

Mark 6:33

Authorized King James Version (KJV)

And the people saw them departing, and many knew him, and ran afoot thither out of all cities, and outwent them, and came together unto him.

Analysis

And the people saw them departing, and many knew him, and ran afoot thither out of all cities, and outwent them, and came together unto him.

Despite Jesus' attempt at privacy, crowds pursue Him. 'The people saw them departing' (εἶδον αὐτοὺς ὑπάγοντας, *eidon autous hypagontas*) indicates their departure was observed. 'Many knew him' (ἐπέγνωσαν αὐτόν, *epegnōsan auton*) shows Jesus was recognized despite attempted privacy—His fame made anonymity impossible. 'Ran afoot thither out of all cities' (συνέδραμον ἐκεῖ πεζῇ ἀπὸ πασῶν τῶν πόλεων, *synedramon ekei pezē apo pasōn tōn poleōn*)—people from multiple towns ran along the shore to reach Jesus' destination before His boat arrived.

'Outwent them, and came together unto him' (προῆλθον αὐτούς, καὶ συνῆλθον πρὸς αὐτόν, *proēlthon autous, kai synēlthon pros auton*)—they arrived first, waiting when Jesus landed. This demonstrates the crowds' desperate hunger for Jesus' teaching and healing. Their physical exertion—running miles along the lakeshore—proves their eagerness. Yet this enthusiasm also prevented Jesus and the disciples from getting needed rest. The scene sets up the feeding of the 5000, where Jesus, despite needing rest, has compassion and serves them (v. 34). This illustrates Christ's character: sovereign enough to withdraw when necessary, compassionate enough to serve when approached despite personal need.

Historical Context

The geography enabled the crowds' pursuit—the Sea of Galilee's oval shape meant someone sailing to the north shore could be paralleled and outpaced by runners on land. The distance by foot around the north shore was shorter than sailing across and around. Multiple towns ringed the Sea of Galilee: Capernaum, Bethsaida, Chorazin, and others. News traveled quickly through interconnected communities. The Greek συντρέχω (syntrechō, 'ran together') suggests organized movement—people from various towns converged as they ran, creating large crowd. Ancient sources confirm that large crowds could gather quickly when popular teachers or healers appeared. The physical effort required—running several miles over rough terrain—demonstrates remarkable devotion or desperation. Likely many sought healing, others craved teaching, some were merely curious. Jesus' fame had spread throughout Galilee due to miracles, exorcisms, and authoritative teaching. Early church noted the irony: Jesus withdrew seeking rest but couldn't escape the crowds' need—foreshadowing His entire ministry's pattern of self-giving service even unto death.

Related Passages

John 15:13 — Greatest form of love

1 John 4:8 — God is love

Study Questions

1. How does the crowds' physical exertion to reach Jesus—running miles—challenge our own level of eagerness and effort to encounter Christ in Scripture, prayer, and worship?
2. What does Jesus' response to this interruption of His rest plans teach about balancing legitimate self-care with compassionate service to others' needs?

Interlinear Text

καὶ εἶδον αὐτὸν ὑπάγοντας οἱ ὄχλοι, καὶ ἐπέγνωσαν
And **saw** **him** **departing** ^{G3588} **the people** **And** **knew**
G2532 G1492 G846 G5217 G3793 G2532 G1921

αὐτὸν πολλοί καὶ πεζῇ ἀπὸ πασῶν τῶν πόλεων
him **many** **And** **afoot** **out of** **all** ^{G3588} **cities**
G846 G4183 G2532 G3979 G575 G3956 G4172

συνέδραμον ἐκεῖ καὶ προῆλθον αὐτὸν καὶ συνῆλθον
ran **thither** **And** **outwent** **him** **And** **came together**
G4936 G1563 G2532 G4281 G846 G2532 G4905

πρὸς αὐτὸν
unto **him**
G4314 G846