

Mark 6:30-44

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[0:00] And we come to this next part of the story, which is one of the great miracles that Christ performs. And we're going to kind of dig into that tonight. And just kind of coming here tonight, just kind of being in a rush. I forgot my coat because in the midst of that, I almost forgot my cell phone because I forgot where I put that. And just kind of in that hustle and bustle of always thinking of where you need to be, you kind of get lost in the things that you're kind of doing right now.

And we're going to see a people like that tonight as they're in this rush to get to this place, to see something or to see someone. They kind of forget something in the process. They're on their way. They're excited about where they're going. So they kind of forget what they need to bring or what they need to carry with them in this process. So if you want to turn with me to Mark chapter six and we'll begin at verse 30, I think it's on page 841 in your pew Bibles.

Lord, we come to you as needy as this people was coming to you. Though they didn't recognize every need they had, they may not even recognize the most important need they had.

But just in our blindness, we see that you shepherd us, that you guide us, that you're leading us back to yourself. Through your love, through your mercy and grace, you have compassion on us.

And you provide us with truth. You provide us with so many things that we need and that we long for. And that hopefully, Lord, that in the process of wading through those things that we see that we need you the most, and that's what our hearts truly long for.

[2:07] Lord, that we may be able to see how great you are and to see how your word always points back to you and how your miracles reveal such great things about you and who you are. In Christ's name, amen.

So I'll start off by reading the passage for us. And the apostles returned to Jesus and told him all they had done and taught. And he said to them, come away by yourselves to a desolate place and rest a while.

For many were coming and going and they had no leisure to even eat. And they went away to a boat to a desolate place by themselves. Now many saw them going and recognized them.

And they ran there on foot from all the towns and got there ahead of them. When they went ashore, he saw a great crowd and had compassion on them because they were like sheep without a shepherd.

And he began to teach them many things. And when it grew late, his disciples came to him and said, this is a desolate place and the hour is now late. Send them away and go into the surrounding countryside and villages and buy themselves something to eat.

[3:25] But he answered them, you give them something to eat. And they said to him, shall we go and buy 200 denarii worth of bread and give it to them to eat? And he said to them, how many loaves do you have?

Go and see. And when they had found out, they said, five and two fish. And he commanded them all to sit in groups on the green grass. So they sat down in groups by hundreds and by fifties.

And taking the five loaves and two fish, he looked up to heaven and said a blessing and broke the loaves and gave them to the disciples to set before the people. And he divided the two fish among them all.

And they all ate and were satisfied. And he took the 12 baskets full of broken pieces and the fish. And those who ate the loaves were 5,000 men. So we kind of see a few things in this text.

One thing, Jesus is a good caterer. He just walks up here. He sees all these people. Surely they must be hungry.

[4 : 34] Let me feed them. Tell the little boy over there to give me his crackers. And his fish. And I'll feed all these people. And I feel that's how this miracle is kind of portrayed to our culture sometimes.

It's kind of, Jesus, he was at this place. It was great. He fed all these people. Surely he must have been a nice guy. He was pretty decent. He didn't make all these people walk back to all the surrounding towns and get their food.

And he fed them. He fed them himself. So surely he must be a nice guy. But is there something more here that we're kind of missing about this story? Is it just about him feeding these people with loaves and fish?

And if you've kind of been following this series or doing any reading in the Gospels, you kind of see that the miracles that Christ shows us, they're not just to provide for those needs that kind of seem obvious.

But they're bigger. They're revealing something about himself. And as John puts it in at the end of his Gospel, like, he specifically picks these seven signs.

[5 : 44] And he writes, And these are written so that you may believe that Jesus is the Christ, the Son of God. And by believing in his name, you may have eternal life.

And even Mark, in his Gospel, he states that this is the Gospel of Jesus Christ, the Son of God. So explicitly, they're stating something here that's very significant, that they're trying to prove, that they're taking an account of, and they want us to see.

And that fact is, they want us to see that Jesus is our Messiah, like he's the Son of God. That's the point that they're trying to make. And not that these people got healed, but not that that's an insignificant thing, but there's something greater that they want us to see.

So hopefully, through these five flows, we begin to see something greater, that Jesus is this good shepherd, that he's this great and good and loving and compassionate shepherd who provides for his people.

So, as we begin to look at the text in verse 30, we see here the disciples coming back.

[6 : 49] They're coming back to Jesus to tell of all they've taught and all they've done. And kind of looking back early in the chapter in verse 7, Jesus gives them authority over unclean spirits.

And they go out, and it says, they proclaim that people should repent, and they cast out many demons and anointed with oil, many that were sick, and they were healed.

So they did all these great signs and doing all these great things the way when Jesus sent them out. So they get back. He probably notices they're kind of weary. They're kind of tired from all the traveling they were doing.

So what does he tell them? Come away to a desolate place. So they're on their way to this desolate place.

And these people hear about it. And they begin to tell one another, I'm sure. And they begin to tell more people. And then they begin to start to run, as it says.

[7:54] As it says here, like, they ran from all the villages around there. They were running. They were going to see something. And there was something there, something significant that was happening. They were seeing all these signs that the apostles were doing.

They were seeing the signs and wonders that Jesus was doing. And they wanted to be a part of that. So they run to this desolate place. So I guess the thing I think about is, like, what were the disciples thinking when they got there?

They were going there in hopes of rest and maybe eating. And they get there and they see all these people. I'm not sure if this crossed their mind. But it could definitely cross my mind.

It's like, dang, my rest is interrupted. I have this plan in mind. Like, I want to rest. But I'm getting phone calls. I'm getting text messages.

Somebody singing loud in the shower next to me. And I can't get any rest. But in contrast to there, we see Christ at this point.

[8:56] And it says in verse 34, And when he came ashore, he saw the great crowd and had compassion on them, because they were like sheep without a shepherd, and began to teach them many things.

And to this point, I was reading this article about from Ajit Fernando. He's a minister and a pastor in Sri Lanka.

And he was just kind of talking about the frustration and the tutorial that he kind of goes through in his work. And he has this quote. And he says, As a leader, I am a bondservant to the people I lead.

And that means that my schedule is shaped more by their needs than mine. And in these verses, we kind of see that as Christ is shaping his schedule and what he's doing around the people that he's serving.

Because he came for really no other purpose than to seek and to save the lost, as we read throughout the Gospels. And as he kind of drives his points home in all he does.

[10:18] And we kind of see that brought to fruition in the cross. So his schedule begins to be shaped by the people that he's serving. In this place where they're going to rest, they're going to eat, they find all these people.

And immediately, he begins to teach them. They don't wait and says, No, me and my disciples are coming here to have our quiet time, kind of go away, come back later type of thing.

They don't see the people at the shore. Like, their place is kind of crowded. Let's go somewhere else. But they pull up to the shore. Jesus gets out and begins to teach them many things.

And so, this great crowd. I'm not sure if the Greek or Hebrew kind of adds anything to that, but we know this crowd was great.

As you kind of read on, we see there are 5,000 men here. And depending on who you talk to, there are anywhere from 15 to 25,000 people here when you start to get into the men, the women, and the children.

[11:26] So, there was this great crowd here that had a need. And Jesus says, they're like sheep without a shepherd. So, we see him in his compassion.

He looked out at these people, not because they had ran there and they were kind of bent over and tired and exhausted. He's looking at something deeper here.

Maybe some heart level issues that they're dealing with. Like, they're wandering and not knowing what they come in to see. As we kind of see in John's gospel, as he kind of brings up this same point.

Like, what did you come here to see? And what were you seeking? And he begins to ask those questions of these people. Of like, why are you here? Like, what's the point of you coming to see these things?

Because, so, we don't really see Jesus yet begin to deal with the feeding and this physical need.

[12:28] There's something spiritual here. He begins to teach them truth. In Luke's gospel, he says, he starts to teach them about the kingdom of God. He spoke to them about the kingdom of God. And he brings up that point.

And first and foremost, we kind of see that, see that come into play here. So, so in his great provision, he, he begins to teach them.

And not knowing much about sheep, I don't really know how to take that, but you kind of see dogs.

They're kind of, if you set them loose in the wild, they could probably fend for themselves. We know cats are pretty much independent, but kind of growing up on a farm around cows, I figure they're pretty much like sheep.

They're herding animals. They kind of go where you lead them. And, and sometimes if you want to get out of the pasture and you kind of notice them walking up along the fence, trying to, trying to figure out where, where they got out, where, where can they get back in?

[13:33] And usually in, in, in that process, me and my grandfather, my uncle, whoever was there or whoever was available had to end up guiding them back to where they needed to be.

And we see Jesus here kind of inserting himself and saying like, I, I'm a shepherd. I see these people, they have no shepherd. So he begins to teach them. He begins to give them truth.

And then we begin to see like, he's, he's, he's, he's leading them. He's guiding them. He's giving them something that they'll need. That's not necessarily going to take care of their, their physical needs, but more so spiritual.

So some of you kind of thinking like, well, is that the, the big idea he's trying to cross here? Like our physical need, our physical needs are kind of irrelevant.

They're kind of less than, less than this great need. Well, it is. I guess in our spirituality, we say we're kind of fine.

[14:32] We kind of take a little pinch of this, sprinkle a little death, a dash of that, a little, a little serenity, a little meditation. And we figure out we're, we're at peace with ourselves.

All is right with the world. And, and spiritually we're fine through that. But we may be saying we have these physical needs. Like we may have student loan debt up to our eyes, or we may be looking for our next meal or our home or, or whatever that may be.

And those things are reported. Those things are relevant, but those things are obvious. We can see those things. They may be even coming to mail with a big red last notice on them or something like that.

But heart level issues, issues that deal with our spirit and our soul, like those things are a little bit harder to identify. But we always try to use physical means to fix them.

Like I feel insignificant. Well, let me get a job that makes me feel important. I'm lonely. Let me get a girlfriend or a boyfriend or both, as you kind of see happen.

[15:39] I don't have any joy. Well, let me think more part of those thoughts. Let me live like every day is Friday type of thing. So in this, I guess, in this struggle with us to always be meeting our own needs and meeting our own, and just solving our own problems, we kind of get caught up in that where we're, where we're always using these physical things to kind of meet needs that, that are, that may not be physical.

And, and as you kind of learn more about this crowd through John, it kind of gets to a point where, where Jesus begins to tell them their, their biggest needs, and they begin to talk about what, what do they need to do to, do for this.

And he says, but believe in the one that God has sent. Believe in me. And, and we kind of see there, as you kind of dive into more, if you want to read that in your spare time, you kind of, you'll kind of get that bigger picture of, of what's going on here.

So, we don't really see Jesus dismissing these, these physical problems, but, we see here first dealing with what's going with them spiritually.

He's giving them truth, something to lead and, and to guide them. Not necessarily to, to feed them at this point. And we also see him healing them as well. As you look in the, the gospels of Matthew and, and Luke, it also, it also introduces that point of, of this physical healing that comes.

[17:19] And, and how loving and compassionate would he be if he didn't address our spiritual need?

Us, broken and sinful man, separated from a holy and perfect God. And nothing we can do to bridge that gap, but believe in Christ.

How compassionate would he be if he just kind of let that slide, or, or made little of that point here. And then he kind of, kind of goes on and, and continues to minister to them and to heal them and, and to teach them.

And we kind of see in this, and see from John that, that not all these people are, are really believing in Jesus.

They're, they're here for the bread. They're here for the, for the miracles. They're here for the things he can do for them. But yet we still, he, we still see his compassion in that as well as he continues to, to love and, and to serve these people.

[18:43] We see his common grace extended to all these people that come. Like there's no qualification for the people he healed. There are no applications they have to fill out. There's no lottery system in place for who gets the first piece of bread.

Like there's none of that in place. We see Jesus here, seeing that all people need to, need, have a need for him, whether they realize it or not. So in the midst of this, it's getting late, and his disciples come to him.

And at this point they say, it's getting late. Send these people away so they can go eat. And it appears that the disciples' concern for the people is greater than the crowd's concern for themselves.

It seems that they're pretty content where they are. They're pretty satisfied right here at Christ's feet, getting healed by him, getting taught by him. So, no one moves.

And the disciples think, well, maybe he will send them away at our request. But, but what does he say next? You give them something to eat.

[19:54] When that kind of perplex you, perplex you a little bit, out of all these people, they recognize that the people didn't have food, and they recognize they had to send them away. So, there was no food anywhere that they could come up with.

So, they must have been a little baffled about this as they kind of logically think through this. And Philip kind of puts in the point, well, it's going to be 200 denarii to feed these people, roughly about eight months wages, and that wouldn't even satisfy them all.

And kind of looking at the average income for the state of Connecticut right now, which is around 65,000. Imagine needing \$43,000 to feed people. That's roughly about eight months worth of that.

But then they find this little boy, which has these five loaves and two fish. And these loaves right here, this bread is kind of like, it's kind of like a cracker, a small thing.

And these fish are pickled. So, this is a lunch for one person. Better yet, it's a lunch for a little boy. I'm sure a grown man would eat more than that.

[21 : 07] And so, we see them. They grab the fish, they grab the loaves, and they bring them to Jesus. And I'm pretty sure this little boy's meal isn't worth \$43,000 at this point.

But nevertheless, Jesus takes the loaves, he takes the fish, and he sends the disciples out. And they sit the people in 50s and 100s, as if they're preparing for a banquet or some great feast.

But yet, at this point, there's still no food. So, what does Christ do? He looks to heaven. He blesses it.

And he hands it to his disciples to start to distribute to the people. And the disciples, at this point, they have to feed these thousands and thousands and thousands of people right now.

So, they're probably coming back to Jesus and getting more bread and continuing to distribute it and getting more fresh and continuing to hand it out. Wouldn't you stop and wonder, where is all this coming from?

[22 : 29] Where is he getting all of this? Wouldn't you be astounded? As you kind of, as you kind of look down a little later in the chapter, it does say they're astounded.

Matter of fact, in verse 51, it says, and they were utterly astounded. But that's not at the loaves and fish. That was at the walking on water and the calming of the wind.

And he goes on to say, for they did not understand about the loaves, but their hearts were hardened. So, we see the disciples here. This great sign right before their eyes, but yet, yet little understanding.

And we see Jesus' provision in that, even though they understand a little, he still has great provision for them. He still provides for them. He still has compassion on them.

And everything's said and done, they still have these 12 baskets left that they get to eat from. Their main purpose for coming here was to rest and to eat.

[23 : 40] And we see Jesus provide for them here, to shepherd them as well as the people and his provision for them. He didn't just bring them here and work them hard and serve these people, seek these people, do all these things.

We also see his provision for them here as well. And we also see later that they will cherish this.

This is the only other miracle other than Christ's resurrection that appears in all four Gospels. The only one. And it comes up here. And it comes up in Matthew.

It comes up in Luke. It comes up in John. So there's something very, very significant about this that all of them saw, that all of them remembered it, and that all of them wanted to record it.

So hopefully this fact that Jesus comes as this compassionate shepherd matters to us in our wandering, whether it be from place to place, from job to job, or whether it be in our own minds from indecisiveness that we have about different things, that we see that Christ comes, gives us truth, can heal us, can feed us, can provide for us in so many ways, and that we would just see, like, the compassion of this great shepherd.

- [25 : 21] And as we see throughout the Gospels, like, his compassion, it never comes without action. It never comes just as a feeling that he kind of sees something and lets it slide. In Mark 1, it heals lepers. In Mark 9, it casts out demons. In Matthew 20, it gives sight. In Luke 7, it raises the dead. In Luke 10, it brings help. In Luke 15, it brings a son home. So this compassion that he's feeling, this deep, this being deeply moved for this people always calls him to action. It always causes him to initiate and to provide and to care for his people. And it also shows, all who come to him, there will be satisfaction, there will be completeness. And we kind of see in this where he says in verse 42, and they all ate and were all satisfied.
- [26 : 37] Nobody was lacking. Nobody was hungry. And this kind of translates as to being gorged, like, they weren't lacking in any way. Nobody let the fish pass by. Nobody was on a low-carb diet and passed the bread by. They all wanted this food that Jesus was feeding them. And they all were satisfied by it. They all were filled. They all ate till they were full. And for the Jews that read this, how could they kind of miss this symbolic, the symbolicness of this? They were in a desolate place, a desert place, as Mark kind of reiterates throughout these verses. And we see Jesus here. He looks to heaven, and bread miraculously shows up. And we see him look out over the people and call them sheep without a shepherd and kind of steps in as Israel's divine shepherd. So we kind of see his divinity come into play here. We kind of, we see this in a way that that shows his divinity as this shepherd of Israel.
- [27 : 51] They kind of use that imagery, and you kind of look through the Old Testament, as you look in Psalms and Ezekiel, Second Chronicles, Kings, I want to say. There's just so many images of God being the shepherd to his people. And that comes into play. And we kind of see here, and as we look at John as well, he calls himself the bread of life. So he brings this bread that's better than the bread that Moses brought to the people. And as he says in John 6, 58, this is the bread that came from heaven, speaking of himself, not like the bread the fathers ate and died. Whoever feeds on this bread will live forever. And he just uses this miracle as the way to show more of himself, to be symbolic of what would happen to him, of what he would become. As he says, the bread that he will give for the life of the world is his flesh. Himself for the ransom of sinners.
- [29 : 13] He became the bread that brought us life. And through the Lord's suffer, we remember that. We actively remember the sacrifice Christ made for us, what he became. His blood, the wine, his body, the bread. Let's pray. Lord, that, I just pray that we would just see that your provision goes deeper and farther and wider than we can, we could ever imagine. That as we look at these loaves and fish, we kind of dismiss it at times. And I think that was a good story about feeding people. But we see that you're trying to reveal something much deeper and something much more, more greater about yourself and who you are. And I pray that we would just see that as well. that we would come to you, Lord, knowing that you're the bread of life.

[30 : 38] That we would come to you as a shepherd and know that you give life and that we would have it more abundantly in you.

That we would trust you. that we would put our hope in, that hope would be in you. And that we would allow you to lead us.

There's so many times we are sufficient in ourselves and we blaze our own trails and we're self-made and we make our own way for ourselves.

And I just pray that we would see how much of a delusion that is. That to know you, to trust you, will be all our hearts long for.

Lord. In Christ's name, Amen. Amen.

[32 : 02] Thank you. Thank you. Thank you. Thank you.

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