

A Compassionate Lord

Mark 6: 30-34

As we continue through the sixth chapter of Mark, I realized we have discussed much in varied settings within this chapter. Jesus dealt with rejection in His hometown of Nazareth, the disciples were sent out to minister in pairs of two, and we read of the horrific death of John the Baptist. The chapter will conclude with Jesus performing another miracle as He walks upon the water. In our text, and the verses that immediately follow, we find a moving passage of Scripture. In these verses we will discover the gracious compassion Jesus had toward those around Him.

In our text today we will discuss Jesus' interaction with the disciples and then with those who are desperate and in need of His provision. It is impossible to consider this passage and miss the compassion of Christ toward those in need. While we are tempted at times to think that our Lord is distant and unengaged in our individual lives, He is actually near to us every moment and concerned with our needs. The compassionate character revealed in our Lord through these verses remains today. We have the assurance that Jesus knows our needs and He cares about the situations we face in life.

As we move through these opening verses of a familiar passage, I hope you will be reminded of Jesus' care for you and the provision available in Him. I want to examine the [expressions](#) of Jesus within the text as we consider: [A Compassionate Lord](#).

I. Jesus among the Disciples (30-32) – We begin our study today with a look at Jesus' interaction with the twelve. Notice:

A. The Conversation (30) – [And the apostles gathered themselves together unto Jesus, and told him all things, both what they had done, and what they had taught.](#) Mark refers to the time following the events recorded in [Vv.7-13](#). The Lord had sent the disciples out to minister among the towns and villages; and following the completion of their journey, they have all returned unto Jesus and are discussing their encounters. No doubt the disciples were excited about their initial endeavor into personal ministry. During their conversation they discussed:

1. Their Work – They told the Lord all things, including what they had done while they were away. These men were genuinely excited to be actively engaged in ministry efforts and wanted to tell the Lord all about it. They likely shared their triumphs and their struggles. (While Jesus knows our hearts, and is always aware of our lives, He desires us to bring our joys and burdens before Him.

We need to share our lives and aspirations with the Lord, even the smallest of details. We must seek His guidance as we strive to serve Him.)

2. Their Witness (30) – As they talked with Jesus concerning their journey, they also shared with Him what they had taught. Likely they shared how various people responded to their teaching and ways they sought to improve. They also probably desired affirmation that they had shared sound doctrine and represented the Lord well. They were seeking additional wisdom and instruction for their lives as they attempted to teach the Word and reach others with the Gospel. (It is imperative that we spend time in prayer as we prepare to teach the Word or be an effective witness for the Lord. Being an effective witness requires wisdom from the Lord.)

B. The Concern (31-32) – As Jesus talked with the twelve, He was concerned for their well-being. Notice:

1. The Appeal (31) – *And he said unto them, Come ye yourselves apart into a desert place, and rest a while: for there were many coming and going, and they had no leisure so much as to eat.* We must remember that this conversation followed their initial journey in ministry by themselves. They had been faithful to the Lord's work, and it had taken a toll on them. It is evident that they were in need of well-deserved rest. They had been so busy, dealing with everyone coming and going that they hadn't even had time to eat. Jesus wanted them to separate themselves from their work for a season of rest and renewal. No doubt they were exhausted physically, emotionally, and even spiritually, having poured themselves out for the good of others. They needed time to evaluate their efforts and refuel spiritually, physically, and emotionally.

▪ While our Lord never encourages laziness, He does understand and emphasize the need for adequate rest. Our bodies were divinely designed, and they were designed with a need for rest. There is nothing "spiritual" about running ourselves ragged, ignoring the need for rest, and there is nothing "sinful" about taking some time away from the demands of life and ministry to rest. *Mark 2:27 – And he said unto them, The sabbath was made for man, and not man for the sabbath.*

2. The Arrangement (32) – *And they departed into a desert place by ship privately.* We will discover that this season of rest was short lived, but the disciples responded obediently to the Lord and went into a desert place alone with Him by boat. Jesus chose a place of seclusion, apart from the demands and distractions of the world and ministry for them to rest.

- We need such a place of rest, a place of seclusion and serenity, apart from the many demands we face in life. If you don't have such a place, I encourage you to find one and guard that place. It is a place that we all need to resort to frequently in order to remain rested and ready to serve the Lord. This does not imply that we lock ourselves away from the world and ignore our responsibilities, but that we all have a place where we can rest and fellowship with the Lord.

II. Jesus among the Desperate (33-34) – Following His care and compassion toward the disciples, Jesus immediately turned His attention toward the needs of the multitude that followed Him. Consider:

A. Their Commitment (33) – *And the people saw them departing, and many knew him, and ran afoot thither out of all cities, and outwent them, and came together unto him.* These are people with great needs. While many of them were opportunistic, seeking only what Jesus could provide materially, they all stood in need of Christ. Regardless of their initial motivation, as the multitude saw Jesus and the disciples depart by boat, they decided to follow them by walking around the shore of the Sea of Galilee. It was about four miles across by boat, and it would have been approximately ten miles around the shore. The multitude knew if they hurried, they could likely make the trip around on land as quickly as they would be able to make it by boat. In this we discover the overwhelming determination of the people to get to Jesus.

- As I studied this passage I had to wonder – do we possess that type of commitment today? Likely most do not. We need to commit to being near to Jesus, whatever the cost. We need Him in our midst as desperately as the multitude did that day. He alone can provide what we need in life. Our only hope is to remain in the presence of Christ our Lord.

B. His Concern (34) – *And Jesus, when he came out, saw much people, and was moved with compassion toward them, because they were as sheep not having a shepherd: and he began to teach them many things.* For me, this is one of the most beautiful verses in all of Scripture. It reveals the genuine concern Jesus had for the multitude. His concern remains for the varied needs of humanity. Notice:

1. His Awareness (34a) – *And Jesus, when he came out, saw much people.* As Jesus stepped out of the boat onto the shore, He immediately saw a multitude waiting for Him. No doubt He recognized the sheer numbers that stood before Him. This was a large gathering of people. He saw them collectively, but I am also convinced He saw them individually. I do not imply that He saw each

one of their faces, but no doubt Jesus noticed individuals in the crowd. As He surveyed the crowd, Jesus sensed individual needs.

- It is beyond our ability to comprehend, but Jesus has total awareness of those who are here. He sees and understands the needs of this congregation collectively. He is aware of the needs of individual families, and He is aware of the burden each one carries. He is Lord of the multitude and Lord of the individual, all at the same time!

2. His Assessment (34) – **And Jesus, when he came out, saw much people, and was moved with compassion toward them, because they were as sheep not having a shepherd.** Jesus surveyed the multitude and immediately sensed their need. He knew they stood before Him as sheep having no shepherd. They were confused about which path to travel in life, seeking direction from Him. They were vulnerable and afraid, needing one to guard and protect them. They were desperate and hungry, needing one to lead them to pastures, green and lush. As Jesus saw them, He accurately assessed their varied needs.

- We live in a world where many are wandering aimlessly about, as sheep without a shepherd. Maybe you are standing at a crossroads in life, wondering which path to take. Maybe you feel vulnerable and alone, needing someone near to provide help and assurance in your life. Maybe you are hungry spiritually, your life is in a mess, and you need to feed from the great provision of the Lord. If you are aware of that, I assure you, Jesus already knows. He sees us as we are, where we are!

3. His Affection (34) – **And Jesus, when he came out, saw much people, and was moved with compassion toward them, because they were as sheep not having a shepherd.** We find a profound statement here: Jesus was moved with compassion toward them. This carries the idea of “*feeling deeply, to yearn; feeling sympathy, while showing compassion and pity.*” Jesus didn’t just recognize their great need, He felt it too. It wasn’t a scene He could look upon and walk away from. He was deeply moved by the need of the people and felt compelled to act on their behalf.

- Jesus isn’t just aware of our needs. He doesn’t just see them, He also feels our need. As we stand in need, He is moved with compassion toward us. He yearns to provide what we desperately need in life. He takes no pleasure in anyone suffering apart from grace. He desires us to come before Him, confessing our need, and reaching up to receive the provision He gives. **Heb.4:15 – For we have not an high priest which cannot be touched with the feeling of our infirmities; but was in all points tempted like as we are, yet without sin.**

- We fail to realize it at times, but Jesus understands every situation we face. He experienced the hurt of betrayal and rejection. He wept at the grave of a friend. He knew loneliness and hurt. He suffered beyond imagination as He hung on the cross. He endured the guilt and shame of the sin of the world. Yes, Jesus knows the need you have and He understands. He is moved with compassion toward you and wants to provide the grace and provision you need.

4. His Assurance (34b) – *And Jesus, when he came out, saw much people, and was moved with compassion toward them, because they were as sheep not having a shepherd: and he began to teach them many things.* We don't know what Jesus shared with the multitude, but He spoke to their need. I am convinced He shared passages of Scripture that offered insight, comfort, and guidance. He likely spoke to them of His being the great Shepherd who provides salvation and security for all who look to Him. As the people came to Jesus, desiring to receive help, He responded to their need.

- You are blessed beyond measure to be in the service today. I do not say that because I have preached, or because of anyone else. You are blessed to be in the presence of Jesus. I can't understand exactly how you feel, or what you are facing, but I know one who does. I can't bring peace to your heart, but I know one who can. I can't bring healing or reconciliation, but Jesus can. I can't save you from sin and offer eternal life, but Jesus stands ready to meet that need.

Conclusion: There is much in these verses that many overlook in the greater context of the feeding of the 5,000. Clearly they reveal the Lord's concern and compassion for our individual needs. He is aware and He cares for you. If there are needs in your life, bring them to Jesus!