

JESUS: THE SERVANT AT WORK

VOLUME TWO

STUDY THREE

Failing to Connect the Dots

Mark 6:45–52

He's the God of impossibilities, and if you really understand who He is and if you really acknowledge what He's able to do, your worries are over.

—Pastor Charles R. Swindoll

It's easy to miss the big picture. We hear what's being said. We see what's happening. We even respond with a smile or a nod. Yet, in a crisis, fear can break the connection between what we know and what we believe. It takes a while for our hearts to catch up with our heads—for us to be able to trust God under pressure.

We read accounts in the Bible about God's care for His people in desperate times. God helped a boy slay a giant with a sling. He led a nation across the Red Sea on dry ground. He filled a flour bin and oil jug to keep a widow and her son alive during a famine.

We've read, heard, memorized, and even taught these Bible stories. We've even experienced firsthand God's saving power in our past. Yet, when a human impossibility knocks on our door, we still worry and panic. Fear short-circuits our faith with thoughts like *He helped me then, but will He help me now?* We struggle to connect the dots between past experiences and present reality. We have trouble believing that God is always who He says He is and that He will always do what He says He will do. *But we can trust Him.*

In the passage of this *Searching the Scriptures* Bible study, we'll join Jesus' disciples as they face another human impossibility. This time, however, the situation is life-threatening, and Jesus isn't with them. It is an extreme test of faith, not unlike some of the tests we might face. Let's begin our study with prayer.



INSIGHT FOR LIVING



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SEARCHING
THE
SCRIPTURES
BIBLE STUDIES

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PREPARE YOUR HEART

Prayer is an expression of faith. It is believing that the One we're communicating with hears us, cares for us, and will help us, as He promised. In your own words, tell God that you trust Him to give you His insight and transform your life with His truths as you turn to the Scriptures.



TURN TO THE SCRIPTURES

The disciples witnessed Jesus' great power again and again! His miracles lined up like stepping stones leading them to faith. In Mark 4:35–41, He calmed a sudden, violent storm on the Sea of Galilee. He healed many who were sick, and He cast out demons (Mark 1:29–34; 5:1–20).

In amazement, the Twelve watched Jesus multiply five flat pieces of bread and a couple of dried sardine-sized fish as they served a crowd of more than ten thousand people. The meal filled the people's stomachs so full they couldn't eat another bite. Satisfied, they stretched and yawned in the evening glow while the disciples gathered twelve baskets of leftovers, more than enough for themselves.

Each miracle they witnessed was an opportunity for Jesus' disciples to reach a logical conclusion about who Jesus was. Only Jesus had authority over death, power to do the impossible, and the divine right to give life to whoever believed in Him.

Even the demons recognized Jesus. "You are the Son of God!" they shrieked (3:11). But most of the people failed to connect the dots. According to John 6:15, the crowd wanted to make Jesus king. *He already was King!* And did Jesus' disciples finally get it? Let's find out, as they face another human impossibility.



Observation: Jesus Walks on Water

Begin with observation by paying close attention to the details of the account in [Mark 6:45–52](#). Read it in several translations and compare the phrasing. This first step of the *Searching the Scriptures* Bible-study method lays the foundation for the other steps.¹

Failing to Connect the Dots

Mark 6:45–52

Struggling in the Boat at Sea—Mark 6:45–48

After the feeding of the five thousand men and their families, Jesus didn't linger. "Immediately after this, Jesus insisted that his disciples get back into the boat and head across the lake to Bethsaida, while he sent the people home" (Mark 6:45).

Why do you think Jesus insisted that His disciples go on without Him? What did Jesus do after saying goodbye to everyone in Mark 6:46? What do you think was on Jesus' mind?

What crisis did the disciples face in 6:47–48? What happened about three o'clock in the morning? Imagine the disciples' mental and physical condition. What were they experiencing?

In a previous storm on the Sea of Galilee, Jesus was in the boat with them. He calmed the waves with a command, "Silence! Be still!" (4:39)—as only the Creator could do. This time, Jesus displayed His divinity by "walking on the water" (6:48). Why do you think He "intended to go past them" (6:48)? How was He hoping His disciples would respond?

Between 3:00 and 6:00 in the morning—deepest part of the night. It's dark. They've been fighting the waves a long time. These seasoned sailors can't get to the other side. Isn't that compassionate of Jesus? He doesn't stay on the mountain and fold His arms and say, "That'll show 'em." No, He decides to come to them.
—Pastor Chuck Swindoll

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Terrified on the Water—Mark 6:49–50

In Mark 6:49–50, how did His disciples react when they saw Jesus? What was Jesus' response? What truth about Himself was He communicating?

Astonished at the Calm—Mark 6:51–52

Look at the word *Then* in Mark 6:51, pointing back to 6:50. How do the two verses connect? What was the disciples' response in the previous storm in [4:40–41](#)? How does that compare to their response now? What did Mark highlight about their response in 6:51–52? Why were they totally amazed?

It says, “They were utterly astonished.” “For” is an explanatory connective saying, “Let me now explain why they said that.” They never connected the dots.
—Pastor Chuck Swindoll



Interpretation: Why Did the Disciples Fail to Connect the Dots?

“Jesus came toward them, walking on the water” (Mark 6:48). If the disciples had their wits about them, they might have recalled from the Scriptures that God alone “marches on the waves of the sea” (Job 9:8) and makes a “pathway through the mighty waters” (Psalm 77:19). What was the central message of Jesus' miracle of walking on the water?

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Instead of the Scriptures, however, superstitions popped into the disciples' thoughts when they saw Jesus. They thought Jesus was a phantom. Jesus told them to take courage, "I am here!" (Mark 6:50). Look up [Mark 6:49–50](#) in [Constable's Notes](#) at [netbible.org](#). What does the expression in Greek, *ego eimi* ("I am"), imply about Jesus' statement?

Read [Mark 6:51–52](#) in the MSG and the J. B. Phillips translations. Think of all the miracles the disciples had seen Jesus do. Why did they fail to connect the dots?



Correlation: Trusting the God Who Does Impossible Things

The step of correlation helps us see the importance of faith in the Bible. Compare [Mark 6:45–52](#) and [Hebrews 11:1–3](#). What is faith? How important is it in our relationship with God? What must we believe about God when we approach Him?

How great it would have been if those twelve disciples on the sea had said, "Lord, it's impossible. We're back again on a sea. We're in a boat we can't handle. Take charge. We're resting in You." They would have then connected the dots. —Pastor Chuck Swindoll

According to the author of Hebrews, what truths should we believe about Jesus' identity in [Hebrews 1:1–4](#)? How did Jesus display these attributes in our passage from Mark?

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He who comes to God must believe God is who He says He is. This belief must make a journey into our hearts so that we understand He also does what He says He will do. —Pastor Chuck Swindoll



Application: Connect the Dots!

Have you found yourself in a humanly impossible situation when your heart did not trust God to do what He says He will do? What insights from this Bible passage will help you trust God when another impossible situation knocks on your door? How can you trust Him no matter the response He gives to your prayers?

When we pray, we can say, “God’s answers will not always be yes, but I will find delight in His answers, even if they’re no, because I’ve turned it over to Him and by faith I leave it with Him. And He who knows me best will never do anything wrong.” God is going to do what He says He will do and that is to bring honor to Himself and bring peace to my heart in the process.

—Pastor Chuck Swindoll

How can you demonstrate faith in God in your current storm?

Close your time in the Word reflecting on the lyrics of the song “*He Is Able*.” If you wish, make the song a prayer by changing the phrase “He is” to “You are,” and sing these words to the Lord from your heart.

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A FINAL PRAYER

Heavenly Father, I trust You. Take charge. In Jesus' great name, I pray. Amen.

ENDNOTE

1. To learn more about Pastor Chuck Swindoll's *Searching the Scriptures* Bible-study method, go to the web page "*How Does Pastor Chuck Swindoll Study the Bible?*" at insight.org.

For the 2026–2027 broadcasts, this *Searching the Scriptures* Bible study was developed by Mirlenda Noëlliste in collaboration with Bryce Klabunde, vice president of *Searching the Scriptures* Ministries, based upon the original outlines, charts, and transcripts of Charles R. Swindoll's messages. Copyright © 2010, 2026 by Charles R. Swindoll, Inc. All rights are reserved worldwide. Duplication of copyrighted material for commercial use is strictly prohibited.

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