

THE GOSPEL OF MARK: STRAIGHT TALK ABOUT JESUS CHRIST

6, The Gospel conflict in this sinful world against unbelief, disbelief, false belief, and weak belief, but saving faith in the Gospel of Jesus Christ is the victory that overcomes the world

Part 6E(1)

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Introduction: Among the benefits of progressive exposition of Scripture through books of the Bible is being challenged with the whole counsel of the Word of God. There are some passages/stories/teachings we are less familiar with and perhaps not fond of and other passages/stories/teachings that are on the “greatest hits” list. A good example is found in Mark's Gospel chapter 6 with the disturbing story of the martyrdom of John the Baptizer and the following story of Jesus miraculously feeding the multitude of 5,000 plus His walking on water. Sometimes we read these stories in a detached or fragmented way like changing the T.V.—“Now to a different show.”

However, Mark arranges a profound contrast for sanctified dramatic effect between the weak selfishness of Herod Antipas at his birthday feast serving up the gory head of John the Baptizer on a platter as the *piece de resistance* and the following story about Jesus' self-giving compassion overcoming the weakness of faith of His followers, even the Apostles, by the power of the Gospel.

Chapter 6, The Gospel conflict in this sinful world is against unbelief, disbelief, false beliefs, and weak belief, but saving faith in the Gospel of Jesus Christ is the victory that overcomes the world.

vv. 30-52, Weak belief from not keeping Christ-centered Scripture testimonies and teachings:

(This is some lengthy passage rich in details, so we will study it by installments.)

- **vv. 37, 49-52,** Mark connects Jesus' miracle of feeding the multitude of 5,000 plus with Jesus' walking on the water rescuing the Apostles for a lesson about weak faith...
- **vv. 31, 36,** Jesus recognizes and validates the need for retreat from public ministry for a time of relaxation, reflection, and restoring body, mind and spirit, but even this is subject to the providence of God fulfilling the great commandment—love God first and our neighbor as our self...

- Mark's narrative is rich in details about Christ-centered Scripture testimonies:
 - ✓ **v. 33, cf. vv. 14-15**, Jesus' name was becoming well known and associated with its O.T. origin "Joshua", cf. Numbers 27:16-18...
 - ✓ **v. 34**, the Shepherd motif used throughout the Bible by God to reveal His saving grace culminates in Jesus the Good Shepherd who came to save His sheep, cf. Psalm 23, Ezekiel 34, et al. ...
 - ✓ **vv. 34b-35**, Jesus providing for the multitude in a deserted place not only with food but with prophetic preaching greater than the manna and prophetic word, including the Law of God, given to the O.T. Israelites through Moses (cf. Deut. 5:1-21; St. John 6)...
 - ✓ **v. 38**, Jesus miraculously multiplying a small amount of food, 5 pieces of bread and 2 little fish, feeding over 5,000 is a demonstration of God's greater presence and power identifying Jesus as greater than the prophets Elijah or Elisha, cf. 1 Kgs. 17:8-16; 2 Kgs. 4:42-44...
 - ✓ **vv. 39-40, 43**, Jesus having the Apostles arrange the people in ordered groups to whom the 12 Apostles served and took up 12 baskets of leftovers symbolizes and previews the New Covenant fulfillment of the Old Covenant, think of the arrangement of the 12 Tribes of Israel around the Tabernacle and the 12 loaves of Showbread, i.e. Bread of Presence before the face of God, Nu. 2; Ex. 25:30; Lev. 24:5-7, et al. ...

- **vv. 49-50**, Not keeping Christ-centered Scripture testimonies and teachings results in spiritual malnourishment along with foolish unscriptural imaginations and fears...

So how do we keep Christ-centered Scripture testimonies and teachings?