

Sermon outline and notes:

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Mark 6:30-56 (read vv.30-34) “God’s Son 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 preach and minister in His name. The disciples have worked hard and done what Jesus commanded them to do, and now they have returned from their mission. They are excited about what has happened. So 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 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 Son needed time to rest, fellowship with His friends, and to find renewal from the Father. He knew His disciples needed rest as well.

The great preacher Vance Havner once 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, such as an occasional vacation. It is not good to neglect your body. There must be a balance between work and rest or you are going to have physical and emotional problems.

Yet Jesus and 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. The over-zealous crowds would not leave Him alone. They even followed Him on foot 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 planned retreat, 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 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), who were not being taught and led in the right way.¹ So He took time to be a good Shepherd and to teach them.² He also went about meeting other human needs as well. The people were about to experience the truth of Psalm 23, the Lord was their shepherd who was about to make them lie down in green pastures and nourish them not only spiritually but also physically.

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, and minister to people’s needs. People are still as sheep, needing direction. So we also should teach people, and lead them to put their faith in Jesus, who still wants to meet people’s needs. We should do what *we* can to minister to people’s needs in Jesus’ name.

So this morning I am going to bring a message about Jesus meeting needs. Do you have any needs today? We will see that Jesus is the answer to whatever problems you face. Now the first main lesson from our text is this:

¹ This was a strong rebuke against the leadership of Israel. Contemporary spiritual leaders need to be careful not to make the same mistake!

² Thus He fulfilled the messianic prophecy of Isaiah 40:11.

I. WHEN YOU ARE HUNGRY, JESUS GIVES HIS PROVISION

This is the passage of Scripture that 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 and the sun was beginning to set. So 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 - Most were far from their homes and there was no food for them in this wilderness. So in the mind of the disciples, there was only one thing to do. In v.36 the disciples said to Jesus, "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 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 evangelist 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 and other people, or do we give the message that says, "Go away"? In contrast with the wrong attitude of the disciples, we see that we should:

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, and the people were hungry. He knew that the people needed 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 and 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 of pay to earn enough money to feed 5000 people just *one* meal (cf. Mt. 20:2). That number did not even include women and children (Mt. 14:21). So the disciples' Finance Committee rejected the idea right off. Feeding such a crowd was impossible. His disciples saw the problem but not the potential, for 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 (cf. 2 Cor. 9:8, 10). They are about to find out that Jesus was going to enable them to feed the multitude by His divine power. 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?³ When it comes to real, necessary ministry to people, are we saying, “We cannot afford it”?

I want to commend the church for your plans to host the free spaghetti dinner for the community on the 19th. You are obeying the command of our Lord in v.37, “You give them something to eat.” May God bless this outreach.

Now finally, let us:

D. Learn Three Lessons from Jesus – 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 obtain 5 loaves and 2 fish.⁴ 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 tithe cannot fund a church’s ministry, but when many contribute to our ministry, the resources are multiplied!

2. We Should Use Organization to Meet Needs – Notice in vv.39-40 that Jesus organized the people, dividing them into groups of 100 and 50.⁵ Feeding 5000 seems overwhelming, but feeding a group of 50 is a more practical approach. Jesus believed in organization, and so we seek to work and minister in an organized way. Church ministry should be conducted in an orderly fashion. For example, we organize people into classes to teach people the Word of God in Sunday School.

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 and multiplies food for the crowd. Surely Jesus is the Son of God, for He had creative power in His hands! I can imagine the expression on the faces of the disciples as they witnessed the food not running out. As they passed out the bread and fish, they would come back for more, and Jesus kept multiplying the food for the hungry people. This reminds me how the flour and the oil of the widow of Zarephath never ran out (1 Kings 17:8-16). As a result, v.42 says, “they all ate and were filled.” Just as Israel was fed with manna in the wilderness, even so this multitude was fed by the Son of God in the wilderness. Yet someone greater than Moses was among them, for Jesus added fish to *their* meal!

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.” So whether you are a young family struggling to make ends meet or a retired person living on a fixed income, trust in Jesus to provide.

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 meeting needs. It is the famous story of Jesus walking on the water to come to the aid of His disciples. Now let’s see how

³ See James 2:15-16; 1 John 3:17-19.

⁴ The Gospel of John adds that Andrew asked, “but what are they among so many?” (6:9).

⁵ Such organization reflects the encampment of Israel in the wilderness (Ex. 18:21, 25).

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. Evidently, they didn’t want to leave Jesus but He had His reasons for sending them away.⁶

Perhaps the main reason He sent them away is because He wanted them to go through a trial to strengthen their faith in Him. 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 would remain on the mountain and pray for them. He was teaching them to live by faith, not by sight.

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! We should follow His example and get alone with God in prayer each day. Now it was during His prayer time that we see:

A. The Concern of Jesus - During the night watch, Jesus saw His disciples in trouble. According to v.48, they were “straining at rowing.” Jesus told them to go to the other side, but they were physically and mentally tormented by the fierce resistance of the wind and waves.⁷ 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. Yet we see that Jesus “saw” them struggling.

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. Jesus knows your problems. And Peter said in 1 Peter 5:7 that you should be “casting all your care upon Him, for He cares for you.” Even when you don’t see Jesus, He sees you and cares for you.

Now consider not only the concern of Jesus but also:

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 the trial you are facing. 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 must have passed between the time Jesus first saw them in trouble, and the 4th watch of the night when He came to them. The 4th watch is from 3:00-6:00 a.m. They probably had been on the Sea at least 7 hours when Jesus finally came to them! 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 just lowered the sail and decided to row a little harder. Perhaps it wasn’t until they realized that they were wit’s end, 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? When God delays answering our prayers, or intervening on our

⁶ He knew that the crowd wanted to make Him king, and the disciples would be inclined to join them.

⁷ That is the most common translation of *basanizo*.

behalf, 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 and 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 to manifest His glory. So don't let your heart be troubled when God seems to delay giving a response to your prayers. God has a plan.

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?⁸ Why did He keep His distance? In fact, 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!

So Jesus came to them in their moment of trial and yet they failed to recognize Him! How often does God come to help us in our time of need and we fail to recognize His Presence!

So why did Jesus seem to just pass by as He walked on the water? I believe that Jesus was passing by in such a way to manifest to them that He is the Son of God. Who but the Son of God can walk on water?⁹ And the fact that He passed by before them should have reminded them of two occasions when God passed by before Moses (Ex. 33:19-34:7) and Elijah (1 Kings 19:11-12) to reveal His divine attributes. Do you remember those stories?

Also remember this, whatever the storm may be, Jesus wants to use that storm as a passageway into your life. If they had not faced the storm, Jesus would not have come to them in the way that He did. The storm enabled Jesus to manifest His deity in a whole new way.

Next we read that:

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." He said to them an emphatic "I am," (*εγω ειμι*) the great Name that God revealed to Moses! (Ex. 3:14). There is no need to be afraid when the Great I am has come to be with you. Then Mark reports, "Then He went up into the boat to them, and the wind ceased." What a miracle! Jesus walked on water, got in the boat, and calmed the storm. His mere presence causes the wind to cease. Then notice the disciples' reaction in v.51, "And they were greatly amazed in themselves beyond measure, and marveled."¹⁰ 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, once again we see that 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 and help. Always remember that! When you are going through one

⁸ Though the verb *parerchomai* means to pass by or pass away the vast majority of times, there are occasions where it means to come alongside (Luke 17:7; Acts 24:7). That may be the meaning here.

⁹ See Job 9:8; Isaiah 43:16; 51:10.

¹⁰ 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!

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! Amen?

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 many people 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 and 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 that they “began to carry about on beds those who were sick to wherever they heard He was. 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. When you encounter someone who is hurting, ask if you can pray with and for them. Even most unbelievers are open to prayer in a time of need.

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 that way.

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 they would not have come to Jesus without faith. 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*, and 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. 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? Do you need forgiveness of your sin? 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 and fish, creating enough food for over 5,000! He walked on water and 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.

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? He is the Son of God. He is the Good Shepherd who will provide for your needs, whether spiritual, physical or emotional.

Sources: Stephen Felker, *Devotional & Explanatory Notes on the Entire Bible* (Col. Hghts, VA: Published by Author), 2023; David E. Garland, *The NIV Application Commentary: Mark* (Grand Rapids: Zondervan, 1996); H.A. Ironside, *Expository Notes on the Gospel of Mark* (Neptune, NJ: Loizeaux Brothers, 1948); J. Vernon McGee, *Thru The Bible*, Vol. 4 (Pasadena, CA: Thru The Bible Radio, 1983); Larry Pierce, *Online Bible* [Ver. 5:80] (Ontario: onlinebible.net, 2021); J.C. Ryle (1816-1900), *Mark: Expository Thoughts on the Gospels* (Wheaton: Crossway Books, 1993); Dr. Jerry Vines (notes from his 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).

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