Responding to Jesus

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[0:00] Mark chapter 6, it's almost a hill up and then back down as you look at the gospel of Mark. The height of the popularity of the ministry of Jesus comes toward the midst of the book in the gospel of Mark.

And then after you get to about the middle of the book, it begins to focus upon the cross. And Mark spends a lot of his time talking about the last days of Christ in Jerusalem.
So when you get to Mark chapter 6, we are at the height of the popularity of the ministry of Christ primarily in Galilee.
He's been on that boat with those disciples. And when it moors into the dock, it is central to most of his ministry, that area.
It is not far from his adopted hometown of Capernaum where he did so much ministry. It's not far from where he taught the Sermon on the Mount. And much of his healing had taken place among those very people.
[1:14] The whole region is alive with anticipation because the word is spreading what Christ has done. Perhaps they see the boat approaching the shore.

I say the boat because Mark always refers to it as the boat. As if it was a boat that was for just Christ and the disciples. They were using somebody's boat to get around.
And crowds were moving toward him. There was a great sense of urgency and desperation. And I want us to look this morning at how they responded to Christ as he came to shore in Mark chapter 6, verse 53.
Because I believe that it's a proper response that we should have for Christ's work. It's in Mark chapter 6, verse 53.
It says this. When they crossed over, they came to the land at Gennesaret and moored to the shore. And when they got out of the boat, the people immediately recognized him.
[2:24] And ran about the whole region and began to bring the sick people on their beds to wherever they heard he was. And wherever he came, villages, cities, or countryside, they laid the sick in the marketplaces and implored him that they might touch even the fringe of his garment.

And as many as touched him were made. Gennesaret is a beautiful area. It is often called the paradise of Galilee.
The word itself means a garden of riches. It is so prominent in that area that Luke chapter 5, verse 1, even says the Sea of Galilee is called the lake at Gennesaret.
It's got very rich soil. Soil that allows almost everything to grow there. Josephus is a first century Jewish historian that said this.
There is not a plant with its fertile soil refuses to produce. And its cultivators, in fact, grow every species in that area.
[3:35] I've been to that area. We spent the night in Tiberias and headed toward Galilee and rode the bus through the area as we went toward Galilee and Capernaum.

It's about a three-mile section. And it is filled with date palms, banana groves, and irrigated fields. It stood out. It was obviously a fertile area. And where food can grow, people live. The area was also known for its mineral springs.
And it was thought that they would bring medical benefit to people. If it didn't bring medical benefit, it still felt good on hurting bones and muscles. And people came.
And now in this populated area, Jesus has arrived. What I want to hone in on this morning for just a few moments is how they responded to Jesus and what we can learn about their response.
[4:34] I believe that how they responded is how we should respond as we saw. How do we respond to Jesus? First thing is we recognize him.

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Verse 54 says the people immediately recognized him. Now, Jesus is from this area. After leaving Nazareth, he made his home in Capernaum.
And that is in this area. And he had ministered in that area in a powerful way. They knew who he was. They knew he was the best preacher in all the land they had ever heard.
They knew that he taught like no one ever taught. He was, in fact, the master teacher. They knew he had power over evil. They had seen that.
He cast out demons by speaking authority over them. Death could not defeat him. He healed the sick. Unless, of course, they died first.
[5:33] And then if they died, he raised them from the dead. Don't you dare think that he did that because he was late. He was always on time. He fed them. He fed them. He fed them the word of God and then miraculously fed them a meal.

And word got out. Word gets out about all of that. Any of that would get the word out. But all of that together really got the word out. More than anything else, word got out about his healing. People saw that he had power in his touch.
And they heard the strength of his voice. And they felt a connection even with his garments. And therefore, they came. They show us how to come as well.
They ran to him. The way we ought to recognize and respond to Jesus is to run to him. Verse 55 says, They ran about the whole region.
Now, we're not just talking about a group standing by the shore that happened to recognize Jesus as they walked up. No, we're talking about people from throughout that region.
[6:37] They dropped what they were doing and they went immediately. I spent most of my life being separated from some family by miles.

My dad was in the Air Force. And the only place that I remember him serving before he retired was in the upper peninsula of Michigan. We had a grandmother in Grand Rapids, Michigan, outside that area.
But we also had a grandmother in South Carolina. So anytime we got a vacation, we typically came to South Carolina to see Grandma. When my dad retired, we moved to Greenville. And then we had a grandmother in Michigan.
So anytime we got a time to go, we'd ride up to see her. Ohio is bigger than any country in the world. You can't get through the end of it. But anyway, we'd ride up that way to see her.
And then I went to New Orleans Seminary. Moved 600 miles away from my parents and went back to see them anytime I got a chance.
[7:43] Dawn and I met when I pastored in South Mississippi as a seminary student. We married shortly after my graduation. And we moved to South Carolina. Her people are all in Mississippi.

And so oftentimes, we'd go during the year down to Mississippi. We moved back to Mississippi. We had folks in South Carolina. Anytime we got a week, we'd go back to South Carolina.
I've spent my life going from place to place. Now, there's very few of us in Mississippi are folks. We've got a brother down there. And I got all my folks right here amongst us right now.
So we don't have to do that as much now. But when my children were young, we always spent Thanksgiving away from home. And we always spent it in one of our parents' homes, regardless of where we live.
And therefore, we had to reach out here. This is great. And so Black Friday came. Now, some of y'all too young to know what Black Friday is. I mean, I know they do it, but they don't do it.
[8:43] Not like they did before the Internet. It was serious before the Internet. And we always went on Black Friday. We'd get up about 4 a.m. and go stand in line somewhere. We may not need anything.

It may not be anything we're looking for, but I'd just like to see the friends. I like to grab the last thing before somebody else can get it when they really want it and watch.
There's been a lot of grandmas elbowed in the mouth over the years because of Black Friday. One time we were standing in a Torres or Us line, standing outside. We didn't know what toy we was going to buy. I don't think we came there for anything particular.
But there was some little battery-powered rodent that was popular that year. And people, they only had so many, and they were giving out tickets. They got a ticket.
They didn't have a ticket. And they were giving out tickets. They only had like 200. There's 400 in line. And so people said, I don't want my test on. I said, I'll tell you what I'm going to buy all the

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things I'm going to sell.
[9:41] Well, I didn't get that many of them. But I did get some, and I took them home to my children because it was the prize possession. It was what you had to have that year. They had never heard of it, didn't care nothing about it. I think they wound it up, and it ran under something, and we never found it again.

You know, it's under the refrigerator somewhere. But we loved going, and there was this frenzy to watch these people get so, the first GPS I ever bought, I bought it in a circuit city in some big bin. And grabbed it, smacked somebody in the head, and grabbed another one, you know, and put it down somewhere else and hit it just so that person couldn't have it, you know. I confessed all that to the Lord.
When I read about these folks running about the whole region, I thought about it like that. Before there were Internet sales and before you could get it all shipped to the house and all that kind of stuff, when you had to show up and get the limited supply, it was something to say.
And I feel sure in that fertile region, this was something to say. They let nothing come away coming to Jesus.
[10:53] And I want you to notice something that I believe is remarkable. When responding to Jesus, bring others with us. Bring others with us. Look at verse 55.

It says, they began to bring the sick people on their beds to wherever they heard He was. They ran with all that they could to get to Jesus.
But they did not come to Jesus alone. They brought someone to Jesus with them. So did we. They found folks with needs.
They found folks who were hurting. I want you to hear me today. They found folks that would not. They found folks that could not come on their own. And they brought them to Jesus. They didn't ignore Him.
[11:56] They didn't look out for just themselves. They didn't send them away. They didn't try to get something of Jesus and not worry about somebody else.

They made a point. Wherever they heard He was to bring all that they could to Him.
It is crucial. Bring people with you to Jesus. Verse 56 says, wherever He came.
In villages, cities, or countryside. Folks, that means that there were small town people there. There were big city slickers there.
That means there were country people there. They had one common bond. They all mean Jesus. And they brought all people to Jesus.
[12:57] I'll tell you another way they responded to Jesus. That I think we can learn from. Reach for them. Verse 56 said, they laid the sick in the marketplace and implored Him that they might touch even the fringe of His garment.

It's interesting. Implored Him. That means they were begging Him. And the verb there in the original language says that they were continually begging Him.
Continually to implore Him. Asking again and again. They had to get a touch of His garment. Why a touch of His garment?
Well, let's look back at Mark chapter 5 that we covered a few weeks ago. Mark chapter 5 verse 24 says, And He went with them. And a great crowd followed Him and thronged about Him.
And there was a woman who had a discharge of blood for 12 years. And who had suffered much under many physicians. And had spent all that she had. And was no better but rather grew worse.
[14:05] And she heard the reports about Jesus. And came up behind Him in the crowd and touched His garment. For she said, if I touch even His garment, I will be made well.

And immediately, the flow of blood dried up. And she felt in her body that she was healed of her disease.
I wonder why those folks wanted to touch His garment. They had heard reports. The Lord had changed her life.
And now those reports had got out. And people were running all over the region. To bring as many people to Jesus as possible. To find healing by grasping.
Matthew tells us. They brought people from all over the region. May all Pippins County.
[15:11] No. Of the hope of Christ. Folks, we reach beyond Pippins County. May all Oconee County. No. They can reach Christ. May all Greenville County.

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No. May all Anderson County. No. May all Transylvania County. Yeah, we got some coming over the mountain to get here. Transylvania County.
No. May all know. In all the surrounding regions. Power. And touch. On Jesus.
You need a touch of Jesus. Just reach for Him. Peter was sinking in that water. In the midst of his storm, he cried out to Jesus.
Jesus. And when he cried out to Jesus. Jesus took him. Jesus took him out of hand. I thank you. He'll always meet you where you are.
[16:16] He'll always break you to where you need to be. He'll make you what you need to be. He'll clean up the coming crows. If you can't clean up one time. He'll meet you where you are.

One more response I want you to see. It's powerful to me. A proper response to Christ is to be changed by him.
They could not heal themselves. None of us can. They had to surrender themselves to Him. Reach out to Him. They implored Him to change their lives.
And He did. Verse 56 said, And as many as touched it were made well. I want to dig into that for just a moment.
Just leave it up for just a moment. That word touched there, in the Greek it's an heirs verb. Which means it's a punctiliar verb from the past.
[17:18] It means that it happened at one time. It was a one time movement. Done in one action. In the past. They touched Him.

But it's not only that. The text emphasizes that when they touched Him, at the point that they touched Him, He made them well.
I don't like to dig among the weeds a whole lot. I like to do my homework and study, and then try to put it in English. But I don't want us to go into a language.
When it says that as soon as they touched Him, excuse me, as many as touched Him were made well.
The word there for well is sozo. Sozo. I want you to understand what it's saying. That word is used several times.
[18:18] It's used when the woman of the issue of blood touches you. That's found in Mark 5, verse 34. It says, And He said, Daughter, your faith has made you well.

Sozo. Go in peace and be healed of your deceit. However, it's also the same word that's used in Luke chapter 19, verse 10.
For the Son of Man came to seek and to sozo the lost. He came to seek and to save the lost.
Let me give you another one. Ephesians chapter 2, verse 8. For by grace you have been sozo. You have been saved through faith.
One more. Romans 10, 9. If you confess with your mouth that Jesus is Lord and believe in your heart that God raised him from the dead, you will be sozo. You will be saved.
[19:19] Actually, the most accurate translation of our passage for today is that as many as touched him were saved.

Now, they changed that because the context is they were looking for physical healing and they got it. But in reality, they got a whole lot more than physical healing. And when you reach for Jesus today, He'll change your life.
Reach for Him. He's reaching for you. He'll change your life. Do you know what I find so ironic? That in the midst of the storm, the disciples didn't recognize Him even though they were with Him day after day.
Day after day, they were with Him, but yet they thought He was a ghost. But Mark tells us this crowd recognized Him immediately. It's quite amazing that sometimes it's the people that are most familiar with the church.
Sometimes it's the people that are most familiar with the things of God. Sometimes it's the people who are the people of God that are the ones that do not recognize Him and they miss out on the very best that He has.
[20:39] I want you to notice, we learned last week, that recognizing the things of God gets tough when we're hard-hearted. Even though the disciples had walked with Him, they were hard-hearted.

That's what the Scripture says. And they had a hard time recognizing it because they were hard-hearted. And I've preached long enough and experienced enough movements of God in congregations to realize that some of the most faithful in attendance, some of the longest standing

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in membership, some of the most experienced in worship, sometimes can be the most skeptical, most hardened about experiences in the church.
Some, and I want you to hear me today, clearly, some can't help that they go to sleep here in worship. They can't help it. Medication's rough, okay?
This past Friday, I celebrated a one-year anniversary. Many of you, if you were here, you remember, I had a massive heart attack a year ago, okay?
Had cardiac arrest three times, and every cardiologist I saw in hospitals was a miracle that I made. And I tried to come back to church just as soon as I could. This church took care of me and had the pulpit filled for five weeks for me, immediately.
[21:58] But after a couple of weeks, I wanted to come back to worship. I'd do the welcome and I'd go over and sit down. I'd stay for the second service, I'd do the welcome and I'd go over there and sit down.

I'm going to be honest. Because of the medication I was on, because of the state of the healing that I was going through and all that stuff. And that second worship hour, it got rough over there, just like it does for you every Sunday Friday.
It got rough over there for me, okay? And I got more sympathetic about those. Now, my wife has told me a long time that God called me in the ministry so I'm going to have to sit in the queue because I don't do a good job.
But I got sympathetic to those that have to take so much medication they can't hardly hold their head up. And so I know that some people can help. I get that.
I get that. But I'll tell you another thing too, folks. Some set out to go to sleep in church. I mean, I've seen people that sit on the end that kind of nuzzle up to get positioned right.
[22:59] Hoping I'll preach long enough and soft enough for them to get a good nap in, but not so long they got to wake up and hear me. I've witnessed that. Never here, of course. I'm talking about churches a long way from here.

But my point is this. It's not just the young and the spry that need a touch from God. We all need a touch from God. Instead, it is often the one that has been in the boat of the Lord a long time that needs it the most and does not recognize when Jesus walks in the midst of the congregation or walks in the midst of our lives.
It is a blessing yet often shame who seeks out and recognizes the movement of the Lord. People who are hungry for the Lord, they don't sit back and worship and say, I dare you to bless you. They don't do it. They pursue the things of God. They strive to tell others of the movement of God. They put themselves second so that God and His work can be first.
They seek Him. Do you know where they find Him? I love the book of Revelation. There's a lot of misunderstanding about it and I had a lot of misunderstanding about it.
[24:21] And I wanted to understand it more and I set out several years ago to really study it to get an understanding for myself. Okay? I look at it a little differently than a lot of times with soul and people.

But I enjoy the book of Revelation. I appreciate the fact that the context in which it's written, it is written, Revelation 2, chapters 2 and 3 tells us that it is written that seven churches in Asia Minor, I know because of the setting, that they were all under the persecution of the Roman Empire.
It was illegal for them to be in church in the area in which they are on. And John is exiled to the island of Patmos because he will not stop preaching to God.
And as he's on the island of Patmos, God gives him a vision. A vision that takes him into heaven to see what's going on in heaven. A vision that takes him back to earth and then back to heaven and then back to earth and then back to heaven several times.
And he comes out writing and sharing what he saw in heaven and what he saw on earth. And he's writing to give hope to those in those seven churches who are struggling under the persecution of the Roman Empire.
[25:42] He writes to them a coded letter. A letter using a lot of Old Testament imagery. But he writes to them an imagery that they will understand and they will get.

A lot of it he repeats in different ways too. But he writes to them an imagery that they will understand so that he can give that letter to a Roman courier and that Roman courier cannot read it and understand what it says.

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And then that Roman courier takes it. If you look at the order of the churches that's listed in Revelation 2 and 3 and you pull up a map and you connect the dots from city to city to city you'll notice that it is an egg-shaped route.
That's exactly what it is. It is a Roman postal route. He was giving him a vision for a letter to be written to be brought to the first church that would handscribe what that letter says and then pass it on to a courier to the next church without the courier never knowing what he was saying.
You know what he was saying? A lot of what he said wasn't about what's going to happen in our future. You know what? The book of Revelation wasn't written first to us in our generation.
[27:12] It was written first to us. And if everything in that book has to do with something that's still going to happen it didn't give them a lick of hope that day. So the reality is what he was telling them is not only what had happened to them what was happening to them but then praise God what will happen not only to them but to all of us is what he was telling them.

But of all those things in Revelation I love chapter 1 the most. You know why I love chapter 1 the most? It's because chapter 1 tells me where Jesus is.
John sees the imagery of each one of those churches as capital students with a light burning burning in the darkness of their sin shedding the light of the Lord and he said I want you to know that Jesus and he gives a great image of Jesus and we just spent days on the night and he's walking in the morning.
The most reassuring thing in the book of Revelation is Jesus. He's walking in our lives. He knows our circumstances. He knows the valleys that we go through.
He knows the mountaintops that we go through. He knows all of that and he's walking with us through that. Friends, it don't only happen when we come into this building. He walked in. If you're a child of God today he walked in with you.
[28:47] He's leaving with you. He's always with you. He's walking in the midst. The Lord is here. We just need to reach out and claim what he has for us.

Or as Deuteronomy chapter 4 verse 29 says, Seek the Lord your God and you will find him even if you search out with all your heart and all your soul.
Sometimes it is the people that have heard it again and again and are used to it that have never really recognized Christ, have never really ran to Christ, have never really surrendered to Christ. you're here this morning and there's never been a time in your life that you've surrendered your life to the Lord Jesus Christ. Don't you dare believe church attendance, church membership, church leadership, don't think any of that will save you.
The only thing that will save you is when the Lord Jesus calls upon you to surrender your life and you respond to the weakness.
[30:17] You've never given your heart and life to the Lord Jesus today. I encourage you to confess that you need you're a sinner and you need to forgive you and to cleanse you and to commit to you from this day of Lord.

I'm going to live for you I want you to take a life. I want to live it. If you've done that but you've done that privately we need to do it publicly.
As I read last week Jesus said if you're ashamed of me before men I'll be ashamed of you. The reality is if you're ashamed of him you've never acknowledged him publicly it's not really happened privately.
There's evidence of that anyway. So if you've never acknowledged him and Jesus by his example and by his commission tells us to do that for the baptism. We're going to baptize next week. If you've never been baptized as a believer I encourage you to come and say pastor I know I'm saved.
I need to be baptized. Maybe you're here and God's leading you to pick this first better. God's doing a wonderful work in our church. I'm thankful. God's leading you to be a part of the God.
[31:25] If you need more Lord Jesus this morning if you need to publicly acknowledge him this morning if you need to join this church this morning maybe there's something on your heart.

Maybe there's something in your life that you need to lay down this altar and just give it to him. You can do that in the pew where you stand in just a moment. Just a quiet prayer. You can do it in this altar. You can do it with a pastor praying.
There's no reason for any of us to leave this room with unfinished business with God. He spoke to us. We need to respond to the people.

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Respond correctly. Respond the way they did in the last morning. without reluctance after we pray we'll stand and sing.
You come. Any questions about what do you come? Let's talk. Let's pray together. Lord Jesus I love you and I thank you dear God for the love that you have for us and I ask today that you'll help us to respond to you as your spirit leads us right now.
[32:32] Jesus precious name. Amen. Amen.

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