

Unexpected Provision

September 6, 2020



Daily Devotionals Introduction

As you read about Jesus in the Gospels, you might see some things that perhaps you weren't expecting. For this 13-week series, we'll open the Book of Mark together and study the life of Jesus—The Unexpected King. During this series, we will gain a better understanding of who Jesus is and what it really means to be his disciple.

As an individual or as a family, use these daily devotionals and reflection questions to connect with Jesus each day this week.

Each day, there will be a thought stemming from our Scripture passage along with 2-3 questions. Our hope is that as we journey together through the book of Mark, we'll be able to come out the other side knowing more about the life of Jesus.

Be sure to prayerfully consider each day's truth, passages, and each of the questions. If you are a part of a life group, let these devotionals stir your thinking and be the foundation for your group conversation.

Our prayer is that these devotionals, questions, and reflections will help you love God, love people, and make disciples.

Day 1

Read Mark 6:1-6

On September 26th, 2002, Jennifer Lopez released her single, “Jenny from the Block”. It’s about her desire, despite her fame and fortune, to remain humble and true to her roots in Bronx, NY. People had formed in their minds an idea of her that went beyond who she actually was because of her superstar status. Her song was an attempt to add some balance to that struggle.

In our text today, Jesus had the opposite problem of J.Lo. Some people could not get past their image of the little boy they knew, to actually see who Jesus was and to actually hear what Jesus was now teaching them. *Isn’t this Mary’s boy? Isn’t this guy just a carpenter? Don’t His brothers and sisters live just around the block?*

As Jesus taught, the people are amazed (and not in the good way). Jesus’ hometown crowd takes offense to Him.

And you can’t blame them right? I mean, imagine if you went back to where you grew up and started telling people you were God’s Messiah! You’d be met with some pretty interesting looks of amazement.

For Jesus’ hometown, their familiarity with Jesus made them miss out on who Jesus was and what He was all about. They were too wrapped up in their preconceived ideas of who Jesus was. They’d watched Jesus their whole lives – His first steps, playing with His friends, learning in school. And now here is this same man, fully grown, teaching people in a way they’ve never heard. Some people just could not get past their image of the little boy they knew.

But let’s pause here for a second...isn’t it true that sometimes it’s the things we are most “familiar” with that we sometimes miss out on how awe-some they are?? Think of the new phone that you treat so gently when you first get it...and then how a month in, you start flinging it around unconcerned for it’s well-being.

The thing you are initially intrigued by, interested in, or thought was amazing eventually becomes dull, boring, or even worthy of your contempt. And that’s what **Mark 6 is telling us...that our preconceived ideas of Jesus can actually lead us to deny Jesus and His power.**

Today, people have all kinds of different ideas of who Jesus is and I can’t help but wonder if maybe that’s something we need to wrestle with – do we follow some preconceived *idea* of Jesus in our heads or do we follow the REAL Jesus?

That’s an important question because for Nazareth, their *misidentification* of Jesus led to them *missing out* on the power of Jesus in their lives. That’s something we don’t want to happen to us.

Questions for reflection:

1. What are common misconceptions of the person of Jesus that you see people holding to? How do those faulty *ideas* of who Jesus is hinder one’s discipleship?

2. What are faulty or incomplete images of Jesus you have held to in your past? What might be an image of Jesus that you do not quite have right currently?
3. In what ways might you be missing out on the power of Jesus in your life because of a faulty or incomplete image of Him?
4. What ways can you begin to form an accurate picture of the true Jesus?

Day 2

Read Mark 6:6-12

Yesterday we talked about following the real Jesus as opposed to some idea of Jesus that we have in our heads. Today, we are going to look at the next couple of verses in **Mark 6** where Jesus sends out His disciples to do the work of the ministry.

As we dive in, I'd like for you to do a little self-assessment...

- On a scale of 1-10, how much do you like structure? Do you love lists? Do you like to have a plan? Do you thrive on having things mapped out? (1 = no structure, 10 = high structure)
- On a scale of 1-10, how much do you consider yourself a "free spirit"? Do you love to dream? Do you thrive on "going with the flow"? Do you normally operate "organically"? (1 = not at all me, 10 = totally me)

We all know the "very orderly" kind of person, we all know the "free spirit" person, and chances are *you* probably fall somewhere in the middle of those extremes.

In our text today, Jesus calls His 12 disciples and sends them out two by two to expand the influence and message of this new Kingdom.

Read verses 8-11 again and note the specific rules Jesus gave the disciples to live by for their journey. What were those rules? What was their result of obedience to Jesus?

I find it interesting that they were effective following some of the structure that Jesus had laid out for them, but also were flexible enough to "go with the flow" with how they were received as they traveled from place to place.

Jesus had a plan for their lives, and it was the disciple's responsibility to follow that plan moment by moment as events changed all around them. Sound familiar to your journey?

If you remember from Rooted, we learned about seven rhythms of Discipleship: (Daily Devotion, Prayer, Freedom from Strongholds, Sacrificial Generosity, Service, Sharing your Story, Celebration.) Based on what we know from scripture, these rhythms are vital parts of God's plan for our lives as children of the King.

As we apply this text to our lives, these questions can help us manage the tension between following God's plan from scripture and implementing that in a moment by moment changing world.

Questions for reflection:

1. Which rhythm(s) of Discipleship listed above do you feel are becoming ingrained in your life as "rules to live by"? What can you point to in your life specifically to support your answer?
2. What rhythms of discipleship need extra attention? Why do you believe they are lacking?

3. How do you think your natural wiring of an orderly person or a free spirit person helps you in your walk with God? What about your wiring makes your walk with God challenging?
4. How have you experienced structure and orderliness helpful in your discipleship to Jesus? In what ways has openness and flexibility been helpful in your discipleship to Jesus?
5. Spend some time asking God to provide what you need for your faith, and ask Him to provide you with moment by moment obedience as the disciples demonstrated in today's text.

Day 3

For today's devotional, let's read Mark 6's two banquet scenes in **Mark 6:14-44**. Find a quiet space to reflect on the questions and prompts below:

LISTEN

Read the passage. Sit quietly for a moment before you begin. Ask the Holy Spirit to speak and show you what the Lord wants for you in this passage. Mark words or phrases that stand out as you read.

LINGER

Read the passage again out loud. Are the same words or phrases you marked the first time still standing out? Write them down. How do these words or phrases apply to your life right now?

LEARN

As you read the text for a third time, ask yourself and write out your thoughts on the following questions:

- What descriptive words could you use to describe the scene at Herod's banquet and the people involved (i.e. selfish, lustful, angry...)? Write down all that comes to mind. Could any of those words be used to describe your heart or mind over the last few weeks?
- What descriptive words could you use to describe the scene you read at Jesus' banquet (compassion, wonder, fear...)? Write down whatever comes to mind.
- What are the differences between the kingdom of the world (Herod's banquet) and the Kingdom of God (Jesus' banquet)?

LIVE

Read the passage one last time and answer these questions:

- Why is God showing me this now?
- In what ways have I been more like Herod and living out of a worldly disposition as opposed to being like Jesus?
- What does this mean for my life?
- What needs to change in my life?
- How do I need to live differently?

PRAY

Pray to the Father about what you wrote in the LEARN section asking for help by the power of His Holy Spirit at work in your life.

Day 4

Throughout Mark 6, one of the things that becomes evident is how much of a provider Jesus is.

Re-read Mark 6:7-13.

One of the things that disciples need to learn as they prepare to be fully sent out on mission in the world is that their Teacher will equip them with whatever they need for the journey ahead. And oddly enough, He does it by sending the disciples out without any food, without a bag, with one tunic, and without money! The disciples had no emergency fund to rely on, just the provision of God.

Read Mark 6:30-44.

Here, in this portion of Mark, Jesus shows His provision in that He feeds over 5000 people with the meager lunch that a boy brought to Him containing five loaves of bread and two fish. The parallel passages to this in the other gospels occur in **Matthew 14:13-21**, **Luke 9:10-17**, and **John 6:1-15**. This story occurs in EVERY gospel, which is rare! There must be something to it that God wants us to know!

And while there are many things to glean from Jesus feeding the 5000 (for example, the fact that Jesus splits the people into groups of 50s and 100s just like a Roman battalion would be split up showcasing His kingliness), Mark is particularly concerned with showcasing to us Jesus' provision.

It can be hard to actually believe that Jesus is our Provider, can it not? We might pay that thought lip service, but that's harder to internalize. It's so easy to rely, not on God for our daily bread, but on Kroger or Meijer. It's so easy to rely, not on God to be our mighty fortress, but on our bank accounts. It's so easy to rely, not on God to fill us, but on our own appetites and desires.

God being our provider doesn't preclude us from *doing* things that are wise for our lives (saving money, storing food in our freezers, etc.), but God being our Provider has something to do with our *recognition* of where all that ultimately comes from. As Jesus tells us in **Matthew 6:25-26**,

"Therefore I tell you, do not be anxious about your life, what you will eat or what you will drink, nor about your body, what you will put on. Is not life more than food, and the body more than clothing? Look at the birds of the air: they neither sow nor reap nor gather into barns, and yet your heavenly Father feeds them. Are you not of more value than they?"

Just as the birds of the air are fed and provided for by their Father in heaven, so too are we provided for by ours. May we have eyes to see and ears to hear that truth.

Questions for reflection:

1. How has God provided for you in this season?
2. In what ways would a more internalized idea of God being your Provider affect your day to day life? What would meditating on that truth do for your soul?
3. Pray through **Psalm 23**. Allow this Psalm to sink down into your heart. Consider memorizing it.

Day 5

Read Mark 6:45-56.

In this passage, we see Jesus walk on the water, obviously showcasing His divinity and lordship over creation (because who else can WALK ON WATER other than God??). That's what we garner about Jesus from the surface of this passage, but there are some other important things lurking just beneath the surface.

Here are a few observations and questions for you to think through this passage about the person of Jesus:

Jesus finally got to be alone to pray.

- After His plans were interrupted by the crowds, Jesus went back to His source of strength, compassion, grace, and humility ... time alone with His Father in Heaven.
- **QUESTION:** Where does spending time alone with the Father rank on your "priorities list"? How is God inviting you to a deeper walk with Him in prayer?

Mark tips his hat to images of Moses in these verses to tell us something about Jesus' identity.

- **Read Mark 6:48-50** again and then read **Exodus 3:14, 33:19-23**.
- "It is I" is a direct reference back to God speaking to Moses in the burning bush. Jesus tells them the reason they should not fear ... He is God in flesh. Jesus "passing by" the disciples is again God in flesh showing His disciples the Glory of God.
- **QUESTION:** in what situation(s) are you currently struggling to trust that God is who He says He is and will do what He says He'll do?

Jesus tells the disciples not to fear.

- "Don't be afraid" is the most repeated command in Scripture (see **Isaiah 41:10; Joshua 1:9; Deuteronomy 31:6**).
- **QUESTION:** What does that reveal to you about God?

Pray. Go to God the Father, the source of our strength. Ask Him, through the power of His Holy Spirit, given to us through the gift of Jesus the Son, to give you all that you need to live fully strengthened as a disciple of Jesus and to give you a spirit of courage instead of fear.