boat and Jesus was on a mountain praying.
- Let's not just glance over the fact that Jesus is PRAYING.

Hebrews 7:25 tells us: **JESUS "is able to save to the uttermost those who draw near to God through him, since he always lives to make intercession for them."**

- Because Jesus is our Great High Priest, he is able to save (completely save). He does not abandon the work midway; he does not begin a work which he is unable to finish.
 - He saved His disciples from Spiritual Error by sending them into the boat, He will save them physically by going out to them on the sea.

Matthew tells us that the boat was a considerable distance from land and was buffeted by the waves

- John tells us that the disciples had been straining at the oars for at least 8 hours and only covered about 3 ½ miles.
- Mark tells us that even though Jesus had gone into the hills to pray HE saw them. Their struggle did not escape his eyes.
- How wonderful that nothing ever escapes our Lord's watchful and loving eye:

Pr 5:21 **For a man's ways are before the eyes of the LORD, and he ponders all his paths.**

Psalms 34:15 **The eyes of the LORD are toward the righteous and his ears toward their cry.**

- Despite the fact that there were expert sailors on board I am sure that there was a good deal of crying going on in the boat.
- And the ears of the Lord are toward their cries.

3. He treads upon the waves of the sea.

Mark 6:48B, **And about the fourth watch of the night he came to them, walking on the sea.**

- 4th watch 3 - 6 AM
- Scholars with a singularly scientific mind rationalize this verse saying that Jesus somehow knew where the sandbars were or that it was an optical illusion Jesus was actually walking along the shoreline.
- BUT Matthew told us they were “**a considerable distance from the land.**”
- AND the text literally says “**He came to them, walking ON THE SEA.**”
- Scholars may have a problem with a MAN walking on the water but this is no ordinary man; Jesus is GOD and the scripture speak of God who treads upon the seas.

Job 9: 8 **who alone stretched out the heavens and trampled the waves of the sea;**

Psalms 77:18 **The crash of your thunder was in the whirlwind; your lightnings lighted up the world; the earth trembled and shook. 19 Your way was through the sea, your path through the great waters; yet your footprints were unseen.**

Isaiah 43:16 **Thus says the LORD, who makes a way in the sea, a path in the mighty waters,**

- The details of Mark’s Gospel consistently reveal the fact that Jesus Christ is God come in human flesh.

4. He reveals his glory as he passes by.

Mark 6: 48 **And he saw that they were making headway painfully, for the wind was against them. And about the fourth watch of the night he came to them, walking on the sea. He meant to pass by them,**

- “He meant to pass by them” WHAT?
- Was he playing a game with them? (how cruel would that be *knowing their fearful and frustrated condition*)
- I believe the wording that Mark uses is specifically designed to connect this appearance of Jesus on the water with the appearance of God in the Old Testament.

Exodus 33: 18 **Moses said, “Please show me your glory.”**

20 **But,” he said, “you cannot see my face, for man shall not see me and live.”**

21 **And the LORD said, “Behold, there is a place by me where you shall stand on the rock,**

22 **and while my glory passes by I will put you in a cleft of the rock, and I will cover you with my hand until I have passed by.**

- We see the same wording used when God reveals himself to Elijah.

1 Kings 19: 11 **And he said, “Go out and stand on the mount before the LORD.” And behold, the LORD passed by, and a great and strong wind tore the mountains and broke in pieces the rocks before the LORD,**

- Here on the Galilee, in the midst of a great and strong wind, the Lord Passes By and the disciples see his glory.

Remember, these same disciples labored among the crowd all day long, now they have been striving against the storm for more than 8 hours. They are wiped out and they believe that they see a ghost. Their screams rise to new heights, their despair goes through the roof.

Mark 6:49 **but when they saw him walking on the sea they thought it was a ghost, and cried out, 50 for they all saw him and were terrified. But immediately he spoke to them and said, “Take heart; it is I Do not be afraid.”**

More than 100 times throughout the Bible the words, “Do not be afraid” are

Gen. 15:1, “Fear not, Abram, I am your shield;

Gen 26:24, “Fear not, for I am with you and will bless you

Ex 14:13, “Fear not, stand firm, and see the salvation of the LORD, which he will work for you today.

5 He is to be worshipped as God

Matthew 14: 32 **And when they got into the boat, the wind ceased. 33 And those in the boat worshiped him, saying, “Truly you are the Son of God.”**

Friends, I believe that this brief statement answers the difficult questions:

Why did Jesus send them away?

How could the one who knows all things knowingly send his beloved disciples into the heart of a treacherous storm?

- Once this story is complete it isn't difficult to understand the will of God or surmise the content of Jesus prayer. Hindsight is truly 20/20.

The Long day, the separation from the Lord Jesus, battle against the wind, all of the trials and hardship were specifically designed to open the blind eyes of the disciples.

Here in Mark 6:33 we have the disciple's FIRST confession that Jesus is the Son of God.

- He protected them from the influences of the crowd by sending them away.
- I believe that Jesus prayed all night that they would see who he truly is.
- He walked on the water and their eyes were opened to see his deity

That night brought about a radical, timely and very necessary change in the hearts and minds of the Disciples.

- Look at mark 6:

Mark 6: 52 for **they did not understand about the loaves, but their hearts were hardened.**

- The miracle of the multiplication of the loaves and fishes did not pierce their hardened hearts.
- Somehow Jesus knew that it would take a storm and a clear display of his glory to open their blind eyes and break through their hardened hearts.

Throughout the Gospel of Mark we have heard the voice of the Father:

Mark 1:11 **And a voice came from heaven, “You are my beloved Son; with you I am well pleased.”**

- But the disciples didn't understand.

We heard the voice of the demons cry out: Mark 1:24 “What have you to do with us, Jesus of Nazareth? Have you come to destroy us? I know who you are—the Holy One of God.”

- Still they did not understand who he was.
- Not UNTIL this night and this storm were their hardened hearts finally broken.
- Jesus is the Son of God!

John 1: 18 No one has ever seen God; the only God, who is at the Father's side, he has made him known.

Col 1:15 He is the image of the invisible God, the firstborn of all creation.

Practical Application:

1. The Lord Jesus is our protector. (We are his disciples today)
 - You may not understand why the Lord seems to be pushing you out to sea, deeper and deeper into the storm.
 - You may feel abandoned, Seem to be rowing against the wind for a prolonged time!
 - I can assure you that He sees you, He is praying for you and he will deliver you. He is able to save COMPLETELY those who draw near to him.
 - Remember Peter's Words: 1 Peter 1:5 The SAME God who caused us to be born again will ALSO guard (US) through faith for a salvation ready to be revealed in the last time.
2. He sees our trouble and delivers us.
 - Surely: The eyes of the LORD are toward the righteous and his ear is attentive to their cry.
 - His strong arm will deliver you, his right hand will uphold you.
3. He treads upon the waves of the sea. (when he moves to deliver nothing can stop him)
4. He reveals his glory as he passes by. (To those he has called)
Job 42:5, I had heard of you by the hearing of the ear, but now my eye sees you;
5. He is to be worshipped as God

Let's do just that!