

Mark Chapter 6: v. 30-56 - Where is our compassion for the lost?

³⁰ Then the apostles gathered to Jesus and told Him all things, both what they had done and what they had taught. ³¹ And He said to them, "Come aside by yourselves to a deserted place and rest a while." For there were many coming and going, and they did not even have time to eat. ³² So they departed to a deserted place in the boat by themselves. ³³ But the multitudes saw them departing, and many knew Him and ran there on foot from all the cities. They arrived before them and came together to Him. ³⁴ And Jesus, when He came out, saw a great multitude and was moved with compassion for them, because they were like sheep not having a shepherd. So He began to teach them many things. ³⁵ When the day was now far spent, His disciples came to Him and said, "This is a deserted place, and already the hour *is* late. ³⁶ Send them away, that they may go into the surrounding country and villages and buy themselves bread; for they have nothing to eat." ³⁷ But He answered and said to them, "You give them something to eat." And they said to Him, "Shall we go and buy two hundred denarii worth of bread and give them *something* to eat?" ³⁸ But He said to them, "How many loaves do you have? Go and see." And when they found out they said, "Five, and two fish." ³⁹ Then He commanded them to make them all sit down in groups on the green grass. ⁴⁰ So they sat down in ranks, in hundreds and in fifties. ⁴¹ And when He had taken the five loaves and the two fish, He looked up to heaven, blessed and broke the loaves, and gave *them* to His disciples to set before them; and the two fish He divided among *them* all. ⁴² So they all ate and were filled. ⁴³ And they took up twelve baskets full of fragments and of the fish. ⁴⁴ Now those who had eaten the loaves were about five thousand men. ⁴⁵ 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. ⁴⁶ And when He had sent them away, He departed to the mountain to pray. ⁴⁷ Now when evening came, the boat was in the middle of the sea; and He *was* alone on the land. ⁴⁸ Then He saw them straining at rowing, for the wind was against them. Now about the fourth watch of the night He came to them, walking on the sea, and would have passed them by. ⁴⁹ And when they saw Him walking on the sea, they supposed it was a ghost, and cried out; ⁵⁰ for they all saw Him and were troubled. But immediately He talked with them and said to them, "Be of good cheer! It is I; do not be afraid." ⁵¹ Then He went up into the boat to them, and the wind ceased. And they were greatly amazed in themselves beyond measure, and marveled. ⁵² For they had not understood about the loaves, because their heart was hardened. ⁵³ When they had crossed over, they came to the land of Gennesaret and anchored there. ⁵⁴ And when they came out of the boat, immediately the people recognized Him, ⁵⁵ ran through that whole surrounding region, and began to carry about on beds those who were sick to wherever they heard He was. ⁵⁶ Wherever He entered, into villages, cities, or 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.

Introduction

Last month we learnt about the rejection of Jesus in His home town. We also discovered that the disciples were being prepared by Jesus for rejection. And finally we were given a living example of the result of this rejection. (John the Baptist Beheaded)

We discovered from the scriptures that most people reject the gospel message because they are not willing to repent of their sins.

We also found out that a major concern for people is "**pressure from other people in their lives**"

People normally fear other people more than they fear God.

We discovered that the life of King Herod was a typical example.

In v. 30 we are told that the Apostles returned from their preaching tour and told Jesus all that they had done and taught.

It was like a de-briefing at the end of a mission trip.

In v. 31 we discover that Jesus was very familiar with how draining ministry in the power of Jesus can be.

When you start ministry in any given day, you are like a sponge full of water. Gradually the water goes out and you are left with nothing more to give.

This is why Jesus said "**Come aside to a deserted place and rest a while.**"

There was only one problem; the crowd would not leave Jesus and the disciples alone. They followed them. At least they did get a restful ride on a boat in Lake Galilee, something I was able to do myself. It was very relaxing.

Jesus was expecting a rest too!!! Remember He is fully human as well as fully divine.

In v. 34 Jesus saw the crowd of people coming towards Him.

The text tells us that He was moved with compassion because He saw them as sheep without a shepherd.

Jesus then began to teach them many things.

At the end of the day Jesus was left with 5,000 men and nothing to feed their physical bodies.

In v. 37 we are told that Jesus challenged the disciples to feed the 5,000 men.

The disciple's answer was to send them away to buy their own food.

The disciples only looked upon the human alternative, but Jesus was about to force them to look towards the "Supernatural".

In v. 38 Jesus asked the disciples if there was "any" available food around.

They found 5 loaves of bread and two fish.

These would be no bigger than the butter rolls that you can buy from 7/11 or the Family Mart. The fish would have been small too.

Jesus, looked up to Heaven, then blessed this small amount of food, broke it open and then fed 5,000 people and had 12 baskets of scrap left over.

What a wonderful miracle to witness.

After everybody had been fed, immediately Jesus made His disciples get into the boat and go on their own to the other side of the lake.

Jesus then sent the crowd away to their homes.

After this Jesus departed and went to a mountain to pray.

Jesus was tired too and He needed rest and prayer with Father God.

The disciples were rowing their boat across the lake at evening time and were having a hard time. It was the middle of the night.

Jesus, being God in human form observed their hardship in trying to row against the wind.

Jesus walked out on to the water to encourage them.

The disciples thought that Jesus was a "Ghost" and they cried out in fear.

Jesus saw that they were afraid, so He came near them and encouraged them with these words "**Be of good cheer, it is I do not be afraid.**"

Jesus then joined the disciples in the boat and the wind ceased.

The disciples were amazed about this event.

Mark closes this section in v. 52 by telling us that the disciples had not understood about the loaves because their hearts were hardened.

There are two key points that I want to draw out from these verses.

1. Jesus is the Shepherd, who has come to rescue His sheep – v. 31-44.

Verse 33 is the key verse in this section

³³ But the multitudes saw them departing, and many knew Him and ran there on foot from all the cities. They arrived before them and came together to Him.

The first thing we need to do is to go back to the Old Testament and look at the prophecy in the book of Ezekiel.

Ezekiel Chapter 34: v.1-17.

And the word of the LORD came to me, saying, ² "Son of man, prophesy against the shepherds of Israel, prophesy and say to them, 'Thus says the Lord GOD to the shepherds: "Woe to the shepherds of Israel who feed themselves! Should not the shepherds feed the flocks? ³ You eat the fat and clothe yourselves with the wool; you slaughter the fatlings, *but* you do not feed the flock. ⁴ The weak you have not strengthened, nor have you healed those who were sick, nor bound up the broken, nor brought back what was driven away, nor sought what was lost; but with force and cruelty you have ruled them. ⁵ So they were scattered because *there was* no shepherd; and they became food for all the beasts of the field when they were scattered. ⁶ My sheep wandered through all the mountains, and on every high hill; yes, My flock was scattered over the whole face of the earth, and no one was seeking or searching *for them.*" ⁷ 'Therefore, you shepherds, hear the word of the LORD: ⁸ "As I live," says the Lord GOD, "surely because My flock became a prey, and My flock became food for every beast of the field, because *there was* no shepherd, nor did My shepherds search for My flock, but the shepherds

fed themselves and did not feed My flock”—⁹ therefore, O shepherds, hear the word of the LORD!
¹⁰ Thus says the Lord GOD: “Behold, I *am* against the shepherds, and I will require My flock at their hand; I will cause them to cease feeding the sheep, and the shepherds shall feed themselves no more; for I will deliver My flock from their mouths, that they may no longer be food for them.”¹¹ “For thus says the Lord GOD: “Indeed I Myself will search for My sheep and seek them out.¹² As a shepherd seeks out his flock on the day he is among his scattered sheep, so will I seek out My sheep and deliver them from all the places where they were scattered on a cloudy and dark day.¹³ And I will bring them out from the peoples and gather them from the countries, and will bring them to their own land; I will feed them on the mountains of Israel, in the valleys and in all the inhabited places of the country.¹⁴ I will feed them in good pasture, and their fold shall be on the high mountains of Israel. There they shall lie down in a good fold and feed in rich pasture on the mountains of Israel.¹⁵ I will feed My flock, and I will make them lie down,” says the Lord GOD.¹⁶ “I will seek what was lost and bring back what was driven away, bind up the broken and strengthen what was sick; but I will destroy the fat and the strong, and feed them in judgment.”¹⁷ “And *as for* you, O My flock, thus says the Lord GOD: “Behold, I shall judge between sheep and sheep, between rams and goats.

The passage in Ezekiel highlights the “Irresponsible Shepherds” in v. 1-10 and then goes on in v.11-16 to prophecy about God the “True Shepherd”.

There are 4 key things that we need to note about the “True Shepherd”.

- a) The True Shepherd will search for His sheep and seek them out. – Ez. 34: v.11.
- b) The True Shepherd will feed them in good pasture and make them lie down – v. 14
- c) The True Shepherd will seek the lost and bring them back and strengthen those who were broken – v. 16.
- d) The True Shepherd would judge between sheep and sheep and Rams and Goats.

The Prophecy from Ezekiel tells us that it is God Himself who is the True Shepherd.

So when Jesus declared that He saw the crowds as sheep without a Shepherd, He was intimating that He was the “Great Shepherd” that Ezekiel prophesied about.

Thereby declaring Himself to be God.

So we need to ask the question, what are sheep without a shepherd like?

I will give you three good answers to this question.

1. Sheep without a Shepherd can’t find their way.

Left to ourselves we will get spiritually lost in our lives.

We can get caught up in a world that is trying to make some sense of life, but they have thrown away the guide book.

We live in a world that promises lots of things if you have the money to buy them but it has no answer to the problem of the human heart.

The problem with the human heart is that it is sinful by nature.

Q. Have you lost your way in life?

Perhaps you are like a sheep without a shepherd?

The answer is to come to Jesus and repent of going your own way and search the guide book for your answers to life and death.

2. A sheep without a Shepherd cannot find pasture

Sheep are dumb animals, they will graze on the same bit of grass until they have eaten everything, roots and all.

They are not capable of finding new grass in another area, unless a shepherd leads them to that place.

It is the same idea with people.

If you are not feeding on Jesus and His word, the Bible, then you will come away spiritually empty.

The things of this world promise so much but they deliver so little.

Many people say, “If I could only have lots of money then I will be happy”

You may be surprised to know that the most miserable people in the world are the rich people.

The reason is that their money is unable to satisfy the real need of their heart. Their life on the outside might seem good, but their soul is dry like desert. The Bible tells us that the only person who will ever satisfy your mind and your heart and soul is Jesus Christ.

John Chapter 6: v. 48.

⁴⁸ I am the bread of life.

There is an old song that reflects this truth, I wish I could sing it to you, maybe one day we can learn it.

**O Christ, in Thee my soul hath found,
And found in Thee alone,
The peace, the joy I sought so long,
The bliss till now unknown.**

**Now none but Christ can satisfy,
None other name for me;
There's love and life and lasting joy,
Lord Jesus, found in Thee.**

**I sighed for rest and happiness,
I yearned for them, not Thee;
But, while I passed my Savior by,
His love laid hold on me.**

**I tried the broken cisterns, Lord,
But, ah, the waters failed!
E'en as I stooped to drink they fled,
And mocked me as I wailed.**

**The pleasures lost I sadly mourned,
But never wept for Thee,
Till grace the sightless eyes received,
Thy loveliness to see.**

3. A Sheep without a Shepherd is in danger

Sheep on their own are very defenceless creatures. They have no protection against wild animals, holes in the ground, falling down cliffs, rolling over and not being able to get back on its legs.

It is exactly the same when we try to live our life without Jesus.

When the storms of life come, we don't have anything to hang on to.

When the creator of the world, becomes your saviour and friend, you don't need to fear anything, even death.

The second thing I would like to focus upon in our text is verse 52.

2. The Miracle of the Loaves and Fish was not understood – v.52.

The miracle of Jesus walking on the water is recorded by Mark, but he is more concerned about the fact that the disciples missed the point about the loaves.

⁵² For they had not understood about the loaves, because their heart was hardened.

Jesus wanted the disciples to perceive something crucial in the miracle about the loaves and feeding the 5,000 people.

Although the disciples didn't understand the truth that Jesus was teaching them, we must understand it.

Firstly, we must go to John's Gospel Chapter 6.

I won't read the whole chapter, I will focus upon what happened after the feeding of the 5,000 that John records.

A discussion took place between Jesus and the crowd which implied that the feeding of the 5,000 miracle is likened to Moses supplying "Manna" bread in the wilderness to the tribes of Israel.

John 6: v. 29-40.

²⁹ Jesus answered and said to them, "This is the work of God, that you believe in Him whom He sent."

³⁰ Therefore they said to Him, "What sign will You perform then, that we may see it and believe You? What work will You do?" ³¹ Our fathers ate the manna in the desert; as it is written, 'He gave them bread from heaven to eat.'" ³² Then Jesus said to them, "Most assuredly, I say to you, Moses did not give you the bread from heaven, but My Father gives you the true bread from heaven. ³³ For the bread of God is He who comes down from heaven and gives life to the world." ³⁴ Then they said to Him, "Lord, give us this bread always." ³⁵ And Jesus said to them, "I am the bread of life. He who comes to Me shall never hunger, and he who believes in Me shall never thirst. ³⁶ But I said to you that you have seen Me and yet do not believe. ³⁷ All that the Father gives Me will come to Me, and the one who comes to Me I will by no means cast out. ³⁸ For I have come down from heaven, not to do My own will, but the will of Him who sent Me. ³⁹ This is the will of the Father who sent Me, that of all He has given Me I should lose nothing, but should raise it up at the last day. ⁴⁰ And this is the will of Him who sent Me, that everyone who sees the Son and believes in Him may have everlasting life; and I will raise him up at the last day."

There are things taught in Mark's account of this miracle that are not taught in the parallel accounts in the other gospels.

a) Firstly, Mark's account emphasizes that this feeding took place in a deserted place.

The location is mentioned 3 times. In v.31,v.32, v. 35. We know that the art of teaching is repetition and Mark repeats this to teach us something.

Through this Mark may have meant to draw some parallel between this miracle and the supply of the "Manna" bread in the desert.

b) Secondly, Mark connects the prayers of Moses, and the prophecy of Ezekiel with Jesus

We don't need to look up these verses but they are on the hand out sheet.

These are Numbers 27: v. 15-17 where Moses prays that God will send a leader to Shepherd His people.

Also in Ezekiel God promised to send a King like David to Shepherd His people.

The illustration to these old Testament passages by Mark suggest to the reader, that is us today that JESUS is fulfilling the role of the longed for "King of Israel", the "messiah", who like Moses, teaches the people and FEEDS the people.

c) The third thing we notice is that Jesus commanded that the people sat down in groups of 100's and 50's. This was the same way that Moses organised the people of God.

Because none of these details are seen in the parallel accounts but can be sure that Mark does not want us to see this incident just as a miracle.

Mark wants us to notice the prophetic significance.

The way that Mark portrays the event, describes Jesus clearly as the "Messiah"

The disciples missed the point of who Jesus really was and is today !!!

We must not miss the point of who Jesus is.

The Bible is all about Jesus

Our lives should focus upon Jesus and the Gospel that connects people to Him.

Our Communion today focuses upon Jesus.

He is the God of the Bible, who became a man, in order to die on a cross for our sins. Don't miss that point today.