

1. **Introduction:** The multitude of people were taught by Jesus and then fed by Jesus by multiplying the available 5 loaves and 2 fish to be enough for 5000 men plus women and children. Jesus and the twelve have not yet had the rest they sought. Jesus dismissed the crowd and directed the disciples to go back to the west shore of the lake. Jesus will remain behind to pray and later meet them there. No doubt the twelve wished Jesus would go with them in the boat.
2. **Mark 6:45-46:** *“Immediately he made his disciples get into the boat and go before him to the other side, to Bethsaida, while he dismissed the crowd. <sup>46</sup>And after he had taken leave of them, he went up on the mountain to pray.”*
  - The multitude had been fed and leftovers gathered, so Jesus dismissed the crowd. He then instructed His disciples to take the boat and go to their next destination on the west side of the lake south of Capernaum.
  - As the crowd and the disciples left, Jesus went up on the mountain to pray. The Gospel of John says many in the crowd were eager to put Jesus forward as their king by use of force if necessary.
  - Rather than submit to that plan, Jesus sent the crowd away and went inland to the hill country above the northwestern shore of the lake.
  - Jesus’ plan was to pray and then meet His disciples at Bethsaida of Galilee south of Capernaum on the west shore of the lake.
  - Bethsaida of Galilee on the western shore of the lake is quite different from Bethsaida Julias on the northeastern shore. Bethsaida means “house of fish.” Since the lake was teeming with fish, two, or even more houses of fish, appear likely.
  - It was not unusual to have more than one town with the same name. Caesarea Maritime and Caesarea Philippi are another example.
  - From Mark 6:55, this Bethsaida was located on the plain of Gennesaret on the west shore of the lake south of Capernaum.
3. **Mark 6:47-48:** *“And when evening came, the boat was out on the sea, and he (Jesus) was alone on the land. <sup>48</sup>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.”*
  - With the surface about 700 feet below sea level with mountains to the north, the lake was subject to sudden violent wind-storms.
  - As the disciples rowed across the lake, they encountered a severe head-wind and large waves. Jesus realized they were making very slow difficult progress.
  - About the fourth watch of the night, He walked to them on the waves into the wind.
  - The fourth watch was from 3AM to 6AM. By then, the disciples had rowed as much as 12 hours against wind and waves. They were exhausted.

- The Romans changed guards every three hours during the night. So, under their occupation, there were four watches between 6PM and 6AM.
  - The direct distance they needed to travel was about 6 miles. With wind and water calm, that would take at most two to three hours depending on the size of the boat.
  - No doubt the storm frightened and frustrated them. The effort required to propel the boat was great and they became exhausted, wondering if they would ever get to the shore.
  - They were expecting Jesus to meet them at their destination.
  - Jesus came toward them walking on the water. The wind was strong, and the waves were powerful white caps, but neither bothered Him. His intent was to walk past them.
  - Perhaps He intended to walk on to the shore, or maybe He wanted to reinforce their awareness of His majestic ability to control the elements.
  - Once before He had calmed wind and waves in a storm on that very lake. That time the disciples believed they were about to drown and woke Jesus who was calmly sleeping. When He woke, Jesus said, “Peace be Still.” The wind ceased. The sea became calm.
  - This time, thoroughly frightened by the turmoil of wind and sea, they saw what they thought was a supernatural presence coming toward them.
  - Seeing the apparition walking on the waves in the midst of the storm intensified their fright and they were terrified.
4. **Mark 6:49-50**: *“But when they saw him walking on the sea they thought it was a ghost, and cried out, <sup>50</sup>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.”*
- Jesus spoke saying, *“Take heart; it is I. Do not be afraid.”* The Greek translated as *“it is I”* is *“ego eimi”* which is literally *“I am.”*
  - The theological implications of “I am” are of course enormous.
5. **Mark 6:51-52**: *“And he got into the boat with them, and the wind ceased. And they were utterly astounded, <sup>52</sup>for they did not understand about the loaves, but their hearts were hardened.”*
- As Jesus came up to the boat, He stepped from the waves into the boat. The disciples were not reassured by that action but instead were terrified.
  - The fury of the storm disappeared. The wind ceased blowing and the lake became calm. The twelve were utterly astounded.
  - Think about what they had previously witnessed: Jesus calming an earlier storm (4:39-41), casting out demons (5:8-13), raising the dead (5:41-42), and using 5 loaves and 2 fish to feed a crowd of thousands (6:41-42).
  - Despite these repeated demonstrations of Jesus’ power, this latest example astounded them. They had not yet grasped the full implication of what they had been seeing.
  - They could see that He was a real man, but it had not yet dawned on them that He was also God come in human flesh.

- The comment that ***“their hearts were hardened”*** is an idiom meaning their reasoning and emotions were failing to grasp and understand the significance of what they were witnessing.
  - They resisted accepting some obvious differences between Jesus and the traditional Jewish view of Messiah.
  - They never expected Messiah might be a divine person in human flesh. What they were experiencing was wonderful but perplexing.
6. **Mark 6:53-55**: ***“When they had crossed over, they came to land at Gennesaret and moored to the shore. <sup>54</sup>And when they got out of the boat, the people immediately recognized him <sup>55</sup>and ran about the whole region and began to bring the sick people on their beds to wherever they heard he was.”***
- Jesus and the twelve brought their boat to the shore of Gennesaret and anchored there.
  - When they stepped ashore, people immediately saw them and recognized Jesus who had become well-known as the Healer.
  - Those who recognized Jesus quickly spread the word of His presence.
  - Many people brought those who were sick to Him. Some had to be carried to Him on their beds. He healed all who were brought to Him.
  - Gennesaret was the name of a plain south of Capernaum bordering the lake. The plain was unusually fertile and densely populated. It was reported by Josephus to be a place of great natural beauty.
7. **Mark 6:56**: ***“And wherever he came, in villages, cities, or countryside, they laid the sick in the marketplaces and implored him that they might touch even the fringe of his garment. And as many as touched it were made well.”***
- As Jesus moved along the route from Gennesaret to Capernaum, He ministered to people all along the way. Though He likely did teach and preach some, His emphasis on this journey was healing.
  - As He proceeded, sick and infirm were constantly brought before Him. They were convinced if they could so much as touch His garment, they would be healed. And all who touched were indeed healed.
  - The reference to healing in the market-places refers to the fact that 1<sup>st</sup> century towns were built around a public square called an agora. An agora often included a well or some other community resource.
  - The open area of the agora was a logical place to bring the sick into the presence of Jesus so that He could heal them. Mark 6:55 says that the people brought the sick to Jesus wherever he happened to be.
  - This likely means that the road He traveled was lined with many sick people. He healed as He passed along.
  - Jesus was trustworthy as a healer. The people had faith both in His ability and His willingness to heal. He did not disappoint any who came to Him.

- The transition from chapter 6 to chapter 7 reveals Jesus and the twelve have returned to Capernaum. From John 6, it appears Jesus delivered the discourse of The Bread of Life after His return to Capernaum.
- The next event (Mark 7:1-23) deals with the issue of ceremonial versus real defilement, or tradition versus commandment.
- This issue produced a bitter confrontation between Jesus and Jewish religions' leaders
- The “tradition versus commandment” incident occurred at a time near the end of the Galilean ministry. Jerusalem and crucifixion are coming near.
- We will consider this incident in detail in the next lesson beginning at Mark 7:1.