

## New City Catechism

### As group:

Ask Question 27

***Are all people, just as they were lost through Adam, saved through Christ?***

Answer Question 27

***No, only those who are elected by God and united to Christ by faith.***

***Read: Romans 5:17;***

***See also: John 6:37, 44; Romans 8:29-30***

### Discuss

1. How should the doctrine of election influence the way we think about evangelism and the offer of the gospel to all people?
2. What helps you trust in God's goodness and wisdom when aspects of his sovereign plan are difficult to understand?

## Main Point

Jesus is the true shepherd who both cares for his people and calls them to share in his work. He models a rhythm of rest and ministry, showing that rest is a gift from God, not an excuse to withdraw from compassion. Though the disciples are weak in faith, Jesus involves them in his provision, teaching us that ministry depends on his power, not ours. Every believer is called to reflect his care and trust in his sufficiency.

## Read Mark 6:30-44

- 1) What does Jesus' invitation to the disciples to "come away and rest" reveal about the rhythm of work and rest in the life of a believer?
- 2) How does Jesus' willingness to engage the crowd amid his rest challenge our understanding of compassion and flexibility in ministry today? What boundaries are biblical, and where might they be too rigid?

- 3) How might we be tempted to fall into patterns of:
  - a) working so hard that we have no time or capacity to rest; or
  - b) prioritising “rest” so much that we are ineffective workers.
- 4) How does Mark portray the crowd in verse 34 as “sheep without a shepherd,” and what Old Testament imagery might this echo? What does this suggest about Jesus’ identity and mission?
- 5) Why is the disciples’ desire to send the crowd away significant, given what they had just experienced in ministry? What does this tell you about the disciples’ faith?
- 6) Why do you think Jesus instructed the disciples to organise the people into groups and distribute the food themselves, rather than performing the miracle independently? What does this teach us about their role in his ministry?
- 7) On Sunday, Don discussed how being a shepherd is every Christian’s responsibility — not just those in a paid pastoral role. How does this passage support that idea, and what might it look like for each believer to embrace that responsibility?

1. Jesus' invitation to "come away and rest" reveals that rest is not just practical, but deeply theological. It reflects the creation pattern established by God himself (Gen. 2:2–3), where rest was sanctified as part of human life. The Sabbath in the Old Testament was a covenantal sign — a weekly reminder that God, not human effort, sustains his people. It was an act of trust and worship, not simply recovery.

Though believers today are not under the Mosaic law, the wisdom of Sabbath rest remains. Jesus' call to rest shows that discipleship involves rhythm — active service sustained by deliberate dependence. Rest guards us from pride and burnout by reminding us we are finite creatures who rely entirely on God's provision. More than that, Sabbath rest anticipates the eternal rest found in Christ (Heb. 4:9–11), where we will dwell forever in the presence of the one who gives true rest to our souls.

2. Jesus' compassion for the crowd interrupts his own rest, showing that love often requires flexibility. His example doesn't abolish rest but reframes it: rest exists to sustain love and service, not to isolate us from need. Biblical boundaries are grounded in wisdom — maintaining rhythms of rest, Sabbath, and delegation — but when those boundaries become self-serving or rigid, they can inhibit compassion. Ministry must be flexible enough to allow for Spirit-led interruptions, while also discerning enough to avoid burnout or resentment.

3. -

4. The phrase "sheep without a shepherd" in Mark 6:34 echoes key Old Testament passages, especially Numbers 27:17 and Ezekiel 34. In Numbers, Moses asks God to appoint a leader so Israel won't be left directionless like sheep without a shepherd. In Ezekiel, God condemns Israel's leaders for failing to care for the flock and promises that he himself will shepherd his people, ultimately through "my servant David" — a messianic figure.

By using this imagery, Mark presents Jesus as the fulfilment of that promise: the true and divine shepherd who steps in where others have failed. His compassion leads him not just to teach, but to feed and care for the people in the wilderness — just as God once fed Israel with manna. Jesus is not merely a prophet or miracle-worker; he is the shepherd-king who gathers, leads, and provides for God's people, revealing the heart of God in action.

5. Their request reveals a disconnect between their recent experience of Christ's power and their present assumptions about what is possible. Though they had preached, healed, and cast out demons in his name, they now rely on human logic rather than bringing their

needs to Jesus in faith. Once again in Mark, the disciples are presented as fragile and faltering humans, not superheroes or hyper-competent Christians. Ultimately, their conduct in this passage serves as a mirror for us: past spiritual success doesn't guarantee present trust.

6. This narrative reveals a key pattern: Jesus provides the power and resources, but his people are called to serve faithfully with what he gives. Ministry is not about initiating outcomes ourselves, but obediently stewarding the means he provides.
7. The passage portrays Jesus modelling shepherd-like care and calling his disciples to share in his work. They are not merely learning about his compassion; they are expected to reflect it. The feeding of the five thousand is a picture of spiritual and practical shepherding — attending to both word and need. For believers today, this means looking out for others in the church family, offering guidance, care, prayer, and encouragement.