

Sermon Outline

“Amazement versus Faith”

Mark 6:45-52 – Paul David Tripp – September 12, 2010

Called To Be Participants

1. If you a God’s child, you have been called to his kingdom work. We are not just saved and adopted; we are not just consumers of grace. We are to be participants of his grace.
2. If God has called us for his service, how does God prepare us for his work? He does it where he has placed us – in marriage, as parents, at work, among friends, in this local church. We don’t step out of life to do ministry. We do ministry and God prepares us for ministry in every venue of life.
3. Discipleship, a prominent theme in Mark’s gospel, is about Christ preparing his followers to be his participants in the gospel. Jesus doesn’t want those who know the gospel; he wants those who are transformed by the gospel. And how does Jesus accomplish this transformation? Jesus crafts experiences that work his transforming grace in our heart. Whether they knew it or not, the disciples were in the school of discipleship 24 hours, 7 days a week. Whether we know it or not, we are in the same school of discipleship, 24/7.

Gospel Equation (v. 45-50)

1. The way that Jesus transforms and makes us useful for Christian service is by manufacturing experiences at the intersection of difficulty and glory.
 - a. Difficulty: confronts our neediness, weakness, smallness, lack of control and lack of dependence. He brings difficulty to rescue us from our self-sufficient independence.
 - b. Glory: In the midst of difficulty, Jesus reveals himself as the Redeemer, the merciful, gracious and all-sufficient Savior.
2. The Gospel Equation is this: Divine Power + Divine Compassion = Everything You Need.
3. The disciples found themselves in a moment of difficulty—headwinds, an angry sea—going nowhere quickly in a dangerous and futile situation. They were not there because of bad choices but because that was exactly where Jesus wanted them. He waited on shore so they could have this experience.
4. Then Jesus revealed his glory, his divine power. The King of kings and the Lord of creation walked on the water to the boat, against the headwinds and across the angry sea.
 - a. The disciples should have been prepared for this moment. They should have recognized the Messiah. Prior to this moment, they saw demons cast out, people resurrected, thousands fed with a few loaves and fishes and a violent storm calmed

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with a word. But, like you and I, instead of seeing Jesus, they thought they saw a ghost.

- b. Jesus came to them in divine compassion and said, “Don’t be afraid, the I AM is here; the covenant-keeping, everlasting and unchanging One is with you. You will never be alone.” He says the same to us; in marriage, parenting, work, relationships, sickness—all of life—we are never alone. He is always with us.

Amazement versus Faith (v. 51-52a)

1. Principle: There is a significant and foundational difference between amazement and faith.
 - a. Amazement is a function of the brain. It is the astonishment at something for which you have no experience or categories.
 - i. It is possible to be amazed at the things happening in the church—testimonies of salvation, baptisms, ministry, exciting worship, etc.—and not be living by faith.
 - b. Faith is the investment of the heart.
2. The disciples responded with amazement. They were astounded at Jesus walking on the water because they lacked faith. They didn’t understand and they hadn’t learned their lessons despite all the many miracles they had seen Jesus perform.
3. The same instructional and transformational principle is in operation in our life. Jesus creates difficult circumstances to weaken our confidence in ourselves and to grow our confidence and faith in the person and power of Jesus.
 - a. However, like the disciples, we are better at seeing the ghosts than seeing the Messiah. In those moments of instruction and transformation, we see difficulty and pain, and we panic and fear.

The Problem: Hard Hearts (v. 52b)

1. Why did the disciples see a ghost? Why were the disciples amazed and fearful? Because their hearts were hardened.
2. A hard heart is resistant to change, self-satisfied, content with the way things are and content with the fruit it once bore. It is satisfied with little growth and just a little Bible intake and knowledge. It lacks hunger and thirst for the Lord. A hard heart does not learn the lessons that come with difficulty and is unprepared for what Jesus is teaching/doing.

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3. We have been given the best gift in the world in the grace of Jesus Christ.

- a. Are we holding on to that grace and not letting go until it has accomplished all that the Lord wants to do in us? Are we seeing that all difficulties of life have been manufactured by Jesus to transform our character and prepare us for useful service? Are we embracing that this transforming grace is at work 24/7 so we can be changed and share the glory with others? These are the marks of a disciple.

Fellowship Starters

1. In view of the fact that we are in the “school of discipleship” 24 hours, 7 days a week, describe the current experiences the Lord has tailor-made for your life to help you grow in character. How are you responding to them?
2. Like the disciples, how prone are you to see and respond to “ghosts” (difficulty and pain; panic and fear) instead of seeing Jesus (Mark 6:49)? What prevents you from seeing the Lord in the midst of your trial? In the midst of the difficulties, are you learning the lessons the Lord is trying to teach you?
3. Jesus told the terrified disciples not to fear because they were never alone; he was always with them (Mark 6:50). How can Jesus’ words bring comfort, hope and faith to the difficulties in your life?
4. Paul Tripp described a “hard heart” as a heart that is resistant to change, self-satisfied, content with the way things are and not hungry for the Lord. How is your heart postured toward the Lord? How can you return to your first love?