

Sight for the Blind

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[0 : 00] As we anticipate the preaching of God's Word, let's take our Bibles again and turn to the book of Mark, chapter 6. Mark chapter 6, and I will be reading from verse 30 through to verse 44.

Mark chapter 6, verse 30. This is the Word of God. The apostles gathered around Jesus and reported to him all they had done and taught.

Then, because so many people were coming and going that they did not even have a chance to eat, he said to them, Come with me by yourselves to a quiet place and get some rest.

So they went away by themselves in a boat to a solitary place. But many who saw them leaving recognized them and ran on foot from all the towns and got there ahead of them. When Jesus landed and saw a large crowd, he had compassion on them because they were like sheep without a shepherd.

So he began teaching them many things. By this time it was late in the day, so his disciples came to him. This is a remote place, they said, and it's already very late.

[1 : 13] Send the people away so that they can go to the surrounding countryside and villages and buy themselves something to eat. But he answered, You give them something to eat. They said to him, That would take eight months of a man's wages.

Are we to go and spend that much on bread and give it to them to eat? How many loaves do you have? he asked. Go and see. When they found out, they said, Five and two fish.

Then Jesus directed them to have all the people sit down in groups on the green grass. So they sat down in groups of hundreds and fifties, taking the five loaves and the two fish.

And looking up to heaven, he gave thanks and broke the loaves. Then he gave them to his disciples to step before the people. He also divided the two fish among them all.

They all ate and were satisfied. And the disciples picked up twelve basketfuls of broken pieces of bread and fish. The number of the men who had eaten was five thousand. Amen.

[2 : 12] Let's hear the word of God preached. In his account of the gospel of Jesus Christ, Mark seeks to answer three main questions.

And he answers them by telling us what Jesus said and what Jesus did. Ready for the questions? Number one, who is Jesus of Nazareth?

And the words and works of Jesus shout to us, He's the Messiah, the eternal Son of God become man. Question number two, why did he come from the glories of heaven into this world of woe?

Again, answer on a mission of mercy to save sinners through his perfect life and atoning death. Question number three, what must you do in order to be saved by this Jesus?

Repent and believe on Christ alone. Trust his promises and his works, not yours. So Mark is answering those three questions again in this account that we've just had read for us this morning.

- [3 : 31] Do you know that apart from the resurrection of Christ from the dead, this is the only miracle that is recorded in all four of the gospels?
- The feeding of the 5,000. And the fact that Matthew, Mark, Luke, and John all record this miracle under the inspiration of the Holy Spirit show how important it is in revealing who Jesus is, why he's come, and how we can be saved through him.
- So let's dig in, let's fix our eyes on Jesus again this morning and not miss him. I have three points. First, the reporting and resting.
- Verses 30 to 32. Last week we saw that after nearly two years of spending time with Jesus, listening to him, watching him, the 12 disciples were sent out two by two with the Lord's authority to heal, to cast out demons, and to preach the gospel.
- And our text this morning is telling us that they're coming back, coming back to Jesus to report on that first mission that they've undertaken without him with them.
- [4 : 51] Verse 30 says, The apostles gathered around Jesus and reported to him all that they had done and taught. This is the first time that they've ministered without the Lord Jesus.
- There was so much to tell their master, to see his response, but also to get his further counsel. This is what we said. Oh, you should have said this. This is what we did.
- You could have said this, done that. You see, they're still in training. This was all part of the training. It would be another year before our Lord would ascend to heaven and they would go out with the gospel.
- And so then, verse 31. That's the reporting. Verse 31, we see the resting. Because so many people were coming and going that they did not even have a chance to eat.
- He said to them, Come with me by yourselves to a quiet place, literally to a desert, and get some rest. Now, we've read this on an earlier occasion, haven't we, where they were so busy that they didn't have time to eat.
- [5 : 57] And you remember, his family came looking for him to lay hold of him, thinking he's lost his mind because he's overworked. And in that time, in that case, Jesus kept working, didn't he?
- But in this case, he gives rest to his men. Come with me by yourselves to a desert place and get some rest.
- Now, don't miss the tender heart of Jesus and his concern for his disciples' needs. He sees that their energies have been sapped by that exhausting tour of ministry.
- Jesus, in his own human nature, knows what it is to be exhausted. And he sees them in need of rest. And so he says, Come aside and rest a while.
- Away from the crowd. And child of God, the Lord Jesus has his eyes on you no less than on these 12 men as we're reading here.
- [7 : 00] He knows just how much you can take before he says, Come aside and rest a while. It's not good to be continually on the go, continually on the stretch.
- There's a time to work and a time to rest. From the very beginning, Jesus, the Lord of the Sabbath, said, For every six days of work, there's to be one day of rest.
- Remember, man was not made for the Sabbath, Jesus said, but the Sabbath was made for man, for his benefit, for his rest, for his refreshment.
- And we ignore it to our own peril, our own harm. You see, Jesus is no slave driver. He's the best of masters. He could not be kinder than what he is.
- And so seeing their need for rest, verse 32 says, They went away by themselves in a boat to a desert place. Now, perhaps it was that boat trip across the Sea of Galilee that was the rest that they got.

[8 : 14] Because their rest was short-lived. Verse 33 says, But many who saw them leaving recognized them and ran on foot from all the towns and got there ahead of them. So much for the solitary place and the rest.

And that brings us to the second point this morning. The interrupted rest. You've just heard it. Now, we're at the top of the Sea of Galilee.

And to go across from the western shore to the eastern shore is about four-mile boat trip. It's about ten miles to go running around on the shoreline to get over there where they were going.

And it shows the strong desires of these people to get to Jesus. This was not a hundred-yard dash. Nor was it a restful vacation that the disciples were hoping for.

I wonder how you are with interruptions. Especially interruptions of your rest. Mom, maybe you've just laid down for a short power nap and one of the kids comes busting in complaining about another one of the children or somebody's at the door or fellas, maybe you're on vacation and your boss calls you with all sorts of work issues.

[9 : 33] Maybe just some needy person comes across your path. Well, that was the situation on the northeast shore of the Sea of Galilee. There was a great crowd clamoring for Jesus and his disciples and their rest was interrupted.

And that brings us to the third point. You say, we're going through these three quite quickly. We are, and we're going to count mostly on this third point because it gives us the two different responses to the interruption.

The response of Jesus and the response of the disciples. So first, Jesus' response to the interruption. verse 34 says, when Jesus landed and saw a large crowd, he had compassion on them because they were like sheep without a shepherd.

So he began teaching them many things. There's a lot here. But notice the key difference between the response of Jesus and his disciples is in the way that they saw the large crowd.

Jesus saw them in a way that the disciples did not. and it made a huge difference in their attitudes and actions toward the crowd. So how did Jesus see the crowd? Well, not as a nuisance, but like sheep without a shepherd.

[10 : 53] About a half a dozen times the Bible speaks about people as sheep without a shepherd and never is it a good situation. Never is it good for a sheep to be without a shepherd.

Sheep need a shepherd. Without a shepherd to lead them they soon go astray. They soon get lost and into trouble. Twenty years ago outside a Turkish town one foolish sheep instead of grazing decided to jump off a cliff.

And 1,500 sheep followed it taking the plunge into the ravine below. But the woolly pile at the bottom softened the landing of the ladder cliff jumpers so there are only 450 who jump first to actually die.

But I say that to say that sheep need a shepherd to lead them. They easily go astray. They easily follow the crowd. They follow the wrong leaders.

Without a shepherd to feed and lead them in green pastures they soon starve. Without a shepherd to protect them there's soon food for wolves and wild animals. Some animals do fine without a shepherd.

[12 : 12] Sheep are a mess without a shepherd. And that's how Jesus saw this large crowd this day. 5,000 men and when you add the children and the women that could have been as many as 15,000 to 20,000 and he sees them as sheep without a shepherd.

Desperately in need of him the good shepherd. The disciples saw a mass of needy people clamoring for something from them.

They saw a loss of ease and interruption to their restful vacation. Jesus saw an opportunity to serve them. How do you see needy people in your life? As an interruption to your ease and rest or as an opportunity to serve in Jesus' name?

You see we need the eyes of Jesus. We need the heart of Jesus for the lost masses of men and women boys and girls and we rub shoulders with them every week don't we?

He saw them poor and needy helpless and harassed by life's troubles by sin by Satan He saw them ignorant and deceived lost and perishing on the broad road leading to destruction in hell and notice how Jesus' eyes were connected to his heart I wonder if yours are or have you learned to disconnect to unplug but what he saw with his eyes affected what he felt in his heart He saw the large crowd and he had compassion on them that word is speaking of the heart the seat of your emotions and his heart was stirred within him it was moved within him with compassion with pity with sympathy for their condition and this is the same heart that left heaven's glories on the costly mission to save sinners was pity the same heart that saw me plunged in deep distress and flew to my relief for me he bore the painful cross and carried all my grief child of God his heart is no different for you today than it was then yes he's in heaven but he's been on earth and he's been tempted in every way like you are he's been through trials just like you have yet without sin he knows temptations powers we do not have a high priest who's unable to sympathize with us in our weaknesses no he has a fellow feeling in his heart with the one that's in your heart more full of pity than we are of sin even for this lost crowd

[15 : 20] Jesus pities them for being sheep without a shepherd now they had shepherds in name their shepherds were the spiritual leaders of Israel they were the ones who were to lead and to guide them in paths of righteousness in the way of eternal life the way that leads to heaven to protect them from the lies of the enemy the devil but Israel's shepherds had failed them Jesus said they were blind leaders of the blind and they both will fall into the ditch together they were so taken up with the rules taught by men that they gave the people no nourishing words from God they made endless legalistic distinctions between binding oaths and non-binding oaths but gave the people nothing for their starving souls they pointed them to law keeping you want to live keep the law but gave the people no good news for wicked sinful men that they are deserving of health needing forgiveness needing pardon needing peace with God needing new hearts no just try to do your best and then hope for the best

Jesus said that these shepherds were shutting the kingdom of God in men's faces there was the door Jesus Christ himself and these leaders were slamming the door shut neither did they enter neither did they let others enter and Jesus says that they go about from one land to another and when they've made a convert they've made him twice as much a creature of hell as themselves these were Israel's shepherds and Jesus pitied this crowd because he saw them as sheep without a shepherd they were no shepherds at all and that pity that we see in Jesus is the same pity that's in the heavenly father you've seen me you've seen the father you've seen what's in the heart of God 600 years earlier God saw Israel's shepherds who did not care for the sheep and he pronounced woes of judgment upon them

Ezekiel 34 he says to them you have not strengthened the weak or healed the sick or bound up the injured you've not brought back the strays or searched for the lost they were scattered over the whole earth and became food for all the wild animals therefore I Jehovah Yahweh I myself will tend my sheep and I will have them lie down declares the sovereign Lord I will search for the lost I will bring back the strays I will bind up the injured and strengthen the weak I will shepherd the flock with justice that's what God said and then he says I will place over them one shepherd my servant David and he will tend them and be their shepherd interesting I will shepherd them and I will place one shepherd over them my servant David and he will be their shepherd and now 600 years later on the northeastern shore of the sea of

Galilee stands the promised good shepherd who is himself God Yahweh in the flesh Jesus of Nazareth and he's searching for the lost and he's bringing back the strays tending them to be their shepherd so what did Jesus heartfelt compassion for these shepherdless sheep lead him to do well he didn't send them away the text says so he began teaching them many things now here we see that Jesus pity for them was not just for their physical needs but more so for their spiritual needs yes as we're going to see he did feed them physical food for their physical hunger but you can go to hell with full stomachs so he began teaching them many things the sinner's greatest need is the gospel of Jesus

Christ it's not as they think healing for the body food for the body no it's salvation for soul and body and so Jesus began teaching them the gospel is a message that needs to be taught that must be understood that must be believed and obeyed if they are to have eternal life so he began teaching them and that's why teaching was always Jesus primary ministry yes he healed yes he fed them but he first taught them they don't even know what their greatest need is he does they need to know who God is that he's their good creator that he's the sovereign king of kings over all that he's the law giver and he is the one who will judge you for whether or not you've kept his law they needed to know what sin is how offensive it is to a holy and good

[20 : 57] God they needed to know the one way of salvation that no one comes to the father except through me Jesus says that only God the son could undo the offense of their sin by himself being damned on the cross in their place they needed to know that and so he began teaching them many things they need to know that salvation is not by your law keeping but by grace through faith not of your own works of righteousness but his never a reward to be earned but ever a free gift to be received with the empty hands of faith he had so much to teach them especially to undo all the garbage that their supposed shepherds had been teaching them about the way of salvation that leads to hell he had to undo that there was so much to teach them the wonderful words of life the gospel the good news of salvation that he came to bring and so through

Jesus although Jesus came for needed rest with his men his compassion changed his schedule!

is your schedule compassion sensitive is it open for interruption of people who need you need something you have to help them time money friendship a meal the gospel what a shepherd Jesus is what a heart of compassion and for ungodly sinners he began to teach them many things now the disciples reaction to this interrupted rest was quite different verse 35 and 36 says by this time it was late in the day so the disciples came to him and notice they say the obvious there's nothing new here any new information that they bring to Jesus this is a remote place they said yes he knows that and it's already very late yes he can see that send the people away so they can go to the surrounding countryside and villages and buy themselves something to eat so they see the same great crowd that Jesus does but they see them in a different light

Jesus saw them as sheep without a shepherd in need great need and it seems the disciples see them more as an inconvenience interrupting their rest and so they look at the facts late in the day remote place and they say it all comes to a clear conclusion send them away so they can go buy something for themselves to eat and Jesus must have just surprised the socks off of them when he says you give them something to eat you Hendrickson comments trying to get rid of people in need is not the solution it is certainly not God's way of doing things haven't you found that when you were poor and needy and you went to him it was not his way to get rid of you but to minister to you the disciples more than once are seen sending people away like those parents bringing their little kids for blessing send them away like that

Syrophoenician woman ever crying out after us Jesus send her away let them come unto me says Jesus so you give them something to eat they raised a protest to his command saying well that would take eight months of a man's wages perhaps forty to fifty thousand dollars in today's money who's got that kind of money laying around we certainly don't and are we to go and spend that much on bread and give it to them to eat Philip added that would not buy enough bread for each one to have a bite well their excuses all sounded very reasonable but they were still excuses and so are ours they may sound very reasonable but if they're excuses they are excuses and so Jesus asked them how many loaves do you have go and see when they found out they said five and two fish and Philip added but what are these among so many to feed our Lord makes them you see face their own lack of resources go and see go and count up what you've got he wants them to see their emptiness five loaves and two fish absolutely impossible to feed 15-20 thousand people so their calculations are correct aren't they in so far as they went but what they failed to add in were the endless resources of their master we see the great need we see our limited resources and we conclude we can't it can't be done but where's

[26 : 27] Jesus the son of God in all of our calculating there is in him a fullness for our emptiness I can do all things through Christ who gives me strength what is impossible without him is possible with him so stop calculating without seeing him in the picture how important of a lesson for these men who would constantly in their future ministries be thrown into impossible situations men you must see me you must depend on my resources and how important it is for us as well to learn to live upon Christ and not upon our meager resources you know even Moses as he led the children of Israel through the desert failed to calculate with God in view and they kept complaining about this miserable manna give us flesh to eat give us meat

Moses said to God where can I get meat for all these people they keep wailing to me give us meat to eat here I am among 600,000 men add the women it's probably and children two million and yet you say Lord that I will give them meat to eat for a whole month would they have enough if flocks and herds were slaughtered for them would they have enough if all the fish in the sea were caught for them that's Moses calculating without the Lord and the Lord answered Moses is the Lord's arm too short you will now see whether or not what I say will come true for you a simple look back will show each one of the children of God all I have needed thy hand hath provided every one of us look back all I have needed thy hand hath provided how quickly

I forget when faced with a new test a new trial think of all that Moses had seen in his past but he's forgetting now under the new trial God who provided man in the desert did provide quail for a whole month and so Jesus is here saying to the twelve disciples and to us bring the little that you do have give it to me in faith and then watch how I can use it to meet the needs of many so what is in your hand brother and sister what money what time what friendship what gospel what food what house what talents bring it to Jesus lay it at his feet ask him to bless it for the good of others and for the spread of Christ's kingdom and so with the great crowd sitting in groups of hundreds and fifties Jesus took the five loaves and the two fish looking up to heaven he gave thanks and broke the loaves and then he gave them back to the apostles to set before the people he also divided the two fish among them they all ate all ate and were satisfied the word means stuffed they had all that they could wish and so the disciples found that with their master they have resources beyond telling and God's provision for his people is not just enough it's more than enough for we read that they collected twelve basketfuls of pieces afterwards the fullness of grace in Jesus is a bottomless ocean it's more than enough to fill the little thimble of our hearts and our needs so what does this miracle tell us about who

Jesus is well it tells us he is God with omnipotence a power to feed fifteen to twenty thousand people on five little barley loaves and two fish the creator somehow multiplying that to feed the multitude but it also shows us his pity doesn't it his pity for the crowd whom he saw his sheep without a shepherd it reveals that Jesus full of pity joined with power what a combination of attributes full of pity joined with power that's our savior that's our God in the flesh he's able full of power able to save completely all who come unto

God through him he's willing to save and turns none away but I wonder if you've noticed how this event resembles the children of Israel in the desert three times this place where Jesus goes with his disciples is mentioned as a desert or a wilderness place verse 31 32 and 35 the word is a reem erimos now sadly the new testament the NIV translates it different each time it calls it a quiet place a solitary place and a remote place it's the same word each time the common word for desert or wilderness the King James gets it right and refers to it three times as a desert place and you see that that that harps back to Israel's history doesn't it because you'll remember that it was in the desert that Israel was in need without resources to meet their need and

[32 : 32] God miraculously provided food manna from heaven and through Moses and Joshua then led them into rest and so here is Jesus the true and better Moses the true and better Joshua who provides food and rest in the desert for his people and on the very next day this same crowd got into boats when they didn't find Jesus there we'll see why not because he walked on the water back to the other side and the next morning they wake up and they can't find Jesus and so they hopped into boats and crossed the sea of Galilee in search for Jesus and found him in Capernaum John 6 records that event for us and Jesus told them when they got there you are looking for me because you ate the loaves and had your fill but you completely missed you missed what that miraculous sign was pointing to not food that perishes!

but food that endures to eternal life which the Son of Man will give you if you would but believe on him the one that God has sent and the crowd responds by saying well what miraculous sign will you show us as if he had not shown them enough that we might see and believe after all our forefathers ate the manna in the desert and Jesus replied I tell you the truth it's not Moses who gave you the bread from heaven but it is my father who gives you the true bread from heaven for the bread of God is he it's a him it's a person the bread of God is he who gives life to people the true bread is he who's come down from heaven and gives life to the world I am the bread of life he says to them he who comes to me will never go hungry and he who believes in me will never be thirsty

I am the living bread that came down from heaven and if anyone eats of this bread he will live forever! this is the main point of the miraculous feeding of the five thousand this is why all four gospels included and it teaches us all about who Jesus is why he's come and how we can be saved through him Jesus is the good shepherd who had been promised to come to shepherd his wilderness people who are lost and helpless sheep without a shepherd in the howling wilderness of this wicked world and as the good shepherd he provides all that his sheep need by laying down his life for them he gives himself his body as the bread of eternal life to all who come to him in faith and he miraculously provides for all their needs and leads them into eternal rest he's not talking about food that spoils he's talking about food that endures to eternal life real food for the soul

I wonder friends have you come to this Jesus and received him by faith and found him to be just that life giving food rest For your soul!

You know you were made for God your very soul is a capacity to know God to enjoy God forever in Jesus Christ but we all like sheep have gone astray we turned our back on that God and we turned each one to our own way and the Lord laid our iniquities upon Jesus and he bore them to that hellish cross where he suffered what we had coming and by his wounds we are healed and he got the punishment that gives us peace with God soul rest you see is only possible when we're at peace with God our maker through faith in Christ alone Jesus is the good shepherd that's what that's what we're seeing and he's come to meet the greatest needs of his people not more physical food that perishes and spoils but eternal life he's come to give that to all who believe spiritual food spiritual rest for our souls in a world that has nothing to give the soul my friend what are you feeding your soul boys and girls you know what it is to have a hungry stomach and when you're hungry what satisfies your hunger going outside and playing watching

[37 : 21] TV listening to music no one thing eating physical food ah that satisfies boys and girls you were not only made a body you have a soul a soul that's the the invisible part of you the inside the control center of your being and that soul was made to know God and to enjoy God and so your soul is hungry for God whether you know it or not what are you feeding your soul money physical pleasures recreation popularity boyfriends girlfriends families cars trucks houses these things can no more satisfy the hunger of your soul than watching TV can satisfy the hunger of your body there's nothing in this wilderness of the world to satisfy your soul and to trying to do so is an exercise in futility and only leads to further unrest of soul only one thing can satisfy your hungry soul and it's

God himself it's this Jesus of Nazareth who is himself God and is true food for the soul only Jesus can satisfy your soul and in him the soul finds more than enough to satisfy it oh the pitiful things that people try to satisfy their souls with they feed on ashes the Bible says absolutely nothing nourishing in the world's fair the world's food nothing nourishing for the soul nothing enduring to eternal life is that you if your soul was a child you'd be arrested for child neglect if your soul had a voice it would cry when are you going to give me something to live on something substantial something that will make the difference in this life in the life to come yet nothing is more common today than this neglect of the soul oh we do lots for the body we feed it hydrate it exercise it rest it cool it heat it medicate it pamper it but the starving soul is left with nothing nothing of substance to satisfy it one old writer said your soul has a

God shaped hole in it kids and nothing can fill that hole but the infinite God himself do your soul a favor and come to Jesus Christ and it will find all that it has been hungry for to be right with your maker you know that is life eternal to have fellowship with the living God and Jesus Christ whom he has sent that's eternal life it begins now it could begin today for you Augustine said God made us for himself and that's why we're restless until we find our rest in him outside of Christ your soul is like the waves of the sea it finds no rest so why starve your soul when Jesus Christ is here in the gospel offering himself to you take and eat take and have me and you'll find me to be life everlasting for your soul he pities you as a sheep without a shepherd with no real food no real rest and he has power and grace to supply all you need come to me he says all you who are weary and burdened and I will give you what rest take my yoke upon you and learn of me for

I am gentle and humble in heart and you will find rest! soul rest that's what it hungers for you can't be at rest soul until you know that God is your father who loves you his wrath is no longer against you he now has made you his child and loves you and will keep you all the way to the end there soul rest only in Jesus and that's what you need peace with God through our Lord Jesus Christ you see how this miracle of feeding the 5000 reveals important truths about who Jesus is he is God in the flesh with infinite pity and power and power to meet all your needs you see how it tells us why he's come he's come because we're starving we're dying we're going to judgment lost and he's come to save sinners it tells us how we can be saved by this

Jesus by receiving him who is the bread of life who is the nourishment that our starving souls! need to make us right with God don't let it be wasted on you come to him today let's pray oh father my soul finds rest in God alone for he alone is my salvation and those words can be on the lips of so many this morning and we gladly confess that this Jesus of whom we've read again who's here by his spirit who is still offering himself an eternal life that he has satisfied our souls and he will for all eternity we long to see others who are still sheep without this shepherd to come to know the good shepherd that laid down his life for the sheep draw them in today here in this place and in every place we ask for his glory and for the eternal good of a whole crowd of needy people we ask in

[43 : 51] Jesus name amen■