



“Who is this King?”

Mark 6:30-56

Emily Carpenter

Sermon audio and text available at www.waitaraanglican.com.au

What do you see?

When I was a high school teacher, one of my favourite lessons in Science was with year 7, where we looked at the eye. I enjoyed talking to them about how our eyes see, and really enjoyed showing them optical illusions. I used to put up a picture like this (P) and asked them what they see. Most of them would tell me that they see an old man. But there's another level to this picture, If you looked at it differently and had some context. Then I would ask my class, can you see a young couple kissing. Some of them, would then be able to find it, Some still would look harder, and still not be able to see, unless I showed them a different way to look. I always enjoyed seeing the 'understanding' that comes onto their faces as they work out the illusion, and see the different aspects of the pictures.

As we've been going through the book of Mark, we've been gathering a picture of who Jesus is. We've seen Jesus as the one who can forgive as God does, he is one who heals many people, raises people from the dead and he drives out evil spirits! What we have here in our passage is another aspect of who Jesus is. So let's have a look at what can be seen and understood about Jesus.

What the crowds and disciples see?

Just before our passage today, in the first part of chapter 6, Jesus has sent the disciples on a mission – and like Jesus the disciples were healing people and doing amazing things, and so we see the crowds are eager to see more from the disciples and Jesus. The crowds are so demanding that the disciples don't even have the chance to eat. And when the crowds saw the disciples leaving, they ran to the place that the disciples were heading. The crowds see Jesus and the disciples as someone popular to follow, see verses 54-56 – “As soon as they got out of the boat, people recognized Jesus. They ran throughout that whole region and carried the sick on mats to wherever they heard he was. And wherever he went – into villages, towns, or country side – they placed the sick in the marketplaces.” The crowds were pursuing Jesus because of the amazing healings that he was doing. They saw him as this amazing person who could heal all those who were sick and someone who gives out free food, why wouldn't you follow him. Even though this is a true statement about Jesus – there is much more to learn about who he is. And in our miracles today, the disciples get a chance to see more of who Jesus really is.

So, What about the disciples? What do they see? They've seen up close and personal what Jesus has been doing. They've seen him feed over 5000 people with just 5 loaves and 2 fish, they've seen Jesus walking on water, and calming a storm. Given all this extra information, Who do the disciples think he is? They know him as a teacher, someone who does miracles, but they are still puzzled by him, they haven't quite figured it out yet. Using the example of the optical illusion I gave at the beginning of the sermon, the crowds have

only seen one aspect of Jesus, the disciples have extra information, and they really should be seeing another aspect of who Jesus is. But based on what we've read today, they still haven't quite got it. If we look at our second miracle in our passage today, not only have the disciples seen Jesus feeding the 5000, they now have seen Jesus walking on water but instead of understanding and seeing a different aspect of Jesus, they thought that he was a ghost. And as Jesus gets into the boat and calms the storm the disciples were completely amazed. Their amazement, is more than just a jaw dropping WOW, it's more like they're scared, they are freaked out!! It's like the difference between Mark my husband not the author) giving me a really nice unexpected present and Mark jumping around the corner to scare, in both situations I'm surprised and amazed, but they are very different feelings. They are freaked out because they didn't understand the loaves. It seems like a really weird thing to say doesn't it?! Mark seems to imply that they shouldn't be completely amazed? That if they had understood the loaves they actually wouldn't have been amazed. I think if we were there we would have been amazed wouldn't we? But maybe that's because we too haven't quite understood about the loaves.

so what is it about these loaves that would mean the disciples wouldn't have freaked out?

So let's look at what these two miracles intend to show us about Jesus. And to do that, we're going to have to remember some of the old testament.

What the author wants us to see?

References to OT: Numbers 27, Deuteronomy 8, Ezekiel 34, Exodus 3

You see, a lot of the people at the time of this gospel being written would have had a good knowledge of the Old Testament. And a lot of what the author does, and a lot of what the new testament does is to reference back to the OT, you may remember the sermons Mark and Penny did just before we started these series, where we saw examples of how the Old Testament points to Jesus. So with these miracles here, understanding the OT allows us to see and understand the significance of these miracles, just like how the kids in my science class were able to see a different image once I pointed out a different way of looking at it. In this case knowing the Old Testament it gives us a different way of looking at the miracles. Or another way of looking at it is like an inside-joke, where you need to know the context to know the joke.

For example if I were to say that I was a 10 cow woman, I would think that most of you would look at me strangely and not know what I meant, however, if I said that I was a 10 cow woman to my friends who went to high school with me, they would have been laughing their heads off because they would remember the movie that this line came from. They would understand the context. It's like that for our passage today, you see, the author assumed that the readers would have knowledge of the Old Testament, and therefore he writes phrases that help us to recall certain parts of the Old Testament so that we would better understand the significance of the miracles.

We'll start at verse 31, 32, 35 where Mark writes about Jesus and the disciples going away to a quiet place, or to a solitary place, or a remote place – all these different English words are actually one word in Greek, and in Greek the word means wilderness.

Does a picture from the Old Testament come into your mind when you think of the wilderness? My mind jumps to Exodus, to the time of Moses and Israelites where they wandered around in the wilderness for 40

years. As we remember what happened in the wilderness, do you remember the time when God provided the Israelites with bread, every day for forty years. During that time God provided for them everything that they needed to live. So as we read about Jesus providing bread in a wilderness type area, it's meant to help us make the connection that Jesus is like God providing bread for the Israelites in the wilderness.

Then, when we get to Verse 34 our old testament radar goes up again "When Jesus landed and saw a large crowd, he had compassion on them because they were like sheep without a shepherd." Just an interesting point - The word compassion here is not just that he's kind, his compassion is gut wrenching – there is a deep emotion of compassion when he sees the crowd, sheep without a shepherd. Jesus really cares and loves his sheep.

Now, throughout the old testament God's people, the Israelites were often pictured as sheep. There has always been a need for them to have a shepherd, a leader, right from Moses's time all the way up to Jesus time. In Ezekiel 34 we get images of God acting as a shepherd for his stray sheep. It uses language very similar to what we see in our passage today. In Ezekiel God describes how Israel are like sheep without a shepherd because of their long history of bad leadership. TO make the connection even stronger, the Ezekiel passage says that God will provide for them a shepherd to gather and look after his people.

Are you getting the picture of who Jesus is?

Jesus is the good shepherd, the shepherd who has deep compassion for his sheep and who provides for his people just like God did in the wilderness in Moses time.

Well what about Jesus walking on water. What do we see here?

(P) The disciples were in the boat and they were struggling because of strong winds to get to the other side. So Jesus who had stayed back to dismiss the crowds and to go and pray. But when Jesus saw them struggling he decides to go out to them. Now mark writes at the end of verse 48, 'he was about to pass by them'. This is strange isn't it? Jesus wanted to go out to them, but now he's going to pass by them? Well there were times in the Old Testament where God would pass by, to show his glory and presence. So as we read he was about to pass by them, it is another clue for us to see who Jesus is. Jesus is shown to us that he is God.

(P) What also emphasises this understanding of Jesus as God, is when Jesus said, Take Courage! It is I. Don't be afraid" What, "It is I" would have sounded like to the disciples would have sounded more like I Am – again this takes us back to the Old Testament when Moses was on Mt Sinai with God as a burning bush God tells Moses to say to his people that their Gods name is I AM.

I AM equals God. I AM is the God who rescued the Israelites from Slavery in Egypt. So for Jesus to say to the disciples, Take Courage, I AM, Don't be afraid, Jesus is saying to his disciples I Am GOD, the one who saves his people, the same God who led them through the wilderness and looked after them, and provided for all their needs.

Can you understand what Mark wants us to see when we read these two miracles? What and Who were you to think about when you see Jesus doing these miracles? When you make the connections between these miracles and the Old Testament, you understand that Jesus is the savior, the King that God had been promising. But he's not a careless king, he's not a mean king, he's not an untrustworthy kind of guy, He is a shepherd, who has a deep compassion for his sheep, he is a shepherd who teaches his people many things, who feeds his people in the wilderness and he has come to save us.

What kind of King do you see?

So what kind of King/leader do you see?

Are your eyes open to see who Jesus really is? Just before our two miracles in verse 14-18, there's been talk about Jesus from the crowds, – even King Herod has been hearing Jesus' name. Some were saying that Jesus was John the Baptist, some were saying that he is Elijah, or a prophet like the prophets of long ago. The author of this book is helping us to answer who is this man Jesus? Is he John the Baptist? No, Is he Elijah? NO! is he just a prophet? No! Mark uses these two miracles to bring into focus for us who Jesus is.

Do you see who Jesus is? That he is God, the one who saves, he is the promised shepherd, the one who will care for you, and provide for you, the one who calls you to follow him.

Would you follow and put your trust in Jesus? The one who promises eternal life with him. As Nick asked us last week, do we put everything in our lives, including ourselves in the hands of Jesus? Do we trust that he's in control? How much easier is it for us to be able to sit in the chair knowing that we are putting our trust in Jesus who is God, who is the promised shepherd and someone will care for us, and provide for us? When we become anxious or afraid of things that are happening in our lives, is it not comforting that we know Jesus, where he says to us – Do not be afraid, I AM. This is the kind of King that we can put our trust in.

For those of you here who haven't put your trust in Jesus, or if you hadn't seen Jesus as this kind of King before. I encourage you to trust in him today. Begin following Jesus today, let him be your Saviour, shepherd and King. To find out more I know there are many people here in church who would love to help you begin to follow Jesus, just ask nick or I.

Putting our trust in Jesus also challenges us to think about how we live.

If we see Jesus as just that popular, kind, caring, and very generous person, then I think Jesus doesn't really have that much of an impact on how we live – we will just go on living the way we want to and every now and then take notice of Jesus because he's this really cool nice guy.

But if we see Jesus as King of our lives, our shepherd, who cares for us and knows what is best for us, if we see Jesus as God the ruler of the universe and is in total control, then we can't ignore him. We can no longer go on living like we know what is best for us. In reflecting on how I live I trust in Jesus, my aim is to be obedient to God, to live the life that Jesus commanded, but I know that I fail to be always obedient. Perhaps is the moments when I get unreasonably angry towards my family, or when I'm not being kind, thoughtful and loving to the people around me because I'm feeling like I'm out of control and I'm a little bit busy, or perhaps it's the times when I get to the end of my day and I think, I haven't spent any time with God today, I've forgotten him because I've been so busy doing my own things. Or perhaps it's those times when I've thought hurtful and unhelpful things in my mind, You can think of some of the moments when you fail to be obedient to God. I think we fail to be obedient because we forget who Jesus is. In times of our disobedience we forget that Jesus knows what is best for us and that he is GOD the creator of the universe. So our challenge is to remind ourselves that Jesus is God, he is our caring compassionate Shepherd who loves us, and not only knows what's best for us but also wants what is best for us. It's so important that we don't see just one aspect of Jesus like the crowd as just this popular guy, but that we see his full character.

If you have put your trust in Jesus, one other thing that I was challenged by as I was preparing this talk, was of the importance of reading God's word. It is to read both the Old Testament and new testament every day. God's word helps us to remember who our King is, who Jesus is. It reminds us when we're going through tough times in life, that we have Jesus as our King and shepherd. Are we reading God's word?

Who is this King? This King is JESUS, our saviour, our shepherd, the one who we can have complete confidence in.