

WHO DO YOU SAY I AM – The Gospel of Mark (Mark 6b)

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Feeding of the 5,000

Mark 6:30-34 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.

Quiet place and get some rest (v. 31): Jesus, mindful of the physical condition of his disciples, directs them to a place to get some R and R—away from the crowds.

Sheep without a shepherd. So, he began teaching them many things (v. 34): You will notice that Jesus sees that people are without a shepherd and so he teaches them. The ministry to the soul is more important than to the body.

Materialism is a philosophy that denies the reality of a non-material dimension. It is defined as, "the doctrine that nothing exists except matter and its movements and modifications." When Materialism infects Christianity (through "Modernism") it neglects ministry of the soul in favor of meeting peoples' physical needs.

Mark 6:35-44 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.

You give them something to eat (v. 37): Since the disciples brought a problem to Jesus, he forces them to take some responsibility. Point: it is easy to identify problems, it is harder to find solutions.

How many loaves do you have... "Five—and two fish." (v. 38): In "kingdom-nomics" the solution often begins with what is presently available to solve the problem.

Exodus 4:1-3 Moses answered, "What if they do not believe me or listen to me and say, 'The Lord did not appear to you?'" ² Then the Lord said to him, "What is that in your hand?" "A staff," he replied. ³ The Lord said, "Throw it on the ground."

Exodus 4:17 But take this staff in your hand so you can perform the signs with it."

Have all the people sit down in groups...groups of hundreds and fifties (v. 39) This harks back to the Exodus account of the people of God in the wilderness. Contrary to popular opinion, the Exodus was not a chaotic, disorganized experience. It was highly organized.

1Corinthians 14:33 and 40 For God is not a God of disorder but of peace—as in all the congregations of the Lord's people... ⁴⁰ But everything should be done in a fitting and orderly way.

Looking up to heaven, he gave thanks (v. 41): In typical Jewish style, Jesus would have said something like, “Blessed art thou O God, who brings forth bread and fish for your people.” We typically bless the food, Jesus blessed God.

They all ate and were satisfied (v. 42): God’s promises are to meet our need and not our greed.

The disciples picked up twelve basketfuls of broken pieces of bread and fish (v. 43): The number twelve is important for God’s people. It is the number of the tribes and apostles. This probably served as a graphic lesson for the disciples regarding God’s provision.

A Terrifying Lesson

Mark 6:45-52 Immediately Jesus made his disciples get into the boat and go on ahead of him to Bethsaida, while he dismissed the crowd. ⁴⁶ After leaving them, he went up on a mountainside to pray. ⁴⁷ Later that night, the boat was in the middle of the lake, and he was alone on land. ⁴⁸ He saw the disciples straining at the oars, because the wind was against them. Shortly before dawn he went out to them, walking on the lake. He was about to pass by them, ⁴⁹ but when they saw him walking on the lake, they thought he was a ghost. They cried out, ⁵⁰ because they all saw him and were terrified. Immediately he spoke to them and said, “Take courage! It is I. Don’t be afraid.”⁵¹ Then he climbed into the boat with them, and the wind died down. They were completely amazed, ⁵² for they had not understood about the loaves; their hearts were hardened.

Immediately Jesus made his disciples get into the boat (v. 45): We need to see that this is a continuation of the “feeding” story. The disciples and reader are to learn something here.

He saw the disciples straining at the oars, because the wind was against them (v. 48): The disciples have gone from the environment of the cheering, happy crowd to the environment of a great wind beating against them. Now it is all strain, stress, and danger. Remind you of the church going from the “Jesus movement” of the 70s to SJWs of today?

Because they all saw him and were terrified (v. 50): This is to teach us that when the Lord shows up in the midst of the storms beating against His church that He is more terrifying than worldly dangers.

Take courage! It is I. Don’t be afraid (v. 50): It is the job of the disciples to summon their courage when the Lord is in the middle of the storm. Remember, the storm was still raging.

He climbed into the boat with them, and the wind died down. They were completely amazed (v. 51): According to the other Gospel accounts, what amazed the disciples was that everything became instantly and perfectly calm. Lesson: Jesus is divine.

They had not understood about the loaves; their hearts were hardened (v. 52): It often takes a number of lessons for slow-witted disciples to figure out who Jesus really is—He is more than our friendly Jesus-genie, sitting on the shelf ready to meet our needs.

Take-Aways

1. The church is like the disciples—gone are the happy crowds, now we are in the storm.
2. It is time to summon our courage because Jesus can be terrifying in the storm.