

Jesus, Our Compassionate Shepherd (Exodus 16:1-16 and Mark 6:30-44)

27-July-25

Exodus 16:1-16

Manna and Quail

16 The whole Israelite community set out from Elim and came to the Desert of Sin, which is between Elim and Sinai, on the fifteenth day of the second month after they had come out of Egypt. ² In the desert the whole community grumbled against Moses and Aaron. ³ The Israelites said to them, "If only we had died by the Lord's hand in Egypt! There we sat around pots of meat and ate all the food we wanted, but you have brought us out into this desert to starve this entire assembly to death."

⁴ Then the Lord said to Moses, "I will rain down bread from heaven for you. The people are to go out each day and gather enough for that day. In this way I will test them and see whether they will follow my instructions. ⁵ On the sixth day they are to prepare what they bring in, and that is to be twice as much as they gather on the other days."

⁶ So Moses and Aaron said to all the Israelites, "In the evening you will know that it was the Lord who brought you out of Egypt, ⁷ and in the morning you will see the glory of the Lord, because he has heard your grumbling against him. Who are we, that you should grumble against us?" ⁸ Moses also said, "You will know that it was the Lord when he gives you meat to eat in the evening and all the bread you want in the morning, because he has heard your grumbling against him. Who are we? You are not grumbling against us, but against the Lord."

⁹ Then Moses told Aaron, "Say to the entire Israelite community, 'Come before the Lord, for he has heard your grumbling.'"

¹⁰ While Aaron was speaking to the whole Israelite community, they looked toward the desert, and there was the glory of the Lord appearing in the cloud.

¹¹ The Lord said to Moses, ¹² "I have heard the grumbling of the Israelites. Tell them, 'At twilight you will eat meat, and in the morning you will be filled with bread. Then you will know that I am the Lord your God.'"

¹³ That evening quail came and covered the camp, and in the morning there was a layer of dew around the camp. ¹⁴ When the dew was gone, thin flakes like frost on

the ground appeared on the desert floor. ¹⁵ When the Israelites saw it, they said to each other, “What is it?” For they did not know what it was.

Moses said to them, “It is the bread the Lord has given you to eat. ¹⁶ This is what the Lord has commanded: ‘Everyone is to gather as much as they need. Take an **omer** [6 pounds or about 2.8 kilograms] for each person you have in your tent.’”

Mark 6:30-44

Jesus Feeds the Five Thousand

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

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

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^[a]! 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.

It would be good to have your **Bibles opened** firstly at **Exodus 16** and then **Mark 6:30-44**

There’s an **outline** for you to take **notes**. Let me **pray** first. Let’s pray...

Intro/A Compassionate God (Exodus 16:1-16)

[Slide-Compassionate God]

We have **a compassionate God**

Compassion means – *having pity and concern for the sufferings or misfortunes of others.*

[Slide-Exodus 34:6]

The Old Testament [OT] describes God as *the Lord, the compassionate and gracious God, slow to anger, abounding in love and faithfulness... (Exodus 34:6)*

And the **Hebrew Word** for **compassionate** also means *merciful* – and by definition **mercy is undeserved** – otherwise it wouldn’t be mercy!

In our OT reading it's around about **1450BC**

We pick up the **story of the Israelites**

They have been **rescued by God** from **400 years** of **slavery** in **Egypt**

God had sent **10 plagues** upon Egypt to **persuade Pharaoh** to let the Israelites go

And **now** they are **in the wilderness** heading towards the **Promised Land** that God

had said they would **occupy** – a **Promised Land** - **flowing with milk and honey**

[Exodus 3:8]

But here they are **grumbling** [*which is mentioned 7 times in our reading*]

Look at verse 3 - *"If only we had died by the Lord's hand in Egypt! There we sat around pots of meat and ate all the food we wanted, but you have brought us out into this desert to starve this entire assembly to death."*

Despite their grumbling – **God showed compassion** – and **grace and mercy** – and

He gave them **special bread** each **morning** – called **manna** [*manna was like coriander seed and tasted like wafers made with honey*] - and God also gave them

quail meat every **evening** to eat!

Application

Are we a bit like the **Israelites**?

We **grumble and complain against God** – and **focus on the negatives** and not the **many blessings** God's given us?

Are we are bit like the **Israelites**?

God has rescued us from slavery. The **slavery of sin.** He's given us a **rescue from sin and death** - through Jesus' death on the cross and His resurrection. But instead of being forever thankful **that we've been rescued** and forever thankful **that we now have a place guaranteed in Heaven.** Instead, we grumble or doubt that God will help us with our current problem.

If God has helped us with the BIG thing – our sin - is He not going to keep helping us? Doesn't He promise – ***He will never leave us nor forsake us?*** [Hebrews 13:5] Doesn't He promise – ***He is our refuge and strength – an ever-present help in trouble?*** [Psalm 46:1]

The lesson here for us is - surely – **don't be like the Israelites!**

(pause)

Now remember the **OT ALWAYS points to Jesus in the New Testament (NT)**

So, **we fast-forward to another wilderness story –** another **solitary place** - in our **NT reading** from Mark 6:30-44 – [Please turn there now...](#)

It's now around **30AD.**

And our 1st point this morning is – **Jesus, our Shepherd, gives rest for the weary!**

[Slide-1st point]

Jesus, our Shepherd, gives rest for the weary (Mark 6:30-34)

We **pick up the story** in verse 30

The **12 apostles report to Jesus** all that they had **done and taught.**

Remember earlier in the chapter – in verses 7 to 13 – **Jesus had sent the apostles out in pairs** to teach people and He also gave them authority over impure spirits.

So now **they've come back to Jesus to report**

They are **accountable to Jesus** – as their **Master**

They have **returned** from **an intense time of ministry**—preaching, healing, casting out demons. Verse 31 says “*so many people were coming and going that they did not even have a chance to eat.*”

Jesus sees their need for rest and responds with compassion. He acknowledges the human limits of His followers and prioritizes their well-being. He invites them: “*Come with me by yourselves to a quiet place and get some rest*”.

By having a quiet time of rest, they can be both physically and spiritually renewed. Ministry without spending alone time with Jesus can become draining and misdirected; and we can start to do things under our own strength, not His! **Constant activity without proper rest leads to burnout! I'm preaching to myself here too!**

Jesus is also modelling a pattern for us – we go out - we share the Good News - we come back to Jesus - we rest - we refresh and - we renew! **That time of rest, renews perspective.** Serving the Lord is not just about being busy all the time; it's about being grounded in the presence of our Lord Jesus!

Application

What about us?

Are we having enough rest time? What will we do about that?

(pause)

Are we having enough quiet time with Jesus? What will we do about that?

(pause)

Remember...

What a Friend we have in Jesus,

All our sins and griefs to bear!

What a privilege to carry

Everything to God in prayer!

O what peace we often forfeit,

O what needless pain we bear,

All because we do not carry

Everything to God in prayer!

Unfortunately when Jesus and the Apostles hop in a boat to sail to a **solitary place** on the **other side of the lake** – for that time of rest (verse 32)

Many of the enthusiastic crowd – **ran around the side of the lake** and **get to the solitary place before them** (verse 33)

When Jesus landed on the shore – verse 34 – **the crowd was waiting.**

If that happened to us **we'd be cheesed** – wouldn't we?

I know if I arrive home – ready to rest – and the phone rings or there's a knock on the door – I get irritated!

But – not Jesus!

Despite, having His quiet time hijacked – verse 34 – Jesus - *had compassion on them, because they were like sheep without a shepherd. So he began teaching them many things.*

What does Jesus mean by saying “*they were like sheep without a shepherd*”?

What **Jesus sees** before Him are **people who are**:

- **Spiritually weary and without direction** – the religious leaders of Israel (the Pharisees and the teachers of the law) have **failed to teach the people properly** and **failed to take care of them**
- That’s why they ran ahead – they are **hungry for the truth and healing** – they **need their souls refreshed** with Jesus teaching
- They are also **weary from the burden of Roman occupation and oppression** and they are **crying out for a true leader.**
- **Jesus knows what they need**
- They need to be **spiritually fed** – before they eat any physical food.
- **This shows Jesus’ priority – so He teaches them!**

Application

What about us?

Are we weary in our work for the Lord?

Are we weary from the troubles in our life?

Are we weary from what we see going on in the world?

Are we feeling lost – like a lost sheep?

Jesus says in **Matthew 11:28-30**

²⁸ “Come to me, all you who are weary and burdened, and I will give you rest. ²⁹ Take my yoke upon you and learn from me, for I am gentle and humble in heart, and you will find rest for your souls. ³⁰ For my yoke is easy and my burden is light.”

Jesus, our Shepherd, gives rest for the weary!

2nd point – **Jesus, our Shepherd, provides food for His Sheep**

[Slide-2nd point]

Jesus, our Shepherd, provides food for His sheep (Mark 6:35-41)

Jesus’ taught for some time

And when it **became late in the day**

The **disciples** came with **a few practical problems** – verses 35-36:

- It’s a **remote place** there are in
- It’s **getting very late**
- The **people are hungry** and there’s no Baker’s Delight or Subway around – so the disciples **recommend the crowd go** to the surrounding villages to buy themselves something to eat

The **disciples** are **overwhelmed** by the **crowd’s physical needs**

(pause)

Jesus is not having a bar of sending the crowd away - though

Instead Jesus says in verse 37 – ***“you give them something to eat!”***

Why would Jesus say that?

There are a **number of lessons** for the disciples here:

- a) 1st - **To have faith not logic** – Jesus **challenges** the instinct to rely on human reasoning and resources rather than relying on and trusting in God’s power
- b) 2nd - **To teach them** to take **responsibility and show compassion** – Jesus is teaching them to **take ownership of the needs around them** and **to care deeply for the people**; not just pass the problem on to someone else!
- c) 3rd - Jesus is also teaching them to have **dependence on Him**. Jesus knows they can’t meet the demand on their own; but they **can be part of the process so that they will learn to depend on Him and not on themselves**.
- d) 4th - Jesus is **preparing the disciples for future leadership**. As His representatives in the world, they will be **called to meet both spiritual and physical needs** through faith and obedience in Jesus.

It’s no surprise that **the disciples find Jesus’ request in impossible** – and they reply – still in verse 37 – that it’s **going to cost 6 months wages to feed the whole crowd!**

But **Jesus’ doesn’t let them off the hook**

Verse 38 – He asks them ***“How many loaves do you have – Go and see!”***

They found out they only have **five loaves and two fish!**

What Jesus is doing here with the disciples is to teach them a few more lessons:

- a) 1st - To shift their focus from **what they DON'T have - to what they DO have!**
- b) 2nd - Jesus also involves them in the process and the miracle
- c) 3rd - **He teaches them faith and stewardship – so that they trust God with the little they have – and let God cause the multiplication to happen**
- d) 4th - Jesus wants to highlight the enormity of the miracle His about to do!

Application

For us there are **number of lessons too:**

- a) 1st - Our resources are limited but God's resources are unlimited!
- b) 2nd - **God/Jesus invites us to participate in His miracles – even when we feel helpless or inadequate. For example, someone had to fill the jars of water at Cana for Jesus to produce the new wine; and someone had to move away the stone from Lazarus' tomb!**
- c) 3rd - Being dependent on Jesus does not mean **we are passive but active. We bring our small gifts; God does the multiplying!**
- d) 4th - **The disciples saw a problem – Jesus saw people. We need to change our perspective.**
- e) 5th - **God works with obedience, not abundance. When we obey with even just a little, God provides more than enough. We step out in faith; and then comes the miracle!**

Deeper Spiritually Meaning

Now this **miracle** is not just about giving people physical food though!

If we read the feeding of the 5000 story in John's Gospel – we find out that Jesus is fulfilling what happened in the wilderness when God gave the Israelites manna from Heaven

Jesus describes Himself as this bread or manna from Heaven

³² Jesus said to them, “*Very truly I tell you, it is not Moses who has given you the bread from heaven, but it is my Father who gives you the true bread from heaven.*” ³³ *For the bread of God is the bread that comes down from heaven and gives life to the world.”*

³⁵ *Then Jesus declared “I am the bread of life. Whoever comes to me will never go hungry, and whoever believes in me will never be thirsty. ³⁶ But as I told you, you have seen me and still you do not believe. ³⁷ All those the Father gives me will come to me, and whoever comes to me I will never drive away. ³⁸ For I have come down from heaven not to do my will but to do the will of him who sent me. ³⁹ And this is the will of him who sent me, that I shall lose none of all those he has given me, but raise them up at the last day. ⁴⁰ For my Father's will is that everyone who looks to the Son and believes in him shall have eternal life, and I will raise them up at the last day.”*

The bottom line is – **Jesus is our spiritual bread** – and **He feeds us spiritually**

When we pray the Lord's prayer each Sunday – and we pray “*Give us this day, our daily bread*” – we are not just praying for God to provide our daily physical food – but also to provide our daily spiritual food!

It's about having a feed from Jesus – who is God's Word

We need spiritual - breakfast, lunch and dinner – each day

And just like the Israelites had to rely on God to provide daily bread or manna – God wants us to rely on Jesus – DAILY.

We need a FEED from Him - EVERY DAY!

Are we doing that?

(pause)

This miracle **should also reminds** us of gathering together to **share in the Lord's Supper.**

In verse 39 and 40 – Jesus got the people to sit together in groups on the green grass (just like Psalm 23 says the shepherd “*makes me lie down in green pastures*”)

And then Jesus – verse 41 - **took the bread and fish** – gave thanks, broke the bread and gave it to His disciples to give to the people.

That's exactly what Jesus did at the Last Supper – when He broke bread with His disciples and shared it with them – **saying the Bread was His body broken** – and the wine, His Blood poured out for sins to be forgiven.

The sharing of bread with each other at the Lord's Supper is not just about eating physical food – but about us **sharing in and remembering Jesus' body broken and sacrificed for the forgiveness of sins.**

Jesus' body was broken on the cross and so **His body is ours to feed upon daily!**

God also takes us, blesses us and breaks our lives/our bodies – and allows our lives/our bodies - to be a blessing to the spiritually hungry multitudes around the world.

Jesus, our Shepherd, provides food for His Sheep

3rd point – **Jesus, our Shepherd, provides an overflowing abundance**

[Slide-3rd point]

Jesus, our Shepherd, provides an overflowing abundance (Mark 6:42-44)

Look at verse 42 – Mark tells us – *They all ate and were satisfied.*

The fact that there were so many leftovers – shows that Jesus provides not just enough - but plenty – in fact - an abundance!

As Jesus says in John 10:11 ***"I have come that they might have life; and have it to the full"***

Jesus is the bread of life – that gives us life now - which overflows into an abundance – with the guarantee of everlasting life in Heaven!

The leftovers also show that **in God's divine economy there should be no waste – and so Jesus' is teaching us to be good stewards of God's provision.**

These leftovers can be the apostles meal for the next day!

The **12 baskets left over** in verse 43 – are **symbolic of the 12 tribes of Israel** – **God's people in the Old Testament.** And the 12 baskets are also **symbolic of the 12 Apostles who begin Jesus' Church** – which is **God's people in the New Testament.**

Jesus used five loaves and two fish to feed 5000 men (verse 44) plus women and children. He transformed the little they had into abundance!

How will we obey Jesus, from now on, and let Him use the little we have, to perform great things?

(pause)

Will we follow Jesus' example – and model compassion to those who are less fortunate than us?

(pause)

Will we model abundance to those around us?

(pause)

Conclusion (Ephesians 3:20)

Let's finish with this verse from Ephesians 3:20 which shows perfectly what a compassionate God can do!

[Slide Ephesians 3:20]

Now to him who is able to do immeasurably more than all we ask or imagine, according to his power that is at work within us —

What Jesus did that day is a glimpse of the God who still does immeasurably more than we can imagine.

Let us NEVER put limits on what God can do – He is the God of miracles!

Let's pray...

Lord Jesus, thank You for showing us your compassion and power.

As You fed the hungry and cared for the weary; help us to model your compassion.

Help us to trust You with what little we have, knowing You can do immeasurably more than we could ever imagine. Fill us with Your love and send us out to serve others. In Your name we pray. Amen.