

Mark 5–8 review

IGG | 9 December 2020 | George Diwakar

Introduction

Three questions:

- 4:38: “Teacher, don't you care that we're perishing?”
- 4:40: “Why are you so afraid? Have you still no faith?”
- 4:41: “Who then is this, that even the wind and the sea obey him?”

Three themes:

- Rescue
- Rejection
- Recognition

One common thread → the Exodus

Therefore:

- Jesus's new Exodus rescue
- Israel's familiar Exodus rejection
- Peter's miraculous Exodus recognition

1. Jesus's new Exodus rescue

A series of similarly helpless people:

- The demon-possessed man
- The woman with bleeding
- Jairus and his daughter

All perishing under the shadow of death:

- 4:41: “Teacher, don't you care that we're perishing?”
- 5:2,3, 5: “There met him out of the tombs...He lived among the tombs...Night and day among the tombs.”
- 5:25: “There was a woman who had a discharge of blood for twelve years” → living death
- 5:23, 35: “My little daughter is at the point of death...” “Your daughter is dead.”

All beyond human help:

- 5:3, 4: “No-one could bind him anymore...No-one had the strength to subdue him.”
- 5:26: “[She] had suffered much under many physicians, and had spent all that she had, and was no better but rather grew worse.”
- 5:35: “Why trouble the Teacher any further?”

A picture Mark's readers would have recognised

A picture we recognise

a. A rescue from death for the desperate

- 4:39: “[He] rebuked the wind and said to the sea, “Peace! Be still!” And the wind ceased, and there was a great calm.”
- 5:8: “Come out of the man, you unclean spirit!”
- 5:34: “Daughter, your faith has made you well. Go in peace, and be healed of your disease.”
- 5:41–42: “Little girl, I say to you, arise.” And immediately the girl got up.”

b. A new Exodus rescue from death

“Some sat in darkness and in the shadow of death,
prisoners in affliction and in irons,
for they had rebelled against the words of God,
and spurned the counsel of the Most High.
So he bowed their hearts down with hard labour;
they fell down, with none to help.”

Psalms 107:10–12 ESVUK

“Some went down to the sea in ships,
doing business on the great waters;
they saw the deeds of the Lord,
his wondrous works in the deep.
For he commanded and raised the stormy wind,
which lifted up the waves of the sea.
They mounted up to heaven; they went down to the depths;
their courage melted away in their evil plight;
they reeled and staggered like drunken men
and were at their wits' end.”

Psalms 107:23–27 ESVUK

The demon possessed man:



5:3: “He lived among the tombs...”

5:4: “He had often been bound with shackles
and chains...”

The disciples in the storm at sea:



4:37: “And a great windstorm arose, and the
waves were breaking into the boat, so that
the boat was already filling.”

4:38: “Teacher, do you not care that we are
perishing?”

c. A rescue only God could do

Then they cried to **the LORD** in their trouble,
and **he** delivered them from their distress.
He brought them out of darkness and the shadow of death,
and burst their bonds apart...
He made the storm be still,
and the waves of the sea were hushed.”

Psalms 107:13–14, 29 ESVUK

Therefore, the question isn't “Don't you care Jesus?” but “Do you believe, disciple?”

- 4:40: “Why are you so afraid? Have you still no faith?”
- 5:34: “Daughter, your faith has made you well (lit. “saved you”).
- 5:36: “Do not fear, only believe.”

i. Faith casts out the fear of death

ii. Faith leaves us in awe of Jesus

Discussion (10 minutes): Where do we see the fear of death in the world around us? How does this section give us hope in the face of the grave? How does it challenge us to fear Jesus instead?

2. Israel's familiar Exodus rejection

Two opposing trends:

a. Jesus reveals his identity more and more clearly

i. He feeds the hungry in a new Exodus feast

- "A desolate place" or literally "a wilderness" (6:31, 32, 35) → Israel in the wilderness
- A miraculous feeding → manna from heaven in Exodus 16
- Compassion for the crowd like sheep without a shepherd (6:34) → Numbers 27:17, Ezekiel 34
- Twelve baskets of leftovers (6:43) → twelve tribes of Israel (cf 5:25, 5:42, 6:7)
- They all ate and were satisfied (6:42) → Psalm 107:4–9

ii. He reveals himself with God's signature Exodus name

- Walking on water → control over the sea like Exodus 14–15
- "It is I" or literally "I am!" (6:50) → I AM WHO I AM in Exodus 3:14–15

b. Israel rejects Jesus more and more blindly

Israel refusing to listen to God's prophetic word:

- In the synagogue in 6:1–6
- In the villages in 6:7–13
- In the palace in 6:14–29

i. A blindness Jesus predicted in Mark 4

"For those outside everything is in parables, so that:
"they may indeed see but not perceive,
and may indeed hear but not understand..." — Mark 4:12 ESVUK

Everyone in Mark 6 hears the word:

- 6:2: "And many who **heard** him were astonished."
- 6:11: "And if any place will not receive you and will not **listen** to you..."
- 6:14: "King Herod **heard** of it..."
- 6:20: "When he heard him, he was greatly perplexed, and yet he **heard** him gladly."

Everyone in Mark 6 hears the word like bad soil:

- 6:3: "And they took offence at him (lit "stumbled over him" cf 4:17)."
- Herod = the seed among thorns → hears gladly but eventually choked by desire

Instead of enjoying Jesus's Exodus feast, they form their own:

- Herod's feast of debauched hedonism in 6:14–29
- The Pharisees' feast of puritanical religion in 7:1–23

Why are they so blind?

ii. A blindness caused by our sinful hearts

- 3:5: “And he looked round at them with anger, grieved at their hardness of heart.”
- 7:6: “This people honours me with their lips, but their heart is far from me”
- 7:21–22: “For from within, out of the heart of man, come evil thoughts, sexual immorality, theft, murder, adultery, coveting, wickedness, deceit, sensuality, envy, slander, pride, foolishness.”
 - ...as demonstrated by Herod in 6:14–29
 - ...as demonstrated by the Pharisees in 3:6, 22, 30

iii. A blindness caused by the same sinful hearts as Israel in the Exodus

Today, if you **hear** his voice,
do not **harden your hearts**, as at Meribah,
as on the day at Massah in the wilderness,
when your fathers **put me to the test**
and put me to the proof, though they had seen my work.
For forty years I loathed that generation
and said, “They are a people who go astray in their **heart**,
and they have not known my ways.”
Therefore I swore in my wrath,
“They shall not enter my rest.””

Psalm 95:7–11 ESVUK

Hearing (6:1–29) with hard hearts (3:5) = another wilderness generation (8:12)

iv. A blindness the disciples are in danger of sharing

Two miracles at sea (4:35–41, 6:45–52) → just as terrified (4:38, 6:49–50)

Two feeding miracles (6:30–44, 8:1–10) → just as doubtful (6:37, 8:4)

How can they be so slow?

- 6:52: “They did not understand about the loaves, but their hearts were hardened.”
- 8:18: “Having eyes do you not see, and having ears do you not hear?”

v. A blindness we might be in danger of sharing

“Today, if you hear his voice...”

Psalm 95:7 ESVUK

How much attention have you been paying?

- Non-Christian → frustrated with disciples but not believing yourself
- Christian → coming to IGG every week but not paying attention

Who can save us?

Discussion (10 minutes): How did the spiritual blindness of Israel and the disciples make you feel? In what ways are we similar in our own attitude to Jesus’s word? Why do you think Jesus diagnoses this as a heart problem?

3. Peter's miraculous Exodus confession

In the final part of Mark 5–8, we see:

a. Two extraordinary developments

Both flowing out of Israel's blind rejection of Jesus's rescue:

i. Jesus opens his rescue to the Gentiles

Crumbs for the Syro-Phoenician woman (7:24-30) → a new Exodus feast for the nations (8:1–10)

ii. Jesus opens the eyes of Peter

Blind eyes and deaf ears (8:18) → “You are the Christ” (8:29)

How on earth is that possible?

b. Two extraordinary miracles

- Healing a deaf man in 7:31–37
- Healing a blind man in 8:22–26

Why are they extraordinary?

- Longer than usual (eg two stages in 8:22–26)
- More physical than usual (7:32–33, 8:23, 25)

c. Two new Exodus miracles

Blindness and deafness = the problem in the section

“Then the eyes of the blind shall be opened,
and the ears of the deaf unstopped.”

Isaiah 35:5 ESVUK

d. One extraordinary confession

“You are the Christ” (8:29) → the LORD God himself doing his new Exodus work

Two questions to ponder:

- Who do you say Jesus is?
- Have you asked him to open your eyes?

Discussion (10 minutes): Why is it so important for us to recognise Jesus for who he is? How can we depend on him to help us do so more and more? Share and pray in your groups.