

Mind of Christ - Lesson 119

August 13, 2021

Welcome to the next edition of The Mind of Christ. We're happy that you have joined us. We are in Part VIII, in Section 73, following A. T. Robertson's chronological study of Jesus' life, in "A Harmony of the Gospels". You can find us at <https://www.centalsarasota.org/>.

We have three texts today and they're fairly short, so I'd like to read each of the one of the texts. The first is found in **Matthew 14:22-23**, I am reading it from the **New American Standard Bible**. Then we'll go to **Mark 6:45-46**, and then **John 6:14-15**.

Matthew 14:22-23

²² And immediately He made the disciples get into the boat and go ahead of Him to the other side, while He sent the multitudes away. ²³ After He had sent the multitudes away, He went up into the mountain by Himself to pray; and when it was evening, He was there alone.

Mark 6:45-46

⁴⁵ And immediately Jesus made His disciples get into the boat and go ahead of Him to the other side to Bethsaida, while He Himself was sending the multitude away. ⁴⁶ And after bidding them farewell, He departed to the mountain to pray.

Then, over in John 6, it's a little unusual because often Matthew, Mark, and Luke are the ones who give a certain story, but this story is included in John.

John 6:14-15

¹⁴ Therefore when the people saw the sign which He had performed, they said, "This is of a truth, the Prophet who is to come into the world."

¹⁵ Jesus, perceiving that they were intending to come and take Him by force to make Him king, withdrew again to the mountain by Himself alone.

Those are the three texts for this particular section. **Matthew** and **Mark** focus on sending the apostles away by boat to Bethsaida. Secondly they are sending the crowds away, and thirdly Jesus, going up into the mountain by Himself to pray. The apostles were only going a short distance from Capernaum to Bethsaida. The storm must have been fierce and pushed them into the lake.

Now, what must it have been like *on land* for Jesus, because He was going up into the mountain to pray? If the weather was that bad, then He was likely out in it alone. It doesn't sound like good weather. I experienced the wind and the cold on the Sea of Galilee in March of 2012. I wonder if the disciples protested. They had come there by boat. It seems Jesus was accomplishing three things. First, He was getting His apostles away from the crowds. Number two, getting the crowds away. Number three was allowing Himself some prayer time alone. Does He know what the crowds have in mind to do?

So everyone was going in three different directions with different experiences. The apostles are going to experience some "circumstances of life". They merely want to get from point A to point B but life happens and in this case, it was the weather and it was uncontrollable.

Number two, the crowds experienced “political posturing” ... how can we improve our lives through a change of leadership to replace the Roman government with the rule of a king.

Number three, Jesus was heading to the hills to pray. This is a picture of life; a sliver of life. Jesus orchestrated all three of these things. He sent them away; He decided what He and they should do.

The need for intimacy with His Father *drove* Him. He was heading that way when the crowds showed up and He was compelled by compassion to heal, and to teach and to feed. But He had not forgotten what He needed to be doing for Himself. Remember, John was still on His mind and He was distraught. He knew that He was about a year away from His own death. He needed some time to refocus.

Alone in the mountains at night, probably in April would have made the nights pretty cool; and of course, this night was stormy. **Matthew’s** words in **14: 23** says, “**After He had sent the multitudes away, He went up on the mountain by Himself to pray; and when it was evening, He was there alone.**” Saying that He was there ‘alone’ seems a little mysterious; sad yet spiritual. As the old folk song says “You got to walk that lonesome valley; you got to walk it for yourself.” Alone to pray at the beginning of His last year on earth ... what if I knew that this was my last year?

John gives a very important detail about *the intent of the people*. Jesus perceived that they were intending to take Him by force to make Him king. That’s interesting. The Greek says, “**knowing**” #1097 “ginosko” (γινωσκω) meaning “knowing”, the idea of being taking by “**force**” #726 “harpazo” (αρπαζω). This word, taking by force, is also found in **John 10:12**, the hireling allows the wolf to “snatch” take the sheep away and scatters them. In **Matthew 13:19** the evil one “snatches” (or catches) the Word away from someone’s heart. **John 10:28-29**, no one “snatches” (or plucks) them out of the Father’s hand. In **Acts 23:10**, Paul was taken by “**force**” for his own protection. In **Jude 23** it says that we should save those who are lost by “snatching” them out of the fire. In **Matthew 11:12** it talks about violent men who take the kingdom by “**force**”. All of these are examples of what Jesus was talking about.

Jesus knew *the way of the world* is to get into God’s business and to try to take matters into their own hands. People are fickle! *They could want you to be king one minute to solve their problems, or to have their king on a cross the next because he didn’t solve their problems* ... or at least the ones they wanted to be solved, the way they wanted to be solved.

Instead of asking Jesus what God’s will is and what does He desire to do for them, they make this plan; they conspire to push their own agenda. This is the clash of two systems; the world and heaven. Jesus’ view, “thy will be done on earth as it is in heaven.” That is how the will of God works. Their view was, “Our will will be done on earth regardless of God’s will in heaven.” Perhaps God will conform His will to ours! Perhaps; but not likely. Our earthly pleasures drive our politics, and heaven’s plan is stuffed in a drawer to gather dust.

Now we're moving to another section here. This is Section 74, of part eight. It's called,
"THE PERIL TO THE TWELVE IN THE STORM AT THE SEA
AND CHRIST COMING TO THEM ON THE WATER IN THE DARKNESS."

This is also found in three texts; **Matthew 14:24-33**; **Mark 6:47-52** and **John 6:16-21**. It is a longer section in Matthew.

Matthew 14:24-33

²⁴ But the boat was already a many stadia away from the land, battered by the waves; for the wind was contrary. ²⁵ And in the fourth watch of the night He came to them, walking on the sea. ²⁶ When the disciples saw Him walking on the sea, they were frightened, and said, "It is a ghost!" And they cried out in fear. ²⁷ But immediately Jesus spoke to them, saying, "Take courage, it is I; do not be afraid."

²⁸ And Peter said to Him, "Lord, if it is You, command me to come to You on the water."

²⁹ And He said, "Come!" And Peter got out of the boat, and walked on the water and came toward Jesus. ³⁰ But seeing the wind, he became afraid, and beginning to sink, he cried out, "Lord, save me!" ³¹ Immediately Jesus stretched out His hand and took hold of him, and said to him, "Oh, You of little faith, why did you doubt?" ³² And when they got into the boat, the wind stopped. ³³ And those who were in the boat worshiped Him, saying, "You are certainly God's Son!"

Mark 6:47-52

⁴⁷ And when it was evening, the boat was in the middle of the sea, and He was alone on the land. ⁴⁸ Seeing them straining at the oars, for the wind was against them, at about the fourth watch of the night, He came to them, walking on the sea; and He intended to pass by them. ⁴⁹ But when they saw Him walking on the sea, they supposed that it was a ghost, and cried out; ⁵⁰ for they all saw Him and were terrified. But immediately He spoke with them and said to them, "Take courage; it is I, do not be afraid." ⁵¹ And He got into the boat with them, and the wind stopped; and they were greatly astonished, ⁵² for they had not gained any insight from the incident of the loaves, but their heart was hardened.

John 6:16-21

¹⁶ Now when evening came, His disciples went down to the sea, ¹⁷ and after getting into a boat, they started to cross the sea to Capernaum. It had already become dark, and Jesus had not yet come to them. ¹⁸ The sea began to be stirred up because a strong wind was blowing. ¹⁹ Then, when they had rowed about three or four miles, they beheld Jesus walking on the sea and drawing near to the boat; and they were frightened. ²⁰ But He said to them, "It is I; do not be afraid." ²¹ And they were willing, therefore, to receive Him into the boat, and immediately the boat was at the land to which they were going.

So this is the incident here. He has gone to a lonely place to pray. They are out on the sea, the wind kicks up, and they can't get to their destination. Jesus, at some point, it says the fourth watch of the night, sees them straining on the oars to try to get to land. So He, of course, starts walking out to them.

So let's see what happens here ... the logistics.

They set out around dark and He came to them at the fourth watch of the night. The storm didn't come up until they were on the lake. **John** says they rowed about three or four miles and **Matthew** says that they were "many stadia" from land with the wind contrary. **Mark** says that the boat was in the midst of the sea and that it was the fourth watch of the night.

Let's consider the route from Bethsaida to Capernaum and Gennesaret. I stayed in this area while in Galilee. John says three or four miles and in the Greek it's literally 25–30 furloughs or stadia which calculates into three or four miles. Walking, it is only 3 or 4 miles to Capernaum from Bethsaida, but by taking a boat? 1) Did they have to go out away from the shore to avoid shallow water making the route longer? I don't know. 2) Did the winds push them out, more into the middle of the lake away from Capernaum? This would have added time and distance to their journey.

Notice **Matthew** says that they are 'many stadia' from land, indicating to me that they were pushed off course by the wind and were struggling against the wind to get to their destination which was Capernaum, but ended up in Gennesaret to the south of Capernaum. The "fourth watch" is from 3:00 A. M. – 6:00 A. M. If they left around dark, they may have been on the lake anywhere from five to eight hours in the storm while Jesus was praying in the mountain. **Mark** tells us that He 'intended to pass by them'. Does this mean He planned to walk by and to get to Capernaum before them? Maybe He didn't intend to stop. Was He just being playful here, to be standing on the shore waiting for them saying, "What took you so long?" But He was spotted, so I'm not sure exactly why He decided to pass by them.

When the disciples see Jesus walking on the water:

1. They thought it was a ghost.
2. They cried out.
3. They were frightened.

Do did the disciples believe in ghosts? The word here is a word that means "**fantasia**" #5326 "phantasma" (φάντασμα). There was a movie that Disney produced many, many years ago called "Fantasia". We get the words phantom or fantasy from this word. It is used in this context. It is also used in **Acts 25:23** where it says that Agrippa's group entered with "great pomp". The word for pomp is "fantasia" as well. In **Hebrews 12:21** it says the sight of Moses at the mountain was terrible "**fantasia**". So, really, the idea of "fantasia" is something that is frightening, something that would cause you to fear.

Here is Jesus walking by the disciples in a way that caused them distress because **they do not understand the reality of what they are seeing**. They supposed it was a ghost. The word for "supposed" is #1380 "dokeo" (δοκεω). It means "to think", "to seem", an "opinion" or a "belief". The disciples were conjuring up in their minds a **false conclusion**, but a powerful one that caused great distress. Remember, they were tired, they were wet, they were frustrated, and afraid, and now what they **think** is a **ghost** appears and they cried out with fright.

I remember taking my kids to see "Fantasia" and it being a little "too real" for them. What was **meant** to entertain made them afraid.

So, what did Jesus do? He revealed *truth* and *reality*. *The antidote for fear is reality*. Jesus immediately *spoke* to them. He said, “Take courage. It is I. Do not be afraid.” Jesus told them the truth so that they would not believe a lie. Jesus did not tell them, “Silly. There’s no such thing as ghosts. He didn’t have a theological discussion about the spirit world. He merely identified Himself so that they would not be afraid. It seems He did not want them to be afraid. If my view is right, He wanted them to be amused; maybe amazed, but not frightened by a false conclusion. “It is I” is all it took. To identify Himself was He needed to say. The presence of Jesus is meant to alleviate fear. His intended joke turned serious. He responded with reality and comfort.

Matthew adds an interesting twist to the story. Peter gets an idea! He decides he wants a little more confirmation that this is really Jesus. It seems pretty impulsive to me if he’s not sure that this is Jesus. *This is a strange way to prove it*. There are many ways he could have proven it without putting himself at risk. He could ask Jesus to light up the area around Himself so they could get a better look. He could ask him some questions like they do to secure your password. He could ask for the storm to be calmed, and none of this would put him at personal risk. But to get out of the safety of the boat to create more fear inside and to have what actually happened happen! (He sank!) It just seems crazy; but Peter is impulsive. He doesn’t think through things.

What if he had been wrong and this was not Jesus, but a real ghost; ... maybe not Casper because He’s friendly. Surely Peter was pretty sure this was Jesus or he wouldn’t have done such a crazy thing. Command me to come! Why did he need a command ‘to do what he wanted to do’? In Luke 5 Jesus commanded Peter to put his nets out and it turned out pretty well for him. *Was Peter showing off? Was he being ‘playful’ too? Was he thinking this miracle will come in handy in the fishing business? Later in **John 21:7** Peter threw himself into the sea, but no mention of walking on the sea. He probably swam to shore.*

Jesus told him to “come”. Simple command and I’m sure it’s one that Peter had heard before **Matthew 4:18ff**. Remember, Peter had specifically asked to come to Him **on** the water; not through it; for Moses had parted the water. For Jonah, He prepared a fish. For Peter, He made the water solid. For Noah, He gave him a boat. Peter got out of the boat! Impressive; and he walked toward Jesus! Can you imagine the excitement of this scene ... the cheers in the boat that turned to Jesus? Can you imagine the smile on Peter’s face in amazement that he was really doing this? Jesus was focused on Peter’s faith and supplied power accordingly.

In **Matthew 14:30** it indicates how life can be.

1. Seeing wind
2. Becoming afraid
3. Beginning to sink
4. Crying out to the Lord to save us.

You do see wind; of course, by the effects of it. Winds constantly blow. This unseen force has always scared man. Wind is ghost-like and mysterious. These days meteorologists help explain the conditions that produce wind so we understand it scientifically today, but we still can’t see it.

In John 3, Jesus compares it to the work of the Spirit and often people have compared it to the spirits of the dead feeling puffs of wind, or so-called indications of the presence of the paranormal. Wind can be scary because we can't control it; though these days it is being used by channeling through wind turbines. Man has long captured it in sails to make their ships go. On this occasion, the atmosphere was too threatening for even a 'seasoned' fisherman like Peter. Of course, this led to fear and Peter began to sink. We all would love to know how miracles work.

Peter was exercising faith when he stepped out of the boat. Faith was his connector; lifeline to Jesus but faith turned to fear like fruit turns to vinegar. At some point, as faith decreased and fear increased, Peter began to sink. Jesus' powerful supportive hold on Peter weakened. The invisible grip was loosened and Peter started to sink, but desperation led to a cry of faith; a refocus on the source and the power and the sustenance. "Lord save me", one of the simplest prayers we can pray. This prayer got an immediate response. Time had run out for Peter; he was sinking fast. This was no slow-motion sink. Time was not standing still. But **the mind of Christ** caused Jesus to stretch out His hand and to take hold of Peter.

It reminds me of **Philippians 3:12ff**. "Not that I have already obtained all this, or have already arrived at my goal, but I press on to take hold of that for which Christ Jesus took hold of me. ¹³ Brothers and sisters, I do not consider myself yet to have taken hold of it. But one thing I do: Forgetting what is behind and straining toward what is ahead, ¹⁴ I press on toward the goal to win the prize for which God has called me heavenward in Christ Jesus." Sinking one minute, holding Jesus' hand the next! All that separated them was "faith" and a "prayer".

After those three words, "Lord, save me" ... someone might argue that Jesus should have baptized Peter before He brought him up. Is this an example of a sinner's prayer? Is it something to do with salvation? Well, the indication of it is that when Jesus took his hand he lifted him back to the surface of the water and the two walked back to the boat together. What was Jesus thinking when He saw Peter sink? We know what He said, "Oh, you of little faith. Why did you doubt?" The second enemy of faith is identified as **doubt**; the first is **fear**. The idea of doubt here is #1365 "distazo" (δισταζω) to doubt, to waver or to hesitate.

In **Matthew 28:17** seeing the resurrected Jesus, some worshiped, and some doubted or they hesitated. It derives from the word "duo" which is twin or two. I doubt like being double-minded, which is an unstable position? See James 1. The doubter is split. ***Peter saw Jesus and the waves. For a moment he gave more attention to the waves than he did to the creator of the waves.*** He was not single-minded. He did not have oneness of mind. Faith is drained when we have a divided mind.

In the parable of the sower it is the worries of life and the deceitfulness of wealth that divides the heart from Jesus. The foundation of hearing Jesus' words and putting them into practice is mixed with other things causing the storms or the winds of life to blow upon our house; and sometimes to blow it down.

Jesus uses another word, "diakrino" (διακρίνω) #1252 meaning 'to separate', 'to make a distinction' or 'to dispute'. It is 'to be at variance with oneself', 'to hesitate', 'to doubt'.

This is the word that He's using here. There was a debate going on inside of Peter. In **Matthew 21:21** He says, "have faith and not doubt." And if you have no doubts you can cast a mountain into the sea.

Mark 11:23 adds that if you believe what he says is going to happen, then there will be no doubt that arises in one's heart. In **Acts 10:20** Peter debated the idea of teaching Gentiles. *He should give up his misgivings; we too need to give up some misgivings.* In other words, when Peter doubted he had misgivings about doing what God told him to do. He had to give up his misgivings; and we should too. You can also see **Acts 11:2** which says there, "he took issue with him"; and another indication of doubt in **Acts 11:12** also.

Then in **Romans 4:20** Abraham did not waver in unbelief but grew strong in faith giving glory to God. In **Romans 14:23** it says that we should eat and we should not doubt because if we eat with doubt, it condemns us. *Whatever is not of faith is sin.* **James 1:6** talks of the doubter being like the surf of the sea driven and tossed by the wind. In **Jude 22** he says, "And have mercy on some, who are doubting; ²³ save others, snatching them out of the fire; and on some have mercy with fear, hating even the garment polluted by the flesh" talking about the doubter.

Notice Jesus saved Peter from drowning before He taught him about his lack of faith. It is true that *we get this mixed up.* There is a time to feed someone, and a time to teach them to fish. *A starving man probably needs some instruction, but at the moment he needs food more.* In John 8 Jesus saves the woman from stoning before He told her to 'go and sin no more'. It is also possible that Jesus said this to Peter outside the hearing of others. *Some correction is best given in private.*

Matthew 14:32 says that when "they", Peter and Jesus, got into the boat, the wind stopped. Why didn't Jesus calm the wind before Peter got out of the boat? Wouldn't walking on calm water be enough? **Mark** says that this was remarkable without mentioning the incident of Peter and he says Jesus also got into the boat and the wind stopped. Then he says they were greatly astonished. **Luke** literally and very much exceedingly in themselves they were astonished. (That's the literal translation of that phrase).

When should these disciples "get it"; that *this is the Son of God*, and all this is child's play for Him; *for they had not gained any insight from the incidents of the loaves and their hearts were hardened?* It's interesting that Jesus had been doing all these miracles *all around them* and they still were just 'not quite' getting it *that Jesus had power to do all these things.*

The idea that they had not gained any insight, the idea is "*to put together*". They had not put it together. Mentally, they had not *comprehended* it, by *implication* they had not *considered* it, they have not *understood* it, they were not wise yet. They had not grasped the concept. They have not been able to see the proper relationship between the two; the feeding of the multitudes and, of course, the calming of the storm.

Matthew 13:13-15 in the parable, Jesus talks about seeing and hearing but not understanding and that those who do so, their hearts are dull.

Matthew 13:13-15

Therefore I speak to them in parables; because while seeing they do not see, and while hearing they do not hear, nor do they understand. ¹⁴ And in their case the prophecy of Isaiah is being fulfilled, which says, ‘You shall keep on listening, but shall not understand; and you shall keep on looking, but shall not perceive; ¹⁵ For the heart of this people has become dull, With their ears they scarcely hear, and they have closed their eyes, otherwise they might see with their eyes, hear with their ears, understand with their heart, and return, and I would heal them.’

In **Matthew 13:19** He says there are those who hear, but they don’t understand, and that the devil snatches the word away from their hearts.

In **Matthew 13:23** it says, whoever hears and understands is one who is the ‘good soil’.

In **Matthew 13:51** Jesus asks the question, “Have you understood all these things?”

In **Matthew 15:10**, Jesus talks about hearing and understanding.

In **Matthew 16:12** He talks about understanding the comment about the leaven.

In **Matthew 17:13** the disciples were trying to understand about John and Elijah.

In **Mark 8:17** it’s tied to hardness of heart.

In **Luke 18:34** they did not understand anything.

In **Luke 24:45** Jesus opened their minds (this is the Emmaus disciples) to understand the Scriptures.

In **Acts 7:25** regarding Joseph’s brothers, they did not understand that they were going to be delivered through him.

In **Romans 3:11** there are none who understand.

In **2 Corinthians 10:12** to compare ourselves to others shows that we have no understanding.

In **Ephesians 5:17** the foolish do not understand the will of the Lord. ***This whole thing of understanding is the disciples did not grasp certain things. They did not put it together.***

In this section there are a couple of other notes in Matthew and John.

Matthew 14:32 says when Jesus and Peter got into the boat, the wind stopped and the apostles worshipped Him saying “You are certainly God’s Son!”

John 6:21 says the apostles received Him into the boat, and immediately the boat was at their destination. ***The scene is a little difficult to envision.*** While outside the boat, the seas were rough. Jesus gets in and it’s calm. Outside the boat, the disciples’ hearts were hardened to Jesus, and inside they were perverted regarding the ***capabilities of Jesus.*** But inside the boat they are ***worshipping*** and ***confessing*** Him as God’s Son.

This reminds me of **Matthew 27:54** after the chaos of the crucifixion. The *Centurion* made the confession, “Truly, this was the Son of God”.

In **Matthew 8:29** the *demons* called Jesus “the Son of God!”

In **Luke 1:35** the *angels* called Him “the Son of God.”

And in **John 1:34** John the Baptist calls Him “the Son of God.”

And in **John 1:49** Nathanael calls Him “the Son of God”.

In **John 11:27** *Martha* calls Him “the Son of God”.

In **John 20:31**, John the apostle uses that term as well. “But these [books] have been written so that you may believe that Jesus is the Christ, **the Son of God**; and that by believing you may have life in His name.”

What bothers me about this is the disconnect. Both Satan and the Jewish leaders said, “If you are the Son of God”. And then, they *present a test* to turn the stones into bread or to come down from the cross. And *Jesus didn't play their games*; but when He did miraculous signs freely, *proving His identity*, many concluded that *He was the Son of God*. But even then, *they often failed to see the implications of such a conclusion!*

The question is not “*If Jesus is the Son of God*”; but if I conclude that He is the Son of God, what will I “do” with that?

Will I worship; yes, but more.

I should live my life in such intimate relationship with Him that *I will experience the power of the Son of God!*

The apostles were saying, “*Son of God*” but were sinking in the lake, not understanding the miracles of the loaves.

Martha said *Son of God* but was only thinking of a future resurrection in the Last Day. What of the Centurion? And, what of the demons? They were all saying, “*Son of God*” but yet many of them did not understand the implications. If I truly believe that He is *the Son of God*, is there any limit to my faith?

Well, that's the section for today. Thank you for joining us and we are grateful you have spent this time with us today. I just encourage you to continue to *seek the mind of Christ* so that we can think the way He does, and so that we can understand completely what He has called us to do.

Until next time ... God bless.