

*Mark 6:52 and Matthew 14:33 seem to contradict each other. They both occur after the feeding of the 5000 and Jesus walking on water and calming the seas. Yet, in one the disciples' hearts are hardened and in the other they are calling Jesus the Son of God. How can their hearts be hardened while also having faith?*

In the Mark passage<sup>1</sup> Jesus' disciples were not able to understand.

Regarding Mark 6:52, John MacArthur wrote:

Mk 6:52 *their heart was hardened*. Cf. 8:17. The disciples' minds were impenetrable, so that they could not perceive what Christ was saying (cf. 4:11, 12). This phrase conveys or alludes to rebellion, not just ignorance...<sup>2</sup>

In Mark 8:17–21 Jesus asked his disciples why they would worry about feeding 4000 when they had just witnessed his feeding the 5000.

In J. Vernon McGee's commentary, he wrote:

There is something quite interesting here. It looks as though the disciples had forgotten about His feeding of the five thousand. I'm of the opinion that many of us have the same kind of experience. God does some very gracious and good thing for us, and we forget it by the next time. When a new emergency arises, we find ourselves neophytes; that is, it is all brand new to us again...<sup>3</sup>

Understanding comes from God. When one has faith (Heb 11:3) and is indwelt with the Holy Spirit (Ex 31:3), he is able to understand spiritual things. Unbelievers do not understand (Jn 8:43). Daniel, the prophet, wrote that in the future the wicked will not understand: "Many shall be purified, made white, and refined, but the wicked shall do wickedly; and none of the wicked shall understand, but the wise shall understand." Da 12:10.

In the Matthew passage<sup>4</sup>, the winds stopped at Jesus' command. The men were in awe and worshipped him (Mt 14:32–33).

The disciples' who walked and talked with Jesus had a faith which grew as they learned to trust the Lord. By the time Peter preached at Pentecost, for example, he had become grounded and bold in his faith (Ac 2:14-36).

Similarly, the believer is rewarded for his faith (Ro 4:4, 5, 16, Heb 11:6). Faith grows as one learns to trust the Lord (Is 28:10, 1 Pe 2:2, 2 Pe 1:5–10).

---

<sup>1</sup> For they considered not the miracle of the loaves: for their heart was hardened (Mk 6:52).

<sup>2</sup> MacArthur, J., Jr. (Ed.). (1997). The MacArthur Study Bible (electronic ed., p. 1473). Nashville, TN: Word Pub.

<sup>3</sup> McGee, J. V. (1991). Thru the Bible commentary: The Gospels (Mark) (electronic ed., Vol. 36, pp. 97–98). Nashville: Thomas Nelson.

<sup>4</sup> Then they that were in the ship came and worshipped him, saying, Of a truth thou art the Son of God (Mt 14:33).