

MARK 6:53-56 JUST AS JESUS THOUGHT!

⁵³ When they had crossed over, they landed at Gennesaret and anchored there. ⁵⁴ As soon as they got out of the boat, people recognized Jesus. ⁵⁵ They ran throughout that whole region and carried the sick on mats to wherever they heard he was. ⁵⁶ And wherever he went—into villages, towns or countryside—they placed the sick in the marketplaces. They begged him to let them touch even the edge of his cloak, and all who touched him were healed.

What a scene. The word goes out that Jesus has come and people race throughout the countryside gathering up the sick and bringing them to Jesus. Jesus was recognized as a man of great, even divine, power, who could heal the most hopeless demoniac, leper or cripple. People believed that he was so powerful that he only had to come into contact with a person for healing to occur – just the brush of his robe and healing was complete. They had it right, as far as they went, but they had no faith in him as anyone other than a healer of their physical ills. They were by no means investing themselves as disciples of Jesus, nor seeking to learn or obey his will. The clamor for healing was drowning out the proclamation of the message, the explanation of the healing and the proclamation of greater healing. Some say that this is exactly why Jesus often instructed those who witnessed his power not to tell anyone.

It is hard for us to fault the people of Jesus' time for missing his true identity. Even the disciples couldn't fully grasp it at this point. We might say, "How could they experience that raw power and not fall on their faces in faith?" They could ask us, "How can you know of the resurrection and ascension, have two thousand years of testimony and repeat the creeds weekly and still not be on your faces in faith?" As they couldn't hear through the "noise" of their need for healing, what is it in our lives that takes our focus off Jesus and places it on our need. Do we concentrate on our salvation instead of Jesus and his greater work in the world?

Jesus, as a sinner I acknowledge my need to come to you for salvation. Lord, help me not to stop there, but to seek to be your disciple – to follow and obey your will. Develop my faith so that I might become more focused on you and less on my need. Grow my faith so that my salvation is but the natural consequence of being in relationship with you and doing your will. Amen.