

Lesson 12

Proper 12

The Holy Gospel: Mark 6:45–56

182. What does Mark 6:30-44 (feeding of the 5,000) teach us about Jesus? What Old Testament references come to mind with this story?

183. After all of this, why did Jesus need some time alone for prayer? How does this impact our lives?

Refreshed by His communion with His Father, Jesus renewed His concern for His disciples, who were struggling against a strong wind that hampered their progress and even threatened to swamp their boat. He went to them during the night, walking on the water in the midst of the storm. The frightened and fearful disciples called out to Him. He reassured them that it truly was He. He went into the boat, and the wind stopped.

184. What was Jesus teaching His disciples that evidently had not come across through His miracle on the mountainside?

185. How does this story fit into the theme/narrative of Mark?

Mark's account does not tell of Jesus' interaction the next day in Capernaum with the crowd and with His disciples. It moves beyond that to tell of their crossing the lake to land at Gennesaret, a fertile plain along the west coast of the Sea of Galilee. Immediately the crowds recognized Jesus, and a time of intense ministry followed. "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." There is no mention of His devoting time to teaching the crowds. He served them in love, in the ways they desired. Jesus came as the promised "Servant of the Lord" for the benefit of God's people. He would give Himself as a ransom for the many and provide new life for their souls and spirits. In His compassion, He gave them relief and healing also of their bodily diseases and disabilities. It's no wonder that His first year of ministry, which took place largely in Galilee, is called "the year of popularity."

186. How can this “year of popularity” be seen during Passion Week?

The Old Testament Lesson: Job 9:1-12

187. When did this take place?

188. What is the context of the book of Job and especially of that leading up to chapter 9?

189. How is God described in chapter 9?

190. How does the story of Job help us understand the struggles of our own life?

The Epistle for the Day: Ephesians 3:14–21

Paul’s prayer for the Ephesian Christians grows out of knowing God the Father through Jesus. And he states that our knowing our identity as His children—our “name” and that of all Christians—is drawn from Him. This is clear in the Greek text. “The Father” is *ton patera*; “every family” is *pasa patria*.

191. How does the Father strengthen the whole family for the growth He desires?

192. This is the only place in the New Testament where the phrase “so that Christ may dwell in your hearts” is found. How is it significant that the Greek word for “dwell,” *katoikeō*, is a derivative of the word for “house”?

As he prayed that the Ephesian Christians might “[be] rooted and grounded in love,” Paul mixed his metaphors. “Rooted” points to living, growing things that send their roots deep into the soil to gain nourishment for life. “Grounded” is from the world of construction, referring to having a good, solid foundation on which to build.

193. How are both metaphors significant for us as we seek to grow in love?

194. How can we get to know that which surpasses knowledge? What is the result of appreciating the dimensions of Christ’s love for us?

When we make the thoughts and desires of Paul’s prayer for the Ephesian Christians our own, we have to end up with words of praise to the One who gives us what we ask for in Christ—and more! Let’s end this study by reading together Paul’s closing doxology:

“To Him who is able to do far more abundantly than all that we ask or think, according to the power at work within us, to Him be glory in the church and in Christ Jesus throughout all generations, forever and ever. Amen.”