

• Herod Antipas hears about Jesus and fears that he is John the Baptist back from the dead

1. A good conscience

• Herod lived with a bad conscience

• Conscience – an influential voice – brings either peace or trouble

2. Fellowship with Jesus

• Telling all to Jesus for his comments and advice

• Time alone with Jesus

3. Ministry with Jesus

• Jesus always had time for people even when he withdrew into privacy

As a result of the preaching and healing of the apostles throughout Galilee, Herod Antipas, the ruler of Galilee, gets to hear about the ministry of Jesus (Mark 6:14–16; Luke 9:7–9) and fears that Jesus is John the Baptist back from the dead. This section of the story draws our attention to four immensely valuable privileges that comes to those who walk with Jesus.

1. **A good conscience.** Jesus and His disciples are men with clear consciences, but Herod Antipas has to live with a bad conscience. Life is not easy for Jesus. Soon He will be almost daily seeking to avoid Herod Antipas. Herod wants to see Jesus, but Jesus does not want to see him! John the Baptist had spoken often to this man Herod and had rebuked him for marrying Herodias who had been the wife of his brother Herod Philip, son of Mariamne. As a result of his rebuking Herod Antipas, John had been put in prison and then had been executed. But now Herod hears of someone who is preaching the same message as that of John the Baptist, the message concerning the kingdom of God. Now Jesus is in danger from Herod Antipas but has the joy of knowing He has a clear conscience. Herod is a powerful person but he lives with the knowledge that he killed John the Baptist. Conscience is a powerful aspect of our personality. It does not in itself bring us to salvation, and it can be misguided, but the conscience is an influential voice within us and can give us peace or can make us highly superstitious and nervous. Jesus was in danger but had much peace. Herod was powerful but had no peace.

2. **Fellowship with Jesus**^{□1}. Mark gives us now the report of the disciples returning from their two-by-two mission^{□2}. The disciples go to the eastern shore of the Sea of Galilee. Fellowship includes the privilege of telling Jesus everything that has happened to us. *'And when they had returned the apostles told him all that they had done'*^{□3}. They had been telling out the message of the kingdom and had no doubt healed many people. Now they come back eager to tell Jesus what they have done. No doubt they had made mistakes. Perhaps some villages had rejected them. Now they have the privilege of telling it all to Jesus and receiving His comments and advice.

It includes the privilege of spending time alone with Jesus. *'And taking them away with himself he withdrew privately to a town called Bethsaida'*^{□1}. It is a good thing after we have been exceptionally busy to take a break to be with Jesus. The apostles did this physically; we do the same thing but our contact with Jesus is 'in the Spirit'. We need time to think and pray and become conscious of God's presence.

3. **Ministry with Jesus**^{□1}. The little holiday with Jesus did not last very long! Jesus was always much in demand. Often when He turned aside to rest people would follow Him. This did not seem to trouble Him very much. Even when He withdrew into privacy people came looking for Him but He always had time for them. People followed Him to Bethsaida and He talked to them informally about the kingdom of God, and healed those of them who were sick. He was more willing to teach than people were to be taught. He was more willing to help than people were to believe. For the disciples it meant the privilege of learning to be always

□1 9:10
□2 Mark 6:30-31 & Luke 9:10a

□3 9:10

□1 9:10b

ministering to people. For many people 'rest' means withdrawing totally from people, but Jesus does not seem to have thought of 'rest' in quite this way. He did not find people a strain upon Him. He withdrew from tumult and turmoil but He did not mind if some people followed Him and He was always ready to help them.

☞¹ 9:11

4. Provision from Jesus

• *The apostles invited by Jesus to meet the need*

• *The could not – so Jesus takes control and performs an amazing miracle*

• *The lesson – Jesus is the Creator and King of the Universe*

• *An abundance of supply in Jesus*

4. **Provision from Jesus**^{☞1}. The number that followed Jesus were not few. The feeding of the five thousand takes place at this point and that means that there were thousands who followed Jesus on His 'holiday'. The apostles speak to Jesus about the need of the people^{☞2}. He says 'You give them something to eat!'^{☞3}. It is worth noticing that before Jesus performed the miracle of the feeding of the five thousand He invited the apostles to do it! If they had responded in faith to His instruction they could have fed five thousand people with miraculous provision. But they thought only about their limited resources^{☞4}. So Jesus takes control. The people sit down in groups^{☞5}. Jesus likes to do things decently and in an orderly manner. The five loaves and two fishes are distributed and an amazing miracle of provision takes place^{☞6}. It is one of the most amazing things He ever did, and has never been exactly repeated since He did it. Never has there been such an undoubted miracle of creation indisputably experienced by thousands of people. Even unspiritual people could not doubt that it had taken place.

☞¹ 9:12-17

☞² 9:12

☞³ 9:13

☞⁴ 9:13

☞⁵ 9:14-15

☞⁶ 9:16-17

It was designed to teach the people that Jesus was the Creator, and the King of the universe. He could abundantly provide for all of His people. He could meet any need of theirs at any time He wished. So abundant was His provision He could create enough for twelve baskets of surplus food. Any one of the five thousand could have had more if he wanted!

There is an abundance of resources and supplies in Jesus. Anyone truly in His plan will not lack His supplies. Nothing is impossible for Him. It is a lesson for the apostles – and for us – that amidst the needs and distresses of the world that surrounds them they have a Saviour who can do anything.

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