



**Mark**  
**6:45-52**  
New International Version  
1984 (NIV1984)

<sup>45</sup> Immediately Jesus made his disciples get into the boat and go on ahead of him to Bethsaida, while he dismissed the crowd. <sup>46</sup> After leaving them, he went up on a mountainside to pray.

<sup>47</sup> Later that night, the boat was in the middle of the lake, and he was alone on land. <sup>48</sup> He saw the disciples straining at the oars, because the wind was against them. Shortly before dawn he went out to them, walking on the lake. He was about to pass by them, <sup>49</sup> but when they saw him walking on the lake, they thought he was a ghost. They cried out, <sup>50</sup> because they all saw him and were terrified.

Immediately he spoke to them and said, **“Take courage! It is I. Don’t be afraid.”** <sup>51</sup> Then he climbed into the boat with them, and the wind died down. They were completely amazed, <sup>52</sup> for they had not understood about the loaves; their **hearts were hardened.**

It’s not important to defend prayer against reason. I am reminded of Charles Spurgeon’s comment about defending the gospel. He said that he would sooner defend a lion; unchain it, and it will defend itself.



# SERMON NOTES

*“All I have seen teaches me to trust the Creator for all I have not seen.” – Emerson*

- #1: **Practical Bible Teaching** (relevance)
- #2: **Providential Relationship** (nurture)
- #3: **Private Disciplines** (personal)
- #4: **Personal Ministry** (growth)
- #5: **Pivotal Circumstances** (roots)

Faith is **TRUTH** we live by not a **CRUTCH** we lean on.

**At the limits of our strength, ability or control...**

**Trials invite TRUST** (mother’s caring for their children)

*“Calm down. It’s OK. I’m here.”*

**Trials invite GROWTH** (confidence with humility) adolescence

*The world is full of suffering, it is also full of overcoming it.*

**Trials invite MATURITY** fantasy to faith,

*You know that under pressure, your faith is forced into the open and shows its true colors. So don’t try to get out of anything prematurely. Let it do its work so you become mature and well-developed, not deficient in any way. James 1:3-4*

# SACRED JOURNEY

---

## Why did God call Abraham?

After humanity fell in the Garden of Eden and entered into rebellion, God began to unfold a plan of redemption. It involved two key features.

**First**, God called a people to himself, entered into a covenant with them, and revealed his righteousness to the. The purpose of the covenant was to enter into a committed relationship with people and reveal his faithful love. The Fall is rooted in broken relationships. A covenant is, in contrast, a relationship which is steadfast. Even in the midst of a sinful world, all of us long for those who are committed to us to be faithful. We long for relationships to not be broken. We long for people to keep their promises. God shows us how this can be done. In fact, even when the people of God broke the covenant and sinned against God, he remained steadfast, faithful and true.

**Second**, even though God began with one people, he revealed to that people his wider saving purposes and his desire to bless all the people and nations of the world. Abraham was an idolater who lived in central Asia. He did not know God or his saving purposes. God revealed himself to Abraham and entered into a covenant relationship with him. This covenant was renewed with Abraham's son Isaac and his grandson Jacob, who was the father of the twelve tribes of Israel. This is why we refer to the Jews as God's "chosen people." In the covenant, however, repeated numerous times, God makes a three-fold promise to Abraham and his offspring. **First**, he promises to personally bless him with numerous descendants. He promises to multiply Israel and make them as numerous as the stars in the sky or the sands on the seashore. **Second**, he promises to bless Abraham's descendants and make them into a great nation. **Finally** he promises that through Abraham and his offspring, he will bless every nation in the world. Eventually it becomes clear that his global blessing is made possible through one particular offspring of Abraham, namely Jesus Christ (see Matthew 1:17)

"Faith is living in confidence, trusting that what we believe will actually come to pass; it gives us assurance about things we cannot yet see." Hebrews 11:1

**Pivotal Circumstances** – something big happened, death, sick, divorced, had a child, lost a job, got married had a child and now responsibility. A miracle given to us and now we're responsible for the beautiful life. Pivotal event.

God began to do something in our faith to build our faith. In the crisis of our faith is purified, we turned to God as our only hope and security.

"Above all I have become aware of God's grace and my need for it. My soul has grown because it has become awakened to the goodness and love of God. God has been present in my life these past three years, even mysteriously in the accident. God will continue to be present to the end of my life and through all eternity. God is growing my soul, making it bigger and filling it with himself. My life is being transformed. Though I have endured pain, I believe that the outcome is going to be wonderful." (pp.

### 179-80) **A Grief Disguised**

Imagine how different your outlook on life would be if you had absolute confidence that God was with you? Imagine how differently you would respond to difficulties, temptations, and even good things if you knew with certainty that God was in all of it and was planning to leverage it for good. In other words, imagine what you would think, what you would do, what you would feel, what you would say, what you would invest in, what you would live for if you had perfect faith.

If you are like most people, you can't tell your life story without referencing people who played significant roles along the way. The same is true of your faith story. In this third installment of Five Things God Uses to Grow Your Faith, we will examine the role that providential relationships play in the development of our faith.

