



Pointers and questions on the Gospel of

MARK

Session 4

6:1 - 7:23

Summary

- 6:1-13** Rejected by local people, Jesus sends out the Twelve on a preaching and healing mission.
- 6:14-29** John the Baptist is beheaded in prison.
- 6:30-56** Jesus feeds the five thousand and walks on the water of Galilee.
- 7:1-23** Disputes with the Pharisees about what it means to be 'clean' and 'unclean'.

Questions to get you thinking

1. Read 6:1-6a. What is the connection here between faith and the ability to do mighty works? Would Jesus have agreed with the proverb, 'Familiarity breeds contempt'?
2. Comment on Jesus' instructions to the Twelve (6:6b-13) as he sent them out.
3. John the Baptist was outspoken in his condemnation of sin (6:17-20). What was the outcome? Did he perhaps overdo it? Should we speak out against specific sin in the same way?
4. Talk about Herod's mixed attitudes towards John the Baptist (6:20).
5. How do you explain the rash promise that Herod made to the dancing-girl (6:22-23, 26)?
6. Talk about the way fear of losing face before other people (6:26-28) can cause us to act rashly, as Herod did. Should we as Christians ever be concerned about saving face?
7. How important is it to 'get away from it all' sometimes? (6:31-32) How would you reply to a Christian who says, 'The Holy Spirit will give you the strength to cope with a pressured lifestyle.'
8. Look at 6:34. What was the need that Jesus saw in these people? In what surprising way did he meet that need? In the light of that, do you need to adjust your concept of what 'shepherding' (pastoring) means?
9. Talk about the way Jesus involved the disciples in the feeding of the five thousand. What light does this shed on the way he involves us in meeting people's needs with the gospel today?
10. What can we learn from the 'walking on the water' incident (6:45-52)?
11. In 7:1-5 the Pharisees are not primarily concerned with hygiene but with 'ceremonial washing' (v3). They were slaves to religious habits. We, of course, don't have any—or do we?
12. Notice the two conflicting motives for action in 7:8-9. Talk about some modern equivalents in the church at large today.
13. What is the gist of what Jesus is saying in 7:17-23?
14. Some Christians believe, on the strength of Old Testament laws about 'clean' and 'unclean' foods, that it is wrong for them to eat, for example, a bacon sandwich. Can you spot the verse in 7:1-23 that lifts such bans?

