

As Many as Touched Him Were Made Well; Mark 6:53-56

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When they had crossed over, they came to land at Gennesaret and moored to the shore. And when they got out of the boat, the people immediately recognized him and ran about the whole region and began to bring the sick people on their beds to wherever they heard he was. 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, or as many as touched *him*, were made well. So these final verses of chapter six serve as a fitting conclusion to the section that we wrap up here at the end of chapter six. As we cross over into chapter seven, we'll notice next week that the Gospel of Mark will take a change in tone.

And it will remain in that same sort of tone from there to the conclusion. In fact, about halfway through Chapter 8, it's going to take a dramatic change in tone. And we'll notice the shift in the events and what's going on about halfway through Chapter 8, as Jesus will tell them for the very first time that He's going to be killed.

But until that point, from the beginning of chapter seven, we'll see a change in tone as the Pharisees once again come to confront Jesus, and we'll have this tone of confrontation that begins from chapter seven and verse one. Now, this SEC section that begins from verse one of chapter seven is a lengthy section that goes down to verse 23 of chapter seven, and it is a very tedious section and it's a full section.

It's going to take us two to three weeks to work through that section. We won't begin there today. But we'll look at these final verses of chapter 6 that serve for us as, first of all, a nice conclusion for the events that we have been studying up until this point. Just to remind ourselves of what has happened recently, there has been, of course, this feeding that took place over in Bethsaida Julius.

Where Jesus goes there for this much needed day of rest. He has just sent the disciples out for the first time, they come back. Jesus is, uh, remarking that they are terribly weak and, and, uh, worn out, and they're just in need of rest. They're spiritually weak, they're spiritually tired. They have been exhausted by the sending out.

And so Jesus says, come away with me, and we'll go to the other side here, and we'll have a day of rest. And as they go, then the boat is spotted, they're spotted in the boat, and the people are running alongside the boat on the shore as the boat remains within sight of the shore there, and they follow Jesus to where they're going, Jesus gets out of the boat, and getting out of the boat, there's already a crowd gathering, so He sees them, He has compassion on them because they are like sheep without a shepherd, and He begins meeting their most poignant need, which is to explain and teach to them the Word of God.

And doing this all day, the crowd gathers and gathers until it's a crowd of some 5,000 men plus women and children. And then as the day is coming to a conclusion, Jesus puts the question to His disciples, How will we provide for these people here? They're going to need food. The disciples say,

well, dismiss them so they can get somewhere and buy some food before the sun goes down and everything's closed.

Jesus says, no, why don't you feed them? And so then they go out and they buy the last remaining little bit of food, which is just a little bit of bread and a little bit of fish. They bring it to Jesus. They say, this is all we've got. Even if we had 200 denarii, even if we had a full year's wages, we couldn't even buy enough for everybody to have just one little bite, even if there was that much here to buy.

Instead, Jesus takes this from them. He blesses them. He has them sit down. And then we have that strong, strong shepherd imagery where Jesus is feeding them. They're sitting on their mats, made to sit on the grass. Jesus is providing for them the strong shepherd imagery. But in the course of all that, the crowd, as well as the disciples, begin to get caught up in this euphoria over this man Jesus, over his personality, over the charisma, over the miracles, over the teaching.

And being so caught up in this, they begin to envision Jesus as this political leader who will free them from all their earthly troubles. The disciples get all caught up in this because, of course, if Jesus becomes this political leader, they are his Most 12 most trusted, uh, accomplices, so to speak. And so they begin seeing these stars in their own eyes, and they begin to get caught up in all the excitement of Jesus becoming this political deliverer.

Jesus sees all this taking place, and He says to them, you need to get in the boat, and you need to leave. He dismisses the crowd. He compels the disciples to get into the boat to begin across to the other side, to Bethsaida of Galilee. Jesus, meanwhile, goes up on the mountain to pray. He spends the entire night praying.

Meanwhile, the disciples spend the entire night fighting the storm, fighting the waves, rowing against the waves. Jesus waits until the final watch of the night, and He comes walking to them on the sea. And we saw in that passage last week, we spent two weeks on that passage because it is such a profound passage.

It is such a profound demonstration of Jesus. Jesus as God, the theophany that we've talked about, the Christophany, the showing Jesus as the Christ, showing Him as God. Three powerful ways that we saw that. Jesus, of course, walks on the water. That strong Old Testament imagery of God putting water under His feet.

Jesus, we're told, in the language of the Old Testament, meant to pass them by. Or in other words, Mark is using the language of the Old Testament to hearken our thoughts back to those instances in which God revealed Himself to a particular people or a particular person in a particular way. So He meant to pass them by and then getting into the boat as the disciples are fearful, they think He's a goat, ghost, not a goat, but a ghost.

As He's getting into the boat, He says, take courage, I am, I am. Yahweh is here. The threefold demonstration That Jesus Christ is the Son of God in the flesh and then getting into the boat, the storm is immediately calmed. Jesus miraculously brings them to the other side and that brings us to our passage today.

So this passage will conclude sort of these events leading up to this. The miracles that we've talked about, the beheading of John the Baptist, those stories that go along with that, as well as the

calming of the storm on the sea, the feeding, all that will be brought to a close with these concluding words, but also we're going to be prepared, so to speak.

Mark is going to prepare us. He is going to prepare our thoughts to enter into chapter three. And I'll call attention to that as we go through the passage this morning. So Mark is a very disciplined writer. We've seen that from the beginning. Mark is a disciplined writer. And what I mean by disciplined writer is this.

I remember, I'll always remember this. I think this is one of these memories that will stay with me. I remember getting to seminary. And I remember more than one professor saying basically the same thing to me, of course, to go to seminary, uh, an undergraduate degree was required. So I had an undergraduate degree and it was in the humanities.

And so I remember getting my undergraduate degree and writing many, many papers for that degree. So I show up at seminary having that degree. thinking that I knew at least how to write an academic paper, but I remember many times my professors telling us, you know, we've learned from experience from long experience, not to expect any of you to know how to write when you get here because they don't teach you in undergraduate studies anymore, how to write out came as a surprise to me, but they just said.

You know, we've learned this over and over is that when you come to us, we're just going to have to teach you from square one how to write academically. And so they began to do that process in all my classes. And the thing that was repeated and drilled into me is that disciplined academic writing, disciplined academic writing always starts with the conclusion.

You write the conclusion of what you want to say first. So that everything that you write after that leads you into that conclusion. You ever written a paper in high school or something like that and you started with the introduction? Anybody ever done that? And you start with the introduction and you sort of have some foggy idea of what you want to say and you introduce what you want to say, but by the time you conclude it, you find out that you're concluding a completely different paper than you started.

Anybody ever had that experience? Okay. So the way you alleviate that is you start with your conclusion and then everything you write, Mark has to direct the reader into that conclusion. That's how you write in a disciplined way. Mark is a disciplined writer. He introduced the Gospel with the conclusion.

He told us in the very first sentence what the purpose of the Gospel is. The beginning of the Gospel of Jesus Christ, the Son of God. And everything that he has written since then, and everything that he will write after this point, is leading the reader in one direction into that direction. The gospel of Jesus Christ, the son of God, gospel, of course, good news from the Greek you and Galileo, the good news that God, the son has come to us.

In the man, Jesus Christ of Nazareth and everything that Mark has said, every story he's related, every miracle account, the parables that were given, even the conflicts with the Pharisees, the stories of John, the baptizer, all of these things are leading the reader in a very disciplined way toward that conclusion that he started out by telling us.

This is what I'm going to prove to you in my gospel. So as he concludes this section with these thoughts here, we're going to see as we work through these how, how thoroughly permeated this is with Mark's Overall theme with what he wants to show us the good news of Jesus Christ of Nazareth who is God the Son come in flesh.

So with that in mind, let's just begin from verse 53. When they, speaking of the disciples plus Jesus now because he's in the boat with them, when they had crossed over, they came to land at Gennesaret. So we remember that Jesus sent them out and he sent them to go to Bethsaida, or specifically Bethsaida of Galilee.

But they end up in a place called Gennesaret. Gennesaret is on the northwestern corner of the Sea of Galilee. Bethsaida of Galilee is a little bit further south. But they've ended up in the northwest corner in this place called Gennesaret. Now, a little bit of background of Gennesaret might be helpful for us.

Gennesaret, unlike the other names that we come across in Mark's Gospel, such as Bethsaida, Capernaum, Caesarea, these other places, Tiberias, Gennesaret is not a city, but it's a region. It's a region. that, uh, as it bordered the Sea of Galilee was about a three-mile border on the sea, and it went back in a little bit of a, uh, uh, rectangular, not rectangular, but a, uh, what's my geometry?

A triangular sort of shape to the back side was maybe a mile or so. So if you put all that area together, it was maybe eight, ten, or twelve square miles, something like that. It's, it's hard to say for certain because it wasn't bordered by fences, of course. It's a region. And so this region would have been say around 10 square miles.

And it was well known, a well-known region for a few things. First of all, the one thing that we want to make note of is that this was a place of what we would call nominal Jewish influence. So this was part of the promised land proper. However, we should be careful when we think about the ancient promised land.

We should not think of it as a place of black and white, a place of, of borders and fences and border crossings so that when you left the promised land and entered into the land of the Gentiles that you crossed through some border cross crossing and showed your Jewish passport to, to come back in.

Instead, the further you got from Jerusalem, the more sparsely populated the areas were in general. with Jewish people and the more increasingly populated it became by Gentile people since such a way so that as you traveled further north. You became more and more surrounded by both Gentile people and Gentile cultures.

So this land is part of what we would call Galilee. So we think of those two regions, Galilee together with Samaria. They made up what was the older kingdom of Israel, the northern kingdom of Israel, which was the ten tribes that broke off from the two tribes, the tribes of Judah and of course the tribe of Levi that remained in the south, the southern kingdom of Judah, which is where Jerusalem is located.

But then, the northern regions of Samaria and Galilee, as you traveled further and further from Jerusalem, it became more and more Gentile. And so, Jesus was from an area known as Nazareth,

as we know. This was a little bit closer to Jerusalem than was the area that we're in now. This area would have been a very nominally Jewish sort of area.

This would've been an area in which many of the people, maybe as many as half or more of the people would've been gentile by their ethnicity and by their religion as well. And so this area is a nominally, nominally Jewish area, but it's also widely known as a very fertile place. A place of beauty, of natural beauty.

It was a plain, and on this plain it was, it was green, it was fertile. Agriculture was a bounding. Compare that to Nazareth. Remember we talked about Nazareth. Nazareth was barren and craggy and rocky and, and hillside caves, that sort of thing. That's what Nazareth looked like. This would have looked like lush plains with lots of green, trees, abundant crops, that sort of thing.

A place known for its beauty. But then also it was a place that was densely populated. So being such an area that was so fertile, It makes sense to us that a lot of people lived there. So this was about 10 square miles in which a lot of people lived. It was full of villages, towns, cities, that sort of thing.

It was a very populous sort of area. So they land here at this place called Gennesaret, and they moored to the shore. I always like to pause and just take note of whenever I see something in Scripture that just brings out the personality of the writer. We know that the writer of Scripture, of course, the...

The ultimate, the author of scripture is divine. The Holy Spirit wrote the scriptures, but He used humans to write the scriptures. And if we look carefully, we can always see little hints of the personality of the human writer coming through. So we're told here that the boat came to the land and moored at the shore.

That's a nautical term, a very specific nautical term. That means that the boat was fastened to land either by way of an anchor. On the bed of the sea there, or by way of a rope tied to a dock, that sort of thing. It's the only time this word shows up in the New Testament. And who would've used this word other than?

Peter, being the fisherman, being the sailor, it makes perfect sense that he told us that the boat was moored. The other gospel writers, Matthew, they don't say, they just say that the boat came to land and they got out at Gennesaret. But Peter tells us the boat was moored to the shore, verse 54, and when they got out of the boat, the people immediately

Now, what strikes me there is that it seems to me that Mark wants to intentionally draw our attention to something. He wants to contrast something for us. You're nodding your head. Because we just finished a story in which the disciples should have recognized Jesus. Yet they did not recognize Jesus, and now they come to the shore, they get out of the boat, and everybody recognizes Jesus.

The word that Mark uses here means that they discerned something or someone that was right or true or valid and then reacted appropriately. That's what the word means. Discerned someone or something to be right and then reacted to that Appropriately. So Mark's going to show us how they discerned rightly, who Jesus is, and then reacted appropriately to who they recognized.

All that comes on the heels of the story in which the disciples should have recognized the Great Shepherd coming to them on the water. Yet they did not recognize him and not recognizing him. They did not react properly to him. So it seems to me that Mark wants to call our attention to that, to the fact that they recognize Jesus.

But the disciples, just the night before, did not recognize Jesus. They recognized Jesus. Many of them probably have never seen Jesus. Maybe they've just been told about Him. Maybe people have told Him about what He looks like or how He travels with these disciples or something of that nature. And yet they recognize Him.

The disciples who now have spent with Jesus Oh, we don't know this. This is, this is a guess, but, but we're going to guess about maybe a year to two years when we start chapter seven, most biblical scholars are going to guess, and that's what it is, a guess that we're about a year from the cross. Which means that the disciples have been with Jesus on a daily basis now for about a year every day.

And so they've been with Jesus every day for month upon month upon month. They don't recognize Him and yet the crowds do recognize Him. Perhaps Mark is trying to say something to us about the deceptiveness of the storm. About how it is that the disciple who knows Jesus Jesus, who follows Jesus, yet in the storm can be led astray to not recognize the one whom they know.

Meanwhile, in the calm of the next day, in the safety of the land, in the firmaterra under our feet, we can recognize someone whom we barely know. Perhaps Mark is trying to call our attention to the disciple there, to say, beware of the storm, that you remember who you belong to, that you remember how to recognize the one to whom you belong.

So they get out of the boat and when they get out of the boat, the people immediately recognize him and begin flocking around him. So I've noticed a theme. I'm sure you've noticed that same theme. And that theme is whenever Jesus gets out of a boat, there's a crowd around him. You know, have you noticed that when Jesus gets out of the boat, there's always seems to be people waiting for him when he gets out of the boat.

The same thing happened just on the other side of the lake. On the other side of the lake, He takes His disciples over here for this day of rest. They get out of the boat, and there's the crowd. Prior to that, when they came back from the other side of the Sea of Galilee, they find that not only is there a crowd there, but people have been watching, looking for His boat to return.

And as soon as Jesus gets out of the boat, the crowd is there. He begins trying to make His way through the crowd, and then there's Jairus. Jairus, who says, you got to come to my house. My daughter's dying. All of that was waiting for Jesus when he got out of the boat. Prior to that, on the other side of the sea, when he got out of the, on the other side of Decapolis, remember, we remember what was, we remember what was waiting for him there, right?

The man. Possessed of the demon legion, running toward him, screaming at the top of his lungs, growling. This wild man, possessed of demons, is there for him as he gets out of the boat on that side. So it seems like every time Jesus gets out of a boat, there's someone there waiting for him. Likewise, here too, when he gets out of the boat, immediately, The people recognized him, verse 55, and ran about the whole region.

Now, what that draws my attention back to is just the previous story. In which we're told that the boat was traveling towards this day of rest, but the people recognized Jesus. Once again, they recognized Him. And having recognized Him, remember they're running along the shore. We talked about that word that Mark used there, that described just a group of people running together, almost in a comic sort of way.

Stumbling over each other. Maybe they're watching the boat, trying to keep up with the boat. They're tripping over roots and rocks and stuff and everything because they're trying to watch the boat and stay up abreast with the boat. And so, a little bit of a comical image because the people are running, this crowd is running along the side of the shore to keep up with the boat.

Here we're told also that people recognized him and began to run about the whole region. It's a different word, but it's the same idea. began to run or they ran about the whole region and began to bring the sick people. So here, the picture that we're given that Mark is showing us is this picture of frenzied activity.

People see Jesus and the disciples. They come to get out of the boat. They recognize them. And then immediately there just begins this flurry of movement. If we could be maybe If we could have a bird's eye view, if we could have a maybe a bird's eye view of the region and what's taking place and we could look down, we would just see frenzied activity, people moving here and there, they would see Jesus and people would say, Oh, what about so and so?

What about my brother? What about my sister? What about my mother? What about this loved one who's sick? Let me run to them. And there's this frenzied activity running here, running there about the whole region. And they began to bring the sick people on their beds to wherever he was. So we're told there, wherever he goes, we should take, we should take, uh, our understanding of these next few verses.

55 and 56 particularly we could we should take these verses as not happening over one day, but probably over at least several days Maybe several weeks. This is a period of time here and during this period of time. Jesus is going to move about in verse 66 We're going to be told wherever he goes whether it's villages cities or countryside wherever he goes Then that's where people are bringing the sick people to so we get this picture of Jesus moving about somewhat in the region But yet there's this network of word of mouth This network of word of mouth in which wherever Jesus goes people find out where he is And that's where they begin bringing the sick people to so they find out where he is There's this word of mouth and they begin bringing the sick people on their beds We're told now our thoughts are taken back to the story in chapter 2 of the paralyzed man And how his friends brought him on his bed.

He couldn't walk, so they bring him to Jesus. Remember, they couldn't get in the house. They make the hole, they lower him down. And so our thoughts now are taken back to that story. And we see that that story is now repeated. Over and over and over, over the course of these days and over the course of these weeks, maybe hundreds of times or thousands of times, as people are bringing those to Jesus who can't walk, maybe they're infirm, maybe they are crippled, maybe they are born with some malady of the body.

Maybe they are so sick that now they are to the point that they are too weak to walk. And so they're picking up their beds and carrying them on their beds. So as they're picking up their beds,

don't have this, this picture in your mind of, uh, what flashed in my mind as I was thinking about this with the monkeys.

Remember that? Where they had the bed with the headboard and the footboard and they're taking the bed. Not that sort of thing, but, but more like, uh, uh, Uh, a, uh, a mat or a cot, maybe, uh, not even a cot. I, what I think of is, you know, those little rollout things that you put underneath the sleeping bag and you sort of blow them up and it gives you about that much space between your sleeping bag and the ground.

That sort of thing. This, this rollout sort of a mat that they lay on and they're picking them up. Maybe four people, maybe two people, they're picking them up and they're carrying all the sick people to Jesus. Just, just have that picture in your mind of hundreds of people. Maybe thousands of people over the course of the next several days going to those who are too sick or too crippled to come to Jesus and they're picking them up and they're bringing them to Jesus on their beds, wherever they heard that He was.

So He goes here, they hear about that He's over there and people come there. He goes over to this other village, people hear about that He's there and they go over there. Now verse 56, And wherever He came, the villages, the cities, or the countryside, they laid the sick in the marketplaces, And that right there, that reminds me of Acts chapter, there's a two, where they bring the sick to Peter.

And in hopes that his shadow passes over them, that they may be healed, they bring, wherever he is, they bring them and they lay the sick in the marketplaces. Now the word marketplaces is a very generic word. It can mean, a literal marketplace where buying and selling is done. But it more generally just means a gathering area in the village or in the town.

You know how towns will just have a gathering area. Maybe it's the city gate, or maybe it's just, uh, a particular, particularly nice shade tree in the middle of the village or whatever. But there'll be a gathering area where the people gather. And that's what Mark is talking about here. They bring the sick to the gathering places, to the marketplaces, and implore him.

implored him. That's that same word we've seen many times before. Back in chapter 1, the leper came to Jesus and implored Him, If you are willing, you can make me clean. Or we saw that word in Rapid Fire repetition in chapter 5, where the demons implored Jesus not to send them into the waterless places.

And then having cast the demons out, the village people implored, village people, the people of the village, that sounds a little better, doesn't it? The people of the village implored Jesus to leave their area. And then getting in the boat to leave, the man who was previously known of as Legion implores Jesus that he may go with him.

And then coming to the other side of the lake. Then of course Jeru, implores Jesus to come to my house because my daughter is dying. So we've seen this word many times used in the relation to those who come before Jesus prostrate, even bowing before Jesus imploring him. So we see here that they implored him, that they might touch even the fringe.

So two things to see there. One is that Mark is, in that phrase, he is setting us up. He's preparing us. For the next section, because in the next section, we're going to have 23 verses that we're going to

be wrestling with this contention between Jesus and the Pharisees over their perception that Jesus has trod all over the law.

And as we'll see over and over, we have to make this distinction between the law And their traditions, but nevertheless, in their mind they see Jesus as trotting on top of the law. So Mark here in the final sentence, before that section takes care to tell us that they implore Jesus, that they might just touch the fringe of his garment.

You ever wonder why that word fringe is in there? Because that word fringe is referring to the tassel. If we were to go back to the Old Testament, we would see in the Old Testament they were told that the Jewish men were to put four tassels on the corners of their robe or their outer garment to simply just to remind them of the law of God.

That was what God mandated for the Jewish male. So Mark here takes care to say that they might touch even the fringe of his garment. So that we might say, oh, by the way, right there, we're just, there's another reminder that Jesus was the perfect keeper of the law. Jesus never violated one law of God. So we're reminded of that.

They might touch just the fringe of the garment. But also, of course, our minds are taken back to the woman with the flow of blood. The woman with the flow of blood whom we're told specifically that she was trying to get to Jesus to just touch the hem of his garment. So perhaps the story of this woman has spread, but even more so than this, we just see that this sentimentality, this feeling, this, this idea, this way of thinking is pervasive in this area.

Remember, this is a nominally Jewish area. And so this way of thinking is pervasive. As we talked about the woman who tried to touch his garment. We talked about her faith and how that faith was mixed together with pagan beliefs. The pagan belief that a piece of clothing had healing power in it. Jesus clothing had no magic power.

Jesus clothing had no healing power whatsoever. The power to heal did not come from touching His clothes. And that's why Jesus specifically says to her, your faith has made you well. Your belief has made you well. So we'll expand on that in just a little bit. They were, we're brought back to that to, to see that there's a continuity.

Not only was, was it this woman herself, but now many, many others, hundreds, even thousands of people are coming to Jesus imploring him. Just let me touch the tassel. Just let me touch the hem of your garment and I'll be made well. And then we're told, and as many as touched it, or as many as touched him, the pronoun 'autous' can mean it or him there. I think a more theologically precise translation is that they as many touched him

But either way it's the same if they touched his garment then they were in by connection touching him But I just think it's clearer theologically to say as many as touched him were made Well as many as touched him were made well, so again, we're given this this clear picture if we read to the Gospels And we were to make note of all the healing stories that are included in the Gospels, of all the blind that are made to see, the lame that are made to walk, the lepers that are cleansed, the demons that are cast out.

If we were to collect all those stories, we would have a couple dozen healing stories. But the Gospels tell us, particularly Mark's Gospel, tells us very plainly, those are just select illustrations,

just select examples. Jesus healed literally thousands of people. You remember the night of healing back in Capernaum, all night as the whole city was brought to him.

And again in chapter three, as the people are flocking by him so close that Jesus orders the boat to be made ready in case the crowd crushes him. And so thousands upon thousands of people have been physically healed by Jesus. Jesus is literally banishing from his presence, all sickness and illness.

There is no sickness or disease that can stand to be in the presence of Jesus because Jesus Banishes it all from his presence. He is the strong man He is the right strong man who has come to oust the lesser strong man He is the rightful King who is expelling the wrongful King and in expelling the wrongful King he's also expelling the side effects of the wrongful kingdom, which is Sickness and disease.

Sickness and disease and all illness are the result of the sin of man. Some of our sickness and some of our disease, of course, can be traced to our sin with a straight line, but not much of it. Most of our sin and most of our sickness and most of the disease that afflicts mankind is a result of our, it's all a result of our sin, but most of it isn't a direct result.

But because mankind has sinned and cast the entire creation into the state of fallenness, that's why sin and sickness exist. And so in the presence of Jesus, the rightful King, the true strong man, he is banishing from his presence the side effects. He's banishing from his presence all sickness and all disease.

So what we should be left with, the strong impression that we should be left with, and perhaps you didn't see this right away, but once I point this out, this will be so clear. This will be so plain for you. What you should be left with is a strong sense of contrast. Gennesaret And Nazareth. Because both visits by Jesus were led, Mark led us up to both of those visits in precisely the same way.

There was a series of miracle accounts. Remember back in chapter four, there was the calming of the storm on the sea. There was a casting out of the demons known as Legion. There was the raising of Jairus's daughter back from the dead. There was the woman with the flow of blood. And then that took us right into Nazareth.

And then coming into Nazareth, what are we told happens at Nazareth? The people of Nazareth. They recognize Jesus. Isn't this the carpenter's son? Isn't this Mary's son? Aren't his sisters here with us? Don't we know this man? They recognize Jesus. And in their recognition of Jesus, they scorn him. Because we are told very plainly that he could do no mighty work there because of their unbelief.

Now as we said when we walked through that passage, What Mark is not saying to us is that Jesus hands were tied. That He was somehow unable to perform any sort of miracle, though He wanted to. What we're told is, what we're told consistently through the Gospels, is that Jesus can do nothing except His Father's will.

Jesus cannot do what violates His Father's will. And so it is not His Father's will that miracles be paraded in front of those who don't believe. And so, therefore, Jesus cannot do any mighty work there because there is no belief there. Instead, there is unbelief. Now we're presented with this picture of Gennesaret, which is, quite frankly, could not be more opposite than Nazareth.

Both instances, both visits by Jesus, Mark leads us into them in the same way with a series of miracle stories. The feeding across the water. The calming of the storm, the walking on the water, and then Jesus gets out of the boat, and then the same thing happens. Jesus is recognized. But now, the result is the complete opposite.

It couldn't be more different. It couldn't be more contrasted against Nazareth. Because now we're told that not only does Jesus do many mighty works, we are told that as many as were brought to Him, as many as touched Him, So we should perceive here that Mark is trying to describe to us a series of days or perhaps weeks in which an absolute flurry of healings is taking place.

Hundreds and perhaps thousands of people are being healed over these next coming days and weeks. So to put the two of these together, we have Nazareth on the one side. And we have Gennesaret on the other. Nazareth, we're told specifically that Jesus did not do many mighty works there. We are told he laid his hands on a few and healed a few.

So whoever came to Jesus with any sort of belief was healed. But by and large, we're told that Nazareth was left devoid of miracles unbelief.

But here we're told that as many as were brought to Jesus, as many as touched him were healed. No one was brought to Jesus and left unhealed. So the conclusion that we must come to is that Gennesaret is a picture of belief. It's a picture of faith. So all who brought were brought to Jesus were healed and we're being shown this as an example, as an illustration of faith.

So let's slow down just a little bit and let's be careful. First of all, I want to be careful that you don't hear me saying that Jesus was some sort of faith healer. That for Jesus to heal, you had to come to Him with faith. That was not true. Jesus healed on many instances people who were demonstrably free from faith.

Lazarus could not possibly believe in anything. He was dead. Jairus daughter could not possibly believe in anything. The widow's son could not possibly believe in anything. Or we think of John chapter 9, the man who was born blind. Jesus heals him, and we know for certain there that when Jesus healed him of his infirmity, that he did not have any sort of belief in Jesus at all, whatsoever, because later on Jesus encounters him again, and Jesus says to him, You better stop sinning and believe upon the Son of Man.

So that worse may not happen, he says, Well, who is this son of man that I may believe in him? And Jesus says, The one who healed you is him. He says, Oh. And the synagogue leaders are asking, Who healed you? He says, I have no idea who it was. He had no idea who healed him, so he could not have believed in him.

So, faith was not a prerequisite. Any kind of faith was not prerequisite for Jesus to be able to heal. He could do what he wanted, in accordance with the Father's will. If it was the Father's will, to heal someone, Who had no sort of faith whatsoever, that was the Father's will. But Gennesaret is positioned for us, is displayed for us as an opposition to Nazareth.

Nazareth is a place devoid of belief, so Gennesaret is shown to us as a place full of belief. So let's think of what that means. So what I'm not saying is that all the people, these hundreds and perhaps

thousands of people that come to Jesus and are healed physically, we're not saying that all of these people had saving belief in Jesus as Messiah.

We're not saying that they all understood that Jesus is the Son of God incarnate and they're coming to Jesus Not only to be healed of their legs that don't work, but also to be forgiven of their sins That's not what we're saying at all There were certainly some among them who understood that Jesus is more than just a healer But the passage is not presenting to us that people are coming to Jesus Understanding that Jesus is more than a healer instead what the passage is presenting to us is that all who are coming to Jesus Have a certain belief in Jesus.

And what is that belief? It is a belief that he can heal them, and that's the faith that Nazareth lacked. Nazareth by and large lacked the belief. That Jesus could heal anybody and lacking the belief that Jesus could heal anybody God wasn't about to say, Oh, let me prove you're wrong. Just stand back and watch.

God doesn't work that way. Instead, those at Gennesaret, they come to Jesus, believing at the very minimum that Jesus has the power. Jesus has the power to heal them and more. We'll talk about that in just a moment, but Jesus at least has the power, the ability to heal them. How do we know that? We know that because if they didn't believe that, why would they be bringing people to Jesus?

It would make no sense whatsoever that the people by droves are bringing the sick to Jesus. To say, well, we don't really think he can heal anybody, but just in case, just in case we're wrong. The people are bringing the sick to Jesus because they at least believe he's able to heal. So Gennesaret is given to us as a contrast over and against.

There's the unbelief of Nazareth. Certainly they did not in Nazareth believe that Jesus was Messiah come in the flesh, but they didn't even believe that He had the ability to heal people. All these miracle stories that they were hearing about, they didn't believe those. But then on the other hand, there's Gennesaret where there's widespread belief that Jesus is able to heal.

And being able to heal, let's get our sick to Him. And so as such, Gennesaret is given to us as a metaphor of saving faith. A metaphor of saving faith. Now, before you say, wait a minute, wait a minute, let's make sure we don't allegorize the Scriptures. Before we say that, let me just point out that Jesus Himself often pointed to His miracle activity as a kind of word picture or illustration or metaphor for His saving work.

Jesus would do that. For example, He would point to His miraculous feeding, miraculously multiplying the loaves and fishes. He would take that and teach the disciples about His saving work. So Jesus Himself gave us the pattern of looking to His miraculous activity and seeing in that something that shows us something about His saving work.

When Jesus heals the sick, He's not saving their souls.

So, perhaps the majority of all these that are coming to Jesus for healing, perhaps they're receiving a physical healing, but going away still not believing in Jesus as any more than a great healer. Or perhaps there's some who do. But those who come to Him at Gennesaret, they're not coming to receive necessarily spiritual healing, but this is a metaphor, this is a picture.

We see something in Jesus physical healing work that teaches us something about His spiritual healing work, of His forgiving work. And so what do we see at Gennesaret? First of all, we see a widespread Deep conviction of our need and that is demonstrated so very plainly in the people's frenzied activity They're running about to get all the sick people and bring them to Jesus What is behind all that other than the people saying we've got nothing else.

There's nobody else that can do this They will die or they will lay there unable to walk or unable to see or unable to work for the rest of their life Unless we can get them to Jesus. Jesus is the only one that can help them. So there's this recognition of a deep need There's the understanding.

There's a realization that the reality is that there are no options open to me. And this is the only option and Jesus is the only one that I can go to. So this connects to us, of course, from chapter 2 verse 17 where Jesus said, I didn't come for the for the healthy. I came, I didn't come for the righteous.

I came for the sinner. Meaning, of course, in that passage that Jesus is not saying that there are some who don't need Him, but instead Jesus is saying the only people I came for are the ones who recognize they need me. The ones who have no recognition of their need for me, I'm doing nothing for them.

Because we must start with the recognition that you need me. That you need my intervention into your life that you need my intervention into your soul And so these people are demonstrating that they understand we need Jesus's intervention So they're running and they're getting the sick and they're bringing the sick to them and as they bring the sick to them Or as they bring the sick to Jesus, what they are showing, they are displaying that they believe at least three things about Jesus.

They believe, first of all, that He is accessible to them. They believe that when they bring the sick to Jesus, they will be able to get to Jesus. That He is, first of all, accessible. Secondly, they believe that He is willing, that they won't bring the sick to Jesus, and Jesus will turn His back, unwilling to do anything for them.

Instead, they believe that He is willing. And then thirdly, we're going to see that they believe that he has the power. So three things that show us very important truths about saving faith. Saving faith is a way of, is a, is a casting of our soul, a casting of one's whole soul without reservation upon Christ with the confidence that he is number one, accessible to the sinner, number two, willing to receive the sinner, and number three, able to save the sinner.

So let's walk through the passage and we'll see these three things. First of all, from verse 50 Well, we'll start back at 52 again or 53 when they had crossed over they came to the land of Gennesaret and more to the shore And when they got out of the boat, the people immediately recognized him and ran about the whole region and began to bring the sick people on their beds to wherever they heard he was and wherever he came in villages cities or countryside They laid the sick in the marketplaces and implored him that they might even touch the fringe of his garment.

And as many as touched him were made well. We must just read that passage and just marvel at the accessibility that Jesus makes of himself. It might be easy to just pass over this and just think, well, here's Jesus making His way, and people are coming to Him left and right, and they can

eventually get up to Him, and the crowds are big, but as long as you wait long enough, you'll, you can eventually get to Jesus.

Instead, what we should see here quite plainly is that Mark has set us up From early on in the gospel to understand something about the size of these crowds and something about the nature of these crowds Remember as Jesus said we need to have a boat just in case I need to escape in case the crowds about to crush me We talked about crowd mentality and crowds how crowds can sometimes work And so the crowds that Jesus that Mark is describing for us are so Voluminous so large so many people That we must conclude that in order for all who came to Jesus to be able to touch Him, Jesus had to purposely and intentionally make Himself accessible to all who came.

There were none who came to Jesus. And spent three days trying to get to him, and then just had to turn around and go back home because they couldn't wait any longer and they just couldn't get to Jesus. All who came to him were healed. There were none who came to Jesus who left disappointed. All who came to him were able to access Jesus.

And something there is very important for us to see about the accessibility of our Messiah. Jesus makes himself available. Supremely accessible to all who would come to him, all who are come to him, as he says in John chapter 6, all that the Father gives me will come to me, and of all who come to me, whoever comes to me, I will never cast out.

1st Timothy 1 and verse 15, Jesus came into the world to save sinners and His mission to save sinners meant that He would make Himself accessible to all who came to Him. Both those who come to Him for spiritual healing and the much, much larger crowds that come to Him for physical healing. There's not one instance in all the Gospels of anyone who came to Jesus for physical healing and was turned away.

Not one. At the, at the least, there are that of course the story of Jesus who first forgives the sins of the paralytic before healing him But no one comes to Jesus for physical healing and is turned away because he makes himself Accessible to all who come to him and this is good news. This is the good news of the God who has become man.

The crowds are coming. The crowds are pressing in on him. There's people everywhere. There's crowds everywhere. But Jesus just makes it a purposeful and intentional point that he will be accessible to all who come. There is none who come to Jesus and say, I wanted to get to Jesus. I just couldn't. I was just blocked by the crowds.

I was blocked by these people that were in my way or I just didn't have the time to get to him. None who came to him were turned away as he says, all who come to me, they will never be cast out. And that is good news because the sinner must believe that we have a rescuer who will make himself accessible to all who come.

The sinner must know that they are coming to a rescuer, that they don't have to take a number and wait in line. And they don't have to hope that they're one of the ones near the front of the line that they can get to Jesus. The sinner comes to Jesus knowing all who come to him, he will not turn any away.

The disciple who walks with Jesus must know that whoever turns to him will find him facing you. with arms open. None will turn to Jesus to find his back turn. No matter how long you have

neglected him. No matter how long you have failed to pray. No matter how cold you feel that your heart has grown to him.

If you are his child and you turn to him, you will find his arms open and his face glowing to receive you because none come to him and find his back turned none come to him and find him inaccessible. The sinner and the disciple must both know that when we come to our rescuer, we are coming to one who makes himself supremely accessible. Secondly, we see how Jesus makes it Jesus is completely willing to heal all who come to him.

His willingness to heal all is something that is quite remarkable in the passage. All who come to him and all who touch him are made well, and all who come are allowed to come to him. The willingness of Jesus to heal is so quite remarkable here. Let's remind ourselves of the recent context. The disciples were sent out for this initial sending out period.

They come back so weary, so physically weary, so mentally and emotionally weary, so spiritually weary, Jesus says to them, look, let's get away. You haven't even had time to eat, but let's get away so that you may rest. Meanwhile, Jesus has been doing that for well over a year and a half now. The crowds that have flocked around Jesus every day have been consistent.

Jesus nevertheless says, let's go, let's get some rest. So they go across the lake for this day of rest. The day of rest never came, did it? Instead, it was a day of work. It was a day of long ministry work into the night. And then as the night begins, they set out on the sea, rowing across, even rowing across calm waters would have been a night of work.

But they row into the storm, into the waves, all night. Meanwhile, Jesus prays all night, Jesus didn't sleep the night before, now they get to the land the next day, Jesus has now been going at this pace for over a year. And remember back in the day of healing at Capernaum, as the people came to him, we made note there that Jesus, Jesus wasn't this healing machine.

Jesus wasn't a healing vending machine that if you just came and put a couple of quarters in the slot and pushed your number, then out came a healing. Instead, the Gospels present Jesus's healing work as something that extracts something from him. Something is taken. Something is required of Jesus. We don't know.

The, the hypostatic union, the union of Christ, the Son of God, and man, the union of those two natures, are such that we can never comprehend that. So, there is so much that we don't understand about the man Jesus. But what we do understand is that the healing activity in which Jesus engaged took something from him.

It required something of him. It exhausted him in some type of a way. And so that night of healing, all night long as he wanted to touch everyone who came to him, and each one took something from him. The woman who touches the hem of his garment, he turns around and he says, I felt power go out from me. So all of these healings take something.

They require something of him, and yet he is supremely willing for all who come to him. Come unto me all who labor and are heavy laden, and I will give you rest. Take my yoke upon you and learn from me, for I am gentle and lowly of heart, and you will find rest for your souls. He is willing for all who come to him.

There is none who ever come to Jesus in faith and repentance who find him unwilling. The leper said to Jesus back in chapter one, if you are willing, you are make, you can make me clean and Jesus must have looked at him and shook his head and said, Oh, I am so willing. I am so willing. That's why I came.

None come to Jesus in faith and repentance and find him unwilling to receive them. So the sinner and the disciple must both understand. The good news. Oh, it is good news, isn't it? That our Master is willing for all, all who come to Him. We understand that all who come to Him find Him willing. Every sinner who comes to Him in faith and repentance finds Him willing.

Every disciple who comes to Him in belief and trust and says to Him, I want more of you. We all find Him willing. To give all of himself such good news that we see here in the passage. But then thirdly, we also see the good news of the power of Jesus. All who came to him were made well, there were none who came to Jesus, who were not made well.

What that means is it didn't matter what they, what the infirmity was, it didn't matter what the sickness was. It didn't matter if it was a sickness that they were born with and they've now lived with it for 55 years. It didn't matter if it was a malformation of the body that was prior to their birth, and now they've learned, they've lived with legs that don't work for their whole life.

Or maybe it was a sickness that came on the week before last. Maybe it was an injury they suffered at work two weeks ago. It didn't matter, nor did it matter the severity of it. It didn't matter if it was a genetic deflection, or it didn't matter if it was like Peter's mother in law, a fever that had her in the bed.

It didn't matter. There is no faith healer that would ever claim such as that. We all know that these faith healers, we all know the falseness behind that, but even in their false claims, none of them would even claim that. There is no faith healer that would ever claim, all who come to me will be healed.

It doesn't matter what you come to me with. It doesn't matter if you come to me with leprosy. It doesn't matter if you come to me with demon possession. It doesn't matter if you come to me with some sort of genetic disease that you were born with. It doesn't matter. Because all who come to me will receive the same healing, which is to say, you will be healed as though you never had the disease.

You'll be healed as though you never had the injury or the infirmity. All who came to Him find power. The power to heal everything that is brought to him. Hebrews seven, in verse 25, he is able to save to the uttermost, those who draw near to him, or Isaiah 59 in verse one. Behold the hand, the Lord's hand is not shortened, that it cannot save, or his ear dulled that it cannot hear.

The sinner comes to him in belief that they're coming to one who has the power to save them. The disciple comes to Jesus in consistent belief that we are coming to the master that has the power over all of our sin, the power to set us free, and when he sets us free, we are free indeed. We don't come to him thinking he maybe has the power.

The true disciple of Christ comes to him knowing he has the power over all sin, over all sickness. There is nothing stronger than him. All who come to him. Come to find one accepting, willing to heal, willing to receive all who come to him in faith and repentance and possessing of all the power

that's needed to free them from whatever disease and the story they come to Jesus with or to free us from whatever sin we come to Jesus with.

But then lastly, in the passage, we see something that tells us of the duty of the disciple, the duty of the believer, because we can't miss in the passage how it was just this frenzy of loved ones and friends bringing the sick to Jesus, bringing those who can't get to Jesus, bringing them to Jesus. They didn't have the power to heal their loved ones, but they had the power to get them to Jesus.

And that's the power that they exercised. They exercised the power to get them to Jesus. Jesus was in the region. He was in the land. We got to get them to Jesus. And that's what they did. We think, of course, of Luke, I'm sorry, John chapter 1, how Philip brings Nathanael to Jesus. Or Luke chapter 14, in the parable, we're told where Jesus says, Go to the highways and hedges and compel people to come in.

Or more, most poignantly, I think of Romans chapter 10. How will they call on Him whom they have not believed? And how will they believe in Him whom they have never heard? And how are they to hear without someone preaching? And how are they to preach unless they are sent? So we see something here of the duty of the disciple of the duty of the believer to bring to Jesus those who need Jesus.

Now, what does that mean? Does that mean that we compel people to come into the gathering of God's people and hear the proclamation of his word? That certainly doesn't hurt. But here's what I think this means. As we see this, this physical reality of when Jesus was physically on the earth, and people are bringing the sick to Jesus to be physically in his presence.

Today the church sees this, and the church takes as its exhortation from this passage, the exhortation to pray, to bring those to Jesus in prayer. You know, I think that we could probably go so far as to say that there's probably not any of us in the room who are in Christ who came to be in Christ out of some Unfounded by earthly means unfounded compulsion to open the Bible and start reading it I think all of us who are in Christ would have to say we are in Christ because someone prayed for us.

Someone, somewhere along the line, prayed. A parent, maybe from early childhood, maybe from before we were born. Maybe a friend. Somebody prayed and lifted you up. Now there may be those, we from time to time may come across those other believers, whom God has worked in their life in such a way as they just receive this compulsion from the Holy Spirit to start reading His word.

God is certainly not beyond, that's not beyond God's work. But that is to say that the norm, the normal way in which people are ushered into the kingdom of God is that God moves in their soul believers to pray for those outside of Christ, to bring them, metaphorically, on the, the bed, the pallet. of their prayers, bring them into the presence of Jesus.

Our prayers don't save anyone, but the believer becomes compelled to usher into the presence of God those who can't come to him. And bringing them to Jesus in our prayers, we find the same Messiah. He hasn't changed. He's the same yesterday, today, and tomorrow. We find him willing, we find him accessible, and we find him powerful.