



AUGUSTINE INSTITUTE®

BREAD OF LIFE

The Eucharist in Galilee

BREAD OF LIFE GROUP REFLECTION

EPISODE 2:

One Greater Than Moses

Dr. Tim Gray

STUDY GOALS

In this session, we are reminded that Jesus multiplies bread and fish twice—first on the western shore of the Sea of Galilee and then a second time on the eastern shore. After each of these mighty deeds, Jesus tests his apostles to see if they have learned the meaning of Jesus’ identity from the great signs they have witnessed. Reflecting on one of these tests, we discover the power of Jesus’ words: “Take heart, I AM; have no fear” (Mark 6:50, author’s translation).

Scripture

Jesus Walks on the Sea

(Mark 6:45–52)

⁴⁵Immediately he made his disciples get into the boat and go before him to the other side, to Beth-sa'ida, while he dismissed the crowd. ⁴⁶And after he had taken leave of them, he went up on the mountain to pray. ⁴⁷And when evening came, the boat was out on the sea, and he was alone on the land. ⁴⁸And he saw that they were distressed in rowing, for the wind was against them. And about the fourth watch of the night he came to them, walking on the sea. He meant to pass by them, ⁴⁹but when they saw him walking on the sea they thought it was a ghost, and cried out; ⁵⁰for they all saw him, and were terrified. But immediately

he spoke to them and said, “Take heart, it is I; have no fear.” ⁵¹And he got into the boat with them and the wind ceased. And they were utterly astounded, ⁵²for they did not understand about the loaves, but their hearts were hardened.



VIEW AND DISCUSS

1. What does Mark's use of the word "paragon" (to pass by), which echoes Exodus 33:22, teach us about Jesus' identity?
2. What do Jesus' words, "Take heart, I AM; have no fear", with their echo to Exodus 3:14, and Jesus' action of walking on the water, which echoes Job 9:8–11, teach us about Jesus' identity?
3. Mark 6:52 tells us that the disciples' "hearts were hardened". In what sense are they echoing the Old Testament story from the Book of Exodus? In the story of the Exodus, whose heart was hardened? How do we keep our hearts from becoming hardened?
4. Why are the disciples "utterly astounded"? What did they fail to understand about Jesus when he multiplied the loaves and fish? Does this challenge surface in your own life? What are the keys to regaining, or deepening, your faith in who Jesus Christ is?
5. How do Jesus' words to the disciples, "Take heart, I AM; have no fear", speak to our fears and uncertainties?

REVIEW

Dr. Gray recalls the memorable storm at sea that the disciples experience, and their reaction as Jesus walks by on the stormy waters of the Sea of Galilee. His words to the terrified disciples (and to us) are, "Take heart, I AM; have no fear" (Mark 6:50). The disciples are witnesses to Jesus' many mighty deeds, but their hardness of heart keeps them from recognizing that Jesus is God and putting their trust in him. We too often fail to trust Jesus and his words to "take heart".

What did you find most helpful or most challenging in this teaching?

Is there something you intend to do differently because of this session?



Memory Verse

God said to Moses,
"I AM WHO I AM." And he said, "Say this to the sons of Israel,
'I AM has sent me to you.'"
—Exodus 3:14

INSIGHTS FROM THE ANCIENTS

AUGUSTINE:¹ When he walked upon the waters, he seems poised to pass by them. For in what way could they have understood this, were it not that he was really proceeding in a different direction from them, as if minded to pass those persons by like strangers, who were so far from recognizing him that they took him to be a ghost? Who, however, is so obtuse as not to perceive that this bears some spiritual significance? At the same time, too, he came to the help of the men in their agitation and outcry, and said to them, "Be of good cheer, it is I; be not afraid" (Matthew 14:27). What is the explanation, therefore, of his wish to bypass those persons whom nevertheless he was prepared to encourage when they were in despair? His intent in passing by them was to serve the purpose of eliciting those outcries in response to which he would then come to bring relief.²

NOTES:

Horizontal lines for taking notes.

¹St. Augustine of Hippo (354–430), Bishop of Hippo and voluminous writer on philosophical, exegetical, theological, and ecclesiological topics. He formulated the Western doctrines of predestination and original sin in his writings against the Pelagians.

²Augustine, *Harmony of the Gospels* 2.47, in *Mark: Ancient Christian Commentary on Scripture*, revised, ed. Thomas C. Oden and Christopher A. Hall (Downers Grove, IL: InterVarsity Press, 1998), 89.

