

Sermon outline and notes:

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Mark 6:30-56 (read vv.30-34) “Jesus Meeting Human Need”

Intro. In order to understand vv.30-34, you need to look back at vv. 7-13. Jesus had sent His disciples out to teach & minister in His name. The disciples have done what Jesus commanded them to do, and now they have returned from their mission. They are excited about what has happened. They have been working hard for the Lord. But now Jesus said in v.31, “Come aside by yourselves to a deserted place and rest a while.” Jesus knew that He and His disciples needed some rest. Part of the reason why Jesus told His disciples to get some rest is given by Mark in the last of v.31, “For there were many coming and going, and they did not even have time to eat.” Even God’s Servant-Son needed time to rest, fellowship with His friends, and to find renewal from the Father.

We all need rest from time to time. Vance Havner has said, “If you don’t come apart and rest, you will come apart.” God said in the Old Testament that man should rest one day/week. We also need other periods of rest and refreshment from time to time. It is not good to neglect your body. There must be a balance between work and rest. We all need an occasional vacation. However, there are only a few who are in danger of working too much! Yet those few need to heed these words of Jesus.

I would also point out that Jesus probably wanted them to get away not just for bodily rest, but also for spiritual refreshment & prayer. Prayer is the secret of success in spiritual business. It brings down the promised aid of the Holy Spirit, without whom the finest sermons are all in vain. The disciples learned this lesson, for later they said in Acts 6:4, “but we will give ourselves continually to prayer and to the ministry of the word.” The two go hand-in-hand.

Yet Jesus & His disciples had a hard time finding rest. You see, at this point in the ministry of Jesus, He was still at the height of His popularity. So the over zealous crowds would not leave Him alone. They followed Him even to a remote region of Galilee, as we see in v.33. Those who are famous know what it is like to have crowds of people not leaving them alone. They can’t go out in public without being mobbed by fans, or by the paparazzi.

In spite of the interruption to His plans, the Lord welcomed the people, taught them the Word, and healed those who were afflicted. To the disciples the crowds were a problem, perhaps even a nuisance. Yet Jesus was also moved with compassion upon the multitudes. He loved people, and wanted to minister to them. He saw them as sheep without a shepherd (v.34b). They were not being taught & led in the right way. So He took time to teach them, even though He sought rest & solitude. We humans need direction through teaching from God’s Word. As we shall see today, He also went about meeting other human needs.

Friend, I want you to know that Jesus still has compassion for people. He still wants to meet the needs of your life. And He sets a great example for Christian workers today. We should have compassion for people, & minister to people’s needs. People are still as sheep, needing direction. So we also should teach people, & lead them to put their faith in Jesus, who still wants to meet people’s needs.

So this morning I am going to bring a message about Jesus meeting needs. Now the first main lesson from our text is this:

I. WHEN YOU ARE HUNGRY, JESUS GIVES HIS PROVISION

This is the passage of Scripture tells of the miracle of the feeding of the 5000. All four gospels tell this story, so it must have been very important. Jesus had been teaching the people that day & the sun was beginning to set. The people were hungry. Now as we too are surrounded by hungry people, this text teaches us an important principle:

A. Don't Have a Wrong Attitude Toward People - In v.36 the disciples said of the hungry people, "send them away."

That is the attitude of some people in the church today. Multitudes of people have great needs, but if they come to church in ragged clothes, in need of help, they say, "send them away." Or when the church is growing, and the pastor has to divide his time and attention to more people, some say, "Send them away. The church is getting too big."

When D.L. Moody was building his great Sunday School in Chicago, children came to him from all over. They often passed by other churches and Sunday Schools to be with Mr. Moody. When asked why he walked so far to attend Moody's Sunday School, one boy replied, "Because they love a fella over there!" The children could tell the difference.

Do we have a loving, welcoming attitude toward visitors & other people, or do we give the message that says, "Go away"? In contrast with the wrong attitude of the disciples, we see:

B. Have the Attitude of Jesus – He did not look upon them in the way the disciples did. He had compassion upon them (v.34). He did not see them as problems to avoid but as people who needed ministry. The day was far spent, & the people were hungry. He knew that man does not live by bread alone, but he also knew that people do need food.

Today there are hungry people all around. There are those who are physically hungry. There are those who are emotionally hungry for attention, friendship, and fellowship. There are those who are spiritually hungry. There is an emptiness in their soul. They may try to fill that spiritual hunger with material things, pleasure, and even religion, but that will not satisfy. We are to be like Jesus & have compassion on such people. That should lead to the next step in ministering to people.

C. Take the Right Actions - Now what should we do with all the hungry that are around us? Should we send them away, or should we obey the command of Jesus in v.37, "You give them something to eat." Jesus here is calling attention to the responsibility of the disciples here. Not surprisingly the disciples were startled by the command of Jesus. It seemed to be an impossible command to obey. They pointed out how much money would be involved to feed that many people. It would take a common working man the equivalent of 8 months pay to earn enough money to feed 5000 people just one meal. So the disciple Finance Committee rejected the idea right off. Acting on the basis of human wisdom, His disciples saw the problem but not the potential. But they left out one important aspect out of their decision. They forgot about the fact that God could provide. You see, there's an important principle here: When God commands, He will also supply the means to obey the command. They are about to find out that Jesus was going to enable them to feed the multitude. So the first step is not to measure our resources, but to determine God's will and trust Him to meet the need.

Are we any better than they? Are we obeying the command of Jesus to meet the needs of people? Are we giving out the bread of life? Are we meeting other needs of people? When it comes to real, necessary ministry to people, are we saying, "We cannot afford it"?

D. Learn the Lessons from Jesus – I see 3 lessons from this story. One is this:

1. Little is Much with God - When Jesus determined to meet the need, He first wanted to see what He had to work with. In v.38 the disciples report that they only could get 5 loaves and 2 fish. The Gospel of John adds that Andrew asked, “but what are they among so many?” (6:9). Now Jesus did not have much to work with, but we see here that “little is much when God is in it.” You may not have much to offer God in way of talents, service, and money, but God can take your little, and make much of it! One person’s tithes cannot fund a ministry like ours, but when many contribute to our ministry, even our size church collects over a half million dollars for ministry & missions!

2. We Should Use Organization to Meet Needs – Notice in vv.39-40 that Jesus organized the people. The people were divided into groups of 100 & 50. Jesus believed in organization, and so we seek to work and minister in an organized way. For example, we organize much of our ministry through the organization of the S.S. By the way, there is a trend, especially among the young adults, to reject the organized church. They want little or no structure. Well those who reject the organized church also reject the plan of God.

3. We Should Trust God to Provide - When Jesus gave thanks, He broke and multiplied the food. The Creator who made the fish at the beginning and caused the grain to multiply in the field, now by His word creates food for the crowd. Surely Jesus is the Son of God, for He had creative power in His hands! I can image the expression on the faces of the disciples as they witnessed the food not running out. As they passed out the bread & fish, they would come back for more, and Jesus kept multiplying the food for the hungry people.

The lesson is this: when you are hungry and look to Jesus, He will provide your need. Whatever type of hunger you have, Jesus can meet that need. If you have a physical hunger, look to Jesus to provide. David said in Psalm 37:25, “I have been young, and now am old; yet I have not seen the righteous forsaken, nor his descendants begging bread.” If you are hungry for emotional love & support, look to Jesus. He loves you, and He can provide for you a family of believers who will love you, & provide fellowship opportunities for you. And when you are spiritually hungry, look to Jesus. He can satisfy your soul. He will provide for your needs.

So we have seen that when you are hungry, Jesus gives His provision. Next we see:

II. WHEN YOU ARE HELPLESS, JESUS GIVES HIS PRESENCE

Now beginning in v.45 we see another wonderful story about Jesus. It is the famous story of Jesus walking on the water to come to the aid of His disciples. Now let’s see how the lesson of this story unfolds. In v.45 we read, “Immediately He made His disciples get into the boat and go before Him to the other side, to Bethsaida, while He sent the multitude away.” The word translated “made” (*anagkazo*) is a strong word. Jesus insisted that the disciples get in the boat and get to the other side. He knew that the crowd wanted to make Him king, and the disciples would be inclined to join them. Also, the disciples had just completed a very successful mission, healing the sick and preaching the Gospel. They had shared in the miraculous feeding of 5,000 people. They were on a “spiritual high.” I hope you have had the joy of a spiritual mountain experience. Well, being on a spiritual high can be dangerous. It can lead to pride & other problems. Spiritual blessings must be balanced with burdens and battles.

So Jesus wanted them to go through a trial to strengthen them. He also wanted to further develop their faith through this trial. Each new experience of testing demands of us more faith and

courage. In that first storm experience, the disciples had Jesus in the boat with them; but this time, He was on the mountain praying for them. He was teaching them to live by faith. The scene illustrates the situation of God's people today: We are in the midst of this stormy world, toiling and seemingly ready to sink, but He is in glory interceding for us.

The disciples obeyed Jesus, just like we are all supposed to do. Then Jesus went off to pray. What an example He was in prayer! Now it was during His prayer time that we see first of all:

A. The Concern of Jesus - During the night watch, Jesus saw His disciples in trouble. According to v.48, they were "straining at rowing." The wind was blowing hard, & the waves were getting bigger. They were rowing just as hard as they could to get to the other side, but they were not making headway. Notice they were in the will of God, but even in the will of God, they were in an agonizing situation. Being in the will of God is not an easy road. But again, notice that Jesus saw them.

Even so, you can be sure that when you are in a trying situation, Jesus is taking note of what you are going through. The same eye which saw the disciples tossed on the lake is always looking at us. I don't know where you are today or what position you are in. You may be in a hard spot right now. You may be facing temptations and problems that are too great to bear. I have some good news for you, Christian friend. He knows your problems. "He saw them toiling in rowing." And Peter said in 1 Peter 5:7 that you should be "casting all your care upon Him, for He cares for you."

B. The Response of Jesus – You may be surprised to see from our text that His first response was:

1. Delay - You might think that God should immediately come to your aid and deliver you from that trial. In the last of v.48 we read, "Now about the fourth watch of the night He came to them, walking on the sea..." But notice that some time passed must have passed between the time Jesus first saw them in trouble, and the 4th watch of the night when He came to them. That was 3:00 a.m. They probably had been on the Sea at least 7 hours. Why did Jesus delay? I believe that when the wind first started against them, they thought they could handle it. Even when the wind became very strong, they still thought they could handle it on their own. They could just row a little harder. Perhaps it wasn't until they realized that they were helpless against the storm that Jesus arrived.

So could it not be that God does not come to our aid at first, because He is waiting upon us to realize how much we need Him? Furthermore, we see that there are times when God delays answering our prayers, or intervening on our behalf. When He does, you can be sure that God has a purpose in the delay. Then He will come at the right time to hold His people up.

Do you remember when Mary & Martha sent word to Jesus that their brother was sick. Jesus did not immediately go to heal him. In fact, he did not leave to go to his home for 2 more days. By the time Jesus arrived, Lazarus was dead 4 days! Well Jesus delayed in order to do an even greater miracle. So don't let your heart be troubled when God seems to delay His response.

Another truth about the response of Jesus is this:

2. He Kept Some Distance - Notice the last part of v.48, "Now about the fourth watch of the night He came to them, walking on the sea, and would (*thelo*) have passed them by." Isn't that interesting? Why did He act as though He would pass them by? Why did He keep His distance? It is because He does not go where He is not invited. He wanted them to recognize Him,

place their trust in Him, and invite Him to come into the ship & help them. If we trust Him, we will always have sufficiency and security, no matter what the situation might be.

Then we read in v.49 that when they saw Jesus, they were scared to death. Why? Probably because they were not expecting Him to come in the way that He did. In their mind only a ghost could travel across the water like that. Was this a vision of a ghost, indicating that they were about to pass into the afterlife? No wonder they were filled with fear!

Just remember, whatever the storm may be, Jesus wants to use that storm as a passage way into your life. If they had not faced the storm, Jesus would not have come to them in the way that He did.

3. Jesus Calmed the Storm – Notice what we read beginning the last of v.50. Jesus said, “Be of good cheer! It is I; do not be afraid.” Then Mark reports, “Then He went up into the boat to them, and the wind ceased.” What a miracle! Jesus walked on water & calmed the storm. Then notice the disciples’ reaction, “And they were greatly amazed in themselves beyond measure, and marveled.”¹ They should not have been so amazed. They had seen Jesus calm the storm before. Furthermore, v.52 says that they were amazed, “For they had not understood about the loaves, because their heart was hardened.” The disciples should have realized that if He could multiply the bread, He could walk on water! Here we see more evidence that Jesus is the Son of God. Friend, since He is the Son of God, He can meet any need of your life.

So as we have seen, when you are hungry, Jesus gives His provision. When you are helpless, He gives His presence & help. Always remember that! When you are going through one of the storms of life, nothing is more precious than the presence of Jesus. I had rather be in the midst of the storm *with* Jesus, than on calm waters without Jesus!

Now vv.53-56 completes the account of Jesus meeting the needs of people. When the ship comes to the other side, the word spread that Jesus had arrived, and people started bringing sick people from all over. So I want to see my final main point:

III. WHEN YOU ARE HURTING, JESUS GIVES HIS POWER

It says in vv. 54-55, “And when they came out of the boat, immediately the people recognized Him, ran through that whole surrounding region, and began to carry about on beds those who were sick to wherever they heard He was.” Here we see:

A. There Are Many Hurting People – That was certainly true in that region, and they were bringing them to Jesus.

Even so, there are a lot of hurting people in this world. Some are here today. Some are hurting from the breakup of their marriage. Some parents are hurting from a child’s rebellion. Some are hurting from loneliness. Today many are hurting & fearful because they have lost a job, and can’t seem to find another one. Others are hurting from sickness or disease.

Here in this text of Scripture we also see that:

B. Hurting People Need Jesus – If you are hurting, you should go to Jesus. Furthermore, when you know of others that are hurting, you should bring them to Jesus. We read beginning in the last of v.55, “began to carry about on beds those who were sick to wherever they heard He was.

¹ A number of miracles were involved in this event: Jesus walking on the water, Peter walking on the water (Mark did not record this; see Matt. 14:28-32), Jesus stilling the storm, and the boat arriving on shore the instant Jesus entered it (John 6:21). It was certainly a “night of wonders” for the Twelve!

Wherever He entered into villages, cities, or in the country, they laid the sick in the marketplaces....”

Even so, the church is in the people business. We are to bring people to Jesus. Are you making efforts to get people to Jesus? Your best opportunity is to reach out to people who are hurting. That is when they are most likely to come to church. That is when they are most open to a gospel witness.

Now notice what happened when they got people in touch with Jesus.

C. Jesus Manifests His Power - We read in v.56, “Wherever He entered into villages, cities, or in the country, they laid the sick in the marketplaces, and begged Him that they might just touch the hem of His garment. And as many as touched Him were made well.” Hundreds, perhaps thousands of people were healed.

Now the key to the people’s healing was not so much their faith. Their faith is not even mentioned here as a factor in their healing, though I’m sure that it was a factor. Otherwise, they would not have come to Jesus. But what is most important here is the object of their faith, Jesus. He is the one that can help the hurting person. People realized that if they could just get their sick friends to Jesus, & even just touch His garment, He could heal them.

This is similar to what we read about back in 5:25-29. A woman with a chronic bleeding problem simply touched the hem of Jesus’ garment, and healing power flowed from Him to her, and she was healed.

He is still helping people with sickness today. He will either heal your sickness or give you grace to bear with it. However, the most important kind of healing is that of the soul. In fact, Mark literally says that they were “saved.” Just as Jesus can save from sickness, even so He can save from sin. Jesus can cure the wounds of sin. He can bring forgiveness to the guilty. So whatever your need, look to Jesus today!

Conclusion: So what is your need today? Are you hungry? Do you feel like you are in a helpless situation? Are you hurting? Well we have seen today that Jesus is able to help with whatever need you have. We have seen overwhelming evidence that He is the Son of God. He multiplied the bread & fish, creating enough food for over 5,000! He walked on water & calmed the sea! He healed people who merely touched Him. If you have a need today, look to Jesus. Reach out to Jesus. He is reaching out to you.

Have you turned to Jesus to meet your greatest need? Your greatest need is not food or friends, but forgiveness. Without forgiveness of sin you will spend eternity separated from God. You will spend your life without the life of God in your soul. You will miss out on the love, joy, & peace that He gives. Look to Jesus. He will pass you by if you do not invite Him into your life.

Christian, have you been trying to live life on your own. You are like the disciples, thinking that if you just row a little harder, everything will be OK. Why not turn to Jesus, and trust in Him to help you?

Sources: Stephen Felker, *Devotional & Explanatory Notes on the Entire Bible* (Col. Hghts, VA: Published by Author), 2009; J. Vernon McGee, *Thru The Bible*, Vol. 4 (Pasadena, CA: Thru The Bible Radio, 1983); Larry Pierce, *Online Bible* [CD-ROM] (Ontario: Timnathserah Inc., 1996); J.C. Ryle (1816-1900), *Mark: Expository Thoughts on the Gospels* (Wheaton: Crossway Books, 1993); Dr. Jerry Vines (notes from sermon tape of 9/18/83); Warren W. Wiersbe, *Be Diligent: Mark* (Wheaton: Victor Books, 1987). Other sources listed in the footnotes. Unless otherwise indicated, all Scripture quotations are from *The New King James Version* (Nashville: Thomas Nelson Publishers, 1982).