

Miracles Around the Sea of Galilee



SABBATH—JULY 27

READ FOR THIS WEEK’S LESSON: Mark 4:35–41; Mark 5:1–20; Mark 5:21–24; Mark 5:25–34; Mark 6:1–6; Mark 6:34–52.

MEMORY VERSE: “But Jesus did not allow the man to go. He [Jesus] said, ‘Go home to your family and friends. Tell them about all that the Lord did for you. Tell them how the Lord was good [showed mercy] to you’ ” (Mark 5:19, ERV).



Miracles help Jesus’ followers to understand more and more that Jesus is the Son of God.

JESUS did most of His work for God in Galilee, around the Sea of Galilee. The Sea of Galilee is actually a very big lake. The lake is almost 13 miles long (21 kilometers) and 8 miles wide (13 kilometers). The Sea of Galilee is the biggest lake in the area. Many people lived nearby and made their living from working on the lake.

Mark 4 ends with the story about the trip that Jesus and His followers take across the Sea of Galilee. A storm starts. Jesus commands the wind and waves to be still. Mark 6 ends with another story about the Sea of Galilee. This time, Jesus walks on the water to His followers in the boat. In between these stories about the lake, Mark tells us about the miracles that Jesus does on land. Mark also tells us about the first time Jesus sent His followers to preach. We will study these stories this week.

These stories show us who Jesus is. Jesus stops a storm. He commands demons to come out of people. He heals a woman who touches His clothes. He wakes up a dead girl. He feeds 5,000 people with a little bread and a couple of fish. He walks on top of water. These miracles help His followers to understand more and more that Jesus is the Son of God.

STOPPING A STORM (Mark 4:35–41)

Read the story in Mark 4:35–41. What happens in this story? What lessons does this story teach us about Jesus?

At the beginning of Mark 4, Jesus steps into a boat to teach the crowd on the beach. In Mark 4:10–12, Jesus may have stepped out of the boat again to talk with His followers in private. Jesus taught all day long. So, He was very tired. At the end of the day, the followers take Jesus back into the boat. Jesus falls asleep. Then a storm starts on the lake. The big waves push the boat around. The boat almost sinks when the followers wake up Jesus. Jesus commands the wind and the waves to stop. The whole lake becomes very calm right away. For sure, the followers are very afraid when they see this powerful miracle from God.

Read Psalm 104:1–9. How does the picture of Yahweh in these verses compare with Jesus when He stops the storm?

The story in Mark 4:35–41 is an example of a “theophany.” A theophany is a time when God or His angels appear to humans. A theophany has five parts: (1) God shows in some special way that He is very powerful. (2) Humans are afraid. (3) The Lord or His angels command the humans not to be afraid. (4) God or His angels give the humans a special message. (5) Humans accept the message. The story in Mark 4:35–41 has four of the five parts of a theophany: (1) Jesus stops the storm. This miracle shows us He is very powerful. (2) The followers are afraid. (3) Jesus asks His followers why they are so afraid. This question is part 3, which is the command not to be afraid. (4) Jesus’ followers wonder about Jesus and ask who He really is. This question is part five of a theophany, which shows how the humans answer the message. The only part missing is a special message or words from God. Why is this part missing? Remember, Jesus keeps who He is a secret. The message is in His behavior. Mark will tell us who Jesus is, but first we must wait for the answer. When the followers ask, “ ‘Who is this? Even the wind and waves obey Him!’ ” (Mark 4:41, NLV), the readers must give the missing answer. Jesus is the Son of God. Jesus is the Lord.

God is very powerful. How can you learn to trust in His strength in all parts of your life?



A theophany is a time when God or His angels appear to humans.

THE MAN WHO WAS FILLED WITH 5,000 DEMONS (Mark 5:1–20)

Read the story in Mark 5:1–20. What does this story teach us about the worldwide war between good and evil? Also, what does this story teach us about Jesus? How much power does Jesus have?

In Mark 5:1–20, we read the story about the man who was filled with 5,000 demons. This story is so sad it breaks your heart. The man lived all alone in hills where the graves were located. The man screamed day and night. He cut himself with sharp stones. “No one was strong enough to control him” (Mark 5:4, ERV). Then the man met Jesus.

Mark tells us what the man did. “When he saw Jesus a long way off, he ran to him. He fell on his knees in front of him” (Mark 5:6, NIV). The words “fell on his knees” come from the Greek word “**proskyneō**.” In the Greek language, “**proskyneō**” means “to worship.” This word shows us that this man understood that Jesus was Someone who could help him. But when the man tried to talk, the demons inside him took control. The demons shouted at Jesus. Jesus heard the man’s cry for help above the demons’ shouts. The demons asked Jesus for permission to enter a herd of pigs. There were about 2,000 pigs in the herd. Jesus allowed the demons to enter the pigs. Then the whole herd ran down the hillside and into the sea. All 2,000 pigs drowned in the water. The loss of the pigs caused the owners to lose a lot of money.

The amazing thing is that the demons knew who Jesus was. They also knew they were powerless against Him. That’s why the demons asked Jesus again (Mark 5:10, 12) to let them enter the pigs. So, the demons knew Jesus was more powerful than all 5,000 demons together!

The story is filled with things that made a person dirty in Bible times. Moses talked about the things that made a person dirty. Graves and dead bodies were not clean (Numbers 19:11, 16). Bleeding made a person not clean (Leviticus 15). Pigs were not clean (Leviticus 11:7).

The story also shows us the war between good and evil. Jesus commands the demons to leave. The demons kill the pigs. The townspeople ask Jesus to leave. But Jesus sends the healed man back to the city as His witness. So, the man goes back to tell other people what Jesus did for him. In some ways, this man was the last person we’d expect to become a worker for God. But the healed man had an amazing story to tell.



**Jesus heard the man’s cry
for help above
the demons’ shouts.**

A DEAD GIRL LIVES AGAIN (Mark 5:21–24)

Read Mark 5:21–24. What do you learn about Jairus in these verses?

Jairus was a spiritual leader. Most of the Jewish spiritual leaders weren't friends with Jesus (read Mark 1:22; Mark 3:2, 6; Luke 13:14). But Jairus was in need. He falls on his knees in front of Jesus. Jairus's daughter is dying. Jairus asks for Jesus' help. Jesus goes with the worried father to his house.

Read the story in Mark 5:25–34. What happens on the way to Jairus's house?

A woman appears in the middle of the story about Jairus while he is on his way with Jesus to his house. The woman has suffered for 12 years. This story is the second Sandwich Story in Mark (read Mark 3:20–35; review lesson 3). Remember, a Sandwich Story is a type of storytelling where a writer starts telling a story and then begins telling another one in the middle of the first story. The writer finishes telling the first story after the second story is finished. In these two stories, Jairus and the suffering woman come to Jesus for help.

The woman comes behind Jesus and touches His clothes. Right away, she is healed. Jesus stops and asks, "Who touched my clothes?" (Mark 5:30, ERV). The woman who was sick is now healthy. But she is afraid that Jesus will be angry with her because she touched Him. Jesus is not angry at the woman. He asks the question because He wants to heal more than her body. Jesus wants to heal her spirit, too.

After Jesus heals the woman, Mark continues Jairus's story (read Mark 5:35–43). Jesus allowed no one else to go with Him and the girl's parents except Peter, James, and John. Jesus says that the girl is not dead but asleep. The people who came to cry for the dead girl laugh at Jesus. Jesus tells all these people to leave the house. Then Jesus goes into the dead girl's room. Jesus takes her hand and says, "**Talitha, kum!**" (This means "Little girl, I tell you to stand up!") Really, the word "**talitha**" means "lamb." Parents called their children "**talitha**" to show them how much they loved them. Then Jesus commands the parents not to tell anyone that He brought their daughter back to life. But as we shall see, who Jesus is cannot stay hidden or secret.



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REJECTED AND ACCEPTED (Mark 6:1–6)

Read Mark 6:1–6. Why did the people from Jesus' hometown of Nazareth reject Him?

Often when a person from a small town becomes popular or famous, people back home get excited. But the people in Nazareth were not happy about Jesus. The people in Nazareth were surprised and upset at Jesus' success. They had a hard time accepting His change from being a carpenter to a teacher and healer. Jesus did most of His miracles in Capernaum, and not in Nazareth (read Luke 4:23). So, some of the people in Nazareth may have been jealous or angry about that. On top of everything else, Jesus already had a disagreement with His family (Mark 3:31–35), as we saw in lesson 3.

Compare the work of the Twelve Followers with the death of John the Baptist (Mark 6:7–30). Talk in class about how different these two things are.



When they must depend on other people for help, Jesus' followers become friends with the people who need to hear their message.

In Mark 6:7–30, we read about the third Sandwich Story (see yesterday's study and lesson 3 for more information). The Twelve take the message of Jesus everywhere while John is in prison and no longer allowed to preach. Jesus tells His followers not to take too many supplies with them on their journey. Jesus tells them to depend on other people for support. This advice makes Jesus' followers depend on the people they serve. When they must depend on other people for help, Jesus' followers become friends with the people who need to hear their message.

John the Baptist is not friends with King Herod or his family. Mark tells us about John's terrible death. Herodias's daughter dances for Herod. She asks him for John the Baptist's head on a dish. John is killed at the same time that the Twelve Followers of Jesus announce the Good News. John's death shows us Jesus' death in the near future (Mark 15 and 16). After John is killed and buried, people report that John wakes up from the dead (Mark 6:29, 14–16).

Did anyone reject you the way Jesus was rejected? Did you suffer something that was hard for you to understand? What did you learn from these experiences that can help you in the future when something terrible happens again?

THE SAVIOR NO ONE EXPECTED (Mark 6:34–52)

Read Mark 6:34–52. What problem did Jesus and His followers have? How did they solve the problem?

After the followers come back from preaching, they go with Jesus to rest in a quiet place beside the Sea of Galilee. But a large crowd of 5,000 people arrives at the place before they get there. Jesus sees that the people are the same as sheep who have no shepherd. So, He teaches them the whole day.

In the evening, Jesus' followers tell Him to send the crowd away to find food. But Jesus tells His followers to feed the crowd. Read the conversation between Jesus and His followers in Mark 6:35–38. This conversation shows us that the followers think about how to solve the problem without God's help. But Jesus does a miracle to solve the problem. Jesus uses five loaves of bread and two fish to feed the big crowd.

This story helps us to understand the false ideas that the Jews had about the Savior. The Jews expected the Savior to make Israel free from the Romans. They believed that this freedom from Rome would cause peace. If the Romans heard that 5,000 men were meeting in the desert, they might think Jesus was trying to build an army to fight against Roman control (compare with John 6:14, 15; Acts 21:38).

Jesus doesn't do what anyone expects the Savior to do. He doesn't lead the crowd in a fight against Rome. He sends His followers away and tells the crowd to go home. Then Jesus goes to a mountain to pray.

The Jews expected the Savior to make Israel free from Rome. But Jesus came to make His people free from sin. That's why Jesus walks on water. When Jesus walks on water, He shows His followers that He is the Lord who is in control of all nature. But Jesus didn't come to control the earth at that time. He came to give His life as an offering for many people (Mark 10:45).

The Jews had a false understanding of Jesus' first coming. How does this story teach us that we must have a correct understanding of special time messages in the Bible? Why is the correct understanding so important?



When Jesus walks on water, He shows His followers that He is the Lord who is in control of all nature.

ADDITIONAL THOUGHT: Read Ellen G. White, “ ‘Peace, Be Still,’ ” and “The Touch of Faith,” pages 333–348, in *The Desire of Ages*.

“God is training His people. Their lives will show that they follow Him in every way. The people who follow God must have personal experience in learning about God and His plan for their lives. We must hear God talk to our hearts. We must wait for God to talk with us. When we are quiet, we will hear His voice speaking to us. God says to us, ‘Be still and know that I am God.’ Psalm 46:10 [ICB]. When we know who God is, we will find real rest. This knowledge will get us ready to do God’s work. Everywhere around us, people are busy and in a hurry. They are weary with the many things they must do. But when we find rest in God, we will feel new energy. The light and peace from heaven will fill our hearts. Our lives will show other people that God is in control of us. This light and peace will touch people’s hearts.”—Ellen G. White, *The Desire of Ages*, page 363, adapted.



“The people who follow God must have personal experience in learning about God and His plan for their lives.”

“Some people wondered why Jesus didn’t give health, strength, and riches to all His people. They saw the miracles and wonderful works He did. So, why didn’t Jesus make His people free from their enemies and give them honor and power? Didn’t Jesus say that God sent Him to this earth? So, why did Jesus refuse to be crowned the King of Israel? The people couldn’t understand Jesus. He was a mystery to them. When He refused to be made king, the people misunderstood Him. Many people thought that He refused to be king because He doubted what He was sent to do and who He was. So, the people let doubt into their hearts. Satan caused the people to misunderstand Jesus and to reject Him.”—*The Desire of Ages*, page 385, adapted.

DISCUSSION QUESTIONS:

- ① What if someone asks you, “What did Jesus make you free from?” How will you answer?
- ② Why does God sometimes allow a good person to be put in prison and die, the same as John the Baptist? What hope does God give us when things are difficult to understand?

PART 2: AN UNEXPECTED CHANGE OF HEART

When Anush graduated university, no one offered her work. Father was very worried. In Armenia, fathers often help their kids get jobs. Some fathers pay companies to give jobs to their children. But Father refused to pay a company to hire his daughter. So, Anush had no job in her town in Armenia.

Then Anush learned about a group of churches from the United States. This group was looking for someone who spoke the Armenian language to translate for them. The job paid a small amount of money. Anush needed to move to a nearby city, Vanadzor, to do the job. Anush asked Father for permission to work for the Christian group. In Armenia, children ask their parents for permission to do many things. Father thought that working with Americans would be a good experience for Anush. He told her, "Yes, you may go."

Anush got the job. She was happy. Four years earlier, Father forbade Anush to go to church or get baptized. Now Anush read the Bible and shared Jesus with other people. She also got paid to do it! As Anush worked, she wanted to become a missionary. A missionary is someone who travels to faraway lands to tell other people about Jesus. When her job ended, Anush came home. She wondered how she could become a missionary.

Anush prayed and fasted for three days. When people fast, they don't eat food for a short time. While she fasted, Anush read in Exodus that God told Moses at the burning bush to ask Pharaoh to let His people go serve Him. Anush felt that God said to her, "Go ask Father to let you serve Me."

Anush went to Father. She asked, "May I go study to become a missionary in another country?" Father said, "No."

Anush kept reading Exodus. God continued to send Moses to Pharaoh. Every time Moses talked to Pharaoh, Anush spoke to Father. Father got upset. One day, he shouted at Anush. He said, "Why can't you just go to the local church and get baptized? Forget about becoming a missionary in another country!"

Anush was confused. She hadn't expected Father to agree to her baptism. So, she decided to go to church. She went to a nearby city where an Adventist church held meetings about Jesus. When the preacher asked who wanted to be baptized, Anush stood.

The preacher asked, "Are you sure? What about your father?"

Everyone knew Anush's story. Anush said, "Father is fine with my decision." Father didn't stop the baptism. With joy, Anush got baptized.

Part of last quarter's 13th Sabbath Offering helped build a special center for families in Yerevan, Armenia. Thank you for your offerings which help to share the Good News with people.

INSIDE *Story*

by ANDREW MCCHESENEY



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