

Mark 6:30-34, 53-56

How have you been transformed? How are the ordinary empowered to live extraordinary lives?

New Revised Standard Version	New Living Translation	J.B. Phillips New Testament
<p>³⁰The apostles gathered around Jesus, and told him all that they had done and taught. ³¹He said to them, “Come away to a deserted place all by yourselves and rest a while.” For many were coming and going, and they had no leisure even to eat. ³²And they went away in the boat to a deserted place by themselves. ³³Now many saw them going and recognized them, and they hurried there on foot from all the towns and arrived ahead of them. ³⁴As he went ashore, he saw a great crowd; and he had compassion for them, because they were like sheep without a shepherd; and he began to teach them many things.</p>	<p>³⁰The apostles returned to Jesus from their ministry tour and told him all they had done and taught. ³¹Then Jesus said, “Let’s go off by ourselves to a quiet place and rest awhile.” He said this because there were so many people coming and going that Jesus and his apostles didn’t even have time to eat.</p> <p>³²So they left by boat for a quiet place, where they could be alone. ³³But many people recognized them and saw them leaving, and people from many towns ran ahead along the shore and got there ahead of them. ³⁴Jesus saw the huge crowd as he stepped from the boat, and he had compassion on them because they were like sheep without a shepherd. So he began teaching them many things.</p>	<p>³⁰⁻³⁴The apostles returned to Jesus and reported to him every detail of what they had done and taught. “Now come along to some quiet place by yourselves, and rest for a little while,” said Jesus, for there were people coming and going incessantly so that they had not even time for meals. They went off in the boat to a quiet place by themselves, but a great many saw them go and recognised them, and people from all the towns hurried around the shore on foot to forestall them. When Jesus disembarked he saw the large crowd and his heart was touched with pity for them because they seemed to him like sheep without a shepherd. And he settled down to teach them about many things.</p>
<p>⁵³When they had crossed over, they came to land at Gennesaret and moored the boat. ⁵⁴When they got out of the boat, people at once recognized him, ⁵⁵and rushed about that whole region and began to bring the sick on mats to wherever they heard he was. ⁵⁶And wherever he went, into villages or cities or farms, they laid the sick in the marketplaces, and begged him that they might touch even the fringe of his cloak; and all who touched it were healed.</p>	<p>⁵³After they had crossed the lake, they landed at Gennesaret. They brought the boat to shore ⁵⁴and climbed out. The people recognized Jesus at once, ⁵⁵and they ran throughout the whole area, carrying sick people on mats to wherever they heard he was. ⁵⁶Wherever he went – in villages, cities, or the countryside – they brought the sick out to the marketplaces. They begged him to let the sick touch at least the fringe of his robe, and all who touched him were healed.</p>	<p>⁵³⁻⁵⁶And when they had crossed over to the other side of the lake, they landed at Gennesaret and tied up there. As soon as they came ashore, the people recognised Jesus and rushed all over the countryside and began to carry the sick around on their beds to wherever they heard that he was. Wherever he went, in villages or towns or farms, they laid down their sick right in the road-way and begged him that they might “just touch the edge of his cloak”. And all those who touched him were healed.</p>

Verse 30 background and context: (a) Jesus healed a man possessed by ‘Legion’ and cast the demons into a herd of sheep. (b) Jesus is asked by a leader of the synagogue to heal his daughter. (c) On his way to the man’s house, a woman touches Jesus’ cloak and is healed. (d) The girl is reported as dead, but Jesus heals her. (e) Jesus teaches in the synagogue, is rejected, and is amazed by the peoples’ disbelief. (f) Jesus sends out his disciples, giving them authority over demons and permission to ‘shake off the dust on your feet’ of any town that does not welcome them. They cast out demons and cure the sick, but it is not reported they have to ‘shake off the dust.’ [Note: most early manuscripts and later translations do not make the reference to Sodom and Gomorrah that earlier translations make.] (g) Herod hears about Jesus and fears he is John the Baptist come back from the dead. (h) The story of John the Baptist’s beheading is told. (i) The disciples return and tell Jesus of their journey.

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How have you been transformed? How are the ordinary empowered to live extraordinary lives?

1. Verse 30: Where have the disciples been? What have they been doing? What emotions might they be feeling? How are these ordinary men being transformed? What might their reputation be among the people in the towns and the villages?
2. Verse 31: What does Jesus say they should do? What reason is given by the writer? How is Jesus' suggestion good advice in our daily lives?
3. Verses 32-33: What happens when Jesus and the disciples try to 'get away from it all'? What might be some reasons why do the people act the way they do? If you were among the crowd, how might you have acted?
4. Verse 34: How does Jesus react when he sees the crowd? If you were one of the disciples, how might you have reacted? What does Jesus do? What, do you think, does Jesus teach the crowd? How might the people in the crowd feel? In the midst of this event, how might the disciples continue to be transformed?

Verse 53 background and context: (a) The disciples ask Jesus to send the crowds home, but he commands them to feed the people. 5,000 are fed with five loaves of bread and two fish. (b) After feeding the people, Jesus sends them home and also sends his disciples back across the sea. Jesus goes to pray but sees the disciples struggling to cross the water. He walks on the water, intending to pass by the boat, but the disciples think he is a ghost and are afraid. Jesus gets in the boat and calms both the waters and their fears. (c) They land on the other side.

5. Verses 53-56: What happens as soon as Jesus and the disciples land? What do the people do? Why? Are the events described limited to the area where they land and moor the boat?
6. Imagine you are one of the disciples. Describe what is happening. What thoughts and ideas might be forming in your mind? How might your understanding of Jesus be changing? Having recently been sent out by Jesus to towns and villages to cast out demons and heal the sick, how might your understanding of yourself be changing? For you, would this be a time of confusion or confidence? Of courage or of fear? Of consternation or of compassion? Or a mix of several emotions?
7. How has Jesus empowered you to live your daily life? What have you witnessed and what have you done that gives you confidence, courage, and/or compassion?

George Gray

by Edgar Lee Masters

I have studied many times
The marble that was chiseled for me –
A boat with a furled sail at rest in a harbor.
In truth it pictures not my destination
But my life.
For love was offered me and I shrank from its disillusionment;
Sorrow knocked at my door, but I was afraid;
Ambition called to me, but I dreaded the chances.
Yet all the while I hungered for meaning in my life.
And now I know that we must lift the sail
And catch the winds of destiny
Wherever they drive the boat.
To put meaning in one's life may end in madness,
But life without meaning is the torture
Of restlessness and vague desire –
It is a boat longing for the sea and yet afraid.

A note about the poem. The speaker is looking back on his life from the grave. The marble that was chiseled is his gravestone and it pictures a boat in the harbor with its sail gathered and tied to the mast. Instead of seeing it as an image of eternal rest, it becomes a metaphor for how the speaker lived his life – "longing for the sea and yet afraid."