

4:35-5:43 Jesus is the death-defeater...

- 4:35-41 Scene #1: saves his disciples from drowning
- 5:1-20 Scene #2: liberates a man from the deathly grip of 'Legion'
- 5:21-24a Scene #3: Jairus' daughter is dying
- 5:24b-34 Scene #4: Jesus heals a woman who had been bleeding for 12 years
- 5:35-43 Scene #3: Jairus' daughter dies aged 12, but Jesus raises her!

6:1-29 ...yet many were unwilling to bear the cost of following him

- 6:1-6 Scene #1: despite his wisdom and miracles, Nazareth can't see past the Jesus they grew up with
- 6:7-13 Scene #2: Jesus expects many to reject his messengers rather than bear the costs of hospitality and repentance
- 6:14-29 Scene #3: Herod knows John is right, but obeying would cost him his marriage and face

The surprise of Mark 4-8

It is commonly assumed in modern Christianity that

- a. Jesus is inherently quite difficult to believe in, so it's unsurprising that ordinary, rational people aren't persuaded
- But the logic of Mark 4-8 feels almost reversed, closer to
- b. Jesus gives people every reason to recognise who he is, unless God blinds them in judgement

Worldview diagnosis

- 4:35-5:43
 - 1. What amount of evidence do you think it would take for most people to follow Jesus?
 - 2. What might cause us to be underwhelmed by Jesus' power over death?
- 6:1-29
 - 3. Read 'The surprise of Mark 4-8' above. How persuaded are you that:
 - a. the author Mark's assumptions have been represented accurately?
 - b. this reversed logic is a *truer way* to see the world?
 - 4. How true to life does Mark 6:1-29 read? Can you think of real-life examples of those somewhat persuaded by the truth of Jesus and yet unwilling to bear the cost of following him?

Getting back into the text

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| Whole | 1. How persuaded are we that Mark 4:12, quoting Isaiah 6:9-10, 'they may indeed see but not perceive, and may indeed hear but not understand, lest they should turn and be forgiven' is being played out through these events? |
| 4:35-41 | 2. Why might Mark include the detail that Jesus was sleeping on a cushion?
3. Expand the poetic compression, 'Why are you so afraid ____? Do you still have no faith ____?' |
| 5:1-20 | 4. Mark is usually very curt but devotes lots of words to this man's setting in 5:1-5. Why?
5. What is the literary function of the 2000 pigs in 5:11-14?
6. What is the significance of the demons recognising Jesus as the Son of God before the surrounding people do? |
| 5:21-43 | 7. Why does Mark begin the Jairus' daughter's story, interrupt it with another story, and then return to Jairus' daughter?
8. Why does Mark tell us both that the woman had suffered for <i>twelve years</i> and that the girl was <i>twelve years old</i> ? What literary connection does that invite us to make (even if we should avoid over-symbolising the number)?

9. Taken together, how do the four scenes (4:35-5:43) escalate the theme of death? |
| 6:1-6 | 10. What evidence does Nazareth have that Jesus is the Son of God? What then prevents them from believing in Jesus?
11. Why might Mark describe Jesus as being amazed at their unbelief in 6:6? |
| 6:7-13 | 12. What role does <i>hospitality</i> play in the mission? What practical cost would receiving Jesus' messengers impose on a household?
13. Why does Mark tell us about rejection before reporting that the Twelve actually preached repentance and exercised Jesus' authority? |
| 4:21-25 | 14. Why does Mark interrupt the mission of the Twelve with the story of John's death?
15. How does Mark distinguish between Herodias' attitude to John and Herod's?
16. Why would obeying John the Baptist have been costly to Herod?
17. What is the social effect of Herod offering up to half his kingdom?
18. Why does Mark specify the presence of Herod's high officials, military commanders and leading men of Galilee?
19. What does killing John the Baptist tell us about the state of Herod's heart?

20. Taken together, how do the three scenes show different <i>costs</i> of responding rightly to Jesus or his message?
21. Why would 'they did not have enough evidence' be an inadequate explanation for the rejection seen throughout 6:1-29? |

²⁴ 'Consider carefully what you hear,' he continued. 'With the measure you use, it will be measured to you – and even more. ²⁵ Whoever has will be given more; whoever does not have, even what they have will be taken from them.'

²⁶ He also said, 'This is what the kingdom of God is like. A man scatters seed on the ground. ²⁷ Night and day, whether he sleeps or gets up, the seed sprouts and grows, though he does not know how. ²⁸ All by itself the soil produces corn – first the stalk, then the ear, then the full grain in the ear. ²⁹ As soon as the corn is ripe, he puts the sickle to it, because the harvest has come.'

³⁰ Again he said, 'What shall we say the kingdom of God is like, or what parable shall we use to describe it? ³¹ It is like a mustard seed, which is the smallest of all seeds on earth. ³² Yet when planted, it grows and becomes the largest of all garden plants, with such big branches that the birds can perch in its shade.'

³³ With many similar parables Jesus spoke the word to them, as much as they could understand. ³⁴ He did not say anything to them without using a parable. But when he was alone with his own disciples, he explained everything.

³⁵ That day when evening came, he said to his disciples, 'Let us go over to the other side.' ³⁶ Leaving the crowd behind, they took him along, just as he was, in the boat. There were also other boats with him. ³⁷ A furious squall came up, and the waves broke over the boat, so that it was nearly swamped. ³⁸ Jesus was in the stern, sleeping on a cushion. The disciples woke him and said to him, 'Teacher, don't you care if we drown?'

³⁹ He got up, rebuked the wind and said to the waves, 'Quiet! Be still!' Then the wind died down and it was completely calm.

⁴⁰ He said to his disciples, 'Why are you so afraid? Do you still have no faith?'

⁴¹ They were terrified and asked each other, 'Who is this? Even the wind and the waves obey him!'

5 They went across the lake to the region of the Gerasenes.^a ² When Jesus got out of the boat, a man with an impure spirit came from the tombs to meet him. ³ This man lived in the tombs, and no one could bind him anymore, not even with a chain. ⁴ For he had often been chained hand and foot, but he tore the chains apart and broke the irons on his feet. No one was strong enough to subdue him. ⁵ Night and day among the tombs and in the hills he would cry out and cut himself with stones.

⁶ When he saw Jesus from a distance, he ran and fell on his knees in front of him. ⁷ He shouted at the top of his voice, 'What do you want with me, Jesus, Son

^a Some manuscripts *Gadarenes*; other manuscripts *Gergesenes*

<u>Mark 8:31-13:37</u> Surprise #2 Jesus' kingdom is for the humble, not externally religious	<u>Mark 14:1-16:8</u> Surprise #3 The mighty eternal King Jesus did actually suffer a miserable death
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of the Most High God? In God's name don't torture me!' ⁸ For Jesus had said to him, 'Come out of this man, you impure spirit!'

⁹ Then Jesus asked him, 'What is your name?'

'My name is Legion,' he replied, 'for we are many.' ¹⁰ And he begged Jesus again and again not to send them out of the area.

¹¹ A large herd of pigs was feeding on the nearby hillside. ¹² The demons begged Jesus, 'Send us among the pigs; allow us to go into them.' ¹³ He gave them permission, and the impure spirits came out and went into the pigs. The herd, about two thousand in number, rushed down the steep bank into the lake and were drowned.

¹⁴ Those tending the pigs ran off and reported this in the town and countryside, and the people went out to see what had happened. ¹⁵ When they came to Jesus, they saw the man who had been possessed by the legion of demons, sitting there, dressed and in his right mind; and they were afraid. ¹⁶ Those who had seen it told the people what had happened to the demon-possessed man – and told about the pigs as well. ¹⁷ Then the people began to plead with Jesus to leave their region.

¹⁸ As Jesus was getting into the boat, the man who had been demon-possessed begged to go with him. ¹⁹ Jesus did not let him, but said, 'Go home to your own people and tell them how much the Lord has done for you, and how he has had mercy on you.' ²⁰ So the man went away and began to tell in the Decapolis^a how much Jesus had done for him. And all the people were amazed.

²¹ When Jesus had again crossed over by boat to the other side of the lake, a large crowd gathered round him while he was by the lake. ²² Then one of the synagogue leaders, named Jairus, came, and when he saw Jesus, he fell at his feet. ²³ He pleaded earnestly with him, 'My little daughter is dying. Please come and put your hands on her so that she will be healed and live.' ²⁴ So Jesus went with him.

A large crowd followed and pressed round him. ²⁵ And a woman was there who had been subject to bleeding for twelve years. ²⁶ She had suffered a great deal under the care of many doctors and had spent all she had, yet instead of getting better she grew worse. ²⁷ When she heard about Jesus, she came up behind him in the crowd and touched his cloak, ²⁸ because she thought, 'If I just touch his clothes, I will be healed.' ²⁹ Immediately her bleeding stopped and she felt in her body that she was freed from her suffering.

^a that is, *the ten cities*

³⁰ At once Jesus realised that power had gone out from him. He turned round in the crowd and asked, 'Who touched my clothes?'

³¹ 'You see the people crowding against you,' his disciples answered, 'and yet you can ask, "Who touched me?"'

³² But Jesus kept looking around to see who had done it. ³³ Then the woman, knowing what had happened to her, came and fell at his feet and, trembling with fear, told him the whole truth. ³⁴ He said to her, 'Daughter, your faith has healed you. Go in peace and be freed from your suffering.'

³⁵ While Jesus was still speaking, some people came from the house of Jairus, the synagogue leader. 'Your daughter is dead,' they said. 'Why bother the teacher anymore?'

³⁶ Overhearing^a what they said, Jesus told him, 'Don't be afraid; just believe.'

³⁷ He did not let anyone follow him except Peter, James and John the brother of James. ³⁸ When they came to the home of the synagogue leader, Jesus saw a commotion, with people crying and wailing loudly. ³⁹ He went in and said to them, 'Why all this commotion and wailing? The child is not dead but asleep.'

⁴⁰ But they laughed at him.

After he put them all out, he took the child's father and mother and the disciples who were with him, and went in where the child was. ⁴¹ He took her by the hand and said to her, '*Talitha koum!*' (which means 'Little girl, I say to you, get up!').

⁴² Immediately the girl stood up and began to walk around (she was twelve years old). At this they were completely astonished. ⁴³ He gave strict orders not to let anyone know about this, and told them to give her something to eat.

6 Jesus left there and went to his home town, accompanied by his disciples.

² When the Sabbath came, he began to teach in the synagogue, and many who heard him were amazed.

'Where did this man get these things?' they asked. 'What's this wisdom that has been given him? What are these remarkable miracles he is performing?' ³ Isn't this the carpenter? Isn't this Mary's son and the brother of James, Joseph,^b Judas and Simon? Aren't his sisters here with us?' And they took offence at him.

⁴ Jesus said to them, 'A prophet is not without honour except in his own town, among his relatives and in his own home.' ⁵ He could not do any miracles there, except lay his hands on a few people who were ill and heal them. ⁶ He was amazed at their lack of faith.

^a Or *Ignoring*

^b Greek *Joses*, a variant of *Joseph*

Then Jesus went around teaching from village to village. ⁷ Calling the Twelve to him, he began to send them out two by two and gave them authority over impure spirits.

⁸ These were his instructions: 'Take nothing for the journey except a staff – no bread, no bag, no money in your belts. ⁹ Wear sandals but not an extra shirt.

¹⁰ Whenever you enter a house, stay there until you leave that town. ¹¹ And if any place will not welcome you or listen to you, leave that place and shake the dust off your feet as a testimony against them.'

¹² They went out and preached that people should repent. ¹³ They drove out many demons and anointed with oil many people who were ill and healed them.

¹⁴ King Herod heard about this, for Jesus' name had become well known. Some were saying,^a 'John the Baptist has been raised from the dead, and that is why miraculous powers are at work in him.'

¹⁵ Others said, 'He is Elijah.'

And still others claimed, 'He is a prophet, like one of the prophets of long ago.'

¹⁶ But when Herod heard this, he said, 'John, whom I beheaded, has been raised from the dead!'

¹⁷ For Herod himself had given orders to have John arrested, and he had him bound and put in prison. He did this because of Herodias, his brother Philip's wife, whom he had married. ¹⁸ For John had been saying to Herod, 'It is not lawful for you to have your brother's wife.' ¹⁹ So Herodias nursed a grudge against John and wanted to kill him. But she was not able to, ²⁰ because Herod feared John and protected him, knowing him to be a righteous and holy man. When Herod heard John, he was greatly puzzled^b; yet he liked to listen to him.

²¹ Finally the opportune time came. On his birthday Herod gave a banquet for his high officials and military commanders and the leading men of Galilee.

²² When the daughter of^c Herodias came in and danced, she pleased Herod and his dinner guests.

The king said to the girl, 'Ask me for anything you want, and I'll give it to you.'

²³ And he promised her with an oath, 'Whatever you ask I will give you, up to half my kingdom.'

²⁴ She went out and said to her mother, 'What shall I ask for?'

^a Some early manuscripts *He was saying*

^b Some early manuscripts *he did many things*

^c Some early manuscripts *When his daughter*

'The head of John the Baptist,' she answered.

²⁵ At once the girl hurried in to the king with the request: 'I want you to give me right now the head of John the Baptist on a dish.'

²⁶ The king was greatly distressed, but because of his oaths and his dinner guests, he did not want to refuse her. ²⁷ So he immediately sent an executioner with orders to bring John's head. The man went, beheaded John in the prison, ²⁸ and brought back his head on a dish. He presented it to the girl, and she gave it to her mother. ²⁹ On hearing of this, John's disciples came and took his body and laid it in a tomb.

³⁰ The apostles gathered round Jesus and reported to him all they had done and taught. ³¹ Then, because so many people were coming and going that they did not even have a chance to eat, he said to them, 'Come with me by yourselves to a quiet place and get some rest.'

³² So they went away by themselves in a boat to a solitary place. ³³ But many who saw them leaving recognised them and ran on foot from all the towns and got there ahead of them. ³⁴ When Jesus landed and saw a large crowd, he had compassion on them, because they were like sheep without a shepherd. So he began teaching them many things.

³⁵ By this time it was late in the day, so his disciples came to him. 'This is a remote place,' they said, 'and it's already very late. ³⁶ Send the people away so that they can go to the surrounding countryside and villages and buy themselves something to eat.'

³⁷ But he answered, 'You give them something to eat.'

They said to him, 'That would take more than half a year's wages^a! Are we to go and spend that much on bread and give it to them to eat?'

³⁸ 'How many loaves do you have?' he asked. 'Go and see.'

When they found out, they said, 'Five – and two fish.'

³⁹ Then Jesus told them to make all the people sit down in groups on the green grass. ⁴⁰ So they sat down in groups of hundreds and fifties. ⁴¹ Taking the five loaves and the two fish and looking up to heaven, he gave thanks and broke the loaves. Then he gave them to his disciples to distribute to the people. He also divided the two fish among them all. ⁴² They all ate and were satisfied, ⁴³ and the disciples picked up twelve basketfuls of broken pieces of bread and fish. ⁴⁴ The number of the men who had eaten was five thousand.

^a Greek *take two hundred denarii*

Exodus 16:11-15

¹¹ And the LORD said to Moses, ¹² "I have heard the grumbling of the people of Israel. Say to them, 'At twilight you shall eat meat, and in the morning you shall be filled with bread. Then you shall know that I am the LORD your God.'"

¹³ In the evening quail came up and covered the camp, and in the morning dew lay around the camp. ¹⁴ And when the dew had gone up, there was on the face of the wilderness a fine, flake-like thing, fine as frost on the ground.

¹⁵ When the people of Israel saw it, they said to one another, "What is it?" For they did not know what it was. And Moses said to them, "It is the bread that the LORD has given you to eat.