

ENCOUNTERS WITH JESUS

MARK 6.30-44 JESUS AND UNCERTAINTY



³⁰The apostles gathered around Jesus and reported to him all they had done and taught. ³¹Then, 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.”

³²So they went away by themselves in a boat to a solitary place. ³³But many who saw them leaving recognized them and ran on foot from all the towns and got there ahead of them. ³⁴When 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.

³⁵ 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. ³⁶ Send the people away so that they can go to the surrounding countryside and villages and buy themselves something to eat."

³⁷ But he answered, "You give them something to eat."

They said to him, "That would take more than half a year's wages! Are we to go and spend that much on bread and give it to them to eat?"

³⁸ "How many loaves do you have?" he asked. "Go and see."

When they found out, they said, "Five—and two fish."

³⁹ Then Jesus directed them to have all the people sit down in groups on the green grass. ⁴⁰ So they sat down in groups of hundreds and fifties. ⁴¹ 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 distribute to the people. He also divided the two fish among them all. ⁴² They all ate and were satisfied, ⁴³ and the disciples picked up twelve basketfuls of broken pieces of bread and fish. ⁴⁴ The number of the men who had eaten was five thousand.

Context

The disciples had just finished their first major ministry project. Sent out without food, money, or extra clothes they carried the kingdom power that they had seen Jesus operate in. When they prayed demons fled, bodies were healed, and lives were transformed. Now, they had returned to Jesus and were looking forward to some "me time."

Discuss

What are some of the ways the disciples might have been feeling? How do you imagine their reactions in response to Jesus telling them to "give them something to eat?"

The disciples and the crowd were all in the same uncertain position - tired, hungry, and without food. Because of the disciples' relationship with Jesus, they had a different experience than the crowd. How do you respond to uncertainty? How does your relationship with Jesus impact your experience of uncertainty?

The disciples' sense of entitlement to rest limited their capacity for the compassion of Jesus, leading them into an "every person for themselves" mentality. How do you identify with the struggle of the disciples? How do you see this mentality play out in our world today? Ask Jesus to lead you into compassionate action.

Jesus was teaching His disciples that He could be relied on in times of scarcity. How can you rely more on Jesus during a time of scarcity?

Spiritual Invitation

Jesus' actions in this passage flow from His compassion. Aligning our hearts with God's heart is essential work for disciples of Jesus. Spend time this week reading about/reflecting on the heart of God on display in Jesus. Ask God to fill you with the Holy Spirit that you might find your heart aligning more and more with the heart of Christ.

Missional Opportunity

This week, commit to practicing compassionate action and/or faith-filled generosity. What will you do? How will you do it? Who will benefit? What accountability do you need?