

EXPERIENCE THE LAND AND THE BOOK

Releasing Our Burdens Beneath the Waves

Mark 6:40–52



LET'S BEGIN HERE

Great things happen on water . . . treacherous things too. Both occurred the night that followed Jesus' miraculous feeding of more than five thousand men. Jesus' disciples shook with terror in a storm-tossed boat on an inky-black sea. Why were they afraid? Weren't they eyewitnesses to His miracles? Mark 6:52 records a heartbreaking moment in Scripture: "[The disciples] had not gained any insight from the incident of the loaves, but their heart was hardened." It took a storm to help the disciples learn a valuable lesson. What will it take for you to surrender to Jesus in faith?



A CLOSER LOOK

The Sea of Galilee

Some roads are paved with tar, some with stone. The road across the Sea of Galilee is made of water. Jesus taught most of His sermons, performed almost all of His miracles, and called all His disciples from around these shores. He traveled its waves as a road from one shore to the next—sometimes as a shortcut, sometimes as an escape route.

Set in the hills of Galilee, the Sea of Galilee is nearly seven hundred feet below sea level—one of the world's only freshwater lakes below sea level. It is nearly eight miles across at its widest point and more than twelve miles long from north to south. It's also called: Sea of Chinnereth (Numbers 34:11), Lake Gennesaret (Luke 5:1), Sea of Tiberias (John 6:1, 21:1), and today, *Yam Kinneret*.

In many ways, Galilee's sea road symbolized a faith road. The disciples lived by faith through what they encountered out there. The high hills surrounding the shore brewed sudden storms. Fish eluded the disciples' nets one day and swarmed them the next. Though most were experienced seamen, the disciples always found the sea a mystery.



Quotable

*Life's tests often
come on the back
side of a great
victory, when we're
full and enjoying
life at its best.*

— Charles R. Swindoll



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LET'S DIG DEEPER

1. Scene One: The Test Begins (Mark 6:40–47)

It had been a busy, busy day. In fact, it was already late when Jesus fed the miracle meal to five thousand men. So, after the people ate and “were satisfied” (Mark 6:42), the disciples picked up the twelve full baskets of bread and fish and prepared to depart (6:43). But Jesus had something else in mind.

As the multitudes returned home, Jesus ushered His Twelve to a waiting boat on the shoreline. He shoved them out to sea alone. Although it was late in the day, He wasn't going with them (yet).

2. Scene Two: The Test Continues (Mark 6:48–52)

The Sea of Galilee is given to sudden storms. Few places are more treacherous or frightening than this dark sea when a storm kicks up. The sea bed is an extinct volcano crater. Its surface is almost seven hundred feet *below* sea level. Its high sides rise to twenty-five hundred feet *above* sea level. Winds whoosh down the hillsides and across the water. Even seasoned sailors can be caught off guard.

Surely the disciples called out to Jesus, right? Wrong. Surely they connected the dots between the miracle they had participated in that afternoon and their present crisis, right? Wrong. They kept fighting the wind and the waves . . . for hours.

Do the math. The “fourth watch of the night” was between 3 and 6 a.m. — the darkest part of the night. It would have been pitch black except for the occasional flash of lightning. They had been “straining at the oars” a long time, but they just couldn't get to the other side (Mark 6:48).

Then, just at the right time, Jesus came down from the mountain and walked out to meet them — on the water.



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LET'S LIVE IT

It all came down to faith for the disciples. The same is true for us today. Will we trust the Lord in our storms? Will we surrender to Him the control of our lives?

This is a wonderful time to reflect—to gain insight—on the blessings and provisions of God, on the storms that have arisen in your life, on the times when Jesus stepped on your boat and brought calm, and on the condition of your heart. What burden do you carry today? Release it to Him.



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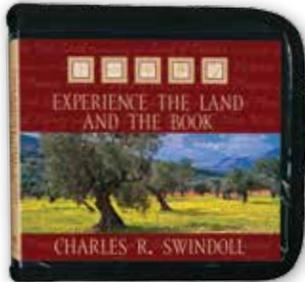
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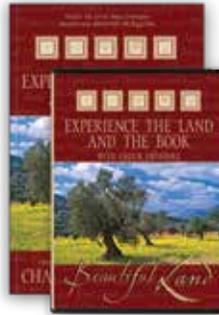
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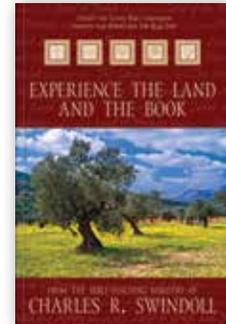
Tools for Digging Deeper



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