

Message #20**Mark 6:30-44**

Have you ever wondered whether or not God really cares for you? Someone you love dies and you wonder why? Have you ever worried about things such as whether or not a family member will be saved or our country will remain safe? Have you ever worried about your health and how much time you have left? Have you ever worried about your income, your bills or even food? Well this passage clearly teaches us that God is a God who cares about every aspect of your life. He cares about your emotional needs, your physical needs and your spiritual needs. What this passage suggests is that Jesus Christ is able to meet every one of your needs. This is an amazing passage of Scripture. What this text teaches us is this:

EVEN THOUGH THERE ARE EVIL AND CORRUPT THINGS HAPPENING IN HIGH POLITICAL OFFICES, GOD’S PEOPLE NEED TO MAINTAIN THEIR FOCUS ON JESUS CHRIST AND FAITHFULLY KEEP AT THEIR WORK, KNOWING GOD PERSONALLY CARES FOR THEM AND WILL SUPPLY EVERYTHING THEY NEED.

Now the context of this is important. We may recall that Jesus had sent the twelve out to different villages to preach. He gave them specific apostolic power and authority to cast out demons and heal people (Mark 6:7-13). Then sandwiched in between this data is a discussion of the murder of John. While the disciples are out ministering for the Lord, Herod is holding a huge banquet which features a dancing girl, who ends up responsible for the murder of John the Baptist. There can be no question that word spread to these apostles that John had been killed, so this probably became the basis for them heading back to Jesus Christ. They were probably wondering what will happen to us?

It is true that John was killed; however, the apostles needed to keep doing their job, which was to communicate the truth of God. They also were about to learn that when they stay focused on what God has called them to do, God not only watches out for them and cares for them, but He will meet all of their needs.

Now this passage is important. It shows us that while Herod was involved in that which was evil, the apostles were involved in that which was sacred. **While Herod was involved in murder, the apostles were involved in ministry.**

No matter what is going on around us, we need to keep at it. God will continue to take care of and supply the needs of those who minister for Him. No matter what is happening in the political and religious world, we need to keep at our work, proclaiming God’s truth. When we do that, we will experience Christ’s care.

According to **verse 30**, the apostles come back and report to Jesus. Notice that Mark uses the noun “apostles” not disciples. This is the only place in this Gospel where Mark uses this noun. He is emphasizing that these were the twelve commissioned by Jesus Christ who had been chosen, sent and gifted by Him and sent out to preach and perform miracles.

It may be that the death of John the Baptist led the apostles to head back to Jesus. They had been out in various villages and probably heard that he had been killed. This may have prompted them to return to Jesus. But they were about to learn that Jesus Christ cares for them. There are three critical episodes that show this in this passage:

CARE EPISODE #1 – Jesus Christ specifically cared about the apostle’s emotional needs.
6:31-32

Jesus Christ cares about the health and welfare of those who serve Him. Jesus was well aware that these guys in ministry needed a break. There were so many people around them that they did not even have time to eat. They had been teaching and performing miracles and they were being mobbed by people. They needed some time to get away from the pressure so Jesus took them in a boat to the other side of the Sea of Galilee to a secluded spot.

That adjective “secluded” refers to some remote wilderness type of place. Luke actually pin-points the general area as being near Bethsaida (Luke 9:10). This is an area just east of where the Jordan enters the Sea of Galilee. According to historical accounts the specific name of this spot was Bethsaida Julius on the NE side of the sea. It features a green plain that is large and plush. Jesus said to His disciples you need a break, so let’s go there.

When you have been on the front lines of ministry, it is grueling and there are times when you need a break. Every true Christian worker needs a break. There needs to be some time to kick back away from the pressure. Ministry at times is fatiguing. It is draining and sometimes one just needs to get away. Jesus knows that. In fact, He sanctions that.

Jesus was drawing huge crowds by His teaching and miracles and now that these twelve were also teaching and able to do the miraculous and that meant the numbers are increasing. The popularity of Jesus Christ and His apostles was intensifying and Jesus knew that these apostles needed a ministry break. They needed some spiritual and physical reviving.

God knows when His people need a break. He knows when His people need to get away from the pressure and He knows just how and where to relieve it.

CARE EPISODE #2- Jesus Christ specifically cared about the people’s spiritual needs.
6:33-34

Now Jesus and the disciples are in a boat crossing the northern part of the Sea of Galilee to a destination that was 5-6 miles in a straight shot across the sea. They are traveling northwest to northeast, which is pretty much a straight shot. When the people saw them moving toward their destination, they took off running to follow them around the north side shoreline of the Sea of Galilee. They could obviously see the boat.

There have been scientific calculations done as to how far you can actually see standing on a shore at sea level. If your eyeball is at 5 feet you can see 2.65 miles. If your eyeball is at 6 feet, you can see 2.9 miles. If your eyeball is at 10 feet, you can see 3.7 miles.

So we will assume that the boat that Jesus and his disciples are in is less than 2 ½ miles out in the water, which would enable people to see it and when they saw the boat they start running in the direction of where it is headed. If you follow the coastline, it is about an 8 mile run.

There were hundreds and hundreds of people running around the north side of the Sea of Galilee, knowing that Jesus and his disciples are in that boat. As **verse 33** says, people from “all the cities” were tracking them.

At this point, collectively Jesus and His disciples had been in many cities and people from all of these cities were running to get to the place where they would land. In fact, the end of **verse 33** says, “they got there ahead of them.”

We are talking about thousands of people here. We know this is true because there were five thousand men, not counting the women and children (**6:44**).

According to **verse 34**, when Jesus got to shore and saw this, He felt compassion on them. They were like a bunch of sheep that did not have a shepherd, who could teach them the truth. They had all kinds of religious men and places of worship; but they did not have one who could teach them the truth. **So Jesus goes on the shore and starts teaching the people.** Do you see this?

The way Jesus expressed His compassion on the crowd was by teaching. Keep in mind that they were supposedly taking a break from teaching, but when they got to this side, Jesus saw this huge crowd and what this crowd needed was teaching. It is clear from this context that He taught for hours.

This is so foreign to the way that most people think about compassionate ministries. Most ministries that stress we need to show compassion to people stress we don't want to preach to people. In fact, I know of one charity that actually said we want to give food and medical supplies to the people, but we do not want to preach at them.

Well frankly, the most compassionate thing that can be done for people is to preach and teach the truth of God because Jesus Christ is the only One who can save from sin and guarantee everlasting life. What is more compassionate than telling lost sinners that they may be saved from their sins through faith in Him?

Most charities today promote the idea that man can live on bread alone. Jesus said, no. You cannot have life by bread alone, but by Me. Therefore, what Jesus did was spend time preaching and teaching.

The most compassionate Christ-like ministry we will actually ever have is one that is concerned about preaching and teaching the Word of God. People today have all kinds of churches and all kinds of religious leaders, but they are like sheep without a shepherd because most of those religious institutions are not preaching and teaching the whole Word of God.

CARE EPISODE #3 – Jesus Christ specifically cared about the people’s physical needs.
6:35-44

The disciples were worried. Jesus was teaching the truth and this had gone on for some time. The disciples came to Jesus with three concerns:

Concern #1 - They were concerned about the time. **6:35**

It was getting late. Twice in this verse that point is stressed. It was probably getting to be late in the afternoon. We may assume from **verse 47** that it is not evening yet, but it is getting late in the day.

The sun typically starts to go down about 6 PM, so the time has been speculated to be somewhere around 5-ish.

Concern #2 - They were concerned about the location. **6:35**

This was a desolate, remote area and this was not an area conducive to housing and caring for massive crowds of people. The word “desolate” means this was an area that did not have a lot of vegetation. It was a desert kind of area.

Concern #3 - They were concerned about food. **6:36**

Now we already know they had not eaten so they were probably concerned about their own food and also they were concerned for the welfare of the thousands of people

Now their solution to the problem was to send the people away (**6:36**). Never once did any of these apostles think Jesus could provide for these people. Not one of these men thought we know Jesus can meet the needs of these people. Their view was let them figure it out for themselves.

Frankly, many people do not realize that Jesus Christ is capable of meeting every need. Even ministers don’t seem to get this point. Many promote the idea that you need to talk to a psychologist rather than you need to talk to Jesus Christ. Jesus Christ is capable of meeting your needs if you go to Him because He is God.

According to **verse 37**, when the disciples said send them away to buy food, Jesus said, “you feed them.” In Greek, the “you” is emphatic and the “you give them something to eat” is an imperative. Jesus is specifically commanding these twelve to feed this crowd.

Now this command totally baffled the apostles. **Verse 37** says do you want us to take 200 denarii and go buy some bread to feed this group? Now a denarius was worth about a day's wage (Matt. 20:2). The denarius had a picture of Tiberius Caesar on it. 200 hundred denarii is about 8 months' worth of wages. So to do economic equivalents if an average wage is \$150 per day, then 200 times this is \$30,000. Jesus and His disciples apparently did have some money. As Mark Strauss said this is not "pocket change" (*Mark*, p. 275). This was quite a sum of money and apparently Jesus and His team did have this much money with them and Judas, who was the group treasurer, probably calculated this will be one very expensive meal if we pick up the tab on this meal.

But Jesus was not going to have them use all their money here. In **verse 38**, He said to His disciples go look and see how many loaves of bread are out there in the crowd. Well the apostles went through the crowd and apparently Andrew said we have a total of five loaves of bread and two fish. John tells us Andrew found this and that there were five barley loaves and two fish that came from a young boy (John 6:8-9).

In verses 39-40, Jesus performs a miracle and feeds the entire crowd showing He cares about the physical welfare of people and He provides for them.

This is one of the greatest miracles that Jesus ever performed. Other than the resurrection, this is the only miracle that is recorded in all four Gospels. Matthew, Peter and John actually were there and participated in this and Peter is telling Mark exactly what happened.

In fact, there is a small chapel located on the Sea of Galilee called the "the Church of Multiplication" that has been built in honor of this amazing miracle.

Now this miracle is remarkable and it is in many ways unexplainable. We will do our best to examine the eight details that are revealed to us:

Detail #1 - Jesus commanded the entire crowd to sit down on the green grass. **6:39**

Keep in mind that there is not much vegetation in this area. There is a large area of green grass that would be capable of seating thousands and that is where Jesus had them sit down. We cannot help but think of Psalm 23:2 that says, "He makes me lie down in green pastures."

Detail #2 - Jesus had them sit down in organized groups of hundreds and fifties. **6:40**

This is very precise organization. Anything that is truly of God will be done decently and orderly and there will be precise organization. In a true work of God, it is not a free-for-all mindset. All things in a true work of God will be very systematic and organized.

Detail #3 - Jesus took the five loaves and two fish. **6:41a**

We take this to mean He literally had these things in His hands. This is an aorist participle, which means this was a specific moment or point of time when this action was performed.

So all He has in His hands in front of thousands of people are five loaves of barley bread and two small fish. A loaf of bread is about the width of your finger and about the size of a small pan. That is it.

But you trust God with your little things and watch what He can do with them. David trusted God with a little stone in a sling and toppled a giant. Moses trusted God with a little staff and parted a sea. A poor widow trusted God with two mites and ended up eternally rich. Little things become big things when put in the hands of God.

You may think you don't have much to offer God. You are small and you don't have much and you are much of anything. Offer whatever you have to God and see what He will do.

Detail #4 - Jesus looked up toward heaven. **6:41b**

The Greek reads He was looking up at "the heaven." He was not looking at the clouds or outer space; He was looking at the throne of God heaven. This is also an aorist participle which means this was a specific moment or point of time when this action was performed.

Detail #5 - Jesus blessed the food. **6:41c**

Aorist verb tense means this is a specific moment when He blesses the food. Now according to John, Jesus gave thanks for the food (John 6:11). Matthew and Mark say He blessed and Luke adds He blessed "them," which refers to the five loaves and two fish (Luke 9:16). So blessing the food is actually more about thanking God for the food. It is not about asking God to bless the food; it is about thanking God for the food.

Detail #6 - Jesus broke the loaves. **6:41d**

Now the verb "broke" is aorist tense indicating this is one specific moment of time when He broke the loaves.

Detail #7 - Jesus kept giving the bread to the disciples. **6:41e**

This is where this miracle goes beyond what we can grasp. **Mark does not say how Jesus did this, but he does stress that this was happening in the hands of Jesus Christ.** Mark changes the verb tense from aorist to imperfect tense. From what we may gather, Jesus kept giving and giving the food out of His hands to His disciples, who in turn passed it on to the people.

He apparently just keeps giving more and more bread out of His hands. The disciples keep coming to Him and He has more and more to give them.

Detail #8 - Jesus kept continually dividing up the fish. **6:41f**

I understand this to mean they served the bread first and then the fish. Same principle, Jesus kept continually giving and giving out the fish to the disciples, who in turn served it to the people.

So as Jesus is passing out the food to the disciples, it continues to multiply from His hands. He keeps giving and giving out bread and fish. Only God can do this. We run out of doughnut holes.

Now can you imagine some vegetarian saying, I think I'll pass on the fish? This was a provision coming from the hands of Jesus Christ.

Verse 42 says they all ate and were satisfied. Do you see that? Jesus didn't just give them small rations to tide them over. He fed them until they were full. Christ did not just give them enough to get by; He gave them more than enough. Jesus Christ can and will satisfy every need of every life. But in order for that to happen, one must put that life in His hands.

According to **verse 43**, when the entire group had been fed; they picked up twelve full baskets of bread and fish.

According to **verse 44**, there were 5000 men that were fed plus, as Matthew says, the women and children (Matt. 14:21). There were thousands of people here.

I don't know what kind of year you have had this past year, but this is what I do know; Jesus Christ can and will meet every need you have if you will put your life into His hands. He cares about your emotional needs, your spiritual needs and your physical needs. If you will turn your life over to Him, you will see Him do some great and marvelous things with you and for you.