

Mark 6:30-56

“The Good Shepherd Tends To His Sheep”

As we come back into the context of what’s happening here in Ch 6 the disciples have just been sent out on their 1st “solo flight” so to speak regarding their missions/ministry endeavors in the name of the Lord. Jesus was teaching them that they could trust *in* Him, that He could impart His authority *to* them and move *through* them even though He wasn’t physically *with* them. So there they were moving throughout and ministering in various villages, but beginning in Vs 14 we had kind of a “cut scene” that took place whereby the camera pulled back and faded away on that scene and refocused on a happening in the palace of Herod the tetrarch. and There we learned of the beheading of J.B. and To put it bluntly John was murdered by a man who knew what was right, knew that what he’d done (in making the promise to Salome that he did) was wrong, yet because of the fear of man he was snared and refused to do the right thing. How many people feel the pressure, and refuse to do what they know they need to do because of the fear of man? They know their life isn’t right, they know they need to repent and come to Christ, yet they fear what their friends, or family, or those around them might think therefore they never humble themselves before the Lord. and I just wonder how many people will tragically wind up in hell because they were worried about what others might think? Too concerned about the here and now and not giving consideration to the eternal perspective...and We don’t know, maybe that’s what brought their “teaching tour” to a close, news of John’s death sent a definite signal that things were changing with regard to the “tolerance” level, the political climate surrounding Christ was heating up. Be that as it may Vs 30 re-connects the dots and picks back up what was going down in Vs 7-13. The disciples have been sent out, now they check back in.

Vs30

Few things here right off the bat that I want to draw your attention to. 1st of all we read here that in their report to Jesus they told Him 2 things that pretty much summed up the entirety of their mission. #1 What they’d done, and #2 What they’d taught. You recall that last week we pointed out the fact that they went out and *preached* that people should repent. But I called to your attention that we shouldn’t perceive them as standing on a soap box on the local Wal-mart parking lot shouting “Repent” “Repent” and being obnoxious and offensive in their reflection of the heart of the Lord toward the people. But rather that they went out and shared the word of God in such a way as to draw men to repentance. and That’s what we’re reading here, they went out not only *preaching* but in reality a significant part of their trip was focused on *teaching* the people the word of God. Opening God’s word for the people, expounding on it, giving the sense of it, teaching people God’s heart in it just as Jesus has been doing. They told Jesus both what they’d done *and* what they’d *taught*, they were teaching the people, giving them practical illumination and application of God’s word, helping them to understand it in its proper context.

and They were telling Jesus everything they’d done as well, how that they’d prayed for people and seen them healed, commanded demons to release their grip on the lives of many who were possessed and seen them set free, they were just telling Him everything.

Which is to say that they *did* what we're all going to *do* and that is they gave an *account* to Jesus of both their *works* and their *words*. Oh I realize that the *interpretation* here doesn't really lend itself to the idea of judgment (though certainly Jesus would've corrected any misguided notions) but certainly there's an obvious *application* here regarding the fact of standing before Jesus to give an account of both our works and our words nonetheless.

Now as a believer you need to understand that one thing you will not stand in judgment for is your sin. It's amazing how many believers still struggle with the reality of the fact that their sin has been *forgiven*, that Jesus bore the penalty for your sin upon the cross and when He said, "It is finished" He meant "It's finished." The penalty had been paid in full. We're new creations in Him, clean slate, whiter than snow; that's what the bible means when it says, "*...if anyone is in Christ, he is a new creation; old things have passed away; behold, all things have become new.*" 2 Cor 5:17 As far as the east is from the west, that's how far He's removed our transgressions from us. So then how can we be judged for something that already been dealt with and put away?

Obviously concerning the *unbeliever* it's a different story, if you're not in Christ you stand personally accountable for your own sin. It's either on Christ or it's on you, the problem is that if it's on you there's no way you can atone for it, or make right *any* wrong that you may have committed. You can walk on your hands and knees 1,000 miles, whip yourself or weep over what you've done, but it doesn't change the fact that you've *done* it and will be held accountable *for* it. Jesus said, "*...I say to you that for every idle word men may speak, they will give account of it in the day of judgment.*" Matt 12:36 How important it is to have Jesus standing in the gap on your behalf, having taken from you your sin and imputed to you His righteousness.

However we as believers *will be* judged on the basis of our works with in the context of being rewarded for what we've done on the earth that has eternal value. Paul speaks of that in 1st Cor Ch 3, the things that we've done motivated by the love of Christ, through the power of the Spirit will be gold, silver, precious stones, enduring through eternity. Things we've done in the effort of the flesh, or to be seen of man, wood, hay, and stubble, they'll go up in smoke, oh we'll still be saved, but there'll be no reward for those things. We'll all stand before Jesus and give an account both of our works and our words.

Vs31-32

We need to realize that Jesus recognized a need in the hearts and in the lives of His disciples, that He understands human limitation. We read here that there were *many* coming and going, and they didn't even have time to eat. Translation, these guys were being bombarded, they were busy, people wanting information *from* them, wanting to be ministered to *by* them, pulling *at* them, desiring different things *of* them. The point being that they were *excited* about what God was doing, yet at the same time they were *exhausted* being ran ragged. They were *stoked*, yet *spent*, they were being "peopled to death." People were digging on their ministry but it was *draining* them. Someone once wrote, "Mary had a little lamb, 'Twas given her to keep, but then it joined the local church and died for lack of sleep." That's the way these guys were feeling, people mean no disrespect but they can be demanding. and Jesus knew that when it comes to ministry if you don't take the time to come apart, you'll ultimately fall apart. So He desired that they take a little time to just get away for a bit in order to be refocused, refreshed,

and renewed; that they might simply relax, rest, and recuperate, nothing particularly “spiritual” on the agenda, just hanging *with* the Lord being refreshed *in and by* the Lord.

Now if there were ever anyone who was all about hard work it was Jesus, there was a sense of urgency about His work. He said, “*I must work the works of Him who sent Me while it is day; the night is coming when no one can work.*” John 9:4 In other words there’s only so much time and I need to make the most of it, being busy about My Father’s business while I have the chance. Yet at the same time He understood that the most effective work is accomplished when one is well rested. Believe me when I say that as diligent as it appears to never take a break, if you’re at about ½ your capacity energy-wise because you’re always exhausted you’re not being as effective as you could be or as you *should* be.

So we have this need occasionally, we need to rest, we need a break. To get away from it all, now don’t get me wrong we don’t need a break *from* the Lord, but we need to rest *in* the Lord; a time when you’re not always going and going and going, and never stopping to come up for air, but you’re always about the needs of others even to the neglect of your own well being and/or your family. Every now and then the Lord will simply say, “Hey, come aside by yourselves to a deserted place and rest for awhile.” Your phone’s not ringing, no meetings, questions, you’re not being pulled on or sought after, just enjoy Jesus. That’s what’s happening here.

Vs33

Here’s the flipside of all that need for rest, though it’s rightfully need, it’s rarely enjoyed. They needed a break, but it didn’t happen, at least not the way that they were expecting it to. Their break lasted about the length of a boat ride. It’s interesting how people are, *way sensitive* to their own plight, their own position, but not so much when it comes to others and even less when it comes to you. I always think there should be time for me, I mean it’s ok if you can’t get to everyone else, that’s life they should understand, but somehow my needs are different and deserve a little attention. and There’s no sinister motive, just a lack of understanding.

So what happens, the people see what direction they’re headed, start running around the edge of the lake telling the people as they pass through the villages where they’re going and why and by the time they reach the other shore there’s already thousands and thousands of people waiting for them, they still haven’t eaten.

Vs34

The Lord is so awesome, so not about Himself, so readily available to anyone at anytime regarding any need you may have, He was *moved with compassion* for these people. and The word translated “moved with compassion” means that something was happening way down deep in Jesus’ gut, when He looked upon them He *felt* for them. He was *concerned* for them.

I’m sure the disciples were *moved* as well, but not with compassion. I’d have been moved with frustration, moved with anger being annoyed by all these people who just didn’t care about what was going on in my life but were only concerned about themselves. More than once I’ve scheduled a vacation with my family only to have to reschedule or cancel it after it had begun because of something that came up that I needed to be available for. and It’s easy to get this feeling of “argh!” C’mon, don’t I ever get a break!? Then the Lord quickens you and you feel horrible for being selfish and almost holding a grudge because someone else is in need. But I have no doubt that to a degree that’s the way these guys felt.

But not Jesus, God help us to be more like Jesus... He looked over them and didn't simply see a crowd in crisis, a problematic people, He saw the individuals in need, and He felt for them way down deep in His gut because they were weary and scattered like sheep having no shepherd. They needed direction, insight and understanding, they needed a shepherd, someone to lead them, tend *to* them and take care *of* them and Jesus was on the job. He began to move among them and minister to them, they'd come to Him. and Jesus said, "...*the one who comes to Me I will by no means cast out.*" John 6:37 Jesus is *never* too busy for you, and will *always* be available to you. "So He began to teach them many things."

Vs35-36

I could be wrong but it seems to me that the disciples are still wanting their "me" time. Oh they mask it with the whole, "they need to get back so that they can get something to eat" routine, the old "It's for their sakes we're saying this" kind of approach, but in reality I think they're just sick of it. So they point out a practical problem to Jesus.

"Look, it's getting late, there's no burger joint around here, no quick taco fix or starbucks for a # of miles, You need to send these people away so they can get themselves something to eat." As far as they were concerned that crowd was in the wrong place at the wrong time and there was nothing that could be done about their predicament. Someone said that with that mentality they'd have made ideal committee members. It's been said that a committee is a group of people who individually can do nothing and collectively decide that nothing can be done... That's kinda where these guys are at. Jesus has another life lesson for them.

Vs37

Interesting isn't it, they both see the same problem but each has a different solution. The disciples solution, "Send them home" the Lord's solution, "You seen the need, you meet it." When He says, "You give them something to eat." The "You" is emphatic, "*You* take care of it." and Like us they're not even *close* to suspecting that the Lord's going to do a work here, all they see is an impossible situation. and We don't really know their mood here, whether they were simply stunned, or frustrated, perhaps angry or whatever. But basically they're like, "Lord what are You talking about? #1 We don't have anything, and #2 It would take 7-8 months wages to feed all these people just 1 meal." A denarii was about a days wage, so 200 days wages to feed these people once, You've got to be kidding me. Jesus is setting the stage.

How many of us see practical problems, we see the impossibilities but don't allow for God's opportunities? God has ways of providing that we know nothing about. Now it's true that as a general rule God has a way of providing for His people, it's called work. The bible says if a man won't work, then neither shall he eat. It's God's will for us to work and provide for our families. So when we come across a brother with out a job and they're looking for prayer we can pray with confidence knowing that it's God's will for him to be working. But God's not limited in His ability to provide to just one way, He can bless your socks off in way that you never seen coming. God provides for His work in the ministry generally the same way, by moving on my heart, and your heart to give to the work of the ministry as an act of obedience and an aspect of our worship, an overflow of our love toward Him as we give of ourselves to Him. It's just a biblical principle that if a work is sowing into you and me spiritually that it's to reap from us materially or financially. Paul speaks of it in 1st Cor, it's spoken of in the book of Romans, the book of Galatians, again in Timothy, Jesus spoke of the principle in the gospel of

Matthew, it's just a biblical principle. Something God has established in both the OT and the new. But that's not to say that God is "limited" to providing through what we might consider to be the "ordinary" way. He can also provide in *extraordinary* in fact *miraculous* ways. and So while the disciples (like you and me) were putting together a cost analysis and sizing up the impossibility they weren't really remembering that Jesus wasn't limited by how much *we* have, notice.

Vs38

This is something else that I think is important to see, Jesus' provision is in no way limited to the *amount* we have, but so often it does begin with *what* we have. He will take what we have (however little it may be) and do grand and glorious things with it. I don't want to get ahead of myself here but realize that what they've got isn't much. John's gospel tells us that in reality Andrew found this little boy who had a sack lunch that his mom had packed for him. 5 small barely cakes and a couple sardine like salted fish.

Vs39-44

Again the other accounts make it clear that there were women and children present but they weren't #'d. Which is to say somewhere to the tune of 10,000 people give or take a couple thousand.

Now obviously there are all kinds of neat things going on here, lessons to be learned and all of that. The correlation to Ps 23 is something that's hard to miss. "The Lord is my shepherd I shall not want." They were all filled to the full, no one left in want. "He makes me to lie down in green pastures." Of course He made them sit down in green grass (meaning it was springtime around Passover). "He restores my soul and leads me in paths of righteousness for His name's sake." He spent all day teaching them many things, so we have picture here of the Lord tending to and providing for the needs of His sheep. We are the sheep of His hand.

Something else we need to see is that Jesus can do a whole lot with just a little, the question is are we willing (truly) to give Him whatever little bit that we may have. and I'm not talking about your money (though if that's what the Lord is dealing with you regarding I won't seek to soften that) but I'm talking about all that we are, all that we have, what do we have but that we haven't received it, we're to place ourselves wholly and completely into His hands. and Jesus want to take you, and break you, and use you in wonderful ways, but before you can be multiplied and used to bless the lives of others, you've got to 1st place your life into His hands. You see the miracle of multiplication didn't happen in the hands of the disciples, they were just the vessels that distributed the goodness of God, the miracle took place in the hands of Jesus. What we have, and who we are needs to be in the hands of Jesus. and He will in turn take us, bless us, break us and give us away to be a source of strength and edification to others. He wants to use you to feed His sheep, to nurture their needs, but we've got to give who we are, what we have to Him. He doesn't need much, He'll use whatever you have to bless others and blow you away.

Something else we see here is that we serve a God of order, there wasn't mass chaos taking place here. He made them to sit down in rows, like a garden path. God likes organization, especially when it comes to managing His provision, we're to be good stewards with what He entrusts to us.

and We note that He met the needs there was plenty left over for a meal for all 12 disciples, they took up 12 baskets of fragments. God's not into waste either, He provides generously, but Jesus didn't waste it, they were thankful for it.

We also note the simplicity of the meal. I think if I'd have been comfortable enough I may've approached Jesus and said something like, "You know Jesus, as long as we're miraculously making a meal here...how about a little steak and lobster? Maybe something a little more upscale?" But Jesus just blessed simply and immeasurably.

Finally we should see beyond the practical side of things here in that Jesus provided a meal for these people and see the spiritual reality that Jesus is seeking to communicate and that is that He is able to satisfy the deepest hunger of all men. Jesus said, "*I am the bread of life. He who comes to Me shall never hunger, and he who believes in Me shall never thirst.*" John 6:35 and We've spoken of this reality the last couple of mid-week studies we've had so I won't linger on it now but suffice it to say that you will always thirst for more, and hunger of your heart will never be satisfied until you partake of Christ. True contentment in this life is found only in Jesus Christ

Vs45-46

John tells us that after that whole experience the people were going to take Jesus and make Him their king right then by force. and So Jesus gets His disciples out of the situation lest they be overtaken by the temptation, sends the people away and gets alone to pray. It's been a long hard day and Jesus finds rest and strength in prayer. Oh that we would learn the value, the refreshing and the refilling properties to be found in prayer.

Probably the single most neglected aspect of the Christian walk and relationship with God is prayer. Jesus knew the value of it and spent plenty of time in the posture of prayer.

Vs47-52

Few things we should see quickly here. #1 Why were they out in the middle of that lake whereby the wind was blowing contrary to them and no matter how hard they strained they couldn't make any progress? Because they were being obedient to Jesus. Obedience to the Lord doesn't always make for smooth sailing, and we commend their persistence because it'd have been easier to simply turn the boat around and come back with the wind instead of trying to row against it. But Jesus told us to so that's what we're going to do, that's the resolve we've got to have. Obedience regardless of the consequence. Notice it was evening when they started out, but it was the 4th watch of the night when He came to them, the 4th watch starts at 3 a.m. so this was somewhere between 3-6 in the morning. Meaning they'd been rowing hard for probably more than 8 straight hours.

The 1st time they were in this situation remember Jesus was with them, this time they probably feel like He's abandoned them. But where was Jesus? He was praying *for* them and had His eyes fixed *upon* them, He was watching them the whole time. Be encouraged by that, because often times it's during life's trials that we feel abandoned by God. But if anything this text teaches us that that when His eyes are fixated *on* us, and we know that He's constantly interceding *for* us.

and Just when things seemed darkest, He came to them, walking on this raging sea. Again no street lights just whatever moonlight was available, I'm sure it was eerie to say the least. You're not exactly expecting a friend of yours to come walking out over water to you in the

middle of the night. and I'm not sure if He was having fun with the waves, sliding up and down the peaks as they went under His feet or what but He was passing right by them (He obviously intended for them to see Him) and they all started screaming like Jr. High girls (understandably so). So He says to them from out of the storm, "Be of good cheer! It is I; don't be afraid."

Of course this is where Matt tells us that Peter said, "Lord if it's You, command me to come to You." and Jesus said, "C'mon out Peter." and He did, until he began to sink and crying out to the Lord Jesus saved him. and We have a tendency to get down on Peter for sinking but at least he got out of the boat that's more than I can say for the rest of them and probably all of us. How many of us are even willing to get out of the boat and actually trust the Lord for the impossible? and Since Peter was Mark's source for this gospel that means 1 of 2 things. Either Peter was humble and didn't like to magnify his feat of faith so he left it out. *Or* Peter just didn't like to talk about that whole *sinking* thing after he challenged the Lord to bring him out. I'm not sure which. John also tells us that as soon as Jesus got in the boat that they were immediately on the land where they were going. Jesus apparently warped them there, and Matt tells us that they began to worship Him. and Of course we could draw from that that when Jesus comes for us, He'll immediately translate us onto the shores of where we're going, the storms of this life will be over and we'll worship Him forever.

Vs52

It's like they saw it but they didn't see it, how often we miss what God's seeking to show us because of the hardness of our own hearts. God wants our heart, not hardened against Him, but open and receptive *to* Him.

Vs53-56

What's the point, they were desperate to touch Him, to be touched by Him, because of that when they came into contact with Him they were changed. How hungry are you, how desperate are you to touch Jesus, to be touched by Jesus? If you're hungering for Him, desperate to touch Him, He'll position Himself to make "contact" with you and your life will be changed forever.

This section of scripture is all about the Good Shepherd tending to His sheep. He tended to the needs of the multitude, He tended to the needs of His disciples, and He tended to the needs of those in Gennesaret. He's able to satisfy your hunger, bring peace to your life, and bring healing to your deepest hurt. He's the Good Shepherd, we are the sheep of His hand.

Prayer Points:

Lord You are so good to us, You satisfy the hunger of our soul, You give us peace that passes understanding, You heal our hurts and restore our soul. You make us to lie down in green pastures, You anoint our heads with oil, our cup runs over. Surely Your goodness and mercy shall follow us all the days of our lives and we will dwell in the house of the Lord forever. Lord we praise You, and we worship You.

If the Lord is calling you to come unto Him and find rest for your weary soul, He's knocking on the door of your heart that You might open it, that He might enter into your heart, and

fill your life, flood you with forgiveness and grace, making you a new creation let's take care of that now. Right where you're at Jesus can wash you, cleanse you, and liberate you from the bondage of sin and death. Just cry out to Him, believe upon Him, ask Him to be your Lord, your Savior and He'll receive you right where you're at and you'll never be the same in Jesus name.