

## Lesson Five

(Mark 5:35 - 6:44)

### Jairus' Daughter

(Mark 5:35-43)

*35 While Jesus was saying this, some messengers came from Jairus' house and told him, "Your daughter has died. Why should you bother the Teacher any longer?"*

*36 Jesus paid no attention to what they said, but told him, "Don't be afraid, only believe." 37 Then he did not let anyone else go on with him except Peter and James and his brother John. 38 they arrived at the official's house, where Jesus saw the confusion and heard all the loud crying and wailing. 39 He went in and said to them, "Why all this confusion? Why are you crying? The child is not dead -- she is only sleeping!"*

*40 They started making fun of him, so he put them all out, took the child's father and mother, and his three disciples, and went into the room where the child was lying. 41 He took her by the hand and said to her, "Talitha, koum," which means, "Little girl! Get up, I tell you!"*

*42 She got up at once and started walking around (She was twelve years old.) When this happened they were completely amazed! 43 But Jesus gave them strict orders not to tell anyone, and said, "Give her something to eat."*

Certainly Jairus would be impressed by the healing of the unfortunate woman. Yet would he feel Jesus was wasting valuable time??? We know he believed Jesus could heal the sick, but did he believe Jesus could restore one already dead??? His worst fears were confirmed by the messengers who say, "Your daughter has died." The messengers refer to Jesus as *the Teacher*, and this shows how the people thought of him. "Teacher" is close to "prophet" in their thinking (compare 1:27).

Jesus paid no attention to their message of death, and acts to relieve the anxiety of the suffering father. "Don't be afraid, only believe." At the house, the ritual of Jewish mourning has already begun. Mark shows us the mourners *outside*. Paid musicians and mourners were hired to play sad music and to scream and cry to show the sadness of the death. Notice how quickly they turn to laughter and ridicule when Jesus says, "The child is not dead -- she is only sleeping!" At this point Jesus has not yet seen the child, so he cannot be making a medical diagnosis. What he says must be taken as meaning she is in a state of death from which she can be "awakened" (compare John 11:11-14) It is somewhat unusual that Jesus had allowed only Peter, James, and John to come along to the house, and allowed only them and the child's parents to go in where the child was. (Peter, James, and John are the three who saw Jesus transfigured.)

Mark's vivid description of the healing preserves the Aramaic (the Hebrew dialect spoken in Palestine) words spoken by Jesus, "*Talitha, koum.*" Mark then translates this for his readers, as meaning: "Little girl! Get up I tell you!" (Note there is no incantation nor magic formula chanted, just a plain command in the language of the people.) "She got up at once and started walking around." It is characteristic of Mark to emphasize the instantaneous results of the healing. He also mentions her age to explain the fact that she walked. Jesus commands she be given something to eat. This shows



both his thoughtfulness and the completeness of the healing. From Jesus' perspective, physical death is no more a barrier than waking someone from natural sleep.

Again Jesus demands secrecy! Surely such a thing could not be kept secret. But Jesus must be concerned with the act of raising the girl from the dead. Those outside the room could speculate, but never really know (except as later revealed by eyewitnesses). It might be that Jesus declared the girl was not dead but only sleeping, with the intent of creating uncertainty in the minds of the people (that is, the minds of those who did not believe in him). Jesus had a work to do before the climax of the cross. His fame must not spread too quickly. Things must be prepared. In addition to his own rising from death, Jesus rescued three from the grave. Here it is a girl who had just died. The widow's son at Nain (Luke 7:11-15) had been dead at least a few hours. Lazarus (John 11) had been dead four days. Note that this girl was raised from death privately, the widow's son publicly, and Lazarus in the presence of bitter enemies.

### **Jesus Rejected at Nazareth**

*(Mark 6:1-6)*

**6** *Jesus left that place and went back to his hometown, followed by his disciples. 2 On the Sabbath day he began to teach in the synagogue. Many people were there, and when they heard him they were all amazed. "Where did he get all this?" they asked. "What wisdom is this that has been given him? How does he perform miracles? 3 Isn't he the carpenter, the son of Mary, and the brother of James, Joses, Judas, and Simon? Aren't his sisters living here?" And so they rejected him.*

*4 Jesus said to them, "A prophet is respected everywhere except in his home town, and by his relatives and his family."*

*5 He was not able to perform any miracles there, except that he placed his hands on a few sick people and healed them. 6 He was greatly surprised, because they did not have faith.*

*Then Jesus went to the villages around there, teaching the people.*

In showing us the ministry of Christ, Mark shows us sharp contrasts between success and failure (that is, from our point of view, since Jesus himself completed the work he came to do), acceptance and opposition, understanding, and misunderstanding. Jesus usually showed his power only in the presence of *faith*. There was no lack of ability on his part, but when people had already decided not to believe, it would have been useless to do great signs and wonders. Even the philosopher Plato wrote: "*To find the maker and father of this universe is a hard task; and when you have found him, it is impossible to speak of him before all people.*" This is a reminder to the followers of Christ not to expect a problem-free, constantly successful life. It may be that some you love the most dearly will not listen to you (but may listen to a stranger).

There is an old saying that, "Familiarity breeds contempt." Older adults are especially likely to look down upon a person who had grown up in their midst. Of all places, Nazareth, where Jesus had spent most of his life, might have been expected to really celebrate the return of their now famous son. But they *thought* they knew him already. Their mood was skeptical, when he began to teach that day in the synagogue.



They were amazed -- but not impressed. The synagogue congregation was not as formal as our church, and so they begin talking with each other. What they say, means: "*Who does he think he is?*" And so they rejected him! This is the second time they have done this, the other time being some months before this (Luke 4:16-30). In view of their unbelief, other than healing a few, all he could do was to point out that great men are not appreciated at home. Certainly there are many exceptions to this "proverb," but it is especially true of prophets who say unpopular things. Jesus was himself a prophet (see Luke 13:33).

The fact that Mary had other children after Jesus was born in no way damages the miracle of the Virgin Birth. No hint is given in the Bible of the *dogma* of "Mary's perpetual virginity." In fact, when someone tried to "elevate" Mary, Jesus rebuked them (see Luke 11:27-28). About 380 A.D., Epiphanius proposed the theory that the "brothers and sisters" were children of Joseph but not of Mary. About the same time Jerome proposed that they were cousins of Jesus, sons of Mary's sister. However, Luke 2:7 and Matt. 1:25 *imply* that Mary had other children. There is no biblical reason to think otherwise.

The fact that Joseph is not mentioned here or in the parallel passage in Matthew, could mean that he is dead at this time. However, there is possibly darker meaning in the omission. Identification by the mother sometimes was used as an insult (compare Judges 11:1-2). Evidently rumors were circulated that Jesus was illegitimate (see John 8:41; 9:29). If this is their thought, they are intentionally giving an insult to Jesus.

### **Jesus Sends Out the Twelve**

*(Mark 6:7-13)*

*7 He called the twelve disciples together and sent them out two by two. He gave them authority over the evil spirits 8 and ordered them, "Don't take anything with you on the trip except a walking stick; no bread, no beggar's bag, no money in your pockets. 9 Wear sandals, but don't wear an extra shirt." 10 He also told them, "Wherever you are welcomed, stay in the same house until you leave that town. 11 If you come to a place where people do not welcome you or will not listen to you, leave it and shake the dust off your feet. This will be a warning to them!*

*12 So they went out and preached that people should turn away from their sins. 13 They drove out many demons, and rubbed oil on many sick people and healed them.*

Despite the failure (it was the people who failed, not Jesus) at Nazareth, the ministry of Jesus had now grown so much that the Twelve were ready for the commission. Also we can be sure Jesus intended this to be a time of testing for them and an opportunity to get the feel of their own capabilities. The mission of these disciples is an extension of the mission of Jesus. And here is the symbolism of twelve: Jesus is calling *all Israel*, not just a handful.

The travel instructions sound very strange to us. The emphasis is on speed -- *urgency!* They were to dress like poor people, and to avoid anything that might look like luxury or ease. (Compare John the Baptizer.) It could be that this was because of other wandering preachers who were victimizing the gullible public and making themselves rich. But the ones being renewed ought to supply the needs of the one renewing. And so



Jesus instructs them to expect to be supported by the people themselves. This first tour of mission was probably a brief tour in a limited area, so that they could easily live in this style. Later seventy-two more (seventy in some versions) would be sent out as Jesus extended his *call* (see Luke 10: 1-12).

Mark tells us that Jesus sent them out “two by two” This was standard practice, both in Judaism and in the early church. This provided both companionship and mutual help in dangerous country. But more importantly, it made possible a message proclaimed by *two witnesses* and this carried more weight with the people (see John 8:17-18; Deut. 17:6; 19:15).

In their evangelism, they were to make one home their base of action, rather than going from house to house. Living in different houses would take more time. As they chose a house in a village, they were to “bless” it by saying, “Peace be with you.” If the people of the house did not welcome them, they were to take back their blessing (see Matt. 10:11-13). But if some home or if a town refused to welcome them or listen to their message, they were to act out a parable by shaking the dust off their feet as they left. Every pious Jew did this upon leaving Gentile territory. In this case, it was a symbolic act that would say all responsibility had ended. God does not force his word upon unwilling people (see Acts 13:50-51).

Since this is *before the cross*, their message was identical -- at this stage -- with that of John the Baptizer (see Matt. 3:2; Mark 1:4) as well as of Jesus himself (see Mark 1:15). Both John and Jesus preached the *nearness* of the Kingdom. It could not be set up until the events of the cross (see Luke 9:31). The apostles were to say it was near, since the time was nearly fulfilled. Jesus said some in his company then would “see the Kingdom of God come with power” (Mark 9:1). After he ascended into heaven (Luke 24:50, 51; Mark 16: 19), the kingdom is spoken of as *fact* (Col. 1:13).

They were to duplicate the work of Jesus in healing the sick and driving out demons. This shows they had been given the power. Matthew also mentions, “raise the dead” (Matt. 10:8). They “rubbed olive oil on sick people” (anointed them). Olive oil symbolized God’s Grace, and using it pointed to God as the Healer. Compare Isaiah 1:6; James 5:14; Luke 10:34. This ministry was a direct confrontation with the sources of evil!

### **The Death of John the Baptizer**

*(Mark 6:14-29)*

*14 Now King Herod heard about all this, because Jesus’ reputation had spread everywhere. Some people were saying, “John the Baptist has come back to life! That is why these powers are at work in him.”*

*15 Others, however, said, “He is Elijah.”*

*Others said, “He is a prophet, like one of the prophets of long ago.”*

*16 When Herod heard it he said, “He is John the Baptist! I had his head cut off, but he has come back to life!” 17 Herod himself had ordered John’s arrest, and had him tied up and put in prison. Herod did this because of Herodias, whom he had married, even though she was the wife of his brother Philip. 18 John the Baptist kept telling Herod, “It isn’t right for you to marry your brother’s wife!”*



*19 So Herodias held a grudge against John and wanted to kill him, but she could not because of Herod.*

*20 Herod was afraid of John because he knew that John was a good and holy man, and so he kept him safe. He liked to listen to him, even though he became greatly disturbed every time he heard him.*

*21 Finally Herodias got her chance. It was on Herod's birthday, when he gave a feast for all the top government officials, the military chiefs, and the leading citizens of Galilee. 22 The daughter of Herodias came in and danced, and pleased Herod and his guests. So the king said to the girl, "What would you like to have? I will give you anything you want." 23 With many vows he said to her, "I promise that I will give you anything you ask for, even as much as half my kingdom!"*

*24 So the girl went out and asked her mother, "What shall I ask for?"*

*25 The girl hurried back at once to the king and demanded, "I want you to give me right now the head of John the Baptist on a plate!"*

*26 This made the king very sad; but he could not refuse her, because of the vows he had made in front of all his guests. 27 So he sent off a guard at once with orders to bring John's head. The guard left, went to the prison, and cut John's head off; 28 then he brought it on a plate and gave it to the girl, who gave it to her mother. 29 When John's disciples heard about this, they came and got his body and laid it in a grave.*

The increasing popularity of Jesus attracted the attention of all kinds of people. Herod had been away in a war with Aretas, king of Arabia, and probably had not heard much of Jesus until his return. "King Herod" (Herod Antipas was the governor of a fourth-part of a province, ruler of Galilee) was a superstitious man with a bad conscience. He believed in a world of spirits, and he began to believe the popular clamor that identified Jesus with John the Baptizer come back from the dead. John had done no miracles during his lifetime (see John 10:41), but if he had returned from the dead, the people thought he could be expected to possess supernatural powers.

Mark gives us a "flash-back" to explain the death of John. That event had taken place only a short time before (compare Matt. 14:12-21). Josephus, the Jewish historian, tells that John the Baptizer had been imprisoned at Machaerus. This was a grim fortress near the Dead Sea, with large, beautiful apartments in it (for the visiting dignitaries, etc.). It was here that Herod had John's head cut off.

The dynasty of the Herods were not known for their moral qualities. Herod the Great had been married to seven wives. Herod Antipas was his son by Malthace. Herodias was the granddaughter of Herod the Great and Mariamne. She had been married to Herod Antipas' half-brother Philip (who was probably the son of Herod the Great and *another* Mariamne). It seems to have been a case of "bigamy," since John kept telling Herod that it wasn't right to marry his brother's *wife*. Herod's legal wife was the daughter of Aretas, king of Arabia. Jewish law did not permit a man to marry the wife of a living brother. Nor did it allow a man to marry his niece (this would be incest). It was a very complex situation.

Herod viewed John as a "holy man," but Herodias had no such scruples. She schemed to rid herself of John the Baptizer, and the opportunity presented itself at Herod's birthday feast. The Herods imitated the Roman emperors by celebrating their birthdays with very extravagant social events. This would be termed a "wild party," and



Salome's dance was on the level of a "strip-tease" in a nightclub. This was not unusual, especially considering the Herods. But he knew she danced because she wanted a favor. In his intoxicated condition, he rashly swears a vow to give her anything -- even half a kingdom (which he didn't have). The girl asks her mother, and Herodias demands *the head of John on a plate*. Because he has sworn a vow, and also because he fears the taunts of his guests, Herod orders the death of John. He had John beheaded in spite of public opinion and his own fear of John as a holy man. Jezebel was the woman who wanted to kill Elijah (1 Kings 19:1-2). Herodias is "Jezebel" to the second "Elijah" (Matt. 11:14), John the Baptizer. The voice of John was silenced, but the words he had spoken to Herod still stood, sealed by his bloody death. From now on a dark shadow hangs over the ministry of Jesus (see 9:12-13). Mark shows us the disciples of John as they bury the body of their leader. Matthew adds: "then they went and told Jesus." In their sorrow they look to the One whom John had pointed out to them.

### **Jesus Feeds Five Thousand Men**

*(Mark 6:30-44)*

*30 The apostles returned and met with Jesus, and told him all they had done and taught. 31 There were so many people coming and going that Jesus and his disciples didn't even have time to eat. So he said to them, "Let us go off by ourselves to some place where we will be alone and you can rest a while." 32 So they started out in the boat by themselves to a lonely place.*

*33 Many people, however, saw them leave and knew at once who they were; so they went from all the towns and ran ahead by land and got to the place ahead of Jesus and his disciples. 34 When Jesus got out of the boat, he saw this large crowd, and his heart was filled with pity for them, because they were like sheep without a shepherd. So he began to teach them many things. 35 When it was getting late, his disciples came to him and said, "It is already very late, and this is a lonely place. 36 Send the people away, and let them go to the nearby farms and villages and buy themselves something to eat."*

*37 "You yourselves give them something to eat," Jesus answered.*

*They asked, "Do you want us to go and buy two hundred dollars' worth of bread and feed them?"*

*38 So Jesus asked them, "How much bread do you have? Go and see."*

*When they found out they told him, "Five loaves, and two fish also."*

*39 Jesus then told his disciples to make all the people divide into groups and sit down on the green grass. 40 So the people sat down in rows, in groups of a hundred and groups of fifty. 41 Then Jesus took the five loaves and the two fish, looked up to heaven, and gave thanks to God. He broke the loaves and gave them to his disciples to distribute to the people. He also divided the two fish among them all. 42 Everyone ate and had enough. 43 Then the disciples took up twelve baskets full of what was left of the bread and of the fish. 44 The number of men who ate the bread was five thousand.*

It is true that our world is under a curse (see Gen. 3:14-19). Yet the Bible shows us that God created this world for the use and enjoyment of mankind. Work is a blessing as well as a duty, and rest is a privilege and a joy. Sometimes the work is so pressing that rest must wait a while, and this is what we see here with Jesus. The crowds were already



there when he got out of the boat. The area west of Lake Galilee was heavily populated. Capernaum alone had some 30,000 people. There were twelve other cities near its shores. John 6:3 implies Jesus first went up the mountain, but then returned to the crowd, drawn by his sympathy for them. Note there were 5,000 *men*, plus women and children (as Matthew tells us). Jesus went up the mountain, but then returned to the crowd, drawn by his sympathy for them. Note there were 5,000 blessing as well as a duty, and rest is a privilege and a joy. Sometimes the work is so pressing that rest must wait a while, and this is what we see here with Jesus. The crowds were already there when he got out of the boat. The area west of Lake Galilee was heavily populated. Capernaum alone had some 30,000 people. There were twelve other c, plus women and children (as Matthew tells us). Jesus went up the mountain, but then returned to the crowd, drawn by his sympathy for t “*You yourselves give them something to eat.*” He said this to test them (see John 6:5-6). Their answer is almost sarcastic as they point out it would take *two hundred silver coins* (a silver coin was a day’s wages to a rural worker) to feed so many people. Jesus asks how much bread they have, and they find five loaves and also two fish. Having called their attention to the problem, Jesus acts. The people are seated in groups of a hundred and groups of fifty. Jesus says the usual “grace.” He gives thanks to God before breaking the loaves of bread and giving them to his disciples to distribute to the people. He also did this with the fish. We see the scanty bread and fish feed all the people so completely that twelve baskets full of what was left were gathered up! This was not a skimpy miracle! It also teaches us to conserve our resources.

What is the meaning of this miracle??? In John's account (John 6) it symbolizes Jesus' ability to give the *bread of life*. Is this similar to the miracle of the manna in the wilderness??? Is it a prophecy of the Lord's Supper??? Is it a prophecy of the Wedding Feast of the Lamb (Rev. 19)??? Perhaps there are elements of all three here, yet there are radical differences also. The actions of Jesus in feeding these people were familiar things which he gave new meaning in the Last Supper. An interesting clue is found in Mark 8:14-21. Mark makes no mention of the reaction of the people to this miracle. John tells us that they were about to come and seize him and make him king by force (John 6:14-15). But this was not why Jesus came.

## Questions for Discussion

(Mark 5:35 - 6:44)

1. How is Isaiah 42:3 fulfilled in Jesus, dealing with Jairus?
2. In what sense did they feel they were “bothering” Jesus (35)? (5:35)
3. What was Jairus to believe (36)?



4. In what sense was the girl sleeping?
5. Why command that she be given something to eat?
6. Why does Jesus command this raising from death be kept secret, when he openly raised the widow's son and Lazarus?
7. Why did Jesus go to the synagogue in Nazareth when he had been rejected there before (Luke 4:14-30)?
8. Just what caused the amazement of those who heard Jesus?
9. Did the mother of Jesus have other children?
10. What darker meaning may be implied in calling Jesus "the son of Mary"?
11. Why was Jesus not able to perform miracles there? (6:5)
12. Why is a prophet respected everywhere but with his own people (4)? Relate this specifically to Jesus at Nazareth.
13. What reason lay behind the mission given to the Twelve (compare Matt. 9:36-38)?



14. Why the strange travel instructions?

15. Why stay in the same house until they left that place?

16. What was the message they were to tell the people?

17. What was the purpose of rubbing olive oil on the sick people (anointing them)?

18. How could shaking the dust off their feet be a warning to the people?

19. Why did the things which Jesus was saying make Herod think of John the Baptizer?

20. Why wasn't it right for Herod to marry Herodias?

21. If John spoke so plainly about Herod's sin, why did he like to hear him and why did he protect him?

22. Can the gospel be preached without any reference to human sin?

23. Did Herodias arrange things to trap Herod into making a rash vow?

24. Did the execution really silence the voice of John forever?



25. Some say you cannot preach to a man with an empty stomach. What responsibility does the Christian have to the physical needs of the unconverted?

26. What factors made it impossible to feed the crowd by normal means?

27. What two things did Jesus do for the crowd (34)? Does this set an example for medical and preaching work?

28. Why ask how much bread they had?

29. How much food were the people given?

30. What kind of miracle do we see performed here? What other events might it be related to?