

Proper 12B: Mark 6, It's not always about you

1. People are selfish by nature, Christian or not, we want the world and its stories to revolve around us and our wants and desires, think about the number of ways that we do this:
 - a. In the modern world our jobs are good for us as long as they are “satisfying” that is they meet our needs, gone are the days of just being paid we’re looking for some secondary benefit like happiness or self-worth
 - i. My grandfather came over from Lithuania, had been apprenticed as a tailor and found himself in America working in a coal mine 12 hours a day, 6 days a week.
 - ii. I never got to meet him, but my guess is he wouldn’t have said that was his dream job that gave him self- actualization.
 - iii. He worked so that he and his family could eat and live.
 - iv. Yet two generations removed my work ethic reflects our present culture more than his – I find it hard not to desire some fulfillment from my work
 - b. Our conversations are also opportunities to relate to others what we think or who we know or what we’ve done
 - i. The one-upmanship is frequently on display in social settings where you hear people trying to impress others that they don’t know well about what they’ve accomplished
 - ii. This narcissism is even captured in songs – Toby Keith, **“We talk about your friends and the places that you've been The polish on your toes and the run in your hose And God knows we're gonna talk about your clothes...But every once in awhile I wanna talk about me Wanna talk about I Wanna talk about number one...What I think, what I like, what I know, what I want, what I see I like talking about you you you you, usually, but occasionally I wanna talk about me.”**
 - iii. When it really comes right down to it there’s nothing occasional about it, what we think about, talk about, and do is almost always about us.
2. Even the way that we interpret and relate to Scripture is not exempt from our desire to make everything all about us - forget what the passage really means what does it mean to me...how does this apply to my life today?
 - a. Today’s Gospel lesson is a case in point, many of the sermons and studies that have been written on this text immediately jump to an allegory about our life
 - i. “The disciples’ passage across the Sea of Galilee is really about the Christian’s journey through life”
 - ii. The headwinds that they encountered are the struggles that we go through in our own lives
 - iii. Jesus walking on the water and calming the storm is God coming to help us in the midst of our storms.

- iv. I won't argue that it's wrong to allegorize Scripture so that it relates to our life, but sometimes it's necessary to step back from the text and realize maybe it's not always about me or my world.
- b. We have to ask ourselves, "Is that what the disciples understood it to be? Is it what Christ was intending to convey?" – let's look again at our Gospel
 - i. Jesus had just finished feeding the 5000 a clear demonstration that the Lord was present among His people supernaturally providing for them
 - ii. He had previously sent the twelve out to heal the sick and cast out demons – He gave them the authority and power to do so.
 - iii. And He had already calmed another storm on the Sea of Galilee, in short Mark's Gospel reveals Jesus as God who controls and directs His creation
- c. Did the disciples think, "Our trouble getting across the Sea of Galilee in the middle of the night is the perfect metaphor for the struggles of life,"?
 - i. No, Scripture plainly tells us that they were even more terrified of Jesus' appearance than of the storm, "**but when they saw him walking on the sea they thought it was a ghost, and cried out...**" (Mk 6:49)
 - ii. When the episode was done Mark tells us, "**And he got into the boat with them, and the wind ceased. And they were utterly astounded, for they did not understand about the loaves, but their hearts were hardened.**" (Mk 6:51-51)
 - iii. They weren't of a mind to allegorize this event or any of Jesus' miracles because they didn't understand them, they were in awe
- d. This episode was a demonstration that Yahweh was present; when our Lord said to the disciples, "It is I" He was using a very specific reference to His divinity.
 - i. When God revealed Himself to Moses in the burning bush He revealed His personal Name – Yahweh in Hebrew that is translated in Greek "ego eimi"
 - ii. That is the same Name Jesus uses here – those two words together aren't used in Scripture apart from God's Name.
 - iii. This is one of the rare times in the synoptic Gospels (Mt, Mk, Lk) that Jesus uses these words, it is much more common in John as we saw in our recent Bible study.
 - iv. But the disciples didn't recognize what was going on even with the use of the Name, as Mark tells us their hearts were hardened (Mk 6:52)
- 3. We too reveal our own hardness of heart when we try make all the events and all of the miracles of Christ about us and our problems in order to relate to them
 - a. For once it's not important what you've done, what you think, feel, or know – it's all about Him
 - i. He is God in flesh, born of a woman born under the Law to redeem (buy back) those under the Law (us)
 - ii. He lived a life fulfilling all of God's Law (His own law) where we couldn't
 - iii. He died on the cross as punishment for your sins when you couldn't

- iv. The whole story of salvation is already all about us...it's already all about you and me
- b. So why when everything that He's done He did for us anyway, do we have to take His demonstrations of divine power and make them about us, too?
 - i. Rejoice and be glad that this almighty God, whose appearance frightened His closest friends, loved you enough to save you
 - ii. Is He there for you in times of trouble? Of course! **“Who shall separate us from the love of Christ? Shall tribulation, or distress, or persecution, or famine, or nakedness, or danger, or sword...No, in all these things we are more than conquerors through him who loved us.”** (Rom 8:35,37)
 - iii. We don't need to invent a Christ who cares for us in times of trouble, that promise is writ large throughout the Bible.
- c. What our Lord did couldn't be summed up any better than John 3:16, **“For God so love the world that He gave (handed over) His only Son so that whoever believes in Him will have eternal life.”**
 - i. The same God who spoke everything into existence with His Word is the same God who looked on His fallen creation in love and once again sent His Word (Jesus) to save that creation.
 - ii. The story of salvation is already all about you so when Christ chooses to reveal Himself for Who He is God in flesh made manifest, be still and know that He is God!