

A Meal Kit For A King

Mark 6:30-44 October 22, 2025

In 1975, Steven Sasson was a young engineer working for the Kodak corporation. He spent his time on an unusual project. It wasn't secret, it's just that no one really cared about what he was creating.

When his prototype was finally ready, he showed it to his bosses and then to *their* bosses. He made presentations to executives in the technical department *and* the business department *and* the marketing department. The response was always the same: Skepticism and disinterest. After all, why would *anyone* want to look at a photo on a television screen?

You see, Steven had invented the first digital camera. But Kodak sold *film*. They sold flash cubes. They processed prints "made with Kodak chemistry on Kodak paper."¹ They ignored Steven's history-changing presentation. By the time they finally embraced what he had done, it was too late. In 2012 the company was bankrupt. It is one of the worst missed opportunities in business history.

The text we just read in Mark 6 is one of the most significant in the timeline of *spiritual* history. In fact, it is the *only* one of Jesus' miracles that is recorded in all four Gospels other than the resurrection. Mark will refer back to these verses *two more times* before his book is done.² *This* story reveals amazing things about Who Jesus is. It also reveals how we should respond.

What does it tell us about Jesus? It reveals that He is the Good Shepherd, ready to receive the lost sheep of humanity into His flock. That He is the great Deliverer we've been waiting for. That He is the Bread of Life. That He is mindful of you and concerned with your everyday needs.

But, this text not only records the presentation of these truths. It also shows the *failure* of the crowd *and* the disciples to apprehend Who Jesus was and what He was doing.

Both times Mark refers back to this story, it is to highlight how the disciples did *not* understand because their hearts were *hard*. In John's Gospel, we learn the crowd didn't do any better. They totally misunderstood the spiritual aspect of Jesus' miracle, focusing instead on the physical - *they just wanted another sandwich*. Jesus tries to get both the disciples *and* the crowds to understand what had been revealed, what had been presented, but they missed it.

So, we want to approach this text with the goal of understanding what Christ was revealing about Himself, and *as disciples*, we want to avoid the mistakes the 12 made in the scene.

Mark 6:30 - ³⁰ The apostles gathered around Jesus and reported to him all that they had done and taught.

¹ <https://archive.nytimes.com/lens.blogs.nytimes.com/2015/08/12/kodaks-first-digital-moment/>

² Mark 6:52, Mark 8:17-21

Back from their trip, the 12 are excited and animated. But notice their perspective: They're not singing the praises of *God*. All they can talk about is what *they* had done, what *they* had taught.

When Jesus healed the paralytic in Mark 2, when people saw the blind seeing and the crippled restored in Matthew 15, when people heard about the conversion of Cornelius' house in Acts 11, the result was everyone gave glory to *God*. The disciples are in a time of self-centeredness.

In *our* service to the Lord, we must keep *His* greatness and *His* activity in the forefront. We are not the reason God changes lives. It's *His* power, *His* plan, *His* accomplishment.

Mark 6:31 - ³¹ He said to them, "Come away by yourselves to a remote place and rest for a while." For many people were coming and going, and they did not even have time to eat.

Matthew tells us Jesus wanted some time alone because He just heard that His cousin, John the Baptist, had been murdered.³ Jesus had real emotion. He felt real sorrow. Think of His heartbreak at the death of His friend, Lazarus, despite knowing He was going to raise him *from* the dead.

But even in His sorrow, Jesus was mindful of the needs of His friends. He saw they hadn't had a moment to grab a mouthful of food. He's so mindful of us, so attentive of our situations and circumstances. Psalm 139 talks about the *vast* sum of God's thoughts for *every day* of your life!

Knowing what we need, He calls us to come away to Him. To find our rest in Him. To refresh ourselves in His grace and His comfort and His provision. He says, "Come to Me. Hide in Me."

Now, this is the era of "self-care." That's a term people love to use these days. Often behind it is this idea that I can't love others unless I first love myself. But that is *not* the Christian pattern. It's *ok* that they planned a little quiet getaway, but then it doesn't happen. *Even though Jesus wanted it!* Rest isn't a bad thing - God commands us to enter into *His* rest. But, the Christian mission prioritizes the needs of others as we treat our own lives as living sacrifices poured out for the Lord's service.⁴

Mark 6:32-33 - ³² So they went away in the boat by themselves to a remote place, ³³ but many saw them leaving and recognized them, and they ran on foot from all the towns and arrived ahead of them.

If the crowds could see *them*, you know *they* could see the crowds. This was *thousands* of people, *running* together so they could get to Jesus.

When I say to you, "A vast number of people, being miraculously fed in the wilderness," what do you think of? We think of the Israelites and the Exodus. How there, in the wilderness, heaven's bread came morning by morning as fine flakes after the dew. A flock not only set free, but supplied.

³ Matthew 14:13

⁴ See Philippians 2:3-4, Romans 12:1

Now, *Moses* could not give them the bread. He was simply the messenger who told the people, “*God* is going to rain bread from heaven on you.” But in *this* text, we see that *Christ* is the One Who gives the bread. It is by *His* hands, *His* power that the people are fed. He *is* the Bread of life. And Jesus would go on to tell *this* crowd, “If you eat of this bread, you will live forever.” Sadly, it was that message that turned many away. They said it was “too hard” to accept.

These people in Mark 6 weren’t slaves to Pharaoh. But they *were* slaves to sin. Held captive by the Devil. They were just as much in need of a Deliverer. They *felt* it in their hearts, and so they *ran* to Jesus, Who they *knew* had power and Whose preaching was unlike anything they had ever heard.

Now, the next time we see the disciples, they’re pretty exasperated. It’s a long day and it’s about to get a *lot* longer. They were worn down. What about Jesus?

Mark 6:34 - ³⁴ When he went ashore, he saw a large crowd and had compassion on them, because they were like sheep without a shepherd. Then he began to teach them many things.

A God of *compassion*. It’s the same term used of the prodigal son’s father who saw his wayward son far off but *ran* to him and threw his arms around his neck and kissed him.⁵

Remember: *Jesus* wanted to be alone. But, seeing the thousands swarming on the shore, He did not change course. He did not duck into another boat going the opposite way. He went ashore met their needs. Compassion outweighed exhaustion. His compassions fail not.

They weren’t only in need, they were in *danger*. They were sheep without a shepherd. That’s a *very* dangerous position to be in. A sheep without a shepherd has no protection from predators. They also don’t know where to go. They can only wander. Who was going to lead them? The pharisees? Herod? Pilate? Caesar? We need truth and direction for life. Jesus is the only One Who has it. But we have to recognize that Jesus’ goal isn’t only to *do* things for us, but to command and lead us.

Mark 6:35-36 - ³⁵ When it grew late, his disciples approached him and said, “This place is deserted, and it is already late. ³⁶ Send them away so that they can go into the surrounding countryside and villages to buy themselves something to eat.”

It’s never a good sign when you tell God what to do. Did you notice *they* command *Him*? They talk to Jesus as if He doesn’t know what’s going on. “You know, Lord, this place is deserted. You probably shouldn’t have brought us out here since, after all, now we’re in a pickle.”

A proper response to the situation would have been, “Lord, what do *You* want to do?” Not, “Lord, here’s what *we’ve* decided *You* should do.” Discipleship is about trusting and following.

⁵ *Lexham Theological Wordbook*

Their declaration betrays the fact that they are not really concerned with the people. In the moment, these people were an audience, maybe a nuisance, but certainly not *their* responsibility. They assume there was no spiritual application in the situation. But remember: They had *just* returned from the mission field where God had worked through them and provided for them when *they* had no food to eat and no money to buy it. Even though God proved His ability *and* His desire to involve Himself in ordinary situations of life, they didn't think He would work in *this* situation.

Now, Jesus *knows* what He is going to do,⁶ but He wants the 12 to understand what's going on.

Mark 6:37 - ³⁷ "You give them something to eat," he responded. They said to him, "Should we go and buy two hundred denarii worth of bread and give them something to eat?"

Their answer is a little testy - disrespectful, even.⁷ Why did Jesus tell *them* to address the problem? Remember: The story *starts* with them telling all the things *they* were able to do. Is *this* situation different? Is God only God on the mission field? Is He only at work when I *feel* like serving?

The problem is: While Jesus was motivated by *compassion*, they were motivated by *exhaustion*, stress, self-centeredness. Their hearts were hard. And hard hearts lead to unspiritual decisions.

They say it would cost thousands and thousands of dollars to feed the crowd. But, again, remember that God had *just* provided them food day after day on their trip. They *knew* what He could do, but their hearts weren't soft, so their response wasn't soft either.

We are so quick to forget the faithfulness of God. What happened to all their excitement from verse 30? It's gone! And now, facing this scene, they think, "Well the only answer is money and we don't have it." But *money* wasn't the problem. The problem was their mindset and their reaction.

Mark 6:38-40 - ³⁸ He asked them, "How many loaves do you have? Go and see." When they found out they said, "Five, and two fish." ³⁹ Then he instructed 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.

God was going to do a *remarkable* work here. And He did so in a calm and orderly way, with basic items. God is a God of order. This wasn't going to be a strange and wild free for all.

He was also teaching the disciples things about ministry. First, humility. It's *humbling* to have to ask people, "Hey, do you have any food to share?" Second, God expects us to serve. He *could* have just filled their stomachs. Instead, He made the disciples responsible for serving the meal, though that would take time and effort. But we each receive a gift so that we might lovingly serve one another.

Third, Jesus' perspective is very different from our natural perspective. The Twelve thought of the crowd as a burden to be dismissed. Jesus saw this as an opportunity for growth and delight.

⁶ John 6:6

⁷ James Brooks *The New American Commentary, Vol. 23: Mark*

The term used for the “groups” here is a word that refers to garden plots.⁸ And the arrangement Jesus uses indicate a more formal *banquet* setting than a simple meal.⁹

For Jesus, this was not just about solving a problem. This was a moment where people were going to experience joy and revelation and cultivation. A moment revealing what kind of God He is.

Mark 6:41 - ⁴¹ He took the five loaves and the two fish, and looking up to heaven, he blessed and broke the loaves. He kept giving them to his disciples to set before the people. He also divided the two fish among them all.

The Lord kept providing meal after meal after meal after meal. He knew what was needed from the front row to the back row. He shows His limitless power and tireless compassion here.

Mark 6:42 - ⁴² Everyone ate and was satisfied.

Steven Sasson’s first digital camera was not the sleek DSLR we think of today. He scavenged a lens from an old Super-8 camera, a cassette tape recorder, 16 nickel batteries, and various other parts. But these humble components changed everything.

The meal that night was plain - just flat barley bread and dried fish. An ordinary lunch. But they were *satisfied*. We, too can find abiding satisfaction in the ordinary when the Lord is in it.

Now, think of the *last* banquet we saw in Mark. Herod’s banquet. The finest food. All the delicacies. Do you think *anyone* left that meal satisfied as John’s head was paraded around on a platter?

The Good Shepherd promises to lead us to green pastures. Just like He did here. They sat down on the green grass. He promises to *satisfy* us. In Psalm 90, Moses speaks of God’s compassion, saying:

Psalm 90:14 - ¹⁴ Satisfy us in the morning with your faithful love so that we may shout with joy and be glad all our days.

That *is* what God desires for you. That you receive your daily bread from Him and find not only the rest you need in your weariness, but *satisfaction*. Daily contentment and fulfillment in His love.

Mark 6:43 - ⁴³ They picked up twelve baskets full of pieces of bread and fish.

God’s math is amazing. There was more *leftover* than they even started with! The disciples weren’t forgotten. In fact, they’d be nourished as a result of their service. But they thought there was nothing for them in the wilderness. In reality, there was more than even they need, not to mention the thousands who had been ministered to. Christ’s provision is always sufficient. Always abundant.

⁸ Morna Hooker *The Gospel According To Saint Mark*

⁹ R.T. France *The Gospel Of Mark*

Always thoughtful and generous for us. And in this moment, the Lord wanted them to understand what He could do and what He *wants* to do in ordinary situations of life. In frustrating situations of life. In moments when we don't know what to do. To show them that He is all they need for every aspect of life. That if they follow Him as a sheep follow their shepherd, the result is life and growth and eyes that see and spiritual power.

Mark 6:44 - ⁴⁴ Now those who had eaten the loaves were five thousand men.

Matthew adds that the women and children were not counted. That means each disciple *could* have been responsible for 1,000 people. This is a long night of service. Have you ever waited tables for 1,000 people? I haven't. But Jesus empowered them, assigned them, supplied them, and it happened! *Despite* the fact they didn't understand, *despite* the fact that their hearts were hard at the moment, the Lord *still* graciously brought them in to be a part of His incredible work. Because He doesn't only have compassion for hungry stomachs, He also has compassion for hard hearts. But He wants to address *that* problem, too. And later, He will come back to this moment and say to the Twelve: "Do you still not understand? Do you still not get what salvation and faith and discipleship is about?"

It's easy for us to become distracted by the miraculous aspect of accounts like this. Obviously, the Lord really, truly worked a miracle here. And God *still* does miraculous things. But one thing we can learn from this example is that, whether God works a miracle in your life or not, He *does* intend to do the supernatural. To bring you into His life-changing work. To help you have a heart like His, a mind like His, eyes like His, compassion like His. He wants to develop our faith so that we go to *Him* day by day, not fall into frustration or defeatism or annoyance.

He has all the power and all the capacity and all the wisdom necessary to do the supernatural in our hearts and in our midst. Our part is to remember Who He is. He is the Good Shepherd. He is the ultimate Deliverer. He is the Bread of Life. He is the Provider. He is the Savior. He is the Architect building in our lives. Building testimonies. Creating opportunities. Calling us to the supernatural here and now as we believe in Who He is and what He does.