

## MARK 6:33-44

## RESTING IN JESUS

<sup>33</sup> But many who saw them leaving recognized them and ran on foot from all the towns and got there ahead of them. <sup>34</sup> 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. <sup>35</sup> 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. <sup>36</sup> Send the people away so they can go to the surrounding countryside and villages and buy themselves something to eat." <sup>37</sup> But he answered, "You give them something to eat." They said to him, "That would take eight months of a man's wages! Are we to go and spend that much on bread and give it to them to eat?" <sup>38</sup> "How many loaves do you have?" he asked. "Go and see." When they found out, they said, "Five—and two fish." <sup>39</sup> Then Jesus directed them to have all the people sit down in groups on the green grass. <sup>40</sup> So they sat down in groups of hundreds and fifties. <sup>41</sup> 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 set before the people. He also divided the two fish among them all. <sup>42</sup> They all ate and were satisfied, <sup>43</sup> and the disciples picked up twelve basketfuls of broken pieces of bread and fish. <sup>44</sup> The number of the men who had eaten was five thousand.

A first principle of Christian ministry is that Jesus can do what we cannot accomplish. At the direction of Jesus, the disciples retreat for rest and refreshment after their first true ministry experience. However, they are intercepted by the crowd and Jesus has compassion both on the crowd and on the disciples. The crowd is like so many famished and wandering sheep that have lost their way. The disciples are about to get a lesson on their need to rely on Jesus.

The disciples recognize the problem and tell Jesus to send the crowd away. Jesus counters by suggesting that the disciples feed the people. Is this what Jesus means by rest and refreshment? No, Jesus is bringing the disciples to the knowledge that they cannot meet the need of the people, but that he can. In addition, they are about to learn that they have a role to play in his kingdom work. In the end, the people are fed, physically and spiritually. When all the crumbs have been cleaned up, the disciples have learned who Jesus is and that Jesus' compassion for the world is to be mediated through them.

Jesus is God, we are not. Jesus has unlimited compassion, we do not. Jesus is the answer to human need, we are not. Jesus is the focus of our lives, we are not. Jesus' plan will ultimately succeed, our plans apart from Jesus, will not. Unburden yourself from the weight of having to do great things for the kingdom, and allow Jesus to do great things through you.

**Jesus, as you employed your reluctant disciples in the feeding of the people, and thereby, revealed to them your nature and your plan, use me this day in meeting the needs of others and in the revelation of your truth to the world. Amen.**